THE SOCIOPOLITICAL CONTEXT OF NATIVE INDIAN LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

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ABSTRACT/RESUME

Over the past decade, many Indian language programs have been developed in British Columbia. The author notes the sociopolitical context of Indian language education in the province, identifies major goals and objectives for language programs, and focuses on a variety of factors which affect them. Acknowledging that language education lies between social science and social policy, she proposes that Indian communities make language program goals more specific, and that they establish community and home locations for language retention in an effort to enhance the viability of Indian language education.

Au cours de la dernière décennie, de nombreux programmes d'études scolaires en langue indienne ont été développés en Colombie britannique. L'auteur décrit le contexte socio-politique de l'éducation en langue indienne dans la province, désigne les buts principaux à poursuivre dans les programmes, et se concentre sur certains facteurs qui exercent une influence sur ces programmes. Tout en admettant que l'éducation en langue indienne occupe une place mitoyenne entre la science et la politique sociales, elle conseille aux communautés indiennes de définir des buts plus spécifiques dans ce domaine, et de fonder des centres communautaires et familiaux dans le but d'encourager l'usage de ces langues, et en vue de justifier l'usage de la langue indienne dans le domaine de l'éducation.

Introduction

The Canadian Northwest is noted for the linguistic diversity of its Native Indian peoples. More than half of Canada's 53 distinct indigeneous languages are spoken in British Columbia (Foster, 1982). Six language families are situated in B.C., as well as a number of language isolates, and a trade jargon (see Map 1). In the pre-contact period, multilingualism was the norm, that is, many Native Indian people spoke more than one language. Today, not a single one of the Indian languages continues to flourish in all domains of daily life. [1]

An estimate of the number and minimum age of native speakers of the B.C. Indian languages has been attempted by Robert Levine, a linguist with the Linguistic Division of the B.C. Provincial Museum in Victoria (see Table 1). Of these languages, those situated in the Interior, especially in the North, are the most viable. Several of the Athapaskan languages are spoken by young children. Although few young people in the Central Interior speak their language, there are numerous speakers of the various Interior Salishan languages who are in their 40's. The Coastal languages are nearing extinction, especially those near the urban areas. Thus, the Indian languages in B.C. are declining or obsolescing and language programmes are very clearly a response to this dilemma. [2]

Goals of Indian Language Programmes

The goals for Indian language education in B.C. are stated differently for different programmes. Generally, all stated goals aim for language maintenance; some also include cultural maintenance. Few aim for language revival; most are willing to settle for less, without being too certain about what less means. One language programme fits into a native studies programme which has increased school attendance and performance as its goals. A review of the goals of some of these programmes will reveal the similarities and differences among various statements.
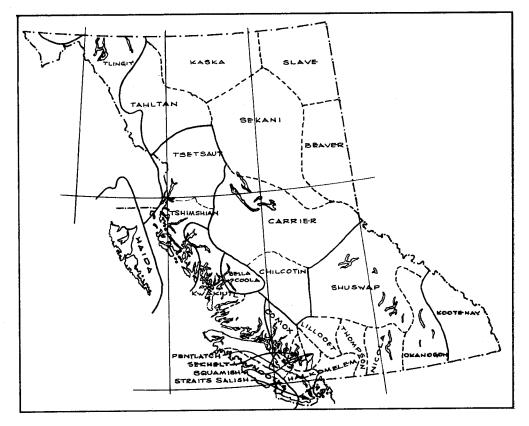
It is difficult to survey the B.C. situation since there is no organization or institutional centre which coordinates or provides resources and guidance for all these language programmes. In many cases, there are no goal statements, but only job descriptions. Most of the information presented here comes from project descriptions and news updates published in the Northwest Languages Newsletter (1978 - present, UBC) and from personal contact with language workers.

The following goal statements have been gathered to date:

to recover as much of the old culture as possible and to transmit this know-ledge to the younger generation (Oowekyala Language Project, Rivers Inlet)

to keep the language alive (parents' view, from a conversation with Marie Cooper. certified teacher and Indian Education Coordinator, Victoria School District, Victoria)

to preserve our language and understand our past, taking the shortest way to teach our language to our children (Dave Elliott, Sr., elder, language

INDIAN LANGUAGE
MAP 1. Indians of British Columbia, Linguistic Subdivisions. Names in capitals are languages, those in lower case are major dialects. Only Tsetsaut, Pentlatch, and Nicola Athapaskan are extinct. (From Wilson Duff. *Indian History of British Columbia.* 1969. BC Provincial Museum, Div. of Natural History & Anthropology.)

TABLE 1: Current State of Indian Languages of British Columbia

Family	Subfamily	Language	Number of Speakers	Minimum Age of Speakers
Kutenai-Salishan	Kutenai	Kutenai	100	
	Salishan	Straits	10	60
		Halkomelem	500	
		Thompson		
		Bella Coola	100	60
		Comox	300	
		Sechelt	30	50-60
		Pentlatch	EXTINCT	
		Okanagan	200	40-50
		Squamish	10	50-60
		Lilooet	300	
		Shuswap	500	40-50
Wakashan		Kwakwala	1000	40-50
		Bella Bella		
		Haisla	300	25-30
		Nootka		
		Nitinaht	50	30-40
Tsimshian		Coast Tsimshian	800	30-40
		Nass-Gitksan	2000	30
		Southern Tsimshian	5	
Na-Dene	Tlingit	Tlingit	100-300	20-30
	Athapaskan	Chilcotin	1500-1700	none
		Carrier	2000-3000	none
		Beaver		none
		Babine	1000-1500	none
		Sekani	80	30
		Kaska		
		Tahltan		
		Nicola	EXTINCT	
		Tsetsaut	EXTINCT	
		Slave		
Haida			100-150	50-60
Algonkian		Ojibwa		

teacher and literacy worker, Saanich Indian Language Training Program, Saanich)

- to teach a language for use, as a means of real   communication   among people in living situations (Richard King, educator, Faculty of Education, Native Indian Language Diploma Program, University of Victoria, Victoria)

- to teach the stories, some words and phrases and, more importantly, the world view expressed by the grammatical patterns of the language (Sechelt Native Environmental Studies Programme, from Ron Beaumont, linguist-consultant, University of British Columbia, Vancouver)

- to use, understand and appreciate our languages (Mandy Jimmie, certified teacher, language worker and curriculum developer, Nicola Valley Indian Historical Association, Merritt)

- to achieve fluency for the students, preferably full fluency, but to be able to talk to the elders and even to parents in ordinary everyday interactions (Shuswap Language Committee's view, Williams Lake School District, from Joy Wild, curriculum developer-consultant, Department of Language Education, University of British Columbia, Vancouver)

- to increase   attendance and successful school achievement for children of Native heritage (goal of Native Studies Program, School District No. 72, Campbell River)

- to revive and maintain our ways through our language (Robert Sterling, well-known spokesman for Indian Education in British Columbia and Canada; chairman of the Advisory Council, Native Indian Teacher Education Program (NITEP), University of British Columbia; Band Councillor; Education Coordinator, Nicola Valley Indian Administration, Merritt)

These statements reflect the views of parents, members of a language committee, language workers, professional educators, and specialists. Most of these statements can be said to view both the past and the languages as static, and call for recovering, preserving, knowing, understanding and appreciating them. One statement is explicitly concerned with the process of cultural transmission. Some of these goal statements can be said to view the languages as dynamic and call for fluent use of the languages. Thus, these goal statements suggest some language programmes which focus on valuing the languages, the culture and the history of the past, and other language programmes which focus on developing social interactional skills.

Underlying these goals seems to be a belief that language can serve as a vehicle to foster a sense of self-esteem, ethnic awareness, identity or pride. This is one of the conditions which applies to the implementation of bilingual instruction in numerous developing countries (Tucker, 1982).

One elaboration of what the characteristics of a good language programme should be is available from a native spokesman for Indian Education in British Columbia and Canada:

To revive and maintain our ways through our language these programmes must be carried out in full seriousness and full aware-

be treated as a popular fad or a temporary band-aid. It should not
be designed to replace English but to sit side by side with it in
equal importance, serving its own unique purpose.
- A good language programme should begin with children at
  birth and carry on till death.
- A good language programme does not select special students
  but all.
- A good language programme is not simply an exercise in learn-
  ing sounds, pronunciation and vocabulary, but one in which
  values, principles, and philosophy are reflected.
- A good language programme should lead to a constant refine-
  ment and updating of its parts so that it "keeps up with the
  times" while maintaining the permanent good values.
- A good language programme should inspire further curiosity
  and opportunity to learn.

The need for all Indians to survive in modern life may under-
mine even the best planned Indian language programmes, but if
we, as Indians, sincerely believe that the strength of our ancestors
is the strength we need now, then their teachings which lie in the
languages will inspire us to overcome the challenges and bring our
languages back forever. (Sterling, 1980)

Both the need and the possible goals for language programmes have been
identified. Many pedagogical and linguistic issues face the developers of language
programmes: choice of teaching method; oral language maintenance versus
literacy; development and choice of an orthographic system; length, time and
location of classes; teacher preparation and training; development and produc-
tion of curriculum; availability of linguistic research on the structure and use of
the languages, on domains of present-day use, on the discourse system, and on
the uses of literacy. Although these are important issues, they will be set aside
in order to examine the sociopolitical context of Indian language education in
B.C.

Five Factors in the Sociopolitical Context

Five factors may be distinguished for the social and political context which
crucially affect the existence and survival of language programmes in British
Columbia, even those with the very best teachers and curriculum materials.
These five factors are: (a) the responsibility and participation of the community
and the home, (b) the role of the school, (c) government policies and funding,
(d) the role of specialists, and quite importantly, (e) the language learners them-
selves. Each of these will be discussed in turn.

(a) The responsibility and participation of the *home and of the community*
may be the key factor affecting the success of Indian language education. To
even initiate a project, the consensus of the community is required. The elders

and the political leaders of an Indian community must provide their support and commitment. Once the membership of a community agrees that there is a need to do something about the state of the language, and that the appropriate response is or includes a language project, then the initiator(s) may proceed to seek funding and begin organizing the project. In addition, interested members of the community must participate in the decision-making process of devising the project itself, and then continue to participate in giving broad direction to the project. Moreover, the language project must also extend into the home. Without the active use of the language at home, without the continued interest of the parents and grandparents, without close and frequent communication between the home and the language workers, and without shared responsibility of home and school, the language projects experience considerable difficulties in maintaining their momentum, their production, their enrollment, and their funding. This is one problem which we now face in B.C. - how to maintain the responsibility and participation of the home in the language projects.

(b) *The role of the school* or educational institution is also very important. Most of the language projects in B.C. are located in schools, be they reserve schools, public schools, or alternative schools. These tend to offer language instruction at the elementary level, where the language is the subject of instruction and is taught as a second language. Some language projects also offer instruction to adults, usually in a community setting. Most of the language projects focus on literacy, sometimes equating literacy with language maintenance, and sometimes viewing literacy as a means of supporting language maintenance. Finally, most language projects are 'obsessed' with the production of curriculum materials, such as lessons, units, alphabet charts, readers, picture books, dictionaries or collections of stories. Attention is increasingly being given to appropriate language for social interaction for both children and adults. Little consideration, if any, has been given to the degree of fluency desired, to the role and appropriateness of literacy in language maintenance, to full language retention versus limited language retention, to the selection of domains of language use for limited language retention, to the necessity or not of modernizing the languages, to the integration of types of speech acts and speech roles recognized by the Indian speech community, to the replication of efforts from one community to the next and to the politics of language projects.

Most importantly, little clarification has been offered in British Columbia of the relationship between Indian language education and the larger social arena. Is Indian language education a potential servant to multiculturalism where schools are implementers of Canadian government policy? Does the school bear the primary, if not full responsibility, for second language education (Tucker, 1982)? Is Indian language education fostering native people's aspirations for nationhood? Does Indian language education contribute to providing equal opportunities for all Canadians? When parents and political leaders decide on Indian language education for Indian youngsters, are they providing an opportunity for these individuals to choose who or what they will become (Appleton, 1982)? Does Indian language education contribute to building a democracy or to creating division and discrimination between individuals and

peoples (Appleton, 1983)? Is there incompatibility between the ideas of Indian language education and national unity? What kind of society is envisaged by the proponents of Indian language education? These and similar questions are now being posed in British Columbia. looking at the broad objectives and motivations which underlie Indian language education.

(c) These questions about the relationship of Indian language education and the broader social arena lead to a third factor which affects the survival of language projects: *government policy and funding*. Since 1971, in Canada, multiculturalism within a bilingual framework has been official government policy. This policy was outlined in response to the report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism. Thus. it is the policy of the Canadian federal government to assist Canadian cultural groups to overcome cultural barriers to participation in mainstream society, to promote 'creative encounters' among cultural groups, and to assist immigrants in learning at least one of the two official languages.

As noted by Edwards (1981), the idea of muhiculturalism is a rather elastic one and can be conceptualized m a number of ways. Moreover, this policy of multiculturalism opened up debate on ethnicity, bringing up for review what Canada is all about (Buchignani. 1982). At least two interpretations of this policy are possible: the first interpretation can be seen as encouraging those members of ethnic groups who want to do so to maintain a proud sense of the contribution of their group to Canadian society, while the second interpretation can be seen as enabling various peoples to transfer or maintain their cultures and languages as living wholes into a new place and time. According to Burnet (1975, 1979), the second view leads to the generation of myths, having to do with misinterpretations of the policy's intent, and as actual reality, is probably doomed. The first interpretation, again according to the same author, leads to something very North American - voluntary marginal differentiation among peoples who are equal participants in the society.

The Canadian Consultative Council on Multiculturalism and the Multiculturalism Directorate were created from this policy within the Department of the Secretary of State, which is now a source of funding for multicultural activities such as heritage language programmes and conferences.

The multiculturalism policy of the government implies four approaches to multicultural education (Young, 1979; Gibson, 1976; Edwards, 1982):
l)   education of the culturally different which addresses minority students and aims to reducing home/school differences for some pupils;
2)   education about cultural difference which addresses all students and aims to promoting an understanding of cultural diversity;
3)   education for cultural pluralism which also addresses all students, but especially minority students, and alms to promoting and extending cultural diversity in society at large: and
4)   bicultural education which extends the third approach to promoting biculturalism within individuals.

The last two approaches are clearly the ones in which Indian language education falls, yet, at the same time. according to Burnet and Edwards, these approaches are the ones which stem from a misinterpretation of the policy's intent and

which are probably the most unworkable. However, this does not seem to deter the proponents of Indian language education. In a more positive analysis, George Manual and M. Posluns (1979), in their discussion of the Fourth World in Canada, astutely note that "The ethnic model teaches us that a Confederation founded on the belief in 'two founding nations' can broaden its perspective when it appears to be politically expedient to do so. That is a source of enormous hope and confidence."

The federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development has acknowledged the principle of Indian control of Indian education put forward in the May 1973 presentation of the National Indian Brotherhood's paper "Indian Control of Indian Education", as marking a significant milestone in the development of Indian education in Canada. In keeping with this principle, DIAND develops programmes, sets criteria and makes funding available for a number of Indian endeavours in educational and cultural development.

At the provincial level, British Columbia lacks a firm and formal policy statement for multiculturalism. Two documents, however, funded by the provincial government, provide an indication of British Columbia,s policy: the 1979 conference report 'Towards a Provincial Multicultural Policy' and the 1981-82 Grey Report from the Cultural Heritage Office of the Advisor. Among the recommendations offered to the provincial government are several which call for the government to recognize and assist ancestral languages and cultures, and to guarantee non-official languages as languages of instruction, along with an official language, in the public school system wherever sufficient numbers of students, circumstances, and agreement of parents warrant such provisions. Within the governmental organization, the Ministry of Education includes staff and structure in the area of language education: a consultant on multiculturalism within a branch including French immersion, ESL and other language instruction,[3] and a Director of Indian Education within the Division of Special Education. The latter provides funding for those Indian education projects, including language projects, which are within the public school system.

Also at the provincial level, one organization of Indian government, the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs (UBCIC), has stated that Indian languages are a priority. This was expressed through a resolution at a conference in the Spring of 1982. In August 1982, the 17 Shuswap bands issued the Shuswap Declaration which includes a number of statements with respect to language and culture, and which resolves that the bands join together for the purposes of developing language and cultural educational materials.

However, in spite of federal and Indian government policy, and of the availability of funding from the federal and provincial governments, people continue to struggle in British Columbia with the pluralist dilemma: to make sure that all children receive adequate education in those things which matter for the society as a whole, while at the same time trying to promote ethnicity and equality where possible. (See McDiarmid, 1977, for a discussion of Indian education as no exception to this basic dilemma.)

But the view need not be so gloomy. One consequence of multiculturalism is "a resurgence of and a willingness of the bureaucracies, federal and provincial,

to give cognizance to the aboriginals' will to speak out about their survival and
to re-conceptualize their strategies" (D'Oyley, 1982:123). Native peoples have
re-asserted and revitalized the concept of aboriginal rights by re-examining
treaties, pressing land and fishing claims, emphasizing the recovery of the riches
of their languages and cultures, and by challenging the invasions of their environ-
ment. This is exemplified by the Nisghas of Nass Valley, B.C., who have had
some success with the establishment of their own Indian school district which
emphasizes bilingualism-biculturalism and with the use of the courts t o insist
on aboriginal rights. Additionally, in response to and with heightened awareness,
formal institutions have been making their programs more welcome to Native
students.

Thus, the conflict inherent in Canada's policy between the anglophone/
francophone duality and the egalitarian notion of multiculturalism, may lead
to attempts to resolve it. D'Oyley (1982) calls for a recognition of Canadian
society as consisting of five groups: (i) the aboriginal, (ii) the anglophone,
(iii) the francophone, (iv) the later Europeans, and (v) the later visible minorities
(i.e., African and Asian). This view of Canadian society, as a hand with five
fingers rather than as a smorgasbord or mosaic, offers a more dynamic possi-
bility for Indian education and for Native language maintenance efforts.

(d) A fourth factor which affects Indian language projects in B.C. is the
role of specialists. These include specialists outside the local Indian community,
such as linguists, ethnographers and anthropologists, educators, curriculum
developers and evaluators, as well as specialists within the local Indian
community, such as university-trained teachers and language instructors, curri-
culum developers, language workers including elders as informants/consultants,
and literacy workers.

A necessary precondition for Indian language projects appears to be the
availability of published linguistic research, which means the existence of a
grammar, sometimes also the existence of texts and of a dictionary, and usually
the development of an orthography. The availability of these reference materials
and the development of curriculum materials has entailed the presence of
specialists in the local Indian community. Although we are now beginning to
observe the effects of the presence of specialists on Indian communities in B.C.,
we have not yet documented or assessed this impact, nor have we actualized
parameters to guide their interactions with ordinary members of the Indian
community. In many cases, specialists leave a residue of their presence. They
tend to be or to become bridges between Natives and non-Natives, agents of
change and perhaps even power brokers, whether or not this was intended.
Moreover, specialists may create a greater dependency and passivity on the
part of the community which may withdraw, at least in part, since the specialists
are now in charge of the language and the job of keeping it alive.

Specialists from within the Indian community may reinforce existing or
historical class or caste distinctions, with resulting increased elitism and
diminished cooperation and feelings of self-worth on the part of others. This
may be accompanied by a reduction in the value one places upon one's own
fluency and knowledge of the language. Specialists may also violate social

distinctions,   tainting   the   language   project   with   covert   non-prestige   values,
leading to diminished returns.

Specialists from outside the Indian   community   tend to bring their own set
of concepts, values and morals, and to influence the   community,   often uncon-
sciously. The pressure to standardize and normalize the Indian languages is one
of these,   yet the   standardization of European languages is linked to   the
invention of the printing press, to imperialism and to industrialization, and is
thus   relatively recent. The pressure to deal with the problem of language
obsolescence/death   with   a   solution   which   involves   the   schools   is   another
influence, stemming from a society at large which tends to solve problems with
institutionalized   and   organized   responses.   Similarly,   literacy   as   a   means   of
language maintenance stems from a myth prevalent in the society at large, yet
examination of the consequences of literacy cast serious   doubt on the efficacy
of literacy as a means of language maintenance and for individual or group social
mobility (Graft, 1979; Scribner and Cole, 1981a, 1981b; Lockridge, 1974).

However, the presence of specialists and their role as researchers, developers
and   proponents   of language education is positive as well, resulting in valuable
records and recommendations, in increased pride of heritage, and in the satis-
faction of doing something. Quite importantly, specialists may provide direction
and guidance with which to further Indian language maintenance efforts.

(e)   A fifth factor which affects Indian language education is the language
learner. It is   important   to realize   that minority language children do not
constitute a homogeneous group (Cummins, 1982). In B.C., there are differences
both   with Indian children of the same linguistic and cultural group with respect
to oral proficiency in English and Indian, as well as differences between various
groups. For only four Athapaskan language groups (see Table l) it is likely that
first language proficiency will be in an Indian language. Some children have a
minimal or passive knowledge of Indian. For many   other children, Indian is a
second language. However, even monolingual English-speaking children of Indian
ancestry retain the socio-cultural rules of the Indian   community   for appropriate
use of language, that is of English (Philips, 1970, 1983). Children learn socially
appropriate ways of structuring discourse in their homes and their communities.
Native   Indian   children   learn   culturally   distinctive   systems   for   socially
appropriate communication, including ways of conveying   attention and regulat-
ing turns at talk. Hence, instruction in or   about a Native language would
necessitate curriculum materials and teaching methods predicated upon a socio-
culturally appropriate discourse system.

Moreover,children as language learners respond to their environment. In
communities where the language is used very little, and where no social,
economic, or political benefits accrue from the knowledge of an Indian language,
children will see little value in knowing it and will prefer to participate in extra-
curricular activities or to stay in the   homeroom classroom rather than to par-
ticipate in Indian language classes. Adolescents and adults as language learners
may see value in knowing some of the language in spite of an apparent lack of
language usage. It may be used, for example, to read and   understand old records
and   texts about the culture and history of the people. However, even where

enrollment and motivation are less than could be expected, positive outputs have been noted (Wilson, no date). These include a reduction of racial tensions in schools with a language programme, increased self-sufficiency on the part of language learners and language workers, an improved view of schooling more generally, and increased helping behaviour between older and younger students. However, little consideration, if any, has been given to what the language learners wish to achieve or to obtain from language programmes. Nor has consideration been given to the interaction between successful language programmes and the learners' cultural identity (Cummins, 1982). Nor have there been systematic evaluations of the level of fluency and other desired or noted outputs, such as change of level of self-esteem, in proficiency in English, in school attendance and performance. Such evaluations are becoming increasingly important to ensure the validity, credibility and even existence of Indian language programmes in the public schools in an era of educational cutbacks in British Columbia.

Enhancing the Viability of the Context

Finally, it should be acknowledged that Indian language education lies somewhere between, social science and social policy. To date. much of the language planning which has occurred in B.C. has focussed on pedagogical and linguistic issues, often involving intense emotional debate and involving much rhetoric. Examining the sociopolitical context of Indian language education in B.C. and taking action leads to social planning and engineering. Thus, we address the key factor affecting Indian language education: the community and the home, especially where Indian is spoken very little and where no apparent benefits accrue from knowledge and use of an Indian language.

The following suggestions are put forward for consideration and response. First of all, clarification and specification of goals, commitment and action by the Indian community is needed. This is very important. The funding and success of Indian language projects in the B.C. public schools are currently under consideration and a refocussing of goals and workable action is necessary.

The role of parents cannot be underestimated in the success of second-language school-based programs. A lesson to this effect can be learned from the immersion phenomenon in Canada where an association, Canadian Parents for French (CPF), has contributed in no small way to the spread of this form of bilingual education, especially by means of their organized insistent requests for immersion programs and their remarkable participation and support (Gibson, 1984). The Canadian immersion approach to second language teaching is highly successful as Stern (1984:4) has noted:

> No one interested in language policy, language education, and bilingualism in Canada can afford to ignore this unique form of bilingual schooling which has made such a powerful impact on the language scene and the sociopolitical climate in Canada . . . It has implications for other bilingual settings and for second-language

pedagogy in general anywhere in the world.

Secondly, if language retention is deemed feasible, and is in fact desirable and receives active commitment, then steps need to be taken to make the home and the community the real basis and location of language retention efforts. This involves beginning the language programme at birth so that a child's first words are in a native language. The importance of very early exposure is illustrated by Janet Werker's research (1982) on the acquisition of velar/uvular distinctions in Thompson. Babies who hear the language at home, and who are spoken to in the language, maintain the ability to distinguish these sounds beyond the age of 11 - 12 months, whereas babies who are not spoken to in the language, and whose first words are in English lose this ability by the age of 11 - 12 months. Although such distinctions can be learned much later in life, this does not reduce the premium on first language acquisition in a natural setting.

Enhancing the viability of the context of Indian language education also involves considering and creating domains of language use compatible with goals, commitment and available fluency, and endowing these uses of the language with economic and social rewards. An example of this would be to require reasonable, pre-determined levels of language fluency in specific contexts for all jobs controlled by local Indian governing agencies, the band office and band-run programmes, with specified time periods for attaining appropriate levels of fluency and with all subsequent employment and pay raises tied to language fluency and language use. The strategy of tying language fluency and use to job criteria with economic consequences has been put into practice elsewhere (Quebec, which legislated French as the language of the work place).

Other techniques to consider include those which involve interpersonal contacts: summer camps where a native language is spoken; meals taken where native language-speaking alders are present, in the home, in the community centre and in the school; increased and sustained contact between grandparents and grandchildren for clearly defined language purposes; fluency testing by elders of students in Indian language programmes; and the deliberate use of a language in group interaction regardless of the presence of a few non-speakers. Literacy in a native language can be encouraged for interpersonal, adult use as prestigious behaviour, for example, in letters to friends and relatives, in making lists, in the exchange of recipes, and in keeping private, family and medicinal records. These uses of literacy exist and are viable in other traditional oral societies (the Vai in Africa and the Cherokee in the United States).

The importance of promoting language use in interpersonal contacts is suggested by follow-up studies of grade 6 and 11 immersion and non-immersion students. French immersion students reported that they were not making significantly greater use of French outside school than were non-immersion, core French-as-a-second language students, except in interpersonal encounters (Genesee, 1982). It follows then, that to promote language use, a greater use of 'the selected language in extracurricular activities involving interpersonal encounters is recommended.

My suggestion, then, is that the best way of enhancing the context of

Indian language education is by actively promoting language use and fluency. This appears to be the next stage of social planning and action, if it is deemed worthwhile and possible to maintain the languages. If not, the goals of Indian language education, and of specific programmes, are to be redefined by the community, with subsequent effect on structure, methodology, materials and output.

NOTES

1. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the third annual conference on Native American Language Issues (NALI) in Seattle, Washington, December 1 - 3, 1982.

    My primary purpose in attending the NALI conference was to develop an awareness of Indian language education models, while examining the goals and effectiveness of these projects as they currently exist in various Indian communities. The Makah Language Project in Neah Bay, Washington, under the direction of Ann Renker, Arlington Flinn, John A. Thomas, and others, indicates concern for language needs assessment in Indian communities in the Canadian Northwest. Programs dealing with Navajo and Alaskan language education are also of considerable interest to Indian language education in British Columbia. Delegates from Warm Springs, Oregon reported discussions in their area over tying language use to jobs on the reservation. They have not yet reached any firm decisions or commenced action for implementing language programs in their communities, however.

    A subsequent version of this paper circulated as background information at the conference 'Successes in Indian Education: A Sharing', held February 16 - 19, 1983, in Vancouver, B.C.

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2. Burnaby (1981) includes a discussion of Native language programming and literacy in Ontario.

3. This multiculturalism consultant position was cut in Fall 1983 due to the provincial government's restraint practices.

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