ANISHINAABEMOWIN TEACHER PERSPECTIVES OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION IN NOGOJIWANONG PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A Thesis Submitted to the Committee of Graduate Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of Master of Arts in the Faculty of Arts and Science.

TRENT UNIVERISTY

Peterborough, Ontario, Canada

Canadian Studies and Indigenous Studies M.A. Graduate Program

January 2022

Abstract

Anishinaabemowin Teacher Perspectives on Indigenous Language Instruction in Nogojiwanong Public Schools

Dominique O'Bonsawin

This thesis explores the importance of Indigenous languages and their revitalization, as well as the roles and responsibilities of schools through the perspective of Anishinaabemowin public school teachers in the Nogojiwanong, Peterborough ON, area. Three teachers were interviewed and have shared valuable insight into how they became teachers, how the language is taught in their schools, and the challenges associated with teaching these classes in these settings, as well as who should be learning and how these languages will bring us forward. From this information, recommendations for schools, school boards, and policy makers are included to better support instructors and students.

Keywords: Anishinaabemowin, Language Revitalization, Schools

Wliwni - Acknowledgements

This thesis was written with the financial support of the following scholarships: Ontario Graduate Scholarship, which was funded in part by the Morton Graduate Scholarship in Indigenous Studies, Mary L. Northway Scholarship, Harley Richards Cummings Scholarship, William B. Reid Graduate Scholarship, as well as a Master's Research Fellowship. I'd like to express my gratitude to the donors of these scholarships as well as to all who have encouraged me to apply for scholarships.

Kchi wliwni – big thank you to the Frost Centre for creating a space that promotes critical thinking and enriched learning. I am particularly grateful to Dr. Janet Miron who, since I have been at Trent, has gone out of their way to ensure that I was supported and appreciated in the Frost Centre. As the program director, Janet goes above and beyond when planning guest speakers, activities and general support for their students. Their hard work has greatly contributed to the joy I felt being part of the Frost Centre. I also want to recognize the hard work of the Administrative Assistant and Graduate Programs & Research Coordinator in the Frost Centre, Cathy Schoel.

Kchi wliwni – big thank you to my peers in my cohort, my colleagues from the Frost Centre and the Indigenous Studies Department as well as the First People's House of Learning. You have all made me feel like I was a part of a community at Trent and in Peterborough. The support and encouragement I felt from you have had a very significant impact on the completion of this thesis and how much I loved doing my graduate studies at Trent. Kchi wliwni to Betty Carr-Braint for creating important cultural programming and ceremonies, as well as becoming my good friend that I could always talk to. I'd also like to specifically thank Catherine Davis for

taking some time to talk with me when I felt very lost in my focus. When COVID-19 forced me to change my topic, they were willing to have a chat with me, share their experiences and point me in the right direction.

Kchi wliwni – big thank you to my friends and family who have unconditionally supported me throughout my studies. To feel loved in the best motivation for me to do my best. To my caring mother, my generous father, my creative sister, my kind brother-in-law, my loving partner and my wonderful friends, whether you encouraged me to get some fresh air, gave me space to work, cooked me some meals or provided me with emotional support when things got difficult, thank you. Throughout my degree I have felt so much love, support and pride. I'd like to additionally thank my dog, Cedar, for being by my side through it all and reminding me not to sweat the small stuff.

Finally, I say the biggest wliwni to my supervisor, friend, mentor and role model Dr. Michèle Lacombe. They believed in me and have been there for me from the start and have enabled me to grow in ways I would have never imagined possible. When things got hard, they helped me get back on my feet and focus on my work. Of course, I could mention all of the things Michele has done to help me finish this thesis, but the reasons I am the most grateful to Michele are that they were always willing to listen, they have a big heart and they brought out the best in me and my peers. The relationship we have built throughout my degree is one that I will cherish forever. Wliwni Michele for always setting me straight but also being the friend I needed at times.

I would not be where I am today without you all, and I will never have the words to express my appreciation. Kchi wliwni, merci beaucoup, thank you so much.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 – Introduction

In the era of reconciliation, we are seeing more and more schools and school boards offer Indigenous language classes at the elementary school level. In Nogojiwanong (Peterborough Ontario area), Anishinaabemowin is being taught in several public schools. In this thesis, I explore how Anishinaabemowin is taught in this setting, as well as the experiences of individual teachers who are teaching the language in these schools. The purpose of this study is to identify the roles that schools hold in language revitalization efforts from the perspective of the teachers. By navigating existing literature and conducting three interviews with local Anishinaabemowin teachers, this thesis has found that schools can be beneficial for revitalization efforts. That said, this work looks to highlight the importance of Indigenous languages and their revitalizations as well as the responsibility of schools all while also looking at the challenges and advantages associated to having these types of classes in public schools.

About the researcher

Prior to introducing my research and its themes, I feel it is important to provide some context into who I am, where I come from and what has led me to focus on this field of research. My name is Dominique O'Bonsawin, I am of Abenaki and French-Canadian descent. I grew up on the edge of a small town within the Greater Sudbury area in Ontario. Even though francophones are still a linguistic minority in the area, Sudbury is home to a large community of French speakers. Both of my parents' mother tongues are French and so we always spoke French

at home. Given that we were a family involved in the community, my sister and I learnt to speak English at a very young age. That said, since before I can remember, I have been interacting with people who speak a language different from my mother tongue and was often forced to translate my thoughts in order to be understood. This came with many challenges as a child. I often felt like I didn't fit in, I had to repeat myself more than I would have liked, I became very frustrated at times, I even shut down when it felt like it was too much. I see my bilingualism as an asset now, but the northern Ontario francophone community is where I feel at home, I am best understood there. As I continue on into academia and the professional world, I recognize that my experiences with language as a young child are at the foundation of my understanding of the challenges and issues surrounding Indigenous languages on Turtle Island today. I am committed to continuing the journey of learning about my Abenaki roots and language and contributing to the larger Indigenous community on Turtle Island.

Abenaki traditional territory spans from the east coast of Connecticut, New Hampshire and Maine through New England and north to the province of Quebec. My Abenaki community is located north-east of what we know today as Montreal. The first time I visited Odanak, I was about 15 years old. Although my parents did their best to teach us about our Abenaki roots, my sister and I knew very little before this initial visit. Since then, we both have been actively learning about our history, and doing work to reconnect and reclaim what has been lost in our family for some time.

I have always lived on Anishnaabe territory, and a lot of my teachings are grounded in Anishnaabe worldview. Sudbury is located on Ojibwe territory. When I graduated high school, I left the Sudbury area to pursue my undergraduate studies at the University of Ottawa, which is situated on unceded unsurrendered Algonquin territory. This is mostly where my reconnection

journey began. I found community connections within the Indigenous student body at the resource center on campus and was inspired and motivated to learn more about what it meant to be Abenaki and our history. My third year of undergraduate studies changed my life in many ways, firstly, as I immersed myself in an Indigenous studies course. The relationship between Indigenous nations and Canada as a colonial state became clear and I began to see myself and my country under a different light. During the summer between my fourth and fifth year of undergraduate studies, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to do a field research course in Taiwan. It was an Anthropology course with a focus on Taiwan's Indigenous population. This is really where my interests in Indigenous Languages began. I was able to draw parallels between issues in Canada and Taiwan's own Indigenous issues, history and politics. Questions and difficulties surrounding language were eye opening to me during this course and I started to explore the importance of Indigenous languages and their revitalization. This topic has since become personal to me, and I have been trying to learn and use the Abenaki language in my daily life. This field research course has led me to pursue my graduate studies in Canadian Studies and Indigenous Studies at Trent University in Nogojiwanong, Peterborough Ontario, on Michi Saagig Anishnaabe Territory, where I further study the relationship between language, culture, identity, land and belonging.

I am grateful to have the opportunity to reside and study in this land upon which I am a visitor. I hope that my contributions to research will be useful for the Anishinaabe people of this area and that it will be carried out in a good way. Although my research is in line with a decolonial agenda, I am actively participating in academia which is, in itself, a colonial institution that provides space predominantly for non-Indigenous and non-racialized individuals. As an Indigenous person whose physical features lead many to assume that they aren't

Indigenous, I do not face the racism or discrimination that many other Indigenous and racialized people do within these types of institutions. I am privileged in many ways and acknowledge that my privileges have been beneficial in coming to a point where I am able to do this research and pursue my education in this way and in this space. By doing this work, I am hoping to give voice to Anishinaabe individuals who are working on the ground and are on the front lines to revitalize and bring awareness to the situation of Anishinaabemowin and Anishinaabe culture in this specific area.

It is important to note that I will use a few terms interchangeably throughout this work. The language I am exploring, Anishnaabemowin, can also be spelled and pronounced as Nishnaabemowin. There are also many different dialects of this language. That said, some participants in my research will refer to the language as Ojibwe. One of my participants also refers to Algonquin as an Anishnaabemowin dialect, though some will say that Algonquin is its own language. Nonetheless, Anishinaabemowin and Algonquin are very similar and share a lot of history. I did not explicitly ask a question about dialects because it can be a quite a controversial subject. Out of respect, and since I am not Anishinaabe myself, I felt it wasn't my place to prompt my participants on this topic. However, a few of my participants did speak of the differences in dialects and how they relate to the teaching of Anishnaabemowin and I felt it was important to include this part of their perspective in this work. I will explore this later when I share my collected data.

Finally, in my efforts to produce decolonial scholarship, I use the term Turtle Island to refer to North America as an act of resistance against the existing colonial borders between Canada and the United States. These borders are not in line with Indigenous ways of knowing and perceiving nationhood. These borders have divided many Indigenous people and

communities and have contributed to the dispossession and removal of Indigenous people on Indigenous lands. Turtle Island alludes to our connectedness as Indigenous people beyond the colonial borders. In addition, I do also want to emphasize that I am also resisting pan-Indianism. Although we are connected and a lot of the issues are similar between nations in the north, the south, the east and the west of Turtle Island, my research is specific and immediately relevant to Nogojiwanong (Peterborough, ON). Local Anishinaabe scholar, activist, poet and writer Leanne Simpson writes in their book, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back,* that Nogojiwanong means "the place at the end of the rapids." (Simpson,2011, p.26) which, in my opinion, shares a lot more information about the land and the environment than the name Peterborough. My research is, however, potentially of use for future research on other areas considering the scarcity of literature. Although I do use the term Ontario in my thesis to provide geographical information, I will use Indigenous place names throughout when possible.

The Importance of Indigenous Language and Revitalization

When considering the importance of Indigenous Languages and their revitalization within the scope of my research, I want to highlight and emphasize the importance of Indigenous voices. Throughout my thesis, particularly in my literature review, I do reference non-Indigenous academics who have done extensive and valuable work in Indigenous Studies and Linguistics. However, my goal is to utilize Indigenous scholarship, particularly Anishnaabeg scholarship, as much as possible. Further, in this section, I am looking to answer the following questions. Why are Indigenous languages important to protect, promote, maintain and revive? Why do we need Indigenous languages?

Before I dive into Indigenous literature, I want to tell you a story about my reconnection journey to my community and my language. I have learnt that reconnection and reclaiming what has been lost due to colonization is life-long work that is not always easy. There are many barriers to reconnecting and reclaiming our identities that may have been lost or forgotten for a long time. There is a lot of guilt, shame and trauma that can arise when doing this good work. I am lucky that my family has always been aware of where we are from. However, I too have had hardships on my journey and will likely have to face many more as I continue on. Although I've already spoken about how I came to be interested in studying Indigenous languages, my motivations to learn my own language, Abenaki, are rooted in a feeling of being lost. The more I learnt about the importance of language, the more I felt like I didn't know who I was. When I was studying Indigenous language issues, I understood that culture and worldview is held within language, and I understood the issues associated with translating Indigenous languages into mainstream languages such as English or French. I think it's important to note that, although language is so incredibly important for the survival of Indigenous people, language loss is equally as important to appreciate, and it is important not to discriminate against people or communities who no longer have their language. It is not their fault. In my current situation, I do not say that I don't know my language, I say that it was taken from me. Colonial regimes in Canada have resulted in so many Indigenous people not having access to their language because of land dispossession, displacement, residential schools, intergenerational trauma and ongoing systematic and institutional racism and discrimination. For me, I understood how the idea of how language has an influence on how we see the world and ourselves at a very young age. As previously mentioned, my mother tongue is French. However, most of my friends I grew up with did not speak French. I often had to try translating my quirky French-Canadian jokes into

English, and at that point they just weren't funny anymore. In this particular case, English speakers will never be able to understand that little joke simply because it does not exist in their language and so it does not exist within their realm of understanding. A lot is lost in translation between French and English, and these are in fact very similar languages since they have related origins.

During my post-secondary studies, I started to learn bits and pieces of the Abenaki language, my language. I learnt the word for 'school' *adalagakidimek*. In simple translation, that made sense. I could just memorize this new Abenaki word and use it to replace my English or French understanding of this word. But when I learnt how this word was broken down in order to provide us with a translation for the word 'school' in English, this idea of worldview within language was once again amplified for me. *Adalagakidimek* – adal = the most, agaki = teach, dimek = where people come together, which all together translates the closest to "the place where people learn the most." I am still a beginner learner, and so I apologize if I have made some grammatical errors; however, learning this breakdown led me to a spiral of thought. I wrote down two sentences, two possible sentences that could be translated using the word adalagakidimek and I thought about how different my relationship to this word is based on these two sentences:

I am going to school.
I am going to the place where people learn the most.

In my mind, these two sentences are significantly different, yet they can be drawn from the exact same word. This example is only one of which we can try to highlight how language shapes the

way we see, interact with and understand the world. I would much rather be going to the place where people learn the most than be going to school.

I was introduced to the concept of glocalization when I read Michael Joseph and Esther Ramani's (2012) article entitled *"Glocalization": Going Beyond the Dichotomy of Global Versus Local Through Additive Multilingualism*. They define glocalization as "a concept that seeks to integrate the local and global to address both the need for social justice and the need to participate in a global market economy." (p.22) One aspect of glocalization focusses on learning languages that are beneficial in multiple social contexts while recognizing that a global or local context does not need to exclude the other and that they both have their own sets of advantages. I feel that I am embodying this within my practice of learning my Indigenous language. All of my languages serve me a different purpose and they can co-exist within my being. I explore this concept a little later in the thesis as well.

