Dakota Language: Past, Present and Future

An Examination of Pedagogical Concerns and Practices for Language Revitalization

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Abstract

Language is not ahistorical. Without an understanding of history, we cannot begin to understand the meaning of language revitalization. This paper is a combination of historical background and present-day issues relating to indigenous languages, specifically Dakota. The first section situates Dakota in its historical context and considers the lasting effects of imperialism and colonialism. The second section explores some of the pedagogical aspects of working with an endangered, indigenous language, discussing how teaching Dakota is different from and similar to teaching other languages. The third section examines the use of technology: a review is provided of online resources available for learners and teachers of Dakota, including the pioneering of the University of Minnesota's Dakota Language instructional website. The fourth section is a mini-study of adult learners of Dakota, designed to identify their learning habits and explore ways to help them become more effective language learners. Finally, findings and experiences are summarized, pedagogical implications are discussed, and suggestions for future research are offered.

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Section I: Background

Historians as well as imperial powers have long understood the tie between language and empire. It has been observed that "Language has long ridden aside the forces of expansion and conquest" (Willinsky, 1998, p. 190), including the ancient Greeks, Romans, and Chinese—and the United States. Imperialism, "in its most general meaning, [is] the imposition of a single set of economic, political or cultural norms by a powerful outside group" (Mühlhäusler, 1996, p. 18). For Native Americans, this period of colonial control under a "powerful outside group" (i.e. the U.S. Government) arguably continues to this day. Particularly relevant for this paper, under colonialism,

> the colonized's mother tongue, that which is sustained by his feelings, emotions and dreams, that in which his tenderness and wonder are expressed, thus that which holds the greatest emotional impact, is precisely the one which is the least valued. It has no stature in the country or in the concert of peoples. If he wants to obtain a job, make a place for himself, exist in the community and the world, he must first bow to the language of his masters. In the linguistic conflict within the colonized, his mother tongue is that which is crushed. He himself sets about discarding this infirm language, hiding it from the sight of strangers. (Memmi, 1965, p. 107)

Significantly, we should remember that "Languages are not lost by accident or willingly forsaken" (Willinsky, 1998, p. 190).

A useful theoretical framework for considering the colonization of indigenous languages throughout the world, as well as the dominance of English, is offered by Phillipson in his *Linguistic Imperialism* (1992). The "working definition" of linguistic imperialism, specifically English linguistic imperialism, is that "the dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment, [. . . with] continuous

reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages" (1992, p. 47). He suggests that,

> The relevant empirical question for us to ask is whether the expansion of English...serves to encourage and promote other languages and cultures or the reverse. Universal and regional human rights covenants pay lip-service to linguistic diversity, but there is overwhelming evidence of linguicide, with speakers of 'world languages' as active agents in the demise of other languages. (Phillipson, 1992, p. 102)

It is important for teachers of English as a Second/Foreign Language to understand why English is a world language (McKay, S., 2002). The flip-side is understanding why Dakota is an endangered language. They have the same source: colonialism and imperialism.

The boarding school period of American Indian history lasted from the middle nineteenth century into the 1970s (Nabokov, 1999). Some schools were run by churches, some by the American government. According to the House of Representatives Select Committee on Indian Affairs in 1944, "The goal of Indian education should be to make the Indian child a better American rather than to equip him simply to be a better Indian" (McBeth, 1983, p. 78). Many American Indian children were taken away from their parents and homes, usually around the age of six, and sent to faraway schools until they were eighteen, where they were indoctrinated with American beliefs in white cultural superiority and Christianity, made to speak English, and severely punished for speaking their native languages or practicing their traditions. The result of years of aggressive assimilation policies is that "Indian people have internalized this illusion [of white superiority] just as deeply as white Americans have..." (Tinker, 1993, p. 2).

The results were devastating. "By what else is the heritage of a people handed down?" asked Memmi. "By the education which it gives to its children, and by language, that wonderful reservoir constantly enriched with new experiences" (Memmi, 1965, p. 104). When the children were taken away and educated by the colonizers, that "wonderful reservoir" was in danger of drying up. Because language is so intricately tied to culture and identity, linguicide is a human rights issue just as much as genocide is.

It is important to keep the boarding school experience in mind when considering present-day Indian education. It is important to remember that, "any [. . .] teacher who is trying to construct or reconstruct a personal philosophy of teaching needs to know the historical inheritances with which s/he is working" (Crookes, 2003, p. 62). There were certain things Native people learned in the boarding schools—about corporal punishment, mental abuse, discipline, and submersion methods of teaching—that have a heavy effect on indigenous language teaching today.

Dakota Iapi

Dakota is part of a larger linguistic family of North American languages known as Siouan, which includes "Sioux," Assiniboine, and Stoney. The people commonly known as "Sioux" refer to themselves as Dakota or Lakota, depending on dialect (Parks & DeMallie, 1992). Parks and DeMallie employ the term "Sioux" for the language because "its use obviates the necessity of selecting between the terms Dakota and Lakota, thereby giving priority to one dialectal form over the other" (1992, p. 234). Nevertheless, throughout this paper I will generally use the term **Dakota**, except when I want to highlight the dialectical differences.

The Dakota people also call themselves the *Oçeṭi Śakowiŋ* (Seven Council Fires), and have always identified themselves as one nation, with one language, merely regional variations in pronunciation (White Hat, 1999). For most of this paper, my emphasis will be on the dialect spoken by four of the Seven Council Fires, collectively referred to as the "Santee Sioux," "Santee Dakota." In this paper I refer to this dialect as **Santee**. These are the *Bdewakaŋtuŋwaŋ* (or 'Mdewakanton'), *Waȟpetuŋwaŋ* ('Wahpeton'), and *Waȟpekute* bands; the fourth band, *Sisituŋwaŋ* ('Sisseton'), is considered by linguists to be a sub-dialect of Santee (Parks & DeMallie, 1992). I will generally consider the Sisseton sub-dialect part of Santee, except when highlighting dialectal variations. Two other bands of the Seven Council Fires, the *Ihaŋktuŋwaŋ* and the *Ihaŋktuŋwaŋna* ('Yankton' and 'Yanktonai'), have also historically referred to themselves as Dakota (Parks & DeMallie, 1992). I will refer to this dialect as **Yankton** when I want to emphasize its difference from the speech of the Santee bands. The seventh and largest band of the Seven Council Fires call themselves Lakota or *Tituŋwaŋ*. Their dialect is referred to in this paper as **Teton**. Santee, Teton, and Yankton are considered dialects of one language (Riggs, 1890/1992; Buechel & Manhart, 2002).

The three major dialects differ most noticeably at a phonological level, but also in morphologic and semantic ways as well. The diminutive suffix, for example, is *-la* in Teton, *-na* in Yankton, and *-da* or *-daŋ*[1] in Santee. The influence of Yankton on Sisseton is evident in that the diminutive suffix in Sisseton is also *-na*. Thus the word for 'boy' is variously *hokšila* (Teton), *hokšina* (Yankton and Sisseton), or *hokšida* (Santee).

[1] The -ŋ signalizes a nasal vowel.

The dialects do have different words, which can cause confusion. Bill Iron Moccasin, an 85-year-old native speaker of Teton who married into the Sisseton community, shared some insights into the dialect differences. He explained, "When I first came to Sisseton in 1970, . . . some of the terminology they used, I wasn't familiar with. But the basic part of the language is pretty much similar. . . . It sounds similar enough that you can understand it if you're kinda familiar with it" (Iron Moccasin, 2003). Some of the expressions are different, he said, "For example, you say *'Wotewagda,'* we say *'Lo waciŋ'*"[2] (Iron Moccasin, 2003).

In Yankton and Teton, the connector 'and' is *na*, whereas in Santee it is *k'a*; 'but' is *keyaś* in Yankton and Teton and *tka* or *tuka* in Santee. Some words have different meanings: *kuże* in Santee means 'lazy,' whereas in Teton it means 'sick.' Yankton and Teton undergo some morphophonemic changes that Santee does not. Allowing for the *d/l* phonological difference, they all have the same word for 'I go' in the present tense: *bde* or *ble*. When the future tense marker *kte* is added, however, Yankton and Teton say *Mniŋ kte*, while in Santee it remains *Bde kte*. On the other hand, Yankton is in some ways phonetically and semantically closer to Santee, such that sharing materials is generally easier between Santee and Yankton than it is between Santee and Teton. Speakers like Mr. Iron Moccasin, who marry someone of a different speech community, are likely to speak a mixture of dialects.

Because of the phonological differences between Santee, Teton, and Yankton (the so-called *d/l/n* division, as in the example of the diminutive suffix above), the Yankton/Yanktonai dialect is sometimes referred to as Nakota. However, as was

[2] "I'm hungry." Since the audience was Dakota-speaking, the speaker did not provide a translation. It is telling, however, that Iron Moccasin uses "you" for Dakota-speakers and "we" for Lakota-speakers.

mentioned before, the Yankton refer to themselves as Dakota. The people whose self-designation is "Nakota" (or "Nakoda") are the Assiniboine and Stoneys (Parks & DeMallie, 1992; Parks & Rankin, 2001). They are different enough that Franz Boas's student Ella Deloria, herself a native Teton speaker, had so much trouble understanding Assiniboine that she had to hire an interpreter (Parks & DeMallie, 1992). Nakota speakers—the Assiniboine and Stoney—are not part of the *Oçeṭi Śakowiŋ* or Seven Council Fires (White Hat, 1999; Parks & Rankin, 2001) and are therefore not included in this paper.

Originally the homelands of the Santee Dakota were in the area that would become western Wisconsin, Minnesota, and northern Iowa (Parks & Rankin, 2001). Their Yankton and Teton relatives lived further west. After the 1862 U.S.-Dakota War, however, the Santee Dakotas were exiled from the state of Minnesota; those not killed or rounded up by the army fled westward and northward, although some eventually returned. Because of this diaspora, speakers of Dakota can be found today in their original homelands of Minnesota, as well as North and South Dakota, Nebraska, Montana, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan (Parks & Rankin, 2001). Many Dakota language activists believe that these events—the 1862 war and the subsequent diaspora—are at least partially responsible for the current endangered state of the language (Neil McKay,[3] personal communication, January 23, 2006).