Now, I am bringing back the questions I have previously posed. Why are Indigenous languages important to protect, promote, maintain and revive? Why do we need Indigenous languages? Language encompasses a lot more than the ability to communicate with one another. It is a gateway to the way we see the world and ourselves within it. In other words, "Language is a social practice". (Noodin, 2014, p.3)

"Indigenous languages carry rich meanings, theory and philosophies within their structure" (Simpson, 2011, p.49) Indigenous languages are based in contexts that are deeply rooted in its people and their histories as well as the lands. They are languages that have come from years of reciprocal relationships between human and non-human beings as well as the understanding of creation stories and human's roles within them. Leanne Simpson in *Dancing on Our Turtle's* Back calls their nation "Kina Gchi Nishnaabeg-ogamig – the place where we all

live and work together." (p.14) They take this further by explaining the connection between land, language and people in their book, *As We Have Always Done:* "Kina Gchi Nishnaabeg-ogamig is connectivity based on the sanctity of the land, the love we have for our families, our language, our way of life. It is relationships based on deep reciprocity, respect, non-interference, self-determination, and freedom." (2017, p.9). Elder Doug Williams (2018) also identifies how their nations are connected. They share "In our language, Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg means people that live at the mouth of rivers. It is not a settler term. It comes from our language. It is how we refer to ourselves and how other Nishnaabeg refer to us." (p.30) This term is so powerful. It provides so much cultural, historical and geographical insight into the lives and practices of these people. The way they identify themselves is a reflection of how they live, where they live and what their world is comprised of. Just knowing the definition of how they identify themselves helps us begin to understand their worldview.

When talking about his Nokomis (Grand Mother), Williams (2018) writes, "She always said if we came across a bear, we have to speak to it in Anishinaabemowin (Ojibwa) because it is the only language they can understand. You can tell it to go away in the language…" (p.21) This is a beautiful example of the reciprocal relationship humans and non-human beings have within the Anishnaabe worldview. Indigenous languages are specific to the land and the people from which they emerged. They hold stories and meanings that could not be properly understood in other languages. In this example, humans are understood by non-human relatives when using the right language. Moreover, Anishnaabe scholar, writer and poet Margaret Noodin in their book *Bawaajimo: A Dialect of Dreams in Anishinaabe Language and Literature* (2014) writes about the teachers they have had that has brought them to the understanding of language as being connected to culture and worldview. They quote George Muswagon who says:

> Language is the medium through which history, culture and worldview are transmitted; therefore, the best connection to historical roots (is) First Nations languages…It is their particular way of viewing the world, and their place in it, that sets First Nations people apart from non – First Nations people. This worldview remains intact in the language. (p.14-15)

Noodin (2014) takes this further by highlighting that "For the Anishinaabe, the language is a source of history and a means of survival." (p.15) Furthermore, language is the livelihood of Indigenous peoples and their way of preserving their knowledge and surviving as Indigenous people for generations to come. Noodin (2014) notes that "teacher Shirley Williams maintains that we need to move the language into the future so that life as it is lived now can be encompassed by the Anishinaabe language". (p.3) Noodin (2014) also discusses language as being a living entity that "evolves with the times". (p.3) It moves and changes with its people and the landscape. Language is not fixed in a certain period. It provides information on the adaptation, survival and resilience of its people throughout time. In the context of the Indigenous people of Nogojiwanong, Elder Doug Williams explains, "Nishnaabeg, like all people, has changed through time. Our language has changed as well – now we use Naabi for husband but in the old days we used this as a human." (p.34)

The reason why so many have declining numbers of speakers or are threatened to be lost is because language was, and is, at the core of the colonial tactics to assimilate Indigenous peoples and nations into the ways of life brought and developed by settler societies on Turtle Island. Many of these assimilationist agendas focused on children. As quoted by the Truth and

Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC), Hector Langevin, 1883 Public Works Minister of Canada stated “In order to educate the children properly we must separate them from their families. Some people may say that this is hard but if we want to civilize them we must do that.” (TRC, 2012a, p.i) The implementation of status, the residential school system, the creation of reserves, the 60s scoop, the millennial scoop, the dispossession of Indigenous peoples from their lands and the non-consensual destruction of land are but a few of the many events and factors that have significantly contributed to the current state of many Indigenous languages on Turtle Island. We understand now that language is an important part of one’s identity, belonging and association. Although we can’t confirm that the architects of the assimilation tactics on Turtle Island targeted language specifically to further the erasure of Indigenous people on this land, some feel it was always part of the plan. Regarding Residential Schools in particular, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada shares that “They were commonly denied the right to speak their language and told their cultural beliefs were sinful.” (TRC, 2012a, p.1) The attacks again Indigenous people and their languages, such as the Residential School system, on Turtle Island forced many nations to change their ways of life which resulted in many aspects of their culture and livelihoods being deeply affected by these attempts of removal. Indigenous languages today are not dead. Although many are endangered, many are still spoken and celebrated, and there are many reasons to remain hopeful that they will continue on for many generations. Like any other living being, however, it needs to be cared for, and used in order to thrive. Additionally, language is not the only factor that connects people to each other and their cultures; however, it is of value and worthy of being protected and promoted.

Mary Isabelle Young is an Anishnaabe residential school survivor who writes about her experiences in a book entitled *Pimatisiwin: Walking in A Good Way* (2005). In this book, they

write about the connection between identity and language through the Anishinaabe perspective. She describes language as being "just the way we see the world, the concepts we have and the understanding that we have in general." (p.116) She continues by explaining the complexities associated with trying to translate this worldview into the English language: "When we talk about worldview, there are certain things that are kind of complicated to describe in English because they are based on a different understanding, different worldview... That's how we see the world." (p.116) In the telling of the Creation Story of the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg, Doug Williams, an Elder from the Nogojiwanong area, also brings to light these types of issues. An example that he gives in his book *Michi Saagiig Nishneebeg: This is our Territory* (2018) is:

> It is difficult to translate Gzhwe Manidoo into English because the English language tends to describe Gzhwe Manidoo as a he, but Gzhwe Manidoo is neither man or woman, there is no gender and it is important to remember that is the way we describe things in Nishnaabemowin. That is a big distinction, and it is important to remember when we are telling the story in English. (p.13)

As stated by Elder Doug Williams, there are many nuanced constructs that cannot be captured outside of the language, such as gender. Mary Isabelle Young also highlights these specific nuances and mentions that of the animate and inanimate conceptualization and how this is one of the ways in which our ways of understanding things are different between languages. (p.116) These stories told in English, such as those in Elder Doug Williams' book, are accessible to Anishnaabe people who do not have their language or other Indigenous and non-Indigenous folks who want to know more about Anishnaabe people and land. The ways in which Doug

Williams and others attempt to explain these nuances within the story provides us with some insight into the worldview of the people whose story this belongs to. However, without the language, this worldview will always be missing certain elements and context that can simply not exist outside of its original language. Mary Isabelle Young highlights this and explains, "We can be taught those things but it is not the same if we do not speak the language." (p.116) This goes to show how important language is. However, I do not agree that without language there is no cultural competency. Young points to the idea that we can't learn who we are without our languages. While I want to highlight the connection between language, culture and identity, I do think that everyone, including non-language speakers, language learners and language speakers, have the ability to know who they are and be culturally competent. That said, I think that these stories told in English and other non-Indigenous languages are incredibly important, particularly Creation stories since they "tell us how we got here and how the world was made" (Doug, p.34) which is an important part of understanding ourselves and this type of knowledge should not just belong to language speakers. Translated stories are a symptom of surviving attempts to erase and assimilate Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island. Our stories are still here, and our teachings live on, even if they must look and sound different than before. These translations allow us to carry many teachings forward and provide cultural knowledge and learning for those whose language has been lost or stolen.

Indigenous language revitalization has the goal of bringing back to life these languages that have been lost, stolen and greatly affected by colonialism on Turtle Island. The need for revitalization is not unique to any one Indigenous language. Indigenous languages across Turtle Island are at various stages of language loss and language revitalization. To this regard, it is not appropriate to compare the specific circumstances of one language over another. That said,

exploring one languages' revitalization efforts can provide insight into how other languages can approach revitalization. We can surely learn from each other, but what works in one circumstance may not work in others. Anishinaabemowin revitalization programs and initiatives are widespread and have proven very effective in transmitting the language to its people and others. As a non-Anishinaabe person myself, I have had the opportunity to participate in many Anishinaabemowin courses and I have been exposed to the many revitalization programs that exist. It is truly quite incredible to see the language grow, evolve and thrive today. Although I won't be touching on these experiences and issues specifically in the scope of my research, they have been paramount in bringing me to where I am now in my understanding and study of Indigenous languages and the importance of their revitalization.

Scope of Research

Although it is evident that many Indigenous languages on Turtle Island are in dire need of revitalization and support, the idea of teaching Indigenous languages in public schools is heavily contested. While some people may believe that schools are a breeding ground for potential speakers, others may think that teaching language in schools does not benefit language revitalization efforts since it does not produce fluent speakers. It truly depends on the individual's perspectives on the teaching and learning of the language, and whether the goals of having Indigenous language classes in school is to be complementary to other language revitalization efforts or to lead to fluency. I am of the perspective that any kind of learning is a step in the right direction. I don't think that fluency is a feasible goal to have in a public school setting, though I do think that these classes could contribute to fluent speakers when in collaboration with other language revitalization efforts. Additionally, some may think that the

language should only be taught to individuals who identify and have a cultural connection to the language while others may believe that the only chance that languages have to survive is if we include people of various backgrounds in the learning of the language. In other words, anyone who is interested in learning the language would be an asset. Whatever the reason may be, there are many conflicting attitudes towards Indigenous language instruction in schools. The participants in this research do address this controversy and are of the thinking that the more people are willing to participate and learn our Indigenous languages, the better our collective futures will be. Nonetheless, these conversations are important to have since they address real life issues that have impacts on real people. It is also an important topic within the greater conversation about colonialism in North America and the idea of reconciliation since it informs how non-Indigenous individuals and governments can support Indigenous peoples and their languages. Conversations surrounding Indigenous languages often find themselves tethered between being both a target of colonization but also a way to promote reconciliation and/or resurgence.

My research fits within this larger conversation. I explore the attitudes of Anishinaabemowin instructors in schools in Nogojiwanong (Peterborough, Ontario and surrounding areas), and how they relate to Anishinaabemowin revitalization. Since this is the traditional territory of the Michi Saagig Anishnaabeg, I focus on the instruction of their language Anishinaabemowin, or Nishnaabemowin, in off-reserve public schools. This is important to study since it provides insight into the perspectives, attitudes and motivations in regard to Anishinaabemowin revitalization specific to this language in this geographical area. The outcomes of my research will not provide absolute answers by any means and will not be applicable outside of this specific context. It could, however, inform policy and provide guidance

on how to move forward or improve Indigenous language revitalization efforts through the medium of public schools. Furthermore, it is important to explore how Anishinaabemowin and Anishinaabe knowledge is being included or not in public schools and its efficacy in transmitting and maintaining language. I will do this by investigating the challenges as well as the opportunities presented to Anishinaabemowin instructors in public schools. In large part, I will be looking at the perspectives of language instructors on the roles and responsibilities of off-reserve public schools on Indigenous language revitalization for Anishinaabemowin in the Nogojiwanong area.

Upon doing some preliminary research and utilizing my networks, I have come to realize that there is very little existing research on the topic of Indigenous language instruction in schools that are not on reserve land or controlled by Indigenous communities. The data from the 2016 Census states that about 40% of registered First Nations live on reserve. That means that 60% of registered First Nations don't. Additionally, 76% of non-status First Nations are said to live in urban areas. It is important to acknowledge, also, all of the Indigenous folks that this data doesn't represent. In Ontario, 23% of First Nations people live on reserve. Finally, in Peterborough, approx. 4.5% of the population is Indigenous (Census, 2016) Considering most Indigenous people in Turtle Island do not live on reserve, this field of study is deeply lacking. The only resource that I was able to find that is specific to my area of research is what is displayed on the Ontario's Ministry of Education website as the Native Languages curriculum. To this regard, my research will be of importance to bring to light the situation of Anishinaabemowin instruction in public, off-reserve, schools. My research will be of benefit to academics in a way that will promote and inspire future research on this topic. Although my

research could be useful in informing policy, my focus is to inquire about the perceptions of Anishinaabemowin teachers in public schools.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

When exploring the existing literature surrounding Indigenous language education, as previously stated, it is important to note that Indigenous language revitalization is tied to culture, worldview, identity and connection to people, the environment, and community. "(L)anguage is the principal means by which culture is accumulated, shared, and transmitted from one generation to another. Language expresses the uniqueness of a group's worldview. It defines who you are." (Kirkness, 1998, p.93)

Policies and Funding

There have been many policies put in place that served to uplift Canada's national language which in turn diminished the importance of Indigenous languages. The historical exclusion of Indigenous language recognition in these policies have served as racial and cultural hierarchization, in which Indigenous people found themselves at the bottom and the *'founding'* languages on the top. This was but another form of assimilation and erasure on the part of the settler state. To name a few; The Indian Act (1876), The Constitution Act (1982), the White Paper (1969), The Royal Commission of Bilingualism and Biculturalism (1963-69), and the Official Languages Act (1969). These have all contributed in one way or another in the wrongful perception that English and French are the founding languages of Canada and are superior to Indigenous languages. To highlight this, Haque & Patrick (2015) state that

> the RCBB enabled the Canadian state to shift the exclusions central to the racial hierarchies of white-settler nationhood onto discourses of language and culture by excluding heritage and Indigenous languages from Canada's linguistic ordering and its 'founding peoples' discourse. This has governed language policy and funding in Canada ever since. (p.38)

The Ministry of Education of Ontario's curriculum for Native Languages itself unintentionally speaks to the inequality of languages. It states, "According to current policy pertaining to elementary school Core French (FSL), all students entering Grade 4 must receive French instruction in every year from Grade 4 to Grade 8." (Ministry of Education, 2001, p.5) Although it does state that students can be exempted from this if the parents decide that it is "in their best interests not to receive French instruction" (p.5) there is no such alternatives to Indigenous languages. There are no language requirements and students must opt into the Indigenous language courses if it is offered at their school. This means that only students or families who are interested in participating in these classes will do so, which limits the exposure to other students who might also benefit from these types of classes. French is mandatory, unless excused, whereas Indigenous languages must be chosen, if it is even available. Our languages courses, as they are, are not treated equally.

Although there are still many racist and discriminatory policies that have an impact on Indigenous language teaching, learning and funding, there has been the development of new policies who aim to support Indigenous languages. In line with the Truth and Reconciliations Commission of Canada's Calls to Action, the Indigenous Language Act was passed in 2019. It states:

> The purposes of this Act are to **(a)** support and promote the use of Indigenous languages, including Indigenous sign languages; **(b)** support the efforts of Indigenous people to reclaim, revitalize, maintain and strengthen Indigenous languages […]; **(c)** establish a framework to

> facilitate the effective exercise of the rights of Indigenous peoples that relate to Indigenous languages […]; **(d)** establish measures to facilitate the provision of adequate, sustainable and long-term funding for the reclamation, revitalization, maintenance and strengthening of Indigenous languages; **(e)** facilitate cooperation with provincial and territorial governments, Indigenous governments and other Indigenous governing bodies, Indigenous organizations and other entities in a manner consistent with the rights of Indigenous peoples and the powers and jurisdictions of Indigenous governing bodies and of the provinces and territories; **(e.1)** facilitate meaningful opportunities for Indigenous governments and other Indigenous governing bodies and Indigenous organizations to collaborate in policy development related to the implementation of this Act; **(f)** respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Cation numbers 13 to 15; and **(g)** contribute to the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as it relates to Indigenous language. (Indigenous Language Act, 2019)

I was very excited to finally see a federal document that centered Indigenous languages. Though it is colonial by nature, the purpose is to support Indigenous languages and the people working to revitalize them. I think that this kind of governmental initiative is definitely a step in the right direct for Indigenous rights and reconciliation. Additionally, the Act proposes the establishment of an "Office of Commissioner of Indigenous Languages" (p.8) whose primary mandate is to "help promote Indigenous languages". (p.10) This Act is an immense move forward for Indigenous language revitalization in Canada. However, considering it is still relatively new, it will be interesting to follow how it is applied and respected.

Language Loss and Minority Languages

Huss (2008) characterizes language loss as a "societal or individual loss in use or in the ability to use a language, implying that another language is replacing it." (p. 69) Fishman (2001) explains that when two languages intersect and try to overcome one another within a community,

there is “societal loss of functionality in the weaker language”. (p. 2) In this example, the term weak, which is interchangeable with minority, is used to describe the contrast between a language that is deemed as having less political or economic power compared to a stronger, or dominant language in a given society, namely colonial Canada. This can also be described as language shift as when a group of people go from using their mother tongue, to an ascendant language. In other words, when a language is overcome by a more dominant one, it is the beginning of the process of language loss or shift.

In Canada, Indigenous languages are minority languages. Many are on the brink of being lost due to the increased use and promotion of French and English. Cree education scholar Verna J. Kirkness (1998) explains that “English/French have been dominant among our people for so many years that these languages are now our means of communication and economy in our daily lives.” (p. 93) This implies that other languages are perceived as less useful and valuable within the settler-Canadian ways of life. Although French is not accessible in every public domain, services in French and/or English are available across Canada which is not the case for Indigenous languages. To survive economically, socially, and to have a voice politically, you must speak at least one of the dominant languages. Although there are many pressures in today’s society to replace minority languages, which results in speakers to shift towards French or English in Canada, there exists historical events that have shaped the relationship that Indigenous peoples have with language that have had a ripple effect into life as we know it. Historically, languages have been the target of many assimilative agendas since European contact and Confederation, such as the residential school system which is explored later. That said, Indigenous languages are not equated as equal to the mainstream or dominant languages in Canada, and this has an impact on how policies, funding opportunities and supports will exist for

these languages. It is argued that English is displacing French in Canada since there are very few places in the country where speaking only French is useful. Nonetheless, the imposed status of French and English provides useful colonial context into the power relations between peoples Canada. Unfortunately, as does the situation of Indigenous languages and how they are viewed and valued by the general Canadian population and government provides insight into the power relations that exist.

Being of French-Canadian and Abenaki decent myself, this controversial conversation about majority and minority languages is very personal to me. Luckily for me, I was raised in a bilingual home and although we mostly spoke French together, I started to speak English at a very young age. Being French-English bilingual in the Canadian context has provided me with a multitude of opportunities that my monolingual peers would not have access to. That said, I have also felt the urgency to 'preserve, pass on and promote' French in Canada as a response to the threat of it being lost to English. These values are very present in my family and French speaking community. There is this belief that young people do not want to speak French anymore, and if they do, it is usually not of the quality that it used to be. Although I am not certain that this is actually the case, and knowing that language is continually evolving, this mentality has definitely been imbedded in my mind. French-Canadian culture depends immensely on the continuance of French speakers, even if the French motherland is France. Conversely, since embarking on my reconnection journey to my Abenaki roots, I have been increasingly motivated to learn the language, but I am forced to confront my thoughts towards languages loss, maintenance and revitalization. In the French-Canadian context I have been exposed to, language loss, or the perception of such, is caused by the growing power and popularity of English and its accessibility. There are also some systems of oppression at play French monolinguals like access

to services in French such as health care, employment opportunities, and a lack of social status or mobility. Although French-English bilinguals are seen as an asset, French-only speakers are not. The Abenaki language, on the other hand, is confronted with a host of different challenges. On top of the challenges associated to the increased use of English, Abenaki also does not have financial, political, educational, or social supports comparable to that of French which is a protected minority language. The settler colonial governments, policies and imposed norms on Turtle Island do not value and uphold Indigenous languages to the same standard as the "official" languages—French and English. I personally would like to see local Indigenous languages included on street signs, in local newspapers and in all other local social contexts for starters. When thinking of the promotion of languages, in my experience, attitudes towards French are founded in the maintenance and continuance of French speaking Canadians and French-Canadian culture. This can also be said for the Abenaki language, however, it is about the resurgence of the language, the reviving of what was stolen and our reconnection to our people, our culture and our land. Although the feeling between the French and the Abenaki is in some ways similar, the difference lies in the historical context and the connection to the land. Even though there are many challenges associated to learning this language, particularly as an adult, my motivations lie in the relationships between language, culture, identity, and land and passing this on to my future family.

Indigenous Languages in schools

In regard to Indigenous language instruction in schools, settler scholar of Educational Linguistics Haley De Korne (2010) states that this issue is becoming "increasingly significant in

the political climate surrounding minority language education." (p.116) Although they mention that there is still uncertainty whether or not schools play an important part in language revitalization, they also mention that "(s)chools designed and controlled by Indigenous groups have set a benchmark for success" (p.116). For example, a study by Jon Reyhner, a settler scholar in Educational Specialities in Native Languages, (2010) explores Indigenous language immersion programs in schools in the United States, namely Apache, Ojibwe, Diné, Hawaiian, and Blackfeet languages and although the focus is on Indigenous students. They state that these programs are "vital to healing the negative effects of colonialism and assimilationist schooling that have disrupted many indigenous homes and communities." (p.299) In other words, schools in, and have the support of, the community seem to have shown positive outcomes in regard to Indigenous language education and revitalization. However, this could mean many things and we cannot assume that schools are creating fluent speakers. Educational Linguistics scholar Nancy H. Hornberger edited a book titled *Can Schools Save Indigenous Languages? Policy and Practice on Four Continents* and explore the roles of schools within Indigenous languages around the world.

Hornberger (2008) states "(w)e recognize that schools alone are not enough to do the job." (p.1) The idea that schools cannot, on their own, create fluent speakers, is found within language research everywhere. That said, schools can support Indigenous language revitalization initiatives; they can be a useful tool in engaging youth within the language but cannot, solely, produce fluent speakers. (Hornberger, 2008, p.10) As quoted by Hornberger (2008), "McCarty recalls Hawaiian activist Sam L. No'eau Warner" saying "we are really asking about the fundamental right of choice of the Indigenous people who speak those languages to make their own decisions about the content and medium of their children's education." (p.10) Control over

language and education is then an extension of sovereignty. Additionally, De Korne (2010) states that “in general school programs are not sufficient to produce proficient speakers" (p.120). So, there is little to no effect on language revitalization when language programming is included in schools. Further, Reyhner (1999) highlights the issue that “(h)istorically, school-based second language teaching has not led to wide-spread ‘communicative competence’… in the new language for most students.” (p.viii) That said, there are various attitudes surrounding the role that schools can play in regard to Indigenous language revitalization; however, there is consensus that schools on their own cannot produce fluent speakers.

How they are taught: pedagogy and Indigenous worldviews

Although there are many ways in which Indigenous languages can be included in the classroom, it is important to consider the specific situation of the language and its speakers. This means having an understanding of the needs of the peoples whose language this belongs to, as well as whether or not there are efforts in place to revitalize the language or not. Every language is unique in that they have all be affected by colonization in unique ways and hold different values to their people. Unfortunately, this means that language initiatives, in and outside of schools, need to be created and supported in a way that accommodates individual languages and their communities. There is no formula that is applicable to every Indigenous language. Although there is the opportunity to share and learn from others, Indigenous language efforts need to be put forward with Indigenous communities and be reflective of their needs in regard to their languages. For example, if there are very few speakers in a community and the language is rarely being used or transmitted to youth, incorporating Indigenous language in schools will look

very different from a community with many fluent speakers and where youth are hearing and engaging with their languages outside of schools. While the first school would likely focus on some language basics such as counting and/or learning the names for certain things, the later would likely focus or more advanced language learning. The outcomes of these programs will also be very different. In other words, Indigenous language learning and teaching methods in schools is heavily dependent on the situation of these languages and the desired outcomes of these classes. In many cases, Indigenous languages are taught as a secondary language to English or French in schools across Turtle Island.

One of the ways in which schools can be used as a tool for Indigenous language revitalization is through giving the freedom to decide what is taught and how it is taught to the communities. In fact, Teresa L. McCarty and Hopi education and sociocultural scholar Sheilah E. Nicholas, highlight that having the Indigenous communities' control and be involved in schools is an important component to the reversal of decline in language. (McCarty and Nicholas, 2014, p.118) This enables schools to include the "language, values, beliefs and traditions along with sound academic principles and content". (McCarty & Nicholas, 2014, p.118) In their study, Reyhner (2010) explains that the language inclusion or exclusion in schools does have an effect on Indigenous students by stating that "While more research needs to be done on the academic advantages of immersion programs" but that "students who participate in them tend to do well academically as well as behaviorally." (p.310)

There are differences between schools who are operating with the addition of Indigenous language classes and content and school who are transitioning to full Indigenous language immersion. This thesis is looking at the schools that have additional Indigenous language classes and content. The purpose of incorporating Indigenous languages in schools is not to replace

academic content, but to include Indigenous worldviews within western education which in turn re-enforces students' identities while also benefiting them academically. McCarty and Nicholas (2014) also suggest that there is a "potentially positive impact on language revitalization and academic achievement" (p.126) when Indigenous language is incorporated in education. However, if schools were to instruct exclusively in Indigenous languages, Reyhner (2010) highlights that it is "not enough … to simply introduce the native language if a school's curriculum remains unchanged" (p.304) since this is not decolonization; rather, it is a new way of colonization. (p. 304) In other words, if curriculum is left unchanged, western education is then not challenged or changed, it is simply teaching and learning in a different language. In this regard, education of this kind is not decolonial. With an unchanged curriculum, Indigenous language is then used in a colonial context— it simply reinforces western schools and educational outcomes. The teaching materials taught in the Indigenous language would be but a translation of what the curriculum prescribes to teacher in colonial languages, values and perspectives. Decolonizing education needs to include Indigenous worldviews, values and teachings and language is the medium to express all of this. Thus, including Indigenous languages is not enough. Nonetheless, as explored by McCarty & Nicholas as well as Rehyner, it is clear that the inclusion of Indigenous languages in schools is beneficial to Indigenous students in many ways. However, how language should be introduced in schools remains heavily contested.

While Reyhner (1999) emphasizes that conversational proficiency needs to be at the forefront of Indigenous language revitalization (p.xiv), McCarty (2008, p.164) and De Korne (2010, p.120) highlight the importance of Indigenous language instruction in schools to promote *additive* bilingualism rather than *subtractive* bilingualism, meaning, teaching the language in a

way that enriches the student's knowledge and does not replace pre-existing ways of learning and knowing. Reyhner (1999) suggests "children can learn an international language such as English along with their Indigenous language." (p. xvi) In addition, the ways in which Indigenous languages are taught is incredibly important. De Korne (2010, p.120) and Reyhner (2010, p.306) state that immersion is the best method for language instruction. It allows students learn through interaction, rather than just acquiring information (De Korne, 2010, p.121) In support of this, settler linguistics scholars Mithun & Chafe who study Indigenous languages (1987), note that when teaching Indigenous languages in schools, they should be "teach(ing) kids a way of thinking, not simply a translating skill." (p.27-28)

Since it is evident through literature that schools cannot revitalize Indigenous languages on their own, settler linguistics scholar Leanne Hinton (2013), as well as McCarty and Nicholas (2014) and Reyhner (1999), emphasize the importance of language transmission happening in homes. Reyhner (1999) writes that "(i)t is extremely important to use language teaching methods in schools that will prepare and encourage students to use the language they are learning outside of school". (p.viii) We cannot rely solely on schools to produce fluent speakers, however, schools can promote that the sharing of language happens in the home and in other public spaces when possible. Reyhner (1999) argues "that the intergenerational transmission of language in the home from parents to young children is key to keeping indigenous languages alive; however, schools can play either a positive or negative role in supporting the efforts of Indigenous parents and communities." (p.vi) Further, Hinton (2013) highlights that the goal of language revitalization is to have the "the natural transmission of the language from parent to child and its use in daily life" (p.xiv) which means that schools are but a piece of the greater puzzle.

It is important to note here that these findings should in no way discourage or prevent parents who do not speak the language from enrolling their children in language courses. Many Indigenous people on Turtle Island have had their language taken away from them. Moreover, it is incredibly important for parents to be involved in language learning, and, in certain communities, there are many opportunities to do that. However, it shouldn't be assumed that parents have the language when talking about the role of schools in language revitalization because for many homes, that is not the case. When talking about language revitalization, it is important not to re-traumatize or discourage people from learning the language. The residential school system's genocides have left many Indigenous people weary of western schooling systems. When including Indigenous language classes in western education schools, these classes must feel safe to Indigenous students, be a place of encouragement and acceptance, and meet students where they are. Indigenous languages accompany sensitive conversations, and it is crucial for it to be approached with good intention and empathy. If this is the only place in which the language is accessible to them, it should still be encouraged.

Public schools

McCarty (2008) argues that while "schools are secondary to the primary language implanting," (p.161) "(s)chool-based programs have nonetheless had significant language strengthening effects." (p.163) However, we must consider Indigenous people who do not live in their communities, such as urban and off-reserve Indigenous people. Although Hornberger (2008) highlights that language revitalization is about identity, experiences and community, they also note that there are an increasing number of Indigenous people who, in the present day, live

in cities and away from their communities. (p.2) This poses a challenge when thinking about Indigenous language instruction in schools. Further, De Korne (2010) notes that the idea that Indigenous language instruction takes place only in Indigenous communities leaves out a large portion of Indigenous people on Turtle Island, those who are in public schools and away from their communities. (p.116) When thinking about the practice of bringing Indigenous languages into the western institutions of public schools, Hornberger (2008) highlights a multitude of questions that cannot be ignored (p.2) including "Who are the teachers? Are they speakers of (Indigenous Languages)? Literate in (Indigenous Languages)? How were they trained – where, by whom, in what language? Are teachers Indigenous-minded or 'West-minded?" (p.2) It is important to note, however, that many Indigenous languages have had to accommodate to settlers' ways of life during colonization. As a result, the languages and cultures have had to evolve and change, many of which have adopted certain aspects of Christianity and settler worldviews. In fact, many evangelical texts have been translated by missionaries into Indigenous languages leading to religion-focused literacy. McCarty (2008) highlights these challenges further by noting that there is "lack of Indigenous-language teaching materials, limited numbers of teachers fluent in and committed to promoting the Indigenous language, and skepticism by Indigenous and non-Indigenous people alike." (p.163) Simply put, there are many challenges and limitations that are not easily addressed since the situation of each Indigenous language and community can vary widely.

The Assaults on Indigenous Languages

Wolfram (2008) proposes that “language can be used as a tool of social oppression.” (p.188) On Turtle Island, language has been the target of many assimilative agendas. The many assaults on Indigenous peoples and communities have had and continue to have devastating and lasting impacts on a multitude of aspect of Indigenous ways of knowing and being, including Indigenous languages.

The Sixties Scoop as well as the Millennial Scoop as but some examples of how the Canadian government has attempted to erase Indigenous ways of life. As stated by Fachinger (2019) these terms refer to “the violent removal of Indigenous children from their parents by the Canadian government to assimilate them by placing them in white middle-class homes.” (p.115) These times saw the highest number of Indigenous children who were taken and put into the foster care and/or adoptive system. (Fachinger, 2019, p.116) As a result, these children lost their language, their culture, their identity and were forced to adopt the colonizer’s way of being. Although many sixties and millennial scoop survivors are now reclaiming what has been taken from them, the damages of such events continue to exist within our communities.

Canada’s Indian residential school system was one of the most dehumanizing and cruel institutions imposed on Indigenous people. The Assembly of First Nations (2007) stated that “Colonization efforts on the part of the Canadian government during the residential school era devastated families and resulted in the loss of language and culture all in the name of assimilation.” (p.5) Children were stripped from their homes, forced to adopt the language, religions, beliefs and values of the colonizer. Haque & Patrick (2015) describe that these schools “became sites of physical, sexual and psychological abuse, often including punishment of Indigenous children for speaking their home languages”. (p.29) In turn, this induces a sense of shame within Indigenous children and communities, further distancing them from their

traditional ways of life. Fordham (1998) highlights that the idea of "civilizing" Indigenous people "required a change in the ways Indigenous people thought, and one of the best ways to foster this change was to control how they spoke." (p.43) It was strategic to take away language from children. Fordham (1998) continues by saying that language loss "cuts children off from the elders in their communities and serves as a barrier to cultural knowledge, understanding, and pride in who they are." (p.43) The abuses imposed on Indigenous children produces parents who fear to pass on the culture and the language to their children in hopes to protect them from the same kinds of abuses they had to endure for being Indigenous.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada was created to listen to survivors and bring light to abuses that were endured by the children who attended these schools. In 2015, the 94 Calls to Action were released by the TRC to "redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation" (TRC, 2015b, p.1) of which five are specific to language and culture. Oxaal (2005) states that "The most painful legacy identified by many residential school survivors is the loss of First Nations culture and language, a result of the schools' assimilationist agenda." (p.367)

As I write this section of my thesis, I am having a very difficult time finding appropriate words to write about these events, particularly residential schools, and I have an incredibly heavy heart. In recent events, there has been the discovery of human remains, many children's remains, on the grounds of former residential schools in Canada. This news has shaken many Indigenous people, myself included. I cry for those babies who were taken from their homes to never return. I cry for the families and the communities who have lost their children to the horrific abuses. I cry for the survivors who have witnessed and been victims of these abuses. Although they were called residential schools, these institutions were not schools. No child should die at school. I

honor these children, their families, their communities and all of my Indigenous kin during these difficult times. I pray for the found children to have a safe journey home.

Every Child Matters.

Anishinaabemowin

"Anishinaabemowin is a language shared by people living within, or connected to, over 220 separate sovereign nations that surround the Great Lakes in Canada and the United States." (Noori, 2009, p.11) As previously stated, Indigenous languages and cultures are intimately intertwined. Willmott et al. (2016) state that "indigenous worldviews are embedded in indigenous languages" (p.97) and, consequently, language revitalization also means the revitalization of cultural knowledge and worldview. In many communities, this means the revitalization of certain cultural practices, as Willmott et al. (2016) state that:

> Among Anishinaabeg however, there is not as much the need for preservation of traditional arts as there is for reconnecting art practiced with indigenous language discourses in relevant vocabulary domains. Community art practices are thriving, but they are doing so on a parallel course from language revitalization initiatives. (p.97)

which means that there is a need, for Anishinaabemowin, to focus specifically on language revitalization in conjunction with the cultural practices that are flourishing, especially in the arts. As stated above, these cultural practices should be facilitating language revitalization as well, but instead, they are happening independently. When talking about their Anishinaabe language class, American poet and Anishinaabemowin language teacher Margaret Noori (2009) writes, "We

currently meet for three hours every Thursday and host students from age 11 to 62. Anyone is welcome and some come from several hours away. The only requirement is a desire to learn and a willingness to listen and then practice speaking." (p.12) To this regard, Srigley and Varley (2018) state that "Indigenous education involves all of us; it extends well beyond the walls of our classrooms; it means honouring our own learning journey and who you are, while also building relationships to the ways of gathering and sharing knowledge indigenous to the territory on which you live." (p. 58-59) This includes Indigenous language learning, such as Anishinaabemowin. Finally, Noori (2009) explains "Seeing the language as part of the wider world gives us a reason to nurture the language at home." (p.12) Having Anishinaabemowin classes in a public school could serve this purpose.

There are many different approaches to language revitalization that exist beyond the classroom. As I mentioned earlier, I am personally taking online Abenaki language classes through a community learning center. Other examples of revitalization efforts include but are not limited to the use of apps, social media groups, community language nights, language and cultural camps, university classes, online classes and the use of arts. Any event or activity that promotes the use of Indigenous languages could be categorized as a revitalization initiative.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

Working premises

My hypothesis prior to conducting this research was that language instructors think that Anishinaabemowin instruction is useful in classrooms. However, I did anticipate some diverse attitudes towards teaching methods and experiences. I thought that, in a general sense, my results would be in line with existing literature, but that it would be more specific to this area. In terms of questions regarding language instruction to non-Indigenous or non-local Indigenous students, I was under the impression that this would be the most variable data collected since many people have very strong opinions about this issue. Since Anishinaabemowin is a language that is used in many different areas of Ontario and beyond, and has many fluent speakers, I was curious to find out the perspectives of the teachers when bringing this language outside of the community and into public schools. To answer my broader research question, I thought that Anishinaabemowin instructors in the Nogojiwanong area would find that teaching the language in public schools is an important component to the broader revitalization agenda but that there are many challenges and limitations.

Research methods

My research is an intersection of Indigenous studies, Educational Linguistics studies, Social-Linguistics studies and Teaching and Learning studies. Working with Indigenous topics and for Indigenous people have enabled me to ground my approach using the teachings received throughout my reconnection journey to my Indigenous roots. My interviewing method is particularly inspired by the works of many Indigenous studies academic, namely those who use story telling as research. Since I am exploring how an Indigenous language is taught in a non-Indigenous context, Education Linguistics studies as well as Social-Linguistics studies enable me

to explore the complexities of this topic all while keeping the language as the focus. Finally, Teaching and Learning studies provides me with the tools necessary to explore the teachers' perspectives as well as how this type of teaching impacts learners and beyond. Taking an interdisciplinary approach has allowed me to have more flexibility in the angle I wanted to take with the data I have collected. That said, it is important to me to have conducted my interviews and produced research in a way that is grounded in the Indigenous teachings I have received, those of respect, humility, love, and reciprocity.

Being a graduate student and finding myself in many networking situations early on in my graduate studies, I was able to build relationships with people who have been instrumental in recruiting the participants for this research through the 'snow-ball' effect. Through my network and colleagues, I was able to recruit and interview three Anishinaabemowin teachers from the Nogojiwanong area.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I was unable to conduct my interviews in person. I used an encrypted online meeting software to meet online with the participants and recorded my interviews through this software. I also recorded the interviews using a protected program on my cell phone. However, once I was sure that the recording from my computer was clear and could be transcribed, I deleted the recording from my personal device. This virtual type of interviewing is not what I had in mind when planning to do this research, but my options were very limited. Nonetheless, since it has been over a year since the global pandemic has changed the way we interact with people, the online interviews felt very natural and provided us with a space to have important conversations.

Despite the current circumstances, it was my responsibility to acknowledge that these individuals were willing to share their experiences, wisdom, energy and time with me. For that

reason, before I began the interviews, I presented some tobacco to each participant and offered to send it in the mail for them along with a handmade gift to show my appreciation for what they shared with me for this research.

For this thesis, I have conducted semi-structured interviews with three Anishinaabemowin public school teachers from the Nogojiwanong area. The questions I used in my interview are in the appendix. These questions were used to guide the discussion and promote a conversational feel to the interview. I would allow the participants to answer the questions however they liked. I would intervene occasionally to ask for clarification on the things they were sharing or to also share some personal anecdotes. The information from the participants within this thesis has been included with the consent of the participants. This style of interviewing and data collection are in line with the principles of respect, humility and reciprocity. It allowed the teachers to speak of their perspective, to share what they think is important and to guide the research in a way that is representative of how Anishinabemowin is taught in public schools. Additionally, it served the purpose of highlighting the impacts and challenges associated with these classes. It is also important to note that due to my small sample size, my research might not be representative of the masses. Through exploring the perspectives of public school Anishinaabemowin teachers in Nogojiwanong, I intend to share the intricacies associated with teaching an Indigenous language in this specific context.

Chapter 4 – Data Analysis & Discussion

A Conversation About Anishinaabemowin

I really enjoyed having conversations with my participants about their experiences as Anishinaabemowin teachers. They shared so much knowledge that I hope will provide valuable insight to Indigenous language teachers, policy makers, school boards and others who are interested in Indigenous language instruction in public schools.

In this chapter, I did not organize my data analysis into specific answers to questions since the questions were used mostly to guide the conversation. Instead, I chose to organize the data from my interviews by themes. The themes presented below were brought forward by the participants in their responses to various questions. What is presented below comes out of the data and is not based on any preliminary hypothesis I had prior to these conversations. It is also important to note that the data is not equally weighted since each of my participants shared more on certain themes than others, and what they chose to share was also different. This is the reason for which some themes have more substance than others and also why I will have more content from individual participants on certain themes. That said, that is the beauty of this kind of interviewing. I provided the space for these three individuals to share their experiences and bring forward what they feel is important and needs to be shared, and this thesis encompasses just that. However, it would have been impossible to include everything that was shared in the interviews. What is presented in this thesis is data of the relevant issues that reoccurred through the individual conversation with each of my participants, such as the processes of becoming language instructors, curriculum and class structure, and the benefits of having these types of classes in public schools. Although it was challenging to decide what to include or not, I do feel that what is shared in this section, based on what my participants deemed important, provides great insight into the purpose of the thesis: to explore the perspectives of Anishinaabemowin teachers on teaching the language in a public-school setting in the Nogojiwanong area. Since the

teachers in this study are on front line of language revitalization efforts in schools, they have first-hand experience and provide valuable insight into the challenges, the limitations and the successes of these types of classes and programs.

As the researcher, I decided to omit some of the personal information about the participants of this study. I have changed the names of my participants in order to protect their identity to the best of my abilities. I have chosen to give them bird names since I have always been told that birds are carriers of knowledge and protectors. The names I have chosen are Finch, Robin and Crane. I have also decided to use gender neutral pronouns for all of these participants since gender does not change the data.

To conclude, this section will explore four different themes with sub-categories. The four overarching themes are: Becoming (Bi-yaawyang), which explores how these individuals became languages teachers and their journeys; Learning (Kendsaasang), which provides insight into how the language is taught in different settings as well as some of the topics that are being taught; Living Together (Maamwi Daadaaying), which explains how Anishinaabemowin is comparable to the teaching of languages as well as the challenges and advantages associated to such; and Welcoming & Moving Forward (Gdi-nmikaagoom & Niigaan Zhaadaa), which shares who should and can be learning the language, and the roles of school as well as what should happen next. You will notice that the titles of these themes included Indigenous words. For these themes, I have chosen to begin with the Anishinaabemowin words, provided to me by one of my participants, followed by the Abenaki words, which I was able to translate thanks to the resources provided to me by my language teacher and learning community, and finally the English words. As stated in the introduction, the etymology of Indigenous languages provide us with the knowledge of worldview and shows us how imperfectly words can be translated

between languages. Noodin (2014) offers one of the best examples of how and why language matters to culture by explaining the breakdown of many Anishinaabe words. For example, they share that "'hell' is simply *maji*-ishkodeng, a bad fire without the implication of religion and darkness carried by the English word". (p.xvii) This example serves as a way to see how different words and translations imply different things in different languages. Our langauges instruct our culture and worldview. Although I do not have access to the knowledge behind the etymology of the words I have chosen for my titles, they were collected for and by Indigenous language speakers. That said, please note that there doesn't exist perfect translations of these words, only imperfect equivalencies.

Bi-yaawyand – Ôpch – Becoming

To be able to truly understand these three teachers' perspectives, we must understand their beginnings. The choices and journeys that have been taken by the participants in this research have all led them to become Anishinaabemowin teachers, more specifically Anishinaabemowin teachers in public elementary schools in the Nogojiwanong area. The theme of becoming tells their unique stories of how they came to occupy the positions they do (or did). The information shared in this section is important as it sheds light into the processes that exist that lead to these types of careers, as well as the situation of Indigenous language teachers in the area and beyond. Robin shared "I need to teach", a sentiment felt by all three participants. Interestingly, Finch, Robin and Crane all became Anishinaabemowin teachers in public elementary schools in different ways. These are their stories.

Exposure to the language

All three of the participants acknowledged that Indigenous languages are incredibly important. Interestingly, their exposures to Anishinaabemowin at different stages of their lives, which eventually led them to become language instructors, are very unique. Robin grew up in a community and household where Anishinaabemowin was the common language. In fact, it was their mother tongue. In regard to formal education, they said: "My first language was Nishnaabemowin and so then going to school, everyone just started speaking English. And I think that's where I started losing a little bit of Nishnaabemowin. So I remember in grade two, they started offering … Nishnaabemowin in the class and the elementary school ... This is the only memory I have of, you know, taking Ojibwe in grade two … All I remember is my sister, you know, teaching Nishnaabemowin in my grade two class, and that was my only memory (…) having Nishnaabemowin in the classroom setting." They also mentioned that the reason their sister was teaching was because the actual teacher couldn't come in and they had no one else to come take over the course. Finch shared a similar experience with accessing Anishinaabemowin through formal education: "So I formally took native language when I was in my reserve school, but it only went up to grade two, … I honestly don't remember a whole lot of that. And I think at one point, the elder that was teaching it retired, they didn't have anybody to come in. So there was like a year or two there wasn't native language instruction. So then, I took native language in university, and that was like, really the first time that I took it." That said, in both of their cases, there were no formal Anishinaabemowin classes beyond having a class in Grade 2 which is likely attributed to the lack of instructors available and qualified to teach these courses.

Crane had a completely different experience in regard to learning the language, particularly because they grew up in an urban setting with very little access to their Indigenous family and teachings. They were willing to share their experience in great detail and said "For a long time growing up, I was kind of disconnected from my culture." They added "I guess when I was around a teenager, I kind of became more interested in reconnecting with the culture, and I tried to reconnect by going to the Native Canadian Center in Toronto, but I didn't really know where to begin… And then I just kind of left it for a bit, but it was always in the back of my head. And then, when I was 25, I went to a sweat lodge, and that was like, the first time I had a spiritual experience… I felt finally like I was home. And so it took me a while but I ended up deciding to go back to the native Canadian center 10 years after I was initially kind of rebuffed there… And so what I started doing when I went to the Native Canadian Center, I started going to drop in Ojibwe classes." Life does funny things and Crane found themselves moving to Nogojiwanong and attending Trent University where they "enrolled in a bunch of different Nishnaabemowin classes".

In this regard, these three individuals have engaged with the language in different ways. From having exposure to the language in their home, in elementary school, in university and in community centres, they have worked hard and have been given the opportunity to teach Anishinaabemowin in public schools, a very important job in language revitalization efforts. Needless to say, sooner or later in their individual lives, they recognized the importance of Indigenous languages and their revitalization as well as the role that they could occupy in the continuance of language.

Process of Becoming Teachers

The paths of each of these individuals to hold positions as Nishnaabemowin instructors in the Nogojiwanong area are also very unique. Finch refers to their journey into this career as being very "round-about", meaning, non-traditional or non-conventional. Finch explains that their motivations to become a teacher were rooted in their experiences as a child. "I didn't really know what to do… so I thought, well, I can be a teacher. I hated the way that I was taught as a kid, so I thought, well, I'll become a teacher. I'll be a very different teacher than the way I experienced it." So, they were admitted to teacher's college after having applied twice. However, they felt that they were accepted almost only because they were Indigenous since this information was only included on their second application at the request of the university when they realized that they hadn't included this on their first application. They said, "I thought if I'm not good enough to get in on my own, how come I'm good enough to get in as a native, I felt very tokenism." Nonetheless, they went through teacher's college. They share "When I graduated, I had just dreams of being a regular teacher. Just honestly be a regular teacher, I'll be a native role model… I never thought about going into native language". Robin talks about their experiences finding work as a recently graduated teacher: "I went through teaching in various areas. I taught up in the Arctic, I taught in various reserves around Ontario, and then came back to Peterborough and tried to find a job here and couldn't for the life of me couldn't. So, I became a supply teacher, and I really liked supply teaching. And then I heard that the native language teacher was retiring from the local school. So, I applied (and..) got rejected… I went and took the same university course again, (with a new instructor), and it came back, and I'm like, oh, okay, I'm getting this now… Then the person they'd hired in the interim… had to re-interview also for that job. So I went, and I spoke to that person, and I said, 'just so you know, I want things to be

civil between us, but I am applying for this job' and the person was like 'you can have it. I don't want it. It's the worst job ever.' I was like 'oh!' This person even had tears in their eyes. They were so upset at the job. And so, I applied thinking, there's no competition, but this person hated it… what am I getting into. But at this point, it was a contract job, and I was desperate for contract work, I just needed permanent. So, I got it… and I'm like 'Well, I can do this'" They continued to explain some of the challenges they had to face once they started this job, as will be explored below. This individual is still, after many years, an Anishinaabemowin teacher.

Robin also had formal education to become a language instructor but in a different way than Finch. They said "I knew there was a program at Lakehead University, and I always thought of going there… So, I went to Lakehead on my own, and I took the… summer program for four years… That's where I attended the native language instructors' program, where I learnt how to read and write in Nishnaabemowin." After graduating from that program, they got a job in Nogojiwanong at a local public elementary school on a part-time basis. From there, they have also occupied other language instructor positions in daycares and at the university. They shared "I'm glad my career was teaching Nishnaabemowin."

Crane became an instructor via a totally different route. Having been a student at Trent University and networking as such in Indigenous circles, they got to know people who helped connect them to an Anishinaabemowin instructor position in a public school. They said that in the spring of 2020, a local public elementary school was looking for Anishinaabemowin teacher. They said "I'm still not a qualified teacher, but (they) recommended me… so I ended up becoming a teacher that way. Then in the fall, the school board rehired me." Now they teach at another local public elementary school.

In addition, I was very interested in knowing how these individuals came to be Anishinaabemowin instructors. Of course, it is easy to imagine that finding people who are able to teach these kinds of courses would be challenging, and so to see how these individuals pursued the qualifications necessary to teach or who have been recruited to teach is valuable. It is possible that the diversity in the qualifications is due to the lack of people interested in teaching the language in this setting, the lack of fluent speakers able to teach these courses or limitations imposed on individuals to receive the appropriate qualifications. Language and culture are intimately connected. The pathways that many Indigenous language instructors have taken to be in a position of teaching the language in a public-school setting is not by any way comparable to other classroom teachers. Although one of my participants went through a Bachelor of Education degree and followed a customary pathway to teaching, and even then, had a unique experience, the two other participants came to their positions in un-traditional ways.

Kendsaasang – Môjagakimzi - Learning

From Becoming to Learning, I shift my focus to how these individuals became teachers to how they are as teachers, their methods and content. When teaching a language, the teaching methods used as well as the materials taught in a class is detrimental to students being engaged and wanting to continue their education in these types of courses. Crane says, “I thought it was just really cool to learn our language”. As much as it is cool, Anishinaabemowin teachers need to pay attention to the needs and wants of their students so that students retain the parts of the language that they are taught and feel empowered to take their language education further. The theme of Learning explores how Anishinaabemowin is taught in public schools as well as how

teaching and learning in a school setting is different from teaching and learning in a community setting.

Curriculum and Class Structure

First, let's take a look at how the Anishinaabemowin classes are organized in the schools where my participants teach. In line with the guidelines of the Ministry of Education, all three of my participants explained how Anishinaabemowin is an elective course, which means students, or in many instances their parents, choose that they will take that course. Since it is not a homeroom topic, the students who are opted into the courses leave their classroom to go to their Anishinaabemowin class. Crane says "I have my own classroom, kids come and see me and then go back to their classrooms. So, it's the kids who have to sign up to take Ojibwe, it's not like a mandatory thing. They have to choose to do it."

In regard to content in the current curriculum that exists in Ontario for teaching Indigenous languages, there is diversity in how my participants have used it in their teaching methods. Finch explained how the Ontario government views Indigenous language teaching and learning. They shared "They value the formalization of everything. So they want proof. They want standardized learning." Of course, teaching an Indigenous language in a western education system in a standardized way could be very difficult. Finch says "Our local school tried to follow the Ontario curriculum, and as do I. I am held to that standard… but I do know that the curriculum has huge gaps." Additionally, Finch says "So the Ojibwe program is very much by the curriculum, and the curriculum 20 years out of date. It came out in 2001, and its native language curriculum. So, it's made for all native languages in Ontario. So, it's not specialized to

Anishinaabemowin, which makes it hard when you're sort of looking at it and it's talking about gender qualifiers for this and gender qualifiers for that, and we don't have gender qualifiers, necessarily, in Ojibwe. We might, I might not know about them. But Mohawk Iroquois languages do. So, this is what they're trying to accommodate. But I'm like, I can't teach this. There's a whole section, right? So, it's like, okay, so I have to teach the curriculum." In fact, the inclusion of a gender qualifier in a curriculum assumes that Indigenous languages have equivalents to colonial social and political constructs, which is not true. Although some languages may have gender qualifiers, they are conceptually much different than those in English, French or other colonial language, or any language for that matter. Simpson addresses this by stating that "For Nishnaabeg people there was fluidity around gender in terms of roles and responsibilities." (p.60) The colonial construct of gender binary and gender qualifiers just does not fit into Anishinaabeg worldview, and this extends into the language. It is evident that there is a need for a specialized curriculum that is focused on specific Indigenous languages that are taught in Ontario instead of an all-encompassing curriculum that makes teaching these unique and important languages that much more difficult. In fact, the Ministry of Education (2001) includes Cayuga, Cree, Delaware, Mohwak, Ojibwe, Oji-Cree and Oneida (p.5) as languages that can be taught through The Ontario Curriculum Grades 1-8 Native Languages program. Teaching and learning outcomes would be much better supported with a curriculum catered to the language being taught. Simpson (2011) writes, "Our languages house our teachings and bring the practice of those teachings to life in our daily existence." (p.49) Curriculum needs to recognize that teaching Indigenous languages is not like any other topic and needs to be curated in a way that acknowledges each languages and areas unique ways of knowing. To draw from what Finch shared, how can teachers teach the curriculum if there are

elements of the curriculum that don't exist or apply to the language they are teaching? How will teachers be supported if they deviate from the curriculum? Does this mean that every student in Anishinaabemowin classes will have a different outcome if they have different teachers? How can we support teachers with materials and resources with this type of curriculum? How has language learning and teaching changed in the last 20 years?

Of course, these are rhetorical questions that I pose myself when learning about this issue of curriculum content. In line with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's call to actions geared towards language and culture, specifically call to action 14.v., "Funding for Aboriginal language initiatives must reflect the diversity of Aboriginal languages." (TRC, 2015b, p.2) public school curriculum for Indigenous language teaching needs to reflect the diversity of Indigenous languages in its jurisdiction, in this case, Ontario. Personally, I am surprised that there have not been changes to the curriculum following the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action since there has been so much momentum and talk about reconciliation in all levels of government and education. Making changed to curriculum seems to me like the first place to address if reconciliation is the goal. It is necessary for the Provincial Government to take responsibility for the support of Indigenous language revitalization initiatives, which includes updating and re-creating curriculum that is a reflection of specific needs of the communities and the languages. As previously stated, Indigenous languages, including Anishinaabemowin, are deeply connected to culture, land and identity. Finch explains their frustrations with the current curriculum by saying "I went through and listed all the things that the curriculum documents teach in terms of vocabulary, and then the things that it doesn't teach that I feel the kids need to have. So, I don't think it taught body parts if I remember correctly… How can you teach a language to the kids when they don't even know their own body parts? Really, they need to be

able to express their worlds around them to be able to start using it… They need to learn the language as it pertains to them, because if they have no connection to it, they're not going to use it ever."

Although Robin agrees that teaching in a school is curriculum based, they say "We had the chairs, we would do circles… I was trying different ways to teach, you know, Nishnaabemowin… through games, through, you know singing, taking them outside, trying to learn and going for… nature walks… So, I really didn't focus on writing, you know at the early age, early years, just because I wanted them to hear and not focus on writing." Even though the curriculum does state that "Each Native-language teacher will have to select the language elements that apply to the language under study and make whatever adjustments are necessary to make them relevant." (Ministry of Education, 2001, p.9), which each of my participants seem to do, it also has very specific expectations on learning outcomes for each grade and for different skills, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Ministry of Education, 2001, p.7) which poses limitations to Indigenized teaching and learning and sets colonial expectations. The Ministry of Education requirements are colonial by nature, it caters to western educational practices. To have real, decolonial and Indigenized education, there needs to be societal change in the expectations and standardizations of education. This can be challenging when thinking about curriculum because western educational practices are very systematic and standardized. This is not compatible with Indigenous ways of teaching and learning. In addition to this, the current curriculum puts a lot of pressure on the teachers to dissect and choose which parts of the curriculum they can use in their language classes while also meeting the expectations of the Ministry of Education. I am skeptical that this is the case for other teachable subjects. If we are to have Indigenous languages classes in colonial educational institutions, there needs to be

supports for teachers through wholistic curriculum that is developed with and for Indigenous communities that reflect the individual needs of individual languages in individual contexts while also allowing teachers to customize their lessons if they wish.

Crane on the other hand said "So I kind of developed my own kind of curriculum" which they explain is inspired by the many language teachers they've had in the past. This curriculum that they have created starts with a "little introduction guide" which includes "their greeting and then I have a fill in the blank thing where it's their name, and then… their clan, because a lot of them don't know their clans and their nation…, and then the place they live… and then the place they're currently residing." They added "Then after that, what I have tried to teach them a little bit about is embedded knowledge in the language, but because they're little, it's like you can't do that the same way you would with adults."

Community vs. Public School

Of the three participants, only Robin has experience teaching the language in a community setting, meaning outside of the public school classroom and in an Indigenous community. They compare teaching in a community to teaching in school as the following: "Well, teaching in a community, I would be more like… if it's just for the community, it's more like informal, like it's not structured, you don't have certain ways. So, you can just basically teach… whatever it is that you know, that you would like the… participants or students, you know, to learn. So, when I do teach in community, it's like… everyday language… it's what you do on a daily basis." In other words, teaching in a community versus teaching in a school is a lot more focused on what the learners and teachers want to share in comparison to following a

curriculum. Teaching in a community is more tailored to conversational language that revolves around everyday life and things that are specific to the community. Robin shared what they are working on at the moment when speaking of teaching the language in a community. They said "I'm working on something now… taking a specific tree like cedar tree… what are the uses of, you know, that tree, so medicinal uses… So, I'm doing it that way, now that I'm learning the medicines." What I find interesting about this approach that is new to this language teacher is that it is in line with their own learning and growth of knowledge. They are shifting the way they approach teaching in a community to reflect the things that they are learning within the culture and sharing that with others. It is quite beautiful.

Dialects

As previously mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, I did not explicitly ask about dialects, however, since it was mentioned by my participants, I felt it was important to include what they had shared with me in this regard.

Finch mentioned that when teaching her Anishinaabemowin class, they teach the children that there are many dialects and their differences. Crane has a much more personal relationship to dialects. They shared "For me, being Algonquin living in Toronto, when I went to go to the Native Canadian Center, they said they were teaching Ojibwe, I was like, okay well, it's different than Algonquin, but I understand that they're related. But I still thought of them as completely separate languages, whereas now, I view them more as dialects." Furthermore, their understanding of the different dialects within Anishinaabemowin was not something they understood from the start. They later continue "In any situation, though, it's important to be

mindful and respectful of the community that you're teaching in. So, you know, I'm Algonquin, so our territory is next door. So, I keep that in mind when I'm teaching… You want to be sensitive to what the community needs, and what… their knowledge is, right? And so, each of those different nations in each of those different communities have a different role in the different relationships. You always want to be mindful and respectful of that, and respectful of their perspectives, right? One thing I will say too, is that people often get really hung up on dialect, and for me, If I had done that, I would never begin to speak the language… So, I try to impress that on my students…, especially the older one, when they start to understand that I'm like, you know, there might be slightly different dialects, or different ways of saying words, but the main thing is you learn the language, and then you research, and you learn your dialect. And ideally, you can do both at the same time… But the main thing is, like the way our language is right now, we just have to keep it alone, and we need to get it… being spoken, and we need those teachings to be spread… But the main thing is just learning the language period." Additionally, they add "the reality is, like if we're so divided about that, we're just, it's just going to die." In that regard, Crane expresses the importance of learning, teaching and sharing the language as much as possible. Any learner of the language in any dialect is an asset. What they have shared brings up a sense of urgency, and like they said, being resistant to learn the language due to inaccessibility of dialects further divides people and takes away from the overall goal of language revitalization, that to carry the language into the future. It is evident that their personal experiences have shaped the way they approach teaching and living on another nation's land, and they do so in a good way.

Robin also has a similar perspective when it comes to learning and teaching the different Anishinaabemowin dialects. When they speak of their experience of getting formal teaching as a

language instructor at Lakehead University, they share "It was really good that, you know, meeting everyone to have those… dialects… We wouldn't say, oh, that's not the way you say it, but today… just probably within the last 10 years, it's all about dialects now… To me, I don't look at that. And some people that, you know, especially back home… they're not worried about the dialects as long as we're learning Nishnaabemowin that should be the top priority. Then once you learn the language, then you can apply to you community."

I think that the idea of disregarding the dialects when we're first starting to learn the language to then apply whatever dialect related to you is incredibly important. I'd like to add that we need to keep in mind that many Indigenous people in Canada do not live in their communities. That said, when there is the opportunity to take a language course, it is imperative to not be turned away just because it is not of the same dialect spoken in your community. Additionally, I'd like to highlight that learning the language is not only for Indigenous people, although this idea will come up later in the thesis, I feel it is an important factor when considering what dialects are being taught. Wherever you live, whoever you are, you can learn the language and the dialect of language of the people whose land you occupy or that is accessible to learn in that given area.

Success

Success is categorized by the goals and expectations one may have. That said, successes within a classroom, particularly one teaching a language, can take different forms. It was interesting to hear how the three participants characterized the successes they have witnessed while being language instructors. Either by hearing bits of the language being used outside of the

classroom or by striving towards fluency, each teacher had a different perspective on what success looked like in their classroom and whether or not they have achieved it.

It was the small successes that made Crane proud. Being the language teacher with the least experience of the three participants in this research, spoke of the small successes that they would see within the kids in their language courses and even other kids within the school. They shared that some students, even non-Indigenous students, would shout words like *aaniin* (hello) to them in the hallways at the school when they would walk by or asked questions about pronunciation. For Crane that is success because that is the beginning of the language learning and sharing journey. Children interacted with the language.

Robin expresses their successes as something that relates to their personal life. They share "When I was a kid, biking around the reserve, you would hear the kids and us using the language, and not using the language like full sentences or anything… just using the language as vocabulary. And I noticed that the kids don't do that anymore. At all. So, one of my goals was to get the kids comfortable enough, using the language that I can hear on the streets, just little bits like that. And I tell the kids that this is my goal like that. And I tell them when I was a kid this is what happened. And this is what I'm hoping that you can do too. And over the years, I've had one or two kids say, 'yeah, we're starting to do that at home now.' That's kind of neat". They have a personal goal to see and hear the language the way they did when they were a child, and they are clear about this goal with the children they teach. I do think that this would be a positive way to motivate the children to learn, not the whole language, as that would be very challenging for them in a public school setting, but to retain the few bits that they can apply in their daily lives. Throughout the years of teaching and having this goal, it is so nice to hear that this teacher

is achieving these types of successes with their students. They also said "And the parents are learning from the kids too" which is an additional success worth celebrating.

Robin on the other hand, feels that, after 25 years of teaching the language, their goals are not being met. They say, "the only thing that saddens me that, you know, after teaching all those years… no one ever became fluent." They added however that "Those in the community where I taught, there's a few that are learning still, they still took it in… University, and they're really trying,… they say they want to, you know, teach Nishnaabemowin. And that's kind of what I've always told… the children from there, I said, I'm not going to be here forever, so, you know, why don't you become… a language teacher… a couple that are… still learning, and I wish… that someday that they would pick it up more, or take that extra time, you know, learn and go out there and spend that time with… the fluent speakers." That said, Robin wished that throughout their career more people would pick it up and become fluent. Although they express that some students, even years after taking their course, would remember some of the basics, they aspire for their students to do more.

Maamwi Daadaaying – Môwi – Living Together

From Learning to Living Together, I explore the ways in which Anishinaabemowin courses exist in the same spaces as other language course, such as French, and how they may be compared. Crane shared that "it should be the same as like a French class." This theme also explores how these languages courses are similar as well as different, the challenges associated to having Anishinaabemowin courses in this setting, as well as some of the advantages of having Anishinaabemowin courses in public schools.

Multiple Languages in a School

The schools at which my participants have worked have all been French immersion schools or at least schools that offer French courses in addition to the Anishinaabemowin courses. It is also important to note that, in these schools, kids take Anishinaabemowin as an elective, meaning, they are not required to take the course but have opted into it. As previously mentioned, the Ministry of Education of Ontario does not have the same requirements for French as Second Language classes, these are required.

Finch shares the following about the school they work at "We used to be what is called an 'AND', well what I call an 'AND' school. So, you could take French, AND Ojibwe… French teacher comes to your English class, you stay there for that, and then at some point you get up during the day and you go to Ojibwe. So, you're taking French and Ojibwe and English. It's and, and, and." It is imaginable that this is very challenging for both the teachers and the students. Finch states that things are a little bit different now. "This year, pandemic year, we became an 'OR' school… So, at the request of the local reserve, the students now take French OR Ojibwe, they can't do 'AND' so when it is time for French in their room, the students now get up and come to Ojibwe, which has made things a little easier."

Crane describes a similar situation in their school. They said, "there'll be a choice between French and Ojibwe." However, they explain the creative ways that they bring these classes together. "So one of the cool things you can do with language, with Nishnaabemowin, you can combine that with other subjects, right? So I've gone in and done little things during art class, where I'll tell a traditional story, and they'll do a drawing based on that. Or, you know,

music, obviously, there's a direct connection to traditional music. And then… with French, what's cool about that is you can like, exchange little like language lessons and language games." In regard to French and Anishinaabemowin cohabitating as courses in the same school, Crane really takes a collaborative and reciprocal approach to bringing these two classes together sometimes in their school. To this regard, they shared "especially as a new teacher. I think it can be really beautiful to talk to other language teachers, and to remember too, that like, other languages aren't like a competition either, right? They're just their own form of knowledge." As shown, there are challenges associated with teaching Anishinaabemowin in public schools that may be unique to Indigenous language courses in public schools.

Challenges in Schools

It goes without saying that there are challenges associated with teaching Anishinaabemowin course in a school founded on western and colonial education. It is well known that western education institutions have not only been a contributing entity in colonization, but they have also not been receptive to Indigenous education, knowledge and languages. I believe that we are in a very transformative time. I think things have been changing over the last few years and we're starting to see more and more colonial institutions embrace Indigenous ways of being and knowing. Although it seems that things are moving towards a better place, there is still much to be done, and this is applicable to teaching and learning Anishinaabemowin in a public school.

A challenge that is often brought forward by my participants is that of being compared to the French immersion streams and French courses in their schools, particularly when it comes to

resources available. Finch explains this by saying “So my school is a French immersion school… it’s very often we hear in our board, ‘we’re a tri-language school.’… and they really emphasize that which kind of makes me angry because it’s not… a French immersion school is a dual track, in that there’s French language, and English language, but it’s immersion right? So, it’s not like they just have one 50-minute class a day, which is what we have with my Ojibwe program.” That said, their school promotes the fact that they have all three languages present in the school; however, these languages are not given equal space. “So, my school budget is the same as anybody else’s school budget. So, if I wanted to do experimental, experiential learning, where I’m taking the kids out on the land, and having like a campfire with the kids, and we’re cooking stuff, where am I getting the money for that? … I think also too, because we have so few resources, print resources, anything that we use in my class… I don’t have one for every kid… So, these are my own resources that I have made to make this class run smoother… and the just the lack of resources.” Crane also speaks of this lack of resources by stating that they create their “own kind of curriculum” Additionally, Robin also had much to share on the topic of budgeting and materials “I didn’t have any materials, you know, so we have to create our materials… the principal made a remark where he said… ‘your photocopying wouldn’t even cover that’. And so I was afraid to use the photocopier… not having language material.” They stated that it was always something that they struggled with as a teacher. Crane says “We are starting to create material, but we need to create more.”

Another issue that was brought up by all three participants was that of taking children out of other classes to attend their Anishinaabemowin class. Crane shares “one of the challenges I run into is going on at the same time other classes are going… for example, they have gym at the same time as I teach Nishnaabemowin. And so like, even if they’re, excited to learn the

language, they're just not always wanting to be there if they have like their one indoor gym period a month… But that creates a really kind of unfair competition for Ojibwe with other classes." Robin had the same feelings towards having classes at the same time as their Ojibwe courses and said that they would always miss something, so… I did lose some students… because they were missing… other classes where their parents didn't want them to miss." Similarly, Finch shared much on this topic. As you may recall, Finch explained the difference between an 'AND' school and an 'OR' school. In line with that they said "When it is time for Ojibwe, the agreement with our local reserve says that they cannot miss any core subjects… which used to happen and still does, the teachers will teach a math lesson, and the kids are out at Ojibwe. So, then the kids aren't getting that math… so it sets me up to be in a position where the kids are saying 'oh, yeah, we're missing math.' So, then I have to go to the principal and say, 'the kids are telling me they're missing math." They add "so because the homeroom teachers can't teach a core subject, they are doing things like drama, music, art, gym… all those things that make things fun for the kids and that they don't want to miss. So, when the kids clue in, and we're missing art, because we have to go to Ojibwe, they don't want to be in Ojibwe, so that's difficult." They add that some kids, particularly those coming from reserve schools who previously didn't have to miss anything for their Anishinaabemowin class, opt out of taking Anishinaabemowin. Finch says that "they would rather take French, because they don't want to miss anything. So fine, they opt out. If they don't opt out, it's because their parents are making them come to Ojibwe and they already are entering my room with a giant chip on their shoulder because they don't want to be there. So that made things a little difficult." They explain afterwards that the idea of shifting towards an 'OR' school prevented these challenges by offering the choice of taking French or Ojibwe so that the students wouldn't have to miss

anything other classes at the same time. They added that now, "when the French teacher goes into that class, the Ojibwe language students leave and come to my class."

Crane also explains that, beyond scheduling conflict, a big challenge is the way the class is perceived by others. They express that it is frustrating at times when homeroom teachers forget to remind their students to go to their Anishinaabemowin classes. They said "So I'll have to go find them, and that eats like 10-15 minutes sometimes into teaching time. It's not necessarily malicious thing, but it can come across sometimes as people not respecting or caring about the language enough to prioritize it." Additionally, Crane says that "in some cases… what will happen is it'll be the kids who are going to flunk French that will be put in Ojibwe, and so it's not a choice for them. And so that can be a challenge, right? Because you want people there who want to learn the language, you don't want it to be a catch all." They go on by saying "I'll teach whoever the language… it's just, I never want Nishnaabemowin to be seen as like a punitive consequence for not doing well in another class. I also don't think it should ever be put against another class." Crane adds that this mentality of Anishinaabemowin class not being as important as others is then translated into the way the students view and value the class themselves. "I have kids tell me sometimes, like 'oh, I didn't do my Ojibwe assignment because I had… so much math and reading assignments as well. Ojibwe is as important as your other subjects… It's seen as like an elective… so changing that messaging is really important." Upholding the Anishinaabemowin class to the same value as others is important in moving forward in reconciliation and language revitalization.

Robin mentioned an important limitation in teaching an Anishinaabemowin in a public-school setting. They state that "the students do not have anyone that when they go home to speak the language." Even though they encourage the students to share what they learnt of the language

with their parents and their friends so that they can practice outside of class, they said that "when they come back in September, I felt like… I'd always go back from day one and then just slowly work up that way again, each fall." For those who did progress in the courses and advanced year after year, Finch expresses frustration with the support for the language after elementary school. They share "It's not a path that offers completion… So, I tell my kids that you need a second language credit to graduate high school. Which is true. It doesn't matter what that second language is, you just need a second language credit to graduate… So, the fact that the other… elementary schools in the area are offering Ojibwe with no chance of completion at the high school level is frustrating, because then it's like a dead end… whereas there could be an easy next step… and I would like to see more of that offered." This issue could be due to many factors such as funding, lack of qualified teachers, lack of support for teachers, bureaucracy and much more. In fact, Finch also says "it's really difficult to find a supply teacher that will take an Ojibwe job."

Finally, Finch shed some light on a challenge they had to confront. They share "When I started, quite a few people from my community were very unhappy and very rude and very vocal in trying to get me to not be the teacher… their main reasoning was that I didn't grow up speaking the language…But I learned it in school, and now I can teach it." In comparing Indigenous languages to any other school taught subject, this criticism would be very different. Of course, I can understand that someone people might criticize language teaching in a public school because they want to protect and safeguard the language and the culture, while other might want the most fluent speakers to be teaching the language, however, as Crane mentioned earlier, anyone learning the language is an asset and languages need to be shared with whoever wants to learn them in order for them to survive.

Teaching the language to more than just Indigenous or Anishinaabe people also serves as a form of anti-racism. Exposure to a diversity of perspectives and cultures starting at a young age leads to culturally sensitive teenagers and adults who will soon become our next societal leaders, teachers, doctors, policy makers and activists. To this regard, Simpson (2011) write that "'learning through the language' provides those who are not fluent with a window through which to experience the complexities and depth of our culture." (p.50) In other words, through the language, students of all backgrounds can learn about the realities of Indigenous people on Turtle Island. They can learn about the connections between humans and non-human beings and the land. They can learn about the worldviews that are founded in reciprocity and collaboration and collectivity. The language allows students to engage with culture in a way that fosters understanding, sensitivity, and appreciation, which in turn benefits Indigenous peoples everywhere.

Additionally, there is a huge lack of Anishinaabemowin teachers, and so it is people like Finch, Robin and Crane who are dedicating their careers to making a difference and making an effort to ensure our languages are carried forward. In response to the criticism they have received, Finch says "I think the degree of criticism from within the community is going to be very significant regardless of where I'm teaching it, or how I'm teaching it. I am constrained by the physicality of my school, the setup of the school and where it is." Although they are the only one of the three who mentioned this type of criticism in the interview, I am certain they are not alone in these experiences and feelings.

Advantages in Schools

Though some of the challenges faced by these language teachers could be difficult to manage and overcome, they also shared some of the advantages of teaching Indigenous languages, namely Anishinaabemowin, in the context of a public-school setting. Finch speaks to how one of the more rewarding things to see in their classroom is when kids discover their Indigeneity and connect through it. As previously stated by De Korne (2010) and Kirkness, language and identity are intimately related, and so it would make sense that students are finding these connections through the language. Finch adds "I'm reaching native kids who never would have identified as native, and they aren't from our own reserve, and it's really near to see because then the local kids will look around and go, 'Oh! You're native? Oh! I didn't know that!' and the other kids were like 'Yeah! And I play little NHL and I see you guys at … the big tournament.' And it's kind of neat because it's expanding the local students beyond their horizon, right, and exposing them that there are other reserves, there are other kids that are native that don't, quote unquote, look native, and are doing well in society, away from our reserve." Robin expressed that "it's just beautiful to see in schools that promote the Indigenous language." They talk about some of the art pieces that their school has installed and said, "when they see that coming into the school… they feel, you know, that sense of belonging, or being included." Having language classes and these kinds of visual representations are important for both the Indigenous students and the Indigenous teachers to feel like they are respected and seen. However, they add "it doesn't matter how many Indigenous students are in a public school, if there's even one or two, … they should offer, you know, a program for that child." Additionally, Robin mentioned the Anishinaabemowin day celebrations that their school hosts every year around March 31st where students can present and share something that they created in Anishinaabemowin with all of the celebration attendees, which includes University students. "It

was something that the kids would enjoy coming to every year… creating something at school and then bringing it there and they've worked on it so hard."

Another big advantage of teaching Anishinaabemowin courses in a public-school setting is that it can inspire a diversity of students to take the class in the future. Crane shares how they have done this. They share "What I've done is I go into each kindergarten class, and I'll tell the, a traditional story and teach them four or five words at a time, and I do that once a week or once every couple of weeks, depending on the kindergarten class, and that's great, and so some of the kids will be interested in taking it next year."

Crane also expresses that anti-racism as well as diversified education are the biggest advantages to teaching Anishinaabemowin in a public-school setting. They explain that this happens through teaching the language because it expands kids' exposure to a different culture from their own, in the case of non-indigenous or non-Anishinaabe students and provides them with a new perspective. Additionally, Crane shares "language doesn't have to be a silo, right? Like, it's not just learning a language, like when you're learning an Indigenous language especially, you're learning about environmental science, you're learning about relationships, you're learning about connection… so it serves to enrich and support a number of other learning opportunities for students." In other words, the language opens the doors to a new avenue of learning and can serve as a way to Indigenize western education. In regard to anti-racism, education creates empathy and so teaching children about various cultures at a young age will create adults who are able to understand and empathize with people who are different from themselves.

Finally, particularly in response to being the target of criticism Finch shares "I also like the protection of the school board and the union. Because when a parent says, 'you're not Indian

enough to be teaching this', the school board can say '(they're) a qualified teacher'." Alternatively stated, their qualifications and ability to teach these types of courses are always backed and supported by the board and union they are a part of.

In short, the public-school setting provides many challenges as well as many advantages. Indigenous language teachers, such as my participants, have a very difficult job which is often the target of a lot of resistance, criticism and hardships. However, it seems that the benefits of teaching in this setting make it all worthwhile. They are all actively playing a part in making our futures brighter by setting a good example and being a role model for our younger generations.

I felt that the re-occurring theme in **Maamwi Daadaaying** is that, although multiple languages exist and live in the same spaces, Indigenous languages classes are not upheld with the same regard as other classes. As previously mentioned, Indigenous languages are not upheld to the same regard as the official languages in Canada. These attitudes are translated into the public education system and are reflected in the importance that the Ministry of Education, schools and school boards apply to the different languages. In other words, Anishinaabemowin, in these schools, is not considered equal to teaching or learning French and English. The idea of additive bilingualism, or multilingualism is relevant in this context. As mentioned in my introduction, I was very intrigued by Joseph & Ramani's (2012) definition of glocalization in their article entitled *"Glocalization": Going Beyond the Dichotomy of Global Versus Local Through Additive Multilingualism*. The idea of promoting bilingualism that encompasses both the local and global contexts and advantages is, in my opinion, a valuable way to approach Indigenous language teaching and learning. It pertains to the concept of additive bilingualism.

In regard to bilingualism, "subtractive bilingualism means doing away the L1 words in favor of L2 words" (Dorambari, 2021, p.80) meaning, replacing the first language (L1) by the new language (L2), the new language is reinforced while the other is not. This is common in colonization when settlers target Indigenous languages by promoting, forcing and assimilation Indigenous people into speaking the settler's languages. In contrast, additive bilingualism is when individuals "added a valued and respected L2 language to their repertoire of languages (including their L1 language)" (Dorambari, 2021, p.80) meaning, multiple languages can be valued, promoted and encouraged to promote bilingualism or multilingualism.

The idea of glocalization , or the acknowledgement of the importance of both global and local languages, allows us to better understand the issues at stake. By promoting languages that are beneficial in the global and local context, every language would then be perceived as having their own purpose, values and would, therefore, be respected for what they can offer to individuals and communities. In regard to teaching Indigenous languages in public schools, this idea of additive bilingualism is instrumental to the teaching and learning of Indigenous languages. If the Ministry of Education, schools and school boards would appreciate that this type of bilingualism is achievable and in fact desirable in line with glocalization, the outcomes of teaching and learning Indigenous languages would be much different. I think we need to move beyond thinking that some languages are more beneficial than others and exploring what each language has to offer and how multilingualism can be enriching in multiple contexts.

Gdi-nmikaagoom & Niigaan Zhaadaa – Abitahodwôganal & Linkawachi – Welcoming & Moving Forward

Beyond Living Together there is also Welcoming, meaning accepting with open arms or an invitation, which also addresses questions regarding who can and should be learning the language. Finch shares that "if they are there to be respectful and to be interested, then bring them on" Of course, this idea of welcoming or inviting others to join the language can be quite controversial since some may feel that the language should be protected and only shared with other Anishinaabe folks. However, the participants shed some light on how welcoming and inviting others to the language can greatly benefit Indigenous languages and their revitalization. In this section, I also explore the roles and responsibilities of schools that have Anishinaabemowin classes. The participants shared how these schools contribute (or not) to language revitalization efforts. Additionally, Moving Forward implies that there is a future and that there is change ahead. I will also be exploring what needs to happen to better support Anishinaabemowin in school, out of school and in general.

Having grown up on a reserve, Robin shares about their first experiences teaching in a public-school classroom. They said, "When I first got there, when I first started teaching, I didn't know who the native kids were." They explain that their class was a mix or Indigenous and non-Inidgenous students, however, they were unable to tell just by looking at them, who were the Indigenous ones and who were not. Though to them, it did not matter. They shared "that was something new for me, because, you know, growing up on the reserve… that's all I have seen was nishnabeg… even when I teach today… I always say, you know, it doesn't matter what race you come from…you are going to meet an Indigenous person, and so that Indigenous person may not speak the language, you will be able to share… the little bit that you've learned from taking the Ojibwe language here at school." To this regard, they invite anyone to learn the language since they can then pass on Anishinaabemowin to others. Their mindset is all about

sharing. Simpson (2011) writes " Good relations provide the context for everything from learning to governing and interacting with other nations." (p.131) Sharing is fundamental to good relations. Additionally, Robin said "I think everyone should be the learners, everyone." We are stronger as a collective when we learn from each other.

In line with this, Finch says that "anyone who wants to learn" should learn Anishinaabemowin. They add "Anybody who wants to learn, I feel, …is going to be an asset. They may grow up and be in the parliaments of today, they may grow up and be a very strong ally. If they're not native… they can be that ally person out in the public talking to those people who are ignorant of the situations and the things that face us… And I feel that having people learn, creates those allies later on, or creates a better understanding… So in my head, anybody who wants to learn regardless of age." In other words, allowing not only Indigenous individuals, but also non-Indigenous people to learn the language creates this common culture of understanding and can serve as a way to decolonize the way people think about Indigenous people. It promotes allyship.

Similarly, Crane says that those who should be learning Anishinaabemowin is "Everybody who lives on Anishinaabeg territory...so if we learn those languages, we learn about our relationship to land… everybody deserves to have… and should be enriched in that way and have that relationship to the land they live on." They also speak about connection between human beings and non-human beings, and how language can provide that for all of us. Crane shared "I think one of the biggest problems with our society is like an absence of connection, and if you look at one of the things that I've come to understand about spirit and spirituality, it is connection… but spirituality at its most basic form, at its most essential is the notion of connection and our society… we're more disconnected that ever, and so language can serve as a

way to unite and to connect, not only human beings to each other, but really, especially Inidgenous languages, can connect us to our surroundings." With this in mind, it is easier to understand why Crane says that "anybody who's learning languages is an asset."

Overall, according to my three participants, anyone is welcomed and encouraged to take Anishinaabemowin courses. They shared valuable insight that highlights the fact that non-Indigenous people learning the language are participating in allyship. It is connecting us as human beings to each other and to our environments. These Anishinaabemowin classes are providing, for Indigenous students, a sense of belonging and that their language and culture is valued, and to non-Indigenous students, an opportunity to learn about and understand a culture different from their own. In other words, allowing anyone who wants to learn the language to do so is beneficial for our future as a collective. It will move us towards a place of mutual empathy, respect and understanding. Additionally, our planet needs human beings to feel connected to the land and to respect it as a living and breathing entity, and Indigenous languages can bring us there if we are open to sharing it.

Playing Their Part

Robin shares about the initiatives that exist in their school. They said "I started having pow wows also, we celebrated 25 years in 2019… Every year we did that… to celebrate… Nishnaabemowin but also our culture, right, because language and culture go hand in hand… so I always included that… We would do different workshops… for the entire school" As previously mentioned, they also shared about the importance of representation with Indigenous art and language. Robin said "having things like that… goes a long way to show that… the

school is being a part… We translated… for welcome… and then so we put that in Ojibwe, so that's right when you come in… Having those signs in the language really helps." In other words, representation matters and makes all the difference in the world.

Crane thinks that schools have a supporting role, meaning, we shouldn't be looking at schools as the only contributor to Anishinaabemowin revitalization or independently taking on this task. Their supporting role is founded in the idea that language revitalization requires a multitude of efforts and initiatives in order to be successful and teaching the language in a school can provide an additional effort to the larger picture. Crane also explains that, when a school assumes this kind of role "it has to be community driven." In other words, the schools need to be teaching the courses in ways that are in line with the communities' needs and requests. Further, language teaching, learning and revitalization is also the responsibility of parents, families, and other members of the community. They play an important role in supporting and promoting the language in daily activities. However, not all communities share the same experience in terms of access to language or support of language revitalization initiatives. It is important that there are initiatives that exist outside of the classroom that encourage the wider community to get involved in the languages, such as language nests in Nogojiwanong. The Nogojiwanong Friendship Centre is a great place to seek out these initiatives. Even though the schools at which the participants of this research teach are not on reserve, they are on Native land and should be including their local communities in the programming of their Anishinaabemowin classes. On that note, all land is native land, and so all public schools have the capacity to research this, find out who's land they occupy and work with those communities to ensure that the language classes they offer at their schools are in line with the community's values. Further, Crane adds "The reality is, all of our kids are going to go to school, … the majority of them, right? So, we need to have our stuff

reflected there. We're the original people of this land." Alternatively stated, many, if not most, Indigenous children on Turtle Island will at some point go to school off reserve, many currently live in urban areas, and so, even off reserve schools have a responsibility to have representation for Indigenous students in their school.

Finch said "I think it's massively, massively important. Because if the native kids only ever see their own community valuing their language, they will never value it a lot themselves, because it's home, it's familiar… But a lot of… the native kids will come from the reserve, come to my classes and be like, 'there's non-native kids here, and they really like this language, and they're having a lot of fun, and they know it more than I do', and they start to see that this is actually a really cool important thing. So, I think the acknowledgement of the public school system that these classes need to happen, is really really important for the furthering of it. And also, to that we allow anybody to take it." To this regard, having it in the schools enables Indigenous students to recognize the importance of their language and attribute more value to it. I really appreciated that Finch mentioned the impact of the schools themselves recognizing the importance of having classes like these.

Interestingly, all of my participants shared how important the language was and how vital it is for school to have Indigenous language classes, namely in Anishinaabemowin, however, when asked what role schools play, the overarching answer has been representation and inclusivity of Indigenous languages, culture, art and ways of knowing.

What Now

Finch shares “I am feeling that there needs to be more classes offered at different schools within Peterborough City itself, because there is a large native population in the schools that would take advantage of this… it kind of bothers me that they’re not offering it at the high school level too because there are so many native kids, and they just need to have it so not just in our schools.” In addition, our students need to have access to the language in their school. To do this, we need more teachers, more funding, more training and more support for, and promotion of our languages in all institutions. Similarly, Crane states “I think honestly, at an institutional level…I should be teaching every single student in every single class Ojibwe, at least one a week.”

Additionally, Finch provides some insight on how these types of recommendations could be achieved, particularly for high school students. They said, “one class a day, teacher commutes between the two schools, something like that would be so beneficial for those kids… and maybe the virtual option, this might come through mare, then they have one teacher who teaches Ojibwe class at the high school level… and everyone can sort of come to that class at the same time.” Of course, this recommendation is strongly influenced by the switch to online learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdowns that have been happening in Ontario, however, it is, in my opinion, not a bad idea to provide virtual language courses. Although we can probably all agree that in-person learning of Anishinaabemowin is ideal. Having a virtual option could reach more students and the few resources and teachers we do have are accessible to a larger number of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students who want to learn the language. As Finch previously mentioned, having Anishinaabemowin classes at the elementary level and not at the high-school level is really frustrating for the students and the teacher since it is a course that does not offer completion. Having virtual options for the school in an area, such as Nogojiwanong, could

potentially fill in this need. They do add, however, “I don’t know if that’s going to be the savior of it, or what, but I think…the public school system needs to work more on getting it into more schools and offering it at a high school level.” Further, whatever needs to happen to get it into high schools in the area, needs to happen.

To conclude, Robin states ‘it’s slowly coming around… it’s come a long way since I… first started teaching… and it’s only going to move forward.” The fact that the language is being taught in public school is a huge strive towards a better future for everyone. Even though there are many hurdles to overcome, particularly in terms of curriculum building, relationship building, bureaucracy and policy making, it is individuals like those in this research who are making a difference and dedicating their careers to brighter days ahead. Their work as Anishinaabemowin instructors in public schools shows a resurgence, a resistance, and decolonization. It is the strength we need to carry our language and our stories forward.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion

Language holds so much more than the ability to communicate. It holds aspects of culture and worldview. There is so much embedded knowledge within language. Different languages provide us with the ability to see and understand the world in a way that is in line with that culture's values, morals and beliefs. Indigenous languages on Turtle Island, and beyond, are incredibly connected to the land and the environment. There exists a relational and grounded reciprocity between the land, human and non-human beings. Indigenous languages have contributed to the survival of Indigenous peoples for an uncountable number of years. These

languages have evolved with the changing landscapes and the development of technologies. These languages are not primal, they are not frozen in time, and although many are endangered and some are gone forever, they are languages that are relevant to today's ways of life. Many of these languages are alive, modern, contextual and informative. While different from European languages, similarly, Anishinaabemowin also has different registers and usages, some relating to ancestral and ceremonial versions and some reflecting modern situations. Consequently, they deserve to be shared, supported and promoted. However, it is important to remember that many Indigenous people on Turtle Island do not live in their communities or on their reserves. In fact, many Indigenous people live in urban areas. This was the reason that I wanted to explore the ways in which Indigenous languages were being taught in urban public schools, namely Anishinaabemowin in the Nogojiwanong area.

Offering Indigenous language classes in public schools is a controversial issue. However, there does not exist much literature on specific Indigenous language classes in public school settings. The controversy surrounding sharing the language in public school settings can mostly be found on social media and other networking and social settings. The few pieces of literature that were accessible, were not specific to Anishinaabemowin in Nogojiwanong, that is why I chose to focus my research in this way. That said, all three participants in this study agreed that these types of courses are necessary for language revitalization, but they also benefit many other aspects of life on Turtle Island. From providing the language to Indigenous students who wouldn't otherwise have access to the language, to inspiring future allies through the non-Indigenous students in the course, having Anishinaabemowin in their school is a step towards a better future for us all. Looking at the journeys of these participants in becoming Anishinaabemowin teachers, how the language is taught in this setting, how these classes

compare to other classes, as well as, to learning in a community, who should be learning and the roles of schools in language revitalization, we can understand how far we have come to be able to hold these classes and celebrate the language, but also how we can approach language revitalization efforts in this setting in the future.

To summarize the data of the interviews, participants had very similar perspectives on the roles and responsibilities that schools have in regard to Anishinaabemowin revitalization and classes. In the theme Bi-yaawyand – Becoming, the participants shared their journeys in becoming Anishinaabemowin teachers. They all have unique understandings and exposure to the language prior to teaching. They also had very different qualifications. I found that this section was the most diverse since it explored their personal experiences. I found that hearing of these experiences was crucial to understanding the wisdom they shared in the subsequent sections.

Within the theme of Kendsaasang – Learning, it was evident how the school's organization is similar. It was expressed that schools and school boards want formalized learning. However, this does not always accommodate Indigenous ways of teaching and learning. The curriculum is very flawed regarding these classes since it is not centered around a specific language. Umbrella curriculum, such as what is sought by the ministry of Education, for all Indigenous languages being taught in Ontario is not effective. Additionally, a certain standard is expected, even though remains a lack of available resources to support teachers compared to other subjects being taught in schools. This means that the participants often have had to become creative and provide their own materials and create ways of teaching on restricted or non-existent budgets. This section also explored how the language is being taught, the limitations associated to such as well as the successes that these teachers have experienced during their careers, characterized by their goals as teachers. Some are seeing that the language is being picked up

and that their goals as teachers are being met, while other have felt a defeated that none of their students have assimilated any of the language.

The theme Maamwi Daadaaying -Living Together, demonstrates how Anishinaabemowin fit into a public-school setting. This theme explored how these classes co-habitate with each other within the same institution, if they are held to the same standard and the same importance. Of course, this was not the outcome expressed by the participants however, hope remains, moving forward. This section also went into more detail with the challenges associated to teaching this type of class in a public-school setting. Despite the challenges of finding a supply teacher, scheduling conflicts, lack of material resources and not benefiting from the same esteem as other subject matters, there are also some advantages to teaching Anishinaabemowin in this setting. Some children discover their identity by assisting these classes. They also serve as great education tools to train future allies and socially aware individuals, an excellent way to transmit anti-racism and social justice values in an educational setting. These classes connect people through the language, who might not otherwise relate to each other.

Finally, the theme Gdi-nmikaagoom & Niigaan Zhaadaa – Welcoming & Moving Forward explores how anyone and everyone who desires to take these classes should. All learners become assets, regardless of race, culture, gender, age, ability or religion. In fact, supporting this instruction allows more sharing, and awareness, permitting us to move towards a better future for all. By offering Indigenous language classes, schools are playing a part in diversified and enriched learning for all of the student population.

That said, when analyzing the data coming out of the interviews, there seems to be implied suggestions as we move forward with including Indigenous languages in western education institutions. While some of these recommendations have come directly from my

interviewees, some are also from myself based on the information and conversations I have had with my participants. The following recommendations incorporate my own response to the reoccurring themes and frustrations expressed during the interviews:

1. Governments and School Boards need to offer support for individuals with a diversity of skills and experiences that would make them qualify to teach an Indigenous language in a public-school setting. This goes beyond formal teacher education training and formal language courses.

Although it is potentially possible for Universities to take on some responsibilities by supporting and supplying more language teachers, there also needs to be some kind of recognition of qualification outside of western institutions. University and formal training is not accessible for many Indigenous people.

2. Indigenous languages should be amongst the languages for which high school students can get their second language credits.

This, in turn, will motivate more students to enroll in these classes and potentially produce more individuals who would be willing, interested and motivated to teach these languages classes in the future. We need more opportunities for our students to interact with the language on a more advanced level.

3. Government, school boards and schools need to hire more Indigenous languages teachers. This means:
    a. Making more funding available for Indigenous language teaching and learning

b. Offering more programs to train and prepare language speakers to become Indigenous language teachers
c. Offering ongoing support and training for Indigenous language teachers
d. Offering more options for continued Indigenous language learning
e. Acknowledging alternate qualifications and language training.

This recommendation will encourage more people to pursue a career teaching in this setting. In turn, more resources will be created, more supports would exist, community would come together to build valuable and relevant content and it directly supports Indigenous language revitalization inside and outside of the classroom.

4. Indigenous language courses need to be recognized as having different needs from other courses but be held to the same importance as other courses.

Reconciliation means coming together and re-shaping our relationships. We must be equal to do this. Our classes need to be valued equally even though they encapsulate different worldviews.

5. Revised and updated curriculum that reflects the needs of each individual Indigenous language. These curriculums need to be developed in collaboration with communities. They must be updated on a regular basis.

Curriculum, particularly regarding Indigenous content, should not be set in stone. It needs to evolve and change to reflect the needs of the communities it serves. We are in a very transitional time. As more revitalization initiatives and research on language becomes public, curriculum needs to adapt.

6. Include Indigenous content in other classes. This includes but is not limited to history, religious studies, social studies, geography, music and art, math, environmental studies, sciences, and physical and health education.

The inclusion of multiple voices and perspectives in all facets of education expands students' understanding and perspective on their world.

7. Indigenous languages and cultures should be represented in the schools. This could mean having signs that include English, French and Anishinaabemowin, or whatever language that is local to the given school, having local Indigenous art on the walls and Indigenous music on their playlists, and include local Indigenous knowledge keepers in different learning initiatives.

Representation and visibility can be detrimental to a feeling of belonging and safety for many students. Additionally, exposure to diversity at an early age can aid in producing culturally competent and sensitive non-Indigenous allies.

Sometimes protocol, like a land acknowledgement, is a surface gesture that risks tokenizing Indigenous peoples, cultures, or languages.

8. We need to have appropriate cultural sensitivity training for all staff and implementing training to continualy renew these learnings. This must all be done in collaboration with Indigenous people and be done in a respectful manner founded in good intention and action.

Indigenous individuals are often asked to educate and advocate for Indigenous peoples and communities in colonial contexts. Collaboration is key. Fostering a relationship that is founded on mutual respect and trust is vital. The burden cannot fall solely on the shoulders of Indigenous people. Whether it be a land acknowledgement or certain teachings about living in a good way, non-Indigenous folks need to learn to be accountable to their words and take action in line with the information they share. Schools play a vital role in activism, and teachers need to be properly

trained on how to carry themselves and their classroom in a way that doesn't objectify our cultures or languages as a formality.

9. Governments, school boards and schools need to abide by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action, namely #6 through #17.

This needs to be carried through in curriculum as well as in practice and school and classroom environments. This cannot be only in regard to Indigenous content courses.

10. Schools and School Boards need to recognize the role they hold in educating the future generations of policy makers, social leaders and educators. Everything they do should be founded in social justice, inclusion and anti-racism. This includes but is not limited to issues of race, gender, sexuality, ability and age.

Social justice is our way forward towards reconciliation.

Although the data in this thesis is specific to Anishinaabemowin in the geographical area of Nogojiwanong, the recommendations are likely to be applicable beyond these borders. I encourage anyone who might be interested in doing future research in language to focus it on a specific language in a specific area. We need more specific and narrow research done on all of our languages. However, research on Indigenous languages and revitalization in general is required right now, as long as it is done in a respectful and appropriate manner. I am hopeful that my research will be useful to those who may wish to do similar research in the future or to those who inform policy. Finally, I strongly encourage anyone who has access to an Indigenous language to learn it. Indigenous or not, learners are an asset and allow us to carry our languages forward.

Bibliography

Assembly of First Nations (2007) *National First Nations Language Implementation Plan*. Ottawa, On. Retrieved from: https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/IPeoples/EMRIP/StudyLanguages/AssemblyFirstNations5.pdf

De Korne, H. (2010). "Indigenous Language Education Policy: Supporting Community - Controlled immersion in Canada and the US". *Language Policy*, 9, 115-141. DOI: 10.1007/s10993-010-9165-4

Dorambari, D. (2021). "Countering Substractive Bilingualism with Additive Bilingualism in the Albanian Language". *Prizen Social Science Journal, 5*(1), 79-85. DOI: 10.32936/PSSJ

Fachinger, P. (2019). "Colonial Violence in Sixties Scoop Narratives: From *In Search of April Raintree* to *A Matter of Conscience*". *Studies in American Indian Literatures, 31*(1/2). 115-135. Retrieved from: https://www-proquest-com.proxy1.lib.trentu.ca/docview/2294413545/fulltextPDF/ACEB9DCEBB5D494BPQ/1?accountid=14391

Fishman, J. (2001). "Chapter 1 Why is it so Hard to Save a Threatened Language?" In J. Fishman (Eds.), *Can Threatened Languages Be Saved? Reversing Language Shift, Revisited: A 21st Century Perspective (pp. 1-22)*. Multilingual Matters LTD.

Fordham, M. (1998). "The Politics of Language and the Survival of Indigenous Culture: From Suppression to reintroduction in the Formal Classroom". *Equity & Excellence, 31*(1). 40-47. DOI: 10.1080/1066568980310107

Haque, E. & Patrick, D. (2015). "Indigenous Languages and the Racial Hierarchization of Language Policy in Canada". *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 36*(1), 27-41. DOI: 10.1080/01434632.2014.892499

Hinton, L. (Ed.). (2013). *Bringing our languages home: Language revitalization for families*. Berkeley, CA: Heyday Books.

Hornberger, N. H. (2008). "Introduction: Can Schools Save Indigenous Languages? Policy and Practice on Four Continents". In. N. H. Hornberger (Eds.), *Can Schools Save Indigenous Languages? Policy and Practice on four Continents* (pp.1-12). Palgrave Macmillan.

Huss, L. (2008). "Researching Language Loss and Revitalization". In K. A. King and N. H. Hornberger (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Language and Education, 2nd Edition, Volume 10: Research Methods in Language and Education* (pp. 69-81). Springer Science + Business Media LLC.

Indigenous Language Act, SC (2019), *c23*. Retrieved at: https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/I-7.85/page-1.html

Joseph, M. & Ramani, E. (2012). "'Glocalization': Going Beyond the Dichotomy of Global Versus Local Through Additive Multilingualism". *International Multilingual Research Journal, 6,* 22-34. DOI: 10.1080/19313152.2012.639246

Kirkness, V. J. (1998). "The Critical State of Aboriginal Languages in Canada". *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 22*(1). 93-107. Retrieved from: http://proxy.lib.trentu.ca.proxy1.lib.trentu.ca/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.proxy1.lib.trentu.ca/docview/61475085?accountid=14391

McCarthy, T. L. & Nicholas, S. E. (2014). "Reclaiming Indigenous Languages: A Reconsideration of the Roles and Responsibilities of Schools". *Review of Research in Education, 38*, 106-136. DOI: 10.3102/0091732X13507894

McCarty, T. L. (2008). "Schools as Strategic Tools for Indigenous Language Revitalization: Lessons from Native America". In. N. H. Hornberger (Eds.), *Can Schools Save Indigenous Languages? Policy and Practice on four Continents* (pp.161-179). Palgrave Macmillan.

Ministry of Education Ontario (2001) *The Ontario Curriculum Grades 1-8: Native Languages*. Retrieved from: http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/nativelang18curr.pdf

Mithun, M., & Chafe, W. L. (1987). "Recapturing the Mohawk language". In T. Shopen (Ed.), *Languages and their status* (pp. 1-34). New York, NY: Winthrop.

Noodin, M. (2014). *Bawaajimo: A Dialect of Dreams in Anishinaabe Language and Litterature*. Michigan State University Press.

Noori, M. (2009). "Wenesh Waa Oshkii-Bmaadizijig Noondamowaad? What Will the Young Children Hear?". In J. Reyhner & L. Lockard (Eds.) *Indigenous Language Revitalizatin; Encouragement, Guidance & Lessons Learned*. (pp.11-22) Northern Arizona University.

Oxaal, Z. (2005). "Removing that Which was Indian from the Plaintiff: Tort recovery For Loss of Culture and Language in Residential Schools Litigation". *Saskatchewan Law Review, 68*(2), 367-402

Reyhner, J. (1999). “Introduction: Some Basics of Indigenous Language Revitalization”. In J. Reyhner, G. Cantoni, R. N. St. Clair & E. Parsons Yazzie (Eds.) *Revitalizing Indigenous Languages*. (pp. 2-17) Northern Arizona University.

Reyhner, J. (2010). “Indigenous Language Immersion Schools for Strong Indigenous Identities”. *Heritage Language Journal*, 7(2). 138-152.

Simpson, L. (2011). *Dancing on Our Turtle’s Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-Creation, Resurgence and a New Emergence*. Arbeiter Ring Publishing

Simpson, L. (2017). *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resistance*. University of Minnesota Press.

Srigley, K. & Varley, A. (2018). “Chapter 2. Learning to Unlearn: Building Relationships on Anishinaabeg Territory”. In D. McGregor, J.P. Restoule & R. Johnston (Eds.) *Indigenous Research. Theories, Practices, and Relationships*. (pp. 46-64)

Statistics Canada. (2016). 2016 Census Ottawa, Ont.: Statistics Canada https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/index-eng.cfm

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2012a). *They Came for the Children: Canada, Aboriginal peoples, and residential schools*. Winnipeg: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2012b). *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action*. Winnipeg: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

Williams, D. (Gidigaa Migizi). (2018). *Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg: This is Our Territory*. Arbeiter Ring Publishing

Willmott, C., Taitt, A., Corbiere, M.A. & Corbiere, A. (2016). “Toward Language in Action: Agency-Oriented Application of the GRASAC Database for Anishinaabe Language Revitalization”. *Museum Anthropology Review*, 10(2). 91-116.

Wolfram, W. (2008). “Language Diversity and the Public Interest”. In K. A. King, N. Schilling-Estes, L. Fogle, J. J. Lou, & B. Soukup (Eds.), *Sustaining Linguistic Diversity: Endangered and Minority Languages and Language Varieties* (pp.187-202). Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics series.

Young, M.I, (2005). *Pimatisiwin: Walking in a Good Way*. Pemmican Publications Inc.

Appendix

Interview Questions:

- Tell me a little bit about yourself and how you came to be a language instructor?
- How is Anishnaabemowin taught in your school?
- Who should be learning the language?
    - And is this represented in your classroom?
- What is the difference between teaching the language in the community versus a public school?
- What are some of the benefits and challenges associated to teaching an Indigenous language in a public school setting?
- What role do public schools have in Indigenous language revitalization?
    - (if not) What could be done differently?
- Do you have any recommendations for schools or school boards to better support Indigenous language teaching and learning?
    - If so, what are they?
- Is their anything else you'd like to add?

Nogojiwanong Friendship Centre
(705) 775-0387
https://www.nogofc.ca/

The Indian Residential School Survivors Society has a National Indian Residential Schools Crisis Line (1-866-925-4419) that provides immediate emotional support for former Indian Residential School students and families.
Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.