Orthography

Dakota was not traditionally a written language. Beginning in the 1830s, Protestant missionaries started documenting the language (Riggs, 1890/1992; Riggs

[3] No relation to Sandra McKay.

1893/2004). Their goal was to create written materials **in the Dakota language** to promote native literacy and teach Christianity (Parks & Rankin, 2001). The system of spelling developed by the missionaries Samuel and Gideon Pond, and modified by Stephen R. Riggs, became the *de facto* orthographic standard for Dakota. Over the years other linguists and language teachers have developed their own systems, to the point that there are almost as many different ways to write it as there are people who teach it (White Hat, 1999; Parks & Rankin, 2001). This has frequently led to "orthography wars." To date, there has been no general agreement as to which orthographic standard to use. The philosophy of those working with Dakota at the University of Minnesota is that there are more important things than spelling. Emphasis is placed on the ability to speak and understand spoken Dakota. Nevertheless, to minimize confusion in beginning students, the University of Minnesota Dakota language program uses a modified version of Riggs's orthography, which is what I use throughout this paper.

State of the Language

Dakota language activists are in a race against time. That will be the time it takes for all those people who now speak Dakota as their first language to die. Most of them are already in their seventies. The number of fluent Dakota speakers in Minnesota is shrinking, not growing. To my knowledge, there has been no official survey of the number of Dakota speakers left. In the year 2000, DeMallie estimated there to be 5000 "fluent speakers" of Teton, 600 of Santee-Sisseton, and 300 of Yankton (cited in Parks & Rankin, 2001). This estimate does not, however, give any indication where these speakers are. In Minnesota the number popularly bandied about most is "thirty fluent speakers

left," but that has been the word for years, and in the meantime elders have passed away. Probably the number is closer to twenty or even fewer, estimates Neil McKay, Dakota language instructor at the University of Minnesota (personal communication, January 23, 2006). There are four Federally-recognized Dakota communities in Minnesota, each with a handful of native speakers. The Twin Cities area also has a large Native American population, including a few speakers of Dakota or Lakota.

In the Twin Cities very few schools offer Dakota. Where it is taught, it is usually, in fact, the Teton dialect. This is largely because there are more Teton speakers. There are no schools in the Twin Cities where Dakota is taught to young people on a daily basis.[4] Most classes that do exist are about fifty minutes in length, and do not meet every day. The teachers are most often elderly native speakers. Their pupils learn lists of words, such as numbers, animals, colors, and a few culturally relevant expressions.

At the grass-roots level, people in various communities have formed "language tables" to learn and practice Dakota. Such get-togethers would be more accurately termed study groups or language classes. Unlike European language tables, participants of Dakota language tables rarely know enough of the language to be able to converse; also unlike European language tables, Dakota language tables usually have an instructor. Sometimes they are led by a language teacher, sometimes by an advanced student. They are informal and irregular; however, they are important for building community, socializing, and reinforcing the idea that the language is important.

[4] There is a new initiative to start two Dakota-language immersion preschools in Minneapolis, but this is still in the planning stage.

With all this in mind, I turn now to the subject of teaching the Dakota language: how it is different from and similar to teaching European or Asian languages and how it can benefit from the input of different teaching methodologies.

Section II: Teaching and Learning Dakota

As discussed in Section I, the psychological fallout from Indian boarding schools and anti-Indianism continues to affect indigenous languages. Teaching Dakota differs from teaching other Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTLs) in that it is an endangered and a colonized language. On the other hand, indigenous languages and other LCTLs do have some common ground. "There are significant institutional commonalities across various otherwise disparate language programs. Hindi, Hawaiian, Irish, Dutch, and Czech **[and Dakota]** are united by a certain marginality, lack of resources and visibility, and clout" (Johnston & Janus, 2003, p. 2). Thus Dakota teachers face many of the same challenges as other LCTL teachers and I believe can learn from their experiences and practices. My philosophy of teaching has been shaped by my background in American history,[5] particularly American Indian history and colonial theory. This section has been influenced by what I have observed in other Dakota language classes and at indigenous language conferences in the United States and Canada. It is the purpose of this section first to describe some of the challenges faced by Dakota teachers, putting these challenges in a wider language teaching context. Second, I discuss ways around these roadblocks. After all, "when we as teachers don't pass on the results of our struggles, a lot of the effort we go to is wasted—no one else benefits from it" (Crookes, 2003, p. 43).

An Endangered Language, A Colonized Language

Forcing generations of children to learn English at the expense of their native language was part of the genocidal campaign against Native Americans in the last

[5] I completed the requirements for an M.A. in History December 14, 2005.

century and a half. Part of the lasting legacy of the colonized mind is that Dakota people have internalized the assimilationist propaganda that English is better, and that learning Dakota is a waste of time (see for example Memmi, 1965; Tinker, 1993; Johnston, 2002; Johnston & Janus, 2003). Other effects of this colonizing process are evident in the fact that many Native American students are shy or lacking in self-confidence. It is also there in the disproportionate amount of alcoholism and physical and mental abuse in Indian communities. It is hard enough to find someone who can speak and teach the language, even harder to find someone who knows Dakota **and** is mentally and physically healthy.

During ESL practicum (spring semester, 2005) I had the unique opportunity to apprentice in Dakota language teaching, under the mentorship of University of Minnesota Dakota language instructor Neil McKay. Several things became evident to me. Teaching Dakota is not exactly like teaching other LCTLs. While Dakota has all of the problems LCTLs have, additionally there is the endangered status of the language and the psychological damage left over from colonization and assimilation. Dakota is in Stage 7 of endangerment, based on Fishman's (1991) Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale for threatened languages. That is, "Most users of [Dakota] are a socially integrated and ethnolinguistically active population but they are beyond child-bearing age" (Fishman, 1991, p. 89). If one speaker of Dutch dies, the Dutch language is not in danger of dying out. When one speaker of Dakota dies, the language itself suffers a life-threatening blow. Like the burning of the Library of Alexandria, it is incalculable, how much is lost. As McKay says, because the population of Dakota speakers is growing older without new speakers being replaced, *"We're in a race."*

Aside from this sense of urgency and the unhealthy colonized mind, the rest is not really all that different from other LCTLs. It is unfortunate that there is not more interaction between indigenous language teachers and other LCTL teachers, because they could be allies. Whatever the language, whether Dakota, Ojibwe, Irish, Hindi or Polish, teachers of these languages usually have fewer and more out-of-date pedagogical resources than teachers of more widely-taught languages such as English, French, or Spanish. Their languages occupy a marginal space on the edge of their institution,[6] they have low visibility, little or no technical support for their orthographies in mainstream computing, few colleagues in the field, and almost no political clout. In short, as a group they are "under-supported and under-appreciated" (Johnston & Janus, 2003, p. 10).

LCTL teachers have stated that one of the biggest issues in their field is convincing people—administrators, students, parents—that the language is worth learning (Johnston & Janus, 2003). McKay wrestles with this as well: "How do I get people to value the language without imposing it on them?" (personal communication, January 22, 2005). Imposing American ways and the English language on Indians was practiced for so long that many Native educators and students recoil at the very thought of academic discipline. Many people, because of what they or members of their families experienced, do not want to **force** their young people to learn their language. For this reason, according to retired Lakota language instructor Jim Clairmont, children at the former Heart of the Earth School in Minneapolis had the choice of taking Dakota or Ojibwe—or neither (personal communication, March 2005).

Over the last decade there has been an increase in the number of LCTLs being taught nationwide, including heritage and indigenous languages (Johnston & Janus,

[6] and probably have an office converted out of a broom closet in the basement

2003). Nevertheless, this increase "has not been matched by a concomitant rise in the amount or quality of teacher preparation and teacher professional development available for teachers of less commonly taught languages" (Johnston & Janus, 2003, p. 1, citing Walker & McGinnis, 1995).

Just as with English, there is a common misconception with indigenous languages that if you can speak the language, you can teach it. Native speakers are an invaluable resource, but being able to speak a language fluently and teach it to others are not the same thing. Many of my fellow students in the ESL program joined the program after an experience abroad where they were hired to teach English because they were native English speakers, and found it more difficult than expected. McKay never went through a teaching training program; he was hired because he was conversationally competent in Dakota (personal communication, January 22, 2005). Many indigenous language instructors, who are often "older, have had less schooling, [or] are more traditional," are hired because they can speak the language, not necessarily because they have any experience teaching (Littlebear, 2003). As a result, as director of the Interface Alaska Bilingual Multifunctional Resource Center Dr. Richard Littlebear has observed, "too many Native American language development programs fail because they are usually staffed with paraprofessionals. Many of these paraprofessionals have little or no training in how to teach their languages" (Littlebear, 2003).

Of all the conferences and symposia on indigenous languages I have attended since 2001, most of them have seemed merely to reiterate the urgent need to document endangered languages, expressed the desire to pass them on to future generations, and described individual language-revitalization initiatives. The theme of such gatherings

could be summed up most often as "My language is dying and we need to save it," without usually giving language teachers anything they can take home with them and put into practice in the classroom. This is **not** to say such conferences are a waste of time. LCTL teachers are very often isolated in their school or institution, indigenous language teachers even more so. A survey of LCTL teachers found a general belief among these teachers that they would benefit from interacting and talking about teaching with each other (Johnston & Janus, 2003). If nothing else, indigenous language conferences help establish networks and remind indigenous language teachers that their work is important.

The belief with many endangered languages may be that there is not time to train native speakers in how to teach, because of their advancing age and the critical need for young people to be learning it **right now**. An alternative to training native speakers before they start teaching is to train them **while** they are teaching. Even trained teachers continue to attend workshops and other professional development opportunities to expand and improve their repertoire. Untrained teachers, especially older, more traditional native speakers, may not have heard of proficiency-oriented teaching techniques such as TPR or the Direct Method. Inexperienced teachers generally fail to produce students with any communicative ability (Greymorning, 1997); they tend to rely heavily on lecture, textbook, chalkboard, and teaching word lists. Indigenous language programs may feel they have to take what they can get, but is the critical state of the language a justification for employing insufficiently trained teachers?

There is, ironically, skepticism among many indigenous language teachers, particularly the older, first-language speakers, that anyone can in fact acquire the language. McKay recalls numerous times when an indigenous language instructor has

opined, "No one will ever be able to speak the language like I do," or "This language is too hard for anyone to learn," or expressed a belief that, because people today do not speak the same way as people a hundred years ago, the language is already lost (personal communication, January 23, 2006). In the spring of 2005 I attended a workshop for indigenous language instructors and observed this myself. The methodology propounded was a variant of the Direct Method (Hadley, 1993). Participants expressed doubt that students really could acquire sentence-level speaking ability in an indigenous language, especially without the use of English in the classroom. When students demonstrated that they could, in fact, describe (in Arapaho) an assortment of pictures, audience members seemed to think there was some trick. I asked the workshop leader, Arapaho language activist Dr. Stephen Greymorning, if he had observed this phenomenon. He answered, "Yes, people are skeptical. [T]eachers frequently think that their language is too difficult for students to learn. Why [they think this] could vary from not having a solid base of how language is acquired, to not [wanting] to do the work necessary, to not really being committed enough to fight the fight, the answers vary" (Greymorning, personal communication, February 4, 2006). A first-year Dakota student had these encouraging words to say: "I had a tendency when I first started the class to think that it was going to be too difficult to ever advance in very far, on top of the fact that finding people to speak with was going to be difficult. The language is **not** too difficult." One key to successful language teaching, then, may be to instill in teachers the confidence that the language **can** be learned.

Student retention is another concern. McKay and University of Minnesota Ojibwe instructor Dennis Jones have wrestled with this problem. As university instructors, they

have to enforce some kind of attendance policy. Dakota instructors cannot afford to "weed" out students through tough grading or discipline. In the case of some LCTLs, decreasing enrollments can lead to the class being dropped (Johnston & Janus, 2003). But, at some point, the teacher has to decide when to let someone go. This is perhaps not all that different from ESL classes, where learners' chances for success in life may depend on their proficiency in ESL. Either way, losing students has serious consequences, but the stakes are raised by the caveat that Dakota is endangered. If a student drops out of an ESL class, the chances of success for that individual may be damaged, but the English language is not affected. In Dakota, every student lost means one less person who might continue to use the language, maybe even go on to teach it.

Dakota is among the LCTLs "learned primarily for cultural and social reasons" (Johnston & Janus, 2003, p. 1). The exoticism of Dakota for non-Indians, and the desire of many Native Americans to reclaim their heritage and traditions, attracts many to Dakota language classes. However, not all students have proficiency as their goal. They may want only to be able to say their Indian name (see for example Deloria, 1998), or to pray and sing ceremonial songs. Requests of this type are common: "I want to give my horse/dog/child/ranch/car a Sioux name" or "Can you translate this prayer for me?" Such people rarely want to take the time to learn how to **speak** the language. This motivation is not entirely unique to indigenous languages. People might decide they want to learn French because they heard it was a "romance" language or take Swedish because their ancestors came from Sweden. The difference, again, is that Dakota language teachers are in a race and cannot afford to take the time to indulge students' fads when the language is dying out.

It is not a **living** language when used only for ceremonial purposes. At a language conference in Berkeley in 2004, a native Karuk of northern California told us she started learning her ancestral language because she wanted to be able to pray in the language. But, she said, she soon realized that before she could pray in the language, she had to be able to say mundane things like "I had pancakes for breakfast and I went to the gas station" (Nancy Steele, personal communication, June 13, 2004).

Related to the exotic appeal of Dakota is often the acceptance (or not) of Dakota as a modern, living language. When I taught my Mendota students the Dakota word for "remote control,"[7] somebody said, "Oh c'mon, they didn't have those!" I pointed out that white people did not always have remote control gadgets either. Some people have to be constantly reminded that Dakotas are not frozen in the nineteenth century.

This brings us to the issue of how much of the target language (Dakota) versus how much English is going to be used in the classroom. For this, Dakota language teachers ought to be in the same situation as any other second-language teachers. However, because of the long history of the boarding schools and submersion education, it is not quite the same. Many Dakota teachers, especially the older ones (and there are **few** younger ones!), are reluctant to impose a firm Dakota-only policy in the classroom (Johnston, 2002). It may be that they do not want to risk traumatizing their students as they or their parents and grandparents were. It could also be related to the afore-mentioned skepticism that Dakota proficiency is attainable.

If Dakota is to be used as the language of instruction, it will need an expansion of vocabulary. This sometimes runs into resistance. This is not unique to Dakota. There was

[7] It's a word I made up, but then "remote control" is a made-up word too. Native speakers might come up with something else. This meant, approximately, "makes it go from a distance." Another option might be "instrument for commanding from a distance."

strong resistance to the modernization of Hebrew, for example, even those who felt it was disrespectful of a sacred language to use it for everyday communicative purposes (Fishman, 1991). There are people—often older, first-language speakers of Dakota—who may not see the need to have modern words in Dakota, or to have Dakota words for traditionally foreign concepts such as linguistic metalanguage. It is not unusual for native speakers to use a mixture of Dakota and English, or to hear a native Dakota speaker say, when a Dakota term is lacking or communication falters, "Just say it in English." In an immersion preschool setting a few years ago, at the request of the director, the native speakers created Dakota words for popular items in a box of toys, such as exotic animals, dinosaurs, Muppets and Smurfs. But they were then so uncomfortable using these newly coined words that they preferred to hide the box of toys instead (Johnston, 2002).

It is difficult to pinpoint the cause(s) of such attitudes. African writer Albert Memmi, in his classic essay on colonialism (1965) described a state he called "petrification," whereby the "[c]olonized society is a diseased society in which internal dynamics no longer succeed in creating new structures" (pp. 98-99), and for the colonized individual, "nothing is left for him but to live isolated from his age. [...] Planning and building his future are forbidden" (p. 102). On the other hand, it could also be the "When-I-was-your-age" phenomenon experienced any time older generations reject "new-fangled" things, which is not unique to indigenous peoples. Either way, for Dakota to survive well into the twenty-first century, attitudes will need to change enough to bring up a new generation of first-language Dakota speakers.

Adult students.

Another feature common to LCTLs and indigenous languages is that, besides the teachers frequently being untrained, students are often inexperienced and naive when it comes to learning a second language. LCTL teachers have reported having students "with no exposure to foreign languages and with little understanding of their own native English language" (Johnston & Janus, 2003, p. 6). Dakota students, too, often have little or no experience in learning a second language. One of the reasons adults have problems, according to Dr. Stephen Greymorning, Arapaho language activist and teacher trainer, is that they want to move right away to the level of sophistication they're accustomed to in English (Greymorning, 2005). Greymorning acknowledges that it is frustrating and disempowering, not being able to communicate fluently, but "they have to learn to accept that they're going to be babies for a while" (Greymorning, 2005). Language anxiety in the classroom is not unusual, but it may be compounded when the learner is Dakota and has issues of colonization to deal with.

Community Dakota language classes like the one I teach in Mendota have much in common with other adult education classes, regardless of the topic. The Mendota class meets for two hours, once a week. The learners are at all different levels. Some are reasonably proficient and others can barely say "Thank you." Attendance is sporadic, people come and go from week to week, people come late, few people study between classes or have anyone to practice with, most have families and jobs and other full-time concerns. This is not unlike adult ESL classes, where those struggling to learn English also work full-time and have families and other concerns. One of the differences is that ESL students living in the United States are surrounded by English. Not so for Dakota

students. However, many of the pedagogical concerns are similar, and teachers of Dakota could draw from Adult Basic Education methodologies.

A common phenomenon I have noticed is that adult students— especially in the informal community language classes—are so reliant on writing, they are incapable of answering even simple questions without referring to their notebooks. Teachers of other languages may experience this too, especially when the class meets infrequently. I ask a student "How are you?" and the student frantically flips through her notes, then comes up with "My name is Sue." They do not get enough practice, they do not hear the language enough, and they rely too much on notes. I have noticed that some students become completely tongue-tied when trying to read a word, whereas, if I have them simply repeat after me, their pronunciation is fine. Writing can be a handy tool, but it can get in the way of oral communication.

Another challenge is the time commitment it takes to learn a language satisfactorily. This, of course, is not unique to Dakota. The problem lies in establishing a time for a Dakota language class, and maintaining attendance, and convincing enough people that it is worth the time to attend. People may perceive there is not enough reward for the effort of learning a minority language, as opposed to a "useful" language like English or Spanish (Johnston & Janus, 2003). Time is against us, both in the sense that native speakers are aging and dying off without new speakers being replaced, and also in the sense that it takes **time** to learn a language, and who has that kind of luxury?

Looking Forward

That having been said, how does the loss of native speakers affect our methodologies in the classroom? Our students are not dying out. What would it mean to put aside the "My-language-is-dying" mantra and teach Dakota like any other world language, with the goal of communicative competence in mind?

Modern words.

An important part of keeping the language alive is keeping the young people interested in it, and young people want to be able to talk about new things like computers, CD players, and iPods. If a word is not coined in the indigenous language, people will borrow the word from some other language, most likely English. One way the people of Iceland have been able to keep their language intact for so long is that they coin new words in Icelandic, rather than borrowing words from English (Roberts, 2001). French, Hebrew, and Hawaiian all have committees for the coinage, approval, and publication of new words (Fishman, 1991; Paulston, Chen, & Connerty, 1993; Wilson & Kamana, 2001). So far, Dakota does not.

This is very much part of my teaching philosophy: that Dakota is a highly productive and adaptive language, and anything that can be said in English or German or Chinese, can be expressed in Dakota too. Siouan languages in general have historically been resistant to borrowing words from other languages, more often using their own morphology and descriptive nature to coin new words (Parks & Rankin, 2001). Glenn Wasicuna is a native speaker from Sioux Valley, Manitoba, currently teaching Dakota at Gustavus Adolphus College in southern Minnesota. He said of the process of creating

new words, "You have to describe it. It's not one word, like in English" (Wasicuna, 2004).[8] Doris Pratt, a native speaker and long-time Dakota activist also from Sioux Valley, said about words for modern things, "*Waŋžida śni* ['There's not just one']. You can name it according to the context in which you use it" (Pratt, 2003, my translation).

This of course leads to the existence of different words in different dialects for the same thing, but this is not usually an obstacle. This can happen in any language and is not unique to language learners. One can usually ask for clarification or figure out the meaning from context. An American visiting England, for example, would probably eventually be able to figure out what *Put the pram in the boot* means.

For Dakota words, a couple of examples will suffice. Horses were at one time new to the Dakota, thus they needed a word for the creatures. Probably because of the nature and personality of the horse, they seemed to early Dakota like large *(ṭaŋka)* or powerful/ mysterious (*waḳaŋ*) dogs (*śuŋka*). Thus two of the most common words for 'horse' are *śuŋkṭaŋka* and *śuŋkawaḳaŋ*. Another example is the word for 'car.' Although different communities have their own words for 'car,' they are all based on Dakota etymology and essentially have the same meaning, combining *iyeciŋka* ('on its own,' 'by itself,' or 'auto') plus some verb meaning going, walking, or running ('mobile'): *iyeciŋkopte, iyeciŋkaiyopte, iyeciŋmani, iyeciŋka iŋyaŋka*, etc.

Individuals (usually teachers) may coin new Dakota words, but as yet there is no system or organization for documenting and publicizing such neologisms. A picture

[8] The page "Coining New Words" of the *Mnisota Dakota Iapi Owayawa* website (http://www.cla.umn.edu/dakota/akahpapi/Supplemental/newwords.htm) contains audio recordings from three pairs of native speakers discussing modern words and how words are coined in Dakota. Most of the recordings are in the Dakota language, although even listeners unfamiliar with the language can get the sense that there is usually more than one way to say something, and the dialogues are interspersed with English.

dictionary was produced in Manitoba nearly twenty years ago, with Dakota words for some modern things including computers, disk drives, and stereo systems (O'Halloran, 1987). However, any innovations since 1987 are absent, and the book has limited distribution in the United States. A listserv (see Section III) was established to enable Dakota teachers to share new vocabulary and other communications, but few use it. The native speakers are usually the older people, and demographically the older people are the least likely to use computers and the Internet (Buszard-Welcher, 2001). What really is needed is some kind of corpus planning committee. Failing that, however, the next best thing may be for a few dedicated individuals simply to make up the new words and start using them with each other and with their students.

Methodology.

Current thinking in second-language pedagogy indicates that teachers in proficiency-oriented classrooms make as much use of the target language as possible (Hadley, 1993). This means not only teaching **about** the language and teaching individual words in the language, but teaching **through** the target language. McKay, a second-language speaker of Dakota in his thirties, is fairly unique in his use of Dakota as the language of instruction. In the other Dakota classes I have visited, English was always the language of instruction.

It takes forethought, practice, and a firmly self-disciplined mind to teach through the target language. Greymorning acknowledged that students do get frustrated (2005). He just tells them, "You'll figure it out." And eventually they do. Moreover, Greymorning pointed out that when they do, they will know the material better than if their teacher had

simply told them. If a student is really stuck, Greymorning will give clues using signs and gestures or examples from what the students already know. He told his audience at the training workshop, "The only English I use in class is to say 'Don't look at me, I'm not going to tell you the answer. You'll figure it out'" (Greymorning, 2005). McKay will occasionally use English in his Dakota class, but only as a last resort (personal communication, January 21, 2005). Usually, through pictures, gestures, numerous examples, and building upon what the students already know, he is able to teach new material without resorting to English. He does allow students to ask questions in English at the end of class, however.

As for writing, I encourage my students in Mendota to "wean" themselves off of their notes as soon as possible, though I do not prohibit them from taking notes. As for using the Direct Method, most of them do not know enough Dakota for me to be able to teach entirely in the target language, especially since I have them only two hours a week. However, I try to set aside periods where I am modeling a new structure, where I use only Dakota at first. For this I use as much realia, pictures, and gestures as possible. One of my students commented, "It's very helpful when you say 'Listen to me—Don't try to read it' and then you give the pronunciation slowly, then more quickly until we have it." I wait until one of the students voluntarily interprets it into English, so I know they understood. **Then** I switch to English to explain in more depth. I also use Dakota words instead of English for expressions such as *say it again, yes, no, listen to me, good*, and so on. They hear me using the Dakota words and they start to pick it up themselves.

McKay started out teaching Dakota with no training except his observations of his own teacher (who also had no training). He has come a long way since he was "thrown

into it, literally" (personal communication, Feb. 18, 2005). McKay has made a concerted effort to shift his teaching to more proficiency-oriented methods. From teaching out of the textbook in the beginning, he is now able to conduct class predominantly orally, using Dakota, and his students improve every year. It might appear at first that he ad-libs most of his classes, without planning. But, McKay reminded me, he has mapped out the full two-year course in a detailed curriculum plan (personal communication, January 23, 2006). The important thing is that he knows where the students need to get to, and is able to get them there without planning out every minute or relying on the textbook. I have found that for myself, it helps to write up some kind of plan ahead of time. For one thing, planning ahead makes it possible to bring the proper materials and equipment. Examples of lesson plans and descriptions of actual classes will be found in Appendix C and D, respectively.

Dakota language teachers face many challenges, but so do teachers of other LCTLs. They have few resources, few professional colleagues, and little visibility or influence. There are some teachers unaware of proficiency-oriented teaching techniques on the one hand, and some students uninterested in pursuing proficiency, on the other. There needs to be more education for indigenous language teachers, including Dakota. An increasing self-awareness among indigenous peoples around the world has begun to address and combat some of the negative effects of colonialism (see for example Smith, 1999), and reversing language shift among indigenous languages is an important part of this movement. An alliance of LCTL teachers and indigenous language teachers could strengthen minority language programs everywhere.

Until recently Dakota and other indigenous language teachers have had to operate largely in isolation, with little peer support, guidance, or materials. Those who wanted to learn Dakota but who lived far away from any place where it was taught, were limited to what dictionaries they could find. This has been changing over the last ten years or so. With the Internet, Dakota speakers in Manitoba can now easily communicate with Dakota learners in Minnesota. Multimedia and hypertext make it easier to create language learning modules that could be shared by several dialects.

A renewed interest in teaching indigenous languages coincides with today's explosion in technological advancements. It raises new and challenging questions and concerns about the role of technology in Native American communities. In the next section, I discuss the role of technology, especially the Web, in Dakota language revitalization.

Section III: Technology

Using technology for indigenous language revitalization and preservation has many pros and cons. Most indigenous languages have a dearth of authentic language materials that teachers can use. Digital technology allows for the conversion and preservation of older recordings made on magnetic tape and film reels. Indigenous community members themselves can more easily go out and make archival-quality digital recordings. When considering the cost of books with a limited demand, publishing on the Web is an attractive alternative. In this section I begin by looking at some of the online projects initiated in other indigenous language communities and discuss their commonalities and what can be learned from them. Second, I review online resources for teachers and learners of Dakota. Third, having reviewed previously-existing online Dakota sources, I describe the pioneering of *Mnisota Dakota Iapi Owayawa*, the University of Minnesota's Dakota Language program instructional website. I discuss what it has to offer, its strengths and weaknesses, and some of the problems encountered.

Online Projects in Other Indigenous Languages

Over the last ten or fifteen years, increasing numbers of indigenous communities have taken advantage of technology as a tool for language preservation and revitalization. In Hawaii, for example, language activists have found multimedia tools more compatible with their traditional ways of learning (as opposed to text-only materials) (Warschauer, 1998). Publishing on the Web enables teachers and students alike to collaborate and

distribute materials. It was found that the use of technology had an especially positive impact on the younger generations of Hawaiian students (Warschauer, 1998). Languages such as Potawatomi, Cheyenne, West Virginia Mingo, Ojibwe, and Hupa have pedagogical websites (Buszard-Welcher, 2001).

In Oklahoma, Choctaw activists found that language goals and cultural/political goals are not always the same (Haag & Coston, 2002). After a two-year project of teaching Choctaw via telecourse and the Internet, it was not clear how much of the language had been learned. The authors felt it was not their place to dictate to the Choctaw instructors how they should run the program, not wanting to ask them "to choose between the present culturally comfortable arrangement and one that might bring better scientific data at the risk of placing the students at the risk of direct evaluation of their language competence" (Haag & Coston, 2002, p. 81). In other words, there was no way to evaluate if the program was a linguistic success, but it was considered a "political success" because it fostered cultural solidarity and made people feel good about learning Choctaw. The authors concluded that, "Choctaw Nation is politically served if members feel satisfied that the language is being taught in a way that reflects positively upon them as a people" (Haag & Coston, 2002, p. 79). This may be true, but it is an example of how an endangered language often takes a back seat to politics.

In summary, the individual situations with indigenous languages around the world are of course quite different, yet there are similarities. Most have a dearth of authentic language materials. Most have a small and/or widely scattered population of speakers. Most are socially and economically disadvantaged in comparison to members of the dominant society. Most learners and speakers have little or no experience with

computers, and many of those who can speak their native language fluently are not literate in their native language. There is also a recurring problem of ASCII-based programming which does not support most indigenous language diacritics or writing systems (Warschauer, 1998; Jancewicz & MacKenzie, 2002). In many of the case studies described here, researchers found it difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of the technology when it came to people actually learning the target language. These problems are true for Dakota as well.

Online Resources for Dakota

A survey of Dakota language websites shows that most sites are designed for people with no knowledge of the language, possibly with the intent of enabling preschool and kindergarten teachers to teach children at least a small amount of Dakota. Most of them consist solely of word lists, without any accompanying grammar or sample sentences. Most do have some kind of audio capability. There are a good deal more Lakota sites available, but because I am primarily concerned with materials for the D dialect, I have not included any of them here (see Ullrich, 2004).

The Tiospa Zina Tribal School (n.d.) on the Sisseton-Wahpeton Reservation in eastern South Dakota has five picture books online, with accompanying audio. The books appear to be Dakota translations of existing English-language children's books. The one on pets ("Ihaktapina") was useful in the University of Minnesota's Dakota class during the lesson on animals. Audio recordings of complete sentences, as opposed to isolated words, are helpful. Unfortunately, not all of the books were translated by a fluent speaker of Dakota, which is reflected in some grammatical mistakes in at least one of the books.

"The Dakota Language Homepage," also from Sisseton-Wahpeton, was sponsored by the Alliance Project for Tribal Colleges (Native Language Systems, 1996). It employs the Silent Way method of teaching using color/sound pairings. The stated goal is not to teach Dakota *per se*, but to familiarize learners with the sounds of the language and encourage literacy. There are sounds and a few words, with no grammar or cultural explanations.

The Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre's "Our Languages" website (n.d.), based in Saskatoon, is the most comprehensive Dakota language website I have discovered so far. Although the language lessons themselves do not go beyond a beginning level and mostly consist of word lists, the site as a whole offers a history of the language, profiles and maps of where it is spoken, quotes from elders, a discussion of the orthography system and attempted reforms, and descriptions of language revitalization efforts. This site requires that a special font be installed on the user's computer in order to display the diacritics properly, but this font appears to work only on PCs. The audio-enhanced lessons use Flash with embedded fonts, so the words appear properly without requiring the font to be installed. Although mostly vocabulary, the lessons are more detailed than the other websites I have reviewed here. For example, the animal lesson provides the plural forms of the animals' names and also what the male, female, and offspring are called. The relationship chart depicts effectively how Dakota kinship is reckoned slightly differently than in English. There is an extensive outline of grammar that may have been adapted from a linguistic survey of the language; unless the user is a grammarian, it is not particularly helpful.

There is generally more overlap in pronunciation between Santee and Yankton than there is between Santee and Teton (Parks & DeMallie, 1992). Yankton is similar enough to Santee that beginning learners of Santee could use Yankton-based materials with a minimum of confusion. For that reason, I include in this review two websites using the Yankton dialect.

The "Talk Indian" website of the Fort Peck Community College in eastern Montana (2002) consists of three lessons: the alphabet, relative terms, and body parts. It does include some complete sentences demonstrating use of vocabulary in context. It requires Windows MediaPlayer for the audio, which is not compatible with all systems. This lesson site is intended as a sampler; serious students are meant to buy the book and tapes.

The "Dakoteyah Wogdaka!–Talk Dakota!" site is a project of the Native American Women's Health Education Resource Center (NAWHERC) (n.d.), of the Yankton Reservation at Lake Andes, South Dakota. It contains three lessons, with audio, teaching some basic words and phrases. Most of the lessons consist of word lists, although lesson 3 contains some simple conversational sentences. The written sentences and the audio do not always coincide, as if the person writing the text for the lesson transcribed the audio recordings but did not know the language.

In addition to these five websites, there are two online dictionary databases[9] for Dakota, and a few electronic discussion forums and listservs. The two dictionary databases are hosted by the University of Minnesota (Dakota dictionary online, n.d.) and Indiana University (Dakota dictionary, 2003). The Indiana database is in fact for the

[9] According to the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre's "Our Languages" website, they are in the process of developing an online dictionary as well, but it is not active at the time of this writing.

Yankton dialect, but I include it here because it is fairly compatible for learners of the Santee dialect.

Of the discussion forums, there are several Lakota (Teton) Yahoo Groups (see for example Lakhotaiyapi, n.d., and Lakotiya, n.d.). For Dakota, there is a listserv (Dakota-net, n.d.) and a Yahoo Group (Dakota iapi, n.d.), both of which originated from the University of Minnesota. The Dakota-net listserv is predominantly used for announcements; the language of communication is almost always English, although the potential exists for it to be used by Dakota language teachers who could communicate in Dakota. The Yahoo Group "Dakota Iapi" was founded by University of Minnesota Dakota language instructor Neil McKay out of a desire to have an online space exclusively for learners of the D dialect, and is used by his students. I estimate the language of communication there is probably about 85% Dakota.

Considering the online resources for Dakota over the last three years, and compared with pedagogical websites for many of the European languages, it was evident that Dakota needed stronger online support. Existing sites did not go beyond a beginning level, usually providing only word lists in isolation or a small set of phrases. The one website with any kind of grammatical explanation (Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre, n.d.) was in fact so technical and complicated that average learners untrained in grammar and linguistic terms would be at a complete loss. There was no online pedagogical grammar for Dakota, no place where learners could advance their proficiency. There were no samples of unscripted, authentic speech, no samples of Dakota speakers in conversation with one another. That all began to change in 2003.

Mnisota Dakota Iapi Owayawa

In the fall of 2003, as the final project for a class on language teaching and technology, I piloted an online Dakota lesson with video of authentic speech. The video was a four minute segment of Sisseton elder Clifford Canku, describing the war of 1862 and its aftermath. The men imprisoned in Mankato, Minnesota, and later Davenport, Iowa, wrote letters to their friends and families in the Dakota language. In the video, Canku describes the Dakota Letters Project to translate those letters, ongoing at Sisseton Wahpeton College. The lesson included a transcript of the speech, a grammar section focusing on the verbs used in the speech, and verb conjugation exercises. Dakota instructor Neil McKay showed the video in first-year Dakota class in December 2003.[10]

I encountered two main problems with the pilot lesson. One was in successfully displaying the nonstandard Dakota font. The second was in the size of the video file and concern over slow internet connections. Fortunately, both of these have become less of an issue by 2006. We can hope these problems will be eliminated as technology improves.

This video on the Dakota Letters Project was the precursor to the comprehensive Dakota language program instructional website, *Mnisota Dakota Iapi Owayawa* (*Dakota Owayawa*, for short). The name is a deliberate play on words. *Owayawa* is usually translated as 'classroom,' but due to the nature of Dakota morphology, it essentially means, simply, 'some place where studying occurs,' or 'a place of studying.' The *Mnisota* (Minnesota) is an allusion to the fact that the website is based at the University of Minnesota, but also that it reflects predominantly the Minnesota (Dakota) dialect. *Iapi* can mean 'language' or 'speaking.'

[10] The video and transcript can be viewed at http://www.cla.umn.edu/dakota/akahpapi/Supplemental/letters_background.html

At the University of Minnesota the CLA Infotech Fees Committee provides grants for the improvement of instructional materials. Two such grants were awarded to the Dakota Language program in the Department of American Indian Studies, one for each year 2004 and 2005. The grants allowed for the purchase of equipment and funded two assistants, myself and undergraduate Beth Brown. As luck would have it, the technology had improved sufficiently to allow using Unicode for the display of diacritics. The pilot lesson was incorporated into the larger Dakota website. Beginning students are now introduced to the website during the first week of class in the fall. Laying the tracks just in front of the train, the intermediate portion of the site was developed as the beginning students were transitioning into their second year of Dakota (summer and fall 2005). For the first year (2004), only the beginning portion of the website had been completed. The students have been using it as the development continues, and provide feedback when they encounter problems.

The purpose of the website is to supplement classroom instruction by providing additional practice, listening exercises, grammatical explanations, and exposure to a variety of different speakers and dialects. McKay and I have observed that students become accustomed to their teacher's way of speaking but may have trouble understanding another speaker of the same language. Therefore one goal of the website is to expose learners to different speakers of the language, including the Sisseton sub-dialect of Santee, and the Teton and Yankton dialects. Ideally such exposure will reduce students' anxiety about face-to-face encounters. Because students can learn new vocabulary and English explanations can be given on the website, the teacher can maximize use of Dakota in the classroom to create an immersion environment.

One of the ironies in working with an indigenous language is the issue of **restricting** access. In publishing on the Web we are faced with the concern that anyone may access it and exploit it. A prime example of this is the *Savages of Gor* science fiction series by John Norman. Sci-fi and fantasy writers like to employ fictional languages for their fictional worlds. Norman's "red savages," on the other hand, speak Lakota, with a few words from other Native American languages thrown in. Fans have enthusiastically posted online dictionaries and encyclopedias of the language of the "Red Savages" living on the planet Gor, and they bear a sickening resemblance to Lakota-language word lists (see for example *City of Lara*, n.d.; or *Red Savage Dictionary*, n.d.).

The flip side is allowing access to people who legitimately want to learn the language. Fortunately, the technology exists for communities to control access to their websites. To enter the Hawaiian Bulletin Board System Leoki, for example, one must be granted access by the administrators and be taught how to use the system (Warschauer, 1998). *Mnisota Dakota Iapi Owayawa* has password protection. Initially we considered using the University of Minnesota's Web CT system (now Vista). However, we wanted to have more control over the site, both in terms of access and in contents and design, so the College of Liberal Arts provided space on their server and we built the website from the ground up. We wanted our site to be accessible to people outside the University system. Temporary usernames could allow access to WebCT for users outside the University system, but this seemed too complicated and meant that the University had control over who could access the site. CLA assisted us in developing a moderately password-protected site. Users must enter a login and password to access the site, but there is only one login (wounspekuwa) and password (d4k0t4) that everyone uses, and it

is shared with anyone who expresses a desire to learn the language. We felt this was a reasonable compromise between tightly-controlled access and being completely public. The disadvantage is that we are unable to track use of the site.

WebCT/Vista would have allowed us the functions of chat and bulletin board, but these needs are served by the free and publicly-available tools of Yahoo Groups. Membership is controlled by the moderator (Dakota instructor McKay), but one need only have a Yahoo ID to participate. Students communicate online about their homework assignments or upcoming events, and most of the communication is, in fact, in the Dakota language. The disadvantage is that the font is not supported, but this poses little problem for students who already know the basics of the language. Initially, communication became confusing when the discussion concerned the university class, but not everyone on the list was enrolled in the class. Eventually it evolved into a tool used only by the enrolled students. Dakota users participate from time to time on the Lakota lists, sometimes with the result that novice students of both dialects become confused.

Technical concerns.

A problem with the high rate at which technology and cyberspace change is that websites will go offline or not be supported anymore. A survey of Native American language websites found that over half of the sites were maintained by individuals (Buszard-Welcher, 2001). What happens when that individual gets tired of maintaining the site or can no longer afford it? An organization or community might get a grant to create a useful website, but when the grant runs out, will it still function? Will a three-

year-old website remain compatible with state-of-the-art systems? In the fall of 2003 I reviewed several Dakota-language websites; by the fall of 2005, two of them had disappeared. Unfortunately, there is no guarantee the same will not happen to *Mnisota Dakota Iapi Owayawa* somewhere down the road.

On the other hand, the *Dakota Owayawa* website, particularly the Unicode and the password protection, works on the most up-to-date equipment, but not on older machines. We eventually came to the conclusion that Internet Explorer 5.0 and Netscape 4 were simply too old for our website to function.

With constant advances in technology and planned obsolescence, it is difficult to stay up-to-date with hardware and software. Many members of Indian communities, if they have computers at all, do not have up-to-date equipment. A high-speed internet connection is highly recommended, due to the size of some of the media files. Schools and community centers are increasingly providing more access. At the University of Minnesota, students have access to high-speed connections at campus computer labs. Some of the adult learners are able to use their workplace connections.

The *Dakota Owayawa* website makes use of QuickTime, Flash, and mp3 plug-ins. Users will need speakers or headphones. They will also need to have the Dakota font installed on their computer, and their browser's preferences set to read Unicode. This can be quite intimidating for students inexperienced with computers. McKay and his assistants have provided one-on-one technical support to many students for this initial setup. However, once this is set, no further manipulations are needed. It works ideally for those who have their own computer. The disadvantage comes when students are using public machines or their computers at work. I have had mixed success working with lab

technicians to enable the website to display properly. Eventually this may be automatic, but for now it has to be set manually. In some cases, the public computers are simply too old to support Unicode.

The Dakota classes at the University of Minnesota are often in classrooms where there is no built-in media player, projector, or Internet access. McKay often has to provide his own equipment if he wants to play a CD or project something from his laptop. In Mendota there is the possibility of projecting from a laptop, but no reliable Internet connection.

Another challenge was getting the students to start using the *Dakota Owayawa* website or the *Dakota Iapi* Yahoo Group. The Yahoo Group, which McKay created, was meant for out-of-classroom communication, with students writing to each other in Dakota and the instructor making announcements and giving assignments. The website contained the actual assignments (either online activities or worksheets students would download, print, complete and bring to class), grammar and pronunciation guidance, listening exercises, and other materials not addressed in class. Students were expected to use these electronic tools as much as they were expected to come to class prepared to participate. Merely telling the students "The assignment will be posted on the *Dakota Iapi* board" or "It's on the website, go look at it," was not sufficient. They knew these tools existed, but few bothered to log in. The only way to get the majority of the students to use the website or the bulletin board is to make it compulsory. Initially students may need to be coached. Once they get accustomed to using the online resources, they will be much more likely to continue on their own.

Reactions.

For the pilot online Dakota lesson (fall 2003), the reaction was very positive. McKay felt the lesson was good and "it's needed," he said (personal communication, December 11, 2003). McKay said his students liked the video and the verb conjugation exercises. They said they wanted more of that type of exercise. Some of the students also said they liked having the transcript available. As it happened, on the day McKay showed the pilot lesson in class, there were also two guests in the classroom, a native speaker from Canada and one of his students.

One of McKay's students said that with the video, it was like having **three** guests in the class, which she thought was very inspiring.[11] She mentioned that they had been learning a particular expression but were not very comfortable with it yet. She noted that the guest speakers (including the speaker in the video) used it a lot and that it was very useful to hear it used in context. She also said she liked hearing the blend of English and Dakota words in the speech. Native speakers do this all the time, and even though English is discouraged in the classroom, I think it lends to the feel of authenticity for learners to hear this phenomenon.

Feedback on the *Dakota Owayawa* website has generally been positive. There remain occasional problems where students are using older computers, slower connections, or type something incorrectly when trying to access the site. I know the site is being used, as I have seen students come to class with pages printed from the website, and they notify me or McKay when they have problems. McKay also uses the website

[11] It is a sad indication of the state of the language, that it is a rare occurence to get three fluent Dakota speakers in the same place at the same time.

during class time on occasion, projecting it from his laptop, and plays extended video or audio segments.

In a broader context, Dakota language instructor at Gustavus Adolphus College, Glenn Wasicuna, has introduced his students to the site. Some Dakota teachers have not seemed inclined to use technology in their language teaching. On the other hand, an advanced Dakota learner in British Columbia, who has little exposure or chance to practice the language, and had found that most Dakota language websites offer only beginning-level lessons on the language, was ecstatic about *Dakota Owayawa* and what it had to offer. I know of several other individuals struggling to learn the language, scattered around the country, who have found the website helpful.

In addition to examining the effectiveness of online resources, I have been interested in the study techniques used by Dakota learners. Adult education is my primary focus. I have noticed that adult learners often struggle, whether in a university class or a community "language table." Some of them may not have access to a class or study group and are trying to teach themselves. I wondered what techniques adult Dakota learners were employing, and how they could be improved. I conducted an action research study in 2003 to learn more about who these adults students were, how they learned, and how to help them learn more effectively. The following section recaps this survey and reports on the findings I felt to be most pedagogically meaningful.

Section IV: Learning Preferences and Habits of Adult Learners of the Dakota Language

Comparatively little second language acquisition (SLA) research has been done on the learning of indigenous, endangered languages. At a time when more and more adults are seeking to learn the Dakota language and new pedagogical materials are being developed, it makes sense to incorporate the findings of other SLA research, especially as they apply to the fostering of autonomous learners.

Indigenous language learners have an extra challenge because their language of study is usually quite different from English. Like most Americans, people wishing to learn an indigenous language often have little or no prior experience learning a second language (Johnston & Janus, 2003). For this reason, the use of strategies in language learning may be valuable and perhaps even essential in helping learners bridge that gap. Understanding how people successfully learn a language, and then overtly teaching such strategies to novice language learners, may be one way to contribute to the process of language revitalization.

Strategies are "intentional cognitive or affective actions taken by the learner in order to learn both simple and complex material" (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, cited in Bacon, 1992, p. 161). Studies tend to focus on only one modality at a time, but a synthesis of strategy research reveals a number of commonalities. Here I summarize findings from studies on listening, reading, and vocabulary learning strategies. They provide a good overview of the kinds of strategies language learners use, as well as providing educators with some ideas in how to make their students more consciously

aware of those strategies. As will be argued, learners can benefit from having language learning strategies taught to them overtly.

In the two listening strategy studies described here, subjects listened to a recorded passage in the target language—French (Bacon, 1992) and Spanish (Vandergrift, 2003)—and recorded what they were thinking about **how** they were approaching the task of getting meaning out of the passage. The researchers then transcribed the subjects' think-aloud monologues and divided the participants' comprehension strategies into three categories based on the taxonomy of O'Malley and Chamot (1990) (Bacon, 1992); and O'Malley, Chamot, and Küpper (1989) (Vandergrift, 2003). These were 1) *metacognitive* (which includes higher-order planning, advance organization, self-management, monitoring, evaluating comprehension, and directed and selective attention), 2) *cognitive* (inferencing, using prior or background knowledge, imagery and visualization, translation, summarization, repetition, and reorganization), and 3) *social/affective* (interaction with another person or self-assurance).

Other researchers (Anderson, 1991; Singhal, 1997) have examined learners' strategies in reading comprehension. The researchers in the first study (Anderson, 1991) were interested in students' performance and types of strategies used on 1) a standardized, relatively short, timed reading test, and 2) a longer, untimed selection from an academic textbook. Subjects did think-aloud protocols (in Spanish or English, as they preferred) to identify the types of strategies they used in working through the reading exercises. This study used Pritchard's (1990) inventory of reading processing strategies and modified it using Cohen's (1989) taxonomy of strategies. The strategies are described as:

Supervising, Support, Paraphrase, Establishing Coherence, and Test-taking strategies (Anderson, 1991, p. 463).

Singhal's (1997) study on reading comprehension strategies used a taxonomy similar to that described in the listening comprehension studies above, but expanded on the number and type of strategic categories. These consisted of 1) *metacognitive* (self-monitoring, recognizing words, evaluation, selective attention), 2) *cognitive* (paraphrasing and summarizing text, anticipating content, previewing text, using context clues, rereading), 3) *affective* (making encouraging statements to oneself), 4) *social* (asking for clarification or verification), 5) *memory* (using cognates and word associations, linking between known and unknown words), 6) *compensation* (guessing and hypothesizing), and 7) *textual* (forming interpretations and opinions about the text, interacting emotionally with the text).

Another study (Sanaoui, 1995) examined adult second language learners' approaches to vocabulary learning. The researcher identified two main types of learner. One group took a highly structured approach: they supplemented their classroom work with self-created activities and engaged in independent learning opportunities, such as listening to the target language on the radio or seeking out native speakers. The other group took a much less structured approach. They devoted little or no time to learning the target language outside of class, they did not seek out supplemental opportunities to hear or use the language, and they tended to be haphazard in taking notes, often losing class handouts and only taking notes when the teacher made a particular point of something. As might be expected, their scores on vocabulary tests were lower than those for the learners with a more structured approach.

The findings from these studies suggest that more effective language learners are more effective users of a variety of strategies. More skilled listeners tended to use an interactive approach of both top-down and bottom-up processing, whereas less skilled listeners engaged only in bottom-up processing such as direct translation, and were not able to form a larger conceptual framework (Vandergrift, 2003). The highest-scoring participant in Anderson's (1991) study also used the greatest variety of strategies, integrating cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Skilled listeners were described as "more purposeful in their approach..., monitored their comprehension..., effectively used prior and linguistic knowledge...[and] used the written listening comprehension questions to establish a topic framework" to guide them in what to listen for (Chamot & Küpper, 1987, cited in Vandergrift, 2003, p. 466). More skilled readers exhibited similar characteristics.

These studies point to the need for more explicit strategy instruction in the language classroom. It appeared that better- and worse-performing students used similar strategies, but that the better-performing students used their strategies **more effectively** (Anderson, 1991; Bacon, 1992). All of the researchers concluded that it is not enough to know **about** certain strategies, but that students have to know how to effectively use them (Anderson, 1991; Bacon, 1992). Bacon (1992) recommended that "Instruction should include explicit metacognitive strategy practice to ensure that listeners make full use of their background knowledge, their monitor, and their self-evaluation of comprehension" (p. 173). Anderson (1991) concluded that "Strategic reading is not only a matter of knowing what strategy to use, but also the reader must know how to use a strategy

successfully and orchestrate its use with other strategies" (p. 468-69). This was found to be true of lexical learning as well (Sanaoui, 1995).

Considering what has been found about successful and less-successful language learners' habits and strategies, I was interested in how this might apply to learners of an endangered indigenous language such as Dakota. Would the same hold true for a situation where materials and access to native speakers are extremely limited? How might learners who are able to attend Dakota class only once a week (informal community "language tables") compensate?

The initial part of this research project on Dakota learners and learning situations was designed to answer the following research question: To what extent do Dakota learners' backgrounds (e.g. age, prior language experience, etc.) predict their learning style preferences, preferences for classroom delivery, input processing strategies, and learning strategies?

Method

Participants.

Participants in this study were people who have shown interest in learning the Dakota language. Over half were students in beginning or intermediate Dakota classes at the University of Minnesota (N = 16). The rest were participants at informal community language classes in Mendota and Minneapolis (N = 12). The sample included sixteen women and twelve men. Their ages ranged between 19 and 79 (Table 1). The mean age was 34 years and the mode was 21 years. It was a fairly even mix of non-Indians and people citing at least some Dakota ancestry (Table 2).

Table 1. Age of Participants

19-25 years old	10 people
26-39 years old	9 people
40-49 years old	5 people
50-59 years old	2 people
60-69 years old	0 people
over 70	2 people

Table 2. Ethnic background

Identified Dakota ancestry	14
Non-Indians	13
Unknown	1

Instrumentation and data collection.

The instrument of measurement was a four-page questionnaire containing ranked items, Likert scales, and open-ended questions. The questionnaire underwent a lengthy revision process whereby drafts were piloted on friends and colleagues before a final version was given to the participants.

The first ten questions of the survey concerned the learner's background: age, sex, ethnic background, prior language experience, as well as goals and motivations. The next section addressed learners' classroom delivery preferences and study habits, for example, "I like it when the teacher speaks Dakota most of the time, using English to explain things only as a last resort"; and "I make up language practice exercises for myself." This was followed by items pertaining to learning style, adapted from Cohen, Oxford, & Chi (2001). (The original questionnaire is reproduced in Appendix A.) The final six questions were more open-ended.

With the permission of the instructor, I visited two Dakota language classes at the University of Minnesota. I also attended two community language classes, one in Minneapolis and one in Mendota.[12] Both in the university and in the community classes, prior to administering the survey I explained the research project, answered questions, and had students sign consent forms. The questionnaire took about thirty minutes to

[12] This was before I started teaching in Mendota myself.

complete. An additional source of data for the university students was the instructor's assessment of their proficiency in the language.

Procedures for data analysis.

Numerical data were analyzed using the statistical program SPSS to run Pearson's chi-squared and Spearman-*rho* tests. Some items were collapsed or eliminated for the purposes of analysis. For example, item 14e, "I use color-coding to help me as I learn," was removed because nearly everyone marked 0 ("Never").

For the item on prior language experience, I assigned a point score based on participants' self-reporting of prior language experience, their self-assessed proficiency in those other languages, and the extent to which they actively maintained the language(s). I was primarily interested in seeing if there was any difference between people who had zero prior language experience and those who had **any** prior language experience at all, regardless of how much.

Items 14-16 concerned learning style preferences, each with 8-10 sub-items. I collapsed these to arrive at three scores for each respondent: a percentage score indicating the extent to which they could be described as "visual," "auditory," or "kinesthetic" learners. Some people showed very strong tendencies for a preferred learning style, especially visual, but many people also scored about evenly across all three.

As my research question was concerned with the extent to which learners' backgrounds predict their learning style preferences, preferences for classroom delivery, input processing strategies, and learning strategies, I grouped the results into four main categories:

1) *Learner background* — the learner's self-assessed and (when possible) teacher-assessed (57% of the participants) Dakota proficiency, age, prior language learning experience, and learning style.
2) *Delivery preferences* — the extent to which respondents preferred that the instructor use English or Dakota most of the time, learners' desire to know the "exact" English translation for Dakota words, and their desire for grammar instruction.
3) *Input processing strategies* — how learners process what they heard or read: the ability to navigate around unfamiliar words and infer meaning based on context and what is known, and selectively focusing on familiar words in an otherwise incomprehensible speech or text.
4) *Learning strategies* — what the learners did to acquire Dakota, including making up language exercises for themselves, sharing with classmates to improve their own comprehension, taking and reviewing notes, and mentally rehearsing or thinking in the language ("din in the head").

Results

Learner background.

Respondents were asked to assess their proficiency in Dakota. This has some potential problems, as people may over- or underestimate themselves. In an attempt to control for this, I also had the university teacher rate his students' proficiency. Because not all respondents were in the university Dakota classes, this could not be done for all participants, but I did have teacher estimates for 16 of the 28 participants (57%). A

Spearman-*rho* test showed a high correlation (ρ = .68**) between the two measures. Assuming that learners' assessments of their own proficiency were accurate, the other related findings were not unexpected. The higher the student's language proficiency in Dakota, whether based on self-assessment or teacher assessment, the more preference there was for the instructor to use Dakota; the lower the proficiency, the more likely the preference for the instructor to use English. These findings are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Self-assessed Proficiency[13]

I like it when the teacher speaks Dakota most of the time, using English to explain things only as a last resort.	.46*
I like the teacher to use English for all explanations, so I can understand them.	-.41*
I make up language practice exercises for myself.	.67**

For age, a number of significant negative correlations were found. According to these results, the older the learners were, the **less** likely it was that they would a) keep their notes and review them, b) be able to navigate around unfamiliar words and guess meaning based on context (inferencing), and c) talk to themselves in Dakota and/or mentally rehearse speech ("din in the head"). Older survey respondents also tended to estimate their proficiency in Dakota lower. It may be that older learners truly had lower proficiency in Dakota, or it may be that they were simply less confident in their abilities. One respondent over 70 assessed her proficiency as 2 (Novice), but having known her for several years I would say her proficiency was higher than that. The findings for age are summarized in Table 4.

[13] Correlations are Pearson correlations unless a *rho* (ρ) coefficient is used
* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$

Table 4. Age

Self-assessed proficiency	ρ = -.43*
I keep all my notes and handouts from my teacher in a notebook and review them regularly.	ρ = -.47*
I like the teacher to use English for all explanations, so I can understand them.	ρ = .49**
If there are one or two words I don't know, I focus on what I do know and try to figure out the rest from context. (Inferencing)	-.39*
I talk to myself in Dakota, rehearse saying things in my head, think about how I would say something in Dakota, etc. ("din in the head")	ρ = -.42*

Contrary to expectations, it did not seem to matter much if learners had any language-learning experience prior to Dakota. It would merit further study to determine if this might be because Dakota is so unlike any other language the students had learned. Two outcomes were surprising because they were **not** statistically significant. There seemed to be no relationship between a student's prior language experience and a preference for use of the target language by the instructor, nor for any instruction in grammar. From personal experience I had expected students with more language learning experience to prefer more target language use in the classroom and to prefer at least some grammar instruction, although this would of course depend on what kind of language instruction they had had. These findings are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Experience with Other Languages

In class I generally just listen, I don't take a lot of notes.	ρ = -.38*
I like it when the teacher speaks Dakota most of the time, using English to explain things only as a last resort.	n. s.
I remember something better if I write it down.	.44*
A basic introduction to the general structures of Dakota, how sentences and words are put together, etc., would help me.	n. s.

I was especially interested in the role learning styles played in learning Dakota. This query has particular relevance for a minority language like this where there are few written or audio materials available. Because of the extremely limited exposure and opportunities for use, I am interested in identifying how learners compensate for these limitations.

Some results from the correlation tests for "Visual Learning Style" were not surprises. For example, there was a positive correlation between those with a visual learning style and those who said they remembered things better if they wrote them down, and got more out of a lecture if the instructor wrote on the board. Visual learners also indicated a fairly strong preference for at least some grammar instruction. Also predictable was a negative correlation between a visual learning style and **not** taking notes in class. There was no statistical significance between a visual learning style and the use of internal dialogues or mental rehearsal for practicing Dakota ("din in the head").

Three findings were somewhat surprising. There was no statistically significant relationship between a visual learning style and the use of self-initiated practice exercises, nor for the practice of keeping and reviewing class notes and handouts. Personal experience had led me to expect otherwise. This is summarized in Table 6.

Table 6. Visual Learning Style

A basic introduction to the general structures of Dakota, how sentences and words are put together, etc., would help me.	.63**
I remember something better if I write it down.	.56**
I get more out of a lecture if the instructor writes things on the board.	.80**
In class I generally just listen, I don't take a lot of notes.	$\rho = -.66$**
I keep all my notes and handouts from my teacher in a notebook and review them regularly.	n. s.
I make up language practice exercises for myself.	n. s.

Most of the findings for the auditory learning style preference were surprises, both because of what turned out to be significant and because of what turned out **not** to be significant. There was no correlation, for example, between an auditory learning style and a) not taking notes in class but just listening, or b) helping oneself learn material better by explaining it to a classmate. As these are auditory in nature I had expected them to relate to the auditory learning style somehow.

There was no significant correlation between an auditory learning style and a belief that grammar instruction would be beneficial. There was also an indication that the more a person showed an auditory learning style, the more likely they were to practice Dakota in their head, to make up practice exercises for themselves, and to prefer that the teacher use Dakota most of the time. There was also a relationship between auditory learning style and using the strategy of inferencing. Visual learners showed no such relationship. These findings are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7. Auditory Learning Style

I keep all my notes and handouts from my teacher in a notebook and review them regularly.	ρ = .48*
I talk to myself in Dakota, rehearse saying things in my head, think about how I would say something in Dakota, etc. ("din in the head")	ρ = .46*
I make up language practice exercises for myself.	.65**
I like it when the teacher speaks Dakota most of the time, using English to explain things only as a last resort.	ρ = .40*
If there are one or two words I don't know, I focus on what I do know and try to figure out the rest from context. (inferencing)	ρ = .57**
In class I generally just listen, I don't take a lot of notes.	n. s.
If I can tell a friend about what I'm learning, or explain something to a classmate, it helps me learn better myself.	n. s.
In listening or reading, I try to pick out words that I recognize, even if I have no idea what the whole text/speech is about. (selective attention)	n. s.

Delivery preferences.

In addition to general learning styles, I was interested in specific aspects of learners' attitudes and desires toward instructional presentation and language use. Did learners have a preference, for example, for use of Dakota or English in the classroom, and if so, to what extent could that preference be predicted by other variables such as age or proficiency? Use of the target language is generally considered good practice in any second language classroom, but in a situation like Dakota where materials and native speakers are extremely limited, it may be the only chance a learner has to hear the

language. And yet, often Dakota teachers use mostly English in class, possibly out of a desire not to alienate or traumatize their students. As would be expected, there was a negative relationship between a preference for the teacher to use English and a) assessed proficiency in Dakota (both by the teacher and self), b) Dakota "din in the head," and c) making up language exercises for oneself and generally taking time to study. In other words more proficient students appeared to want less English. The older the learners were, the more likely they were to want the instructor to use English. Learners' use of inferencing, self-initiated exercises, and "din in the head" were also predictors of their desire to have the teacher use Dakota. These findings are summarized in Tables 8 and 9.

Table 8. Preference for Instruction in English

Age	$\rho = .49^{**}$
Self-assessed proficiency	-.41*
I talk to myself in Dakota, rehearse saying things in my head, think about how I would say something in Dakota, etc. ("din in the head")	-.53**
I make up language practice exercises for myself.	$\rho = -.41^{*}$
I make time in my regular routine to study/practice Dakota.	-.51**

Table 9. Preference for Instruction in Dakota

Self-assessed proficiency	.46*
Auditory learning style	$\rho = .40^{*}$
I make up language practice exercises for myself.	.63**
I talk to myself in Dakota, rehearse saying things in my head, think about how I would say something in Dakota, etc. ("din in the head")	.50**
If there are one or two words I don't know, I focus on what I do know and try to figure out the rest from context. (inferencing)	.48**

A debate rages among language teachers, especially among teachers of indigenous languages with a strong oral tradition and a history of being exploited and abused by anthropologists and linguists, as to how to deal with grammar. Some advocate avoiding it altogether, using a more naturalistic approach. Some teach using a strongly grammar-based approach, and some take a more central path. Through personal

experience, I have observed some students (usually non-Indians, myself included) to be very curious about and interested in the "nitty-gritty" technical aspects of Dakota grammar. On the other hand, some students, when the word "grammar" is even mentioned, shut down and tune out. Therefore I was careful not to use the word "grammar" in my questionnaire, but I was interested in knowing how people felt about it and if they thought a small amount of grammar instruction would be beneficial. As can be seen in Table 10 below, visual learners showed a preference for some grammar instruction. There was no correlation for auditory learners. Age did not turn out to be a predictor of grammar preference.

Table 10. Desire for Grammar Instruction

Visual learning style	ρ = .58**
Auditory learning style	n. s.
I remember something better if I write it down.	.39*
If I can tell a friend about what I'm learning, or explain something to a classmate, it helps me learn better myself.	ρ = .47*
I get more out of a lecture if the instructor writes things on the board.	.59**

Input processing.

Two items related to comprehension and input-processing strategies were inference and selective attention. *Inference* was phrased in the questionnaire as, "If there are one or two words I don't know, I focus on what I do know and try to figure out the rest from context." The item was worded in such a way that it could apply to listening or reading. *Selective attention* was identified by the questionnaire item, "In listening or reading, I try to pick out words that I recognize, even if I have no idea what the whole text/speech is about." Here I explicitly stated that it could refer to listening or reading. For the inference item (see Table 11), there was a strong correlation with the auditory learning style and no significance for the visual learning style. The selective attention

item (see Table 12) showed the reverse: a positive correlation with the visual learning style, and no significant relationship with the auditory style. Learners who were likely to apply inferencing were also more likely to a) make up language practice exercises for themselves, b) prefer that the teacher use Dakota in class, and c) think to themselves in Dakota—characteristics of more skilled or experienced learners. As learners got older they seemed to be less likely to engage in inferencing.

Learners who were likely to employ selective attention were also more likely to want some grammar instruction. Inferencing and selective attention were also correlated with each other, although not as strongly as might be expected. Evidently respondents did perceive them as different things. This is addressed in the Limitations section.

Table 11. Inference: "If there are one or two words I don't know, I focus on what I do know and try to figure out the rest from context."

Age	-.39*
Auditory style	ρ = .57**
I make up language practice exercises for myself.	.58**
I talk to myself in Dakota, rehearse saying things in my head, think about how I would say something in Dakota, etc. ("din in the head")	.64**

Table 12. Selective attention: "In listening or reading, I try to pick out words that I recognize, even if I have no idea what the whole text/speech is about."

Visual learning style	.53**
A basic introduction to the general structures of Dakota, how sentences and words are put together, etc., would help me.	.60**
If there are one or two words I don't know, I focus on what I do know and try to figure out the rest from context. (inferencing)	.49**
I remember something better if I write it down.	.52**
If I can tell a friend about what I'm learning, or explain something to a classmate, it helps me learn better myself.	.63**

Learning strategies.

The students in this study indicated that they used a variety of strategies for learning new material and retaining old material. One of the most successful strategies identified in other studies, according to Sanaoui (1995), is engaging in self-initiated

learning tasks. The variety of tasks that my respondents came up with on their own was extensive, just as with Sanaoui's respondents (see Appendix B, items 12e and 13e). Engaging in self-initiated activities was strongly correlated with self-assessed proficiency (discussed above). The more students created their own learning tasks, the more likely they were also to have an auditory learning style preference and experience "din in the head." Counter to my expectations, there was no significant relationship between self-initiated learning tasks and a visual learning style.

Related to self-initiated learning tasks is the "din in the head," or practicing speaking Dakota in one's mind, talking to oneself, or carrying on internal monologues in Dakota. As might be expected, there was a positive correlation between the "din in the head" and being an auditory learner, and no correlation with being a visual learner. There was a negative correlation between "din in the head" and age. The findings for self-initiated learning tasks and "din in the head" are summarized in Tables 13 and 14.

Table 13. Use of Self-Initiated Language Learning Tasks

Self-assessed proficiency	.67**
Auditory learning style	.65**
Visual learning style	n. s.
I like it when the teacher speaks Dakota most of the time, using English to explain things only as a last resort.	.63**
I talk to myself in Dakota, rehearse saying things in my head, think about how I would say something in Dakota, etc. ("din in the head")	.62**

Table 14. Din in the head: "I talk to myself in Dakota, rehearse saying things in my head, think about how I would say something in Dakota, etc."

Age	ρ = -.42*
Auditory learning style	ρ = .46*
I like the teacher to use English for all explanations, so I can understand them.	-.53**
I like it when the teacher speaks Dakota most of the time, using English to explain things only as a last resort.	.50**
I make time in my regular routine to study/practice Dakota.	.54**
In listening or reading, I try to pick out words that I recognize, even if I have no idea what the whole text/speech is about. (selective attention)	ρ = .59**

I had expected a possible significant correlation between anxiety ("I'm reluctant to speak because I'm afraid of making a mistake") and age, because of an observed tendency in older learners to be quiet and shy when it came to speaking the language. Some people did check this item but as it turned out, there was no statistically significant correlation between anxiety and any other variable. There was also no correlation between age and learning style preference, or between gender and anything else.

I was interested in why people wanted to learn Dakota and whether the nature of their motivation influenced their learning habits or preferences. As it turned out, motivation was so varied, and responses sufficiently inconsistent, that I elected to leave it out of this analysis. I felt that the other findings on learners' habits and learning styles were more relevant to a discussion on improving Dakota pedagogy.

Discussion of Survey

Summary and interpretation.

The findings from the study suggested that older learners were more likely to prefer English and less likely to 1) keep their notes and review them, 2) be able to engage in inferencing, or 3) practice Dakota in their heads. It may be that older learners are more "rusty" or less experienced in language learning. There did not appear to be any relationship between age and language anxiety. It did not seem to matter if students had had prior language learning experience as far as what type of instruction or classroom delivery they preferred. There was a tendency for more proficient learners (based on self- and teacher-assessed abilities) to prefer Dakota for classroom delivery and for less proficient students to prefer English. More proficient learners were more likely to make

up their own language practice activities, which coincided with a tendency to use the strategy of inferencing and to practice Dakota in one's head.

Visual learners, oddly enough, did not appear to practice statistically more self-initiated language exercises or to be more organized in their note-taking and reviewing than anyone else. Auditory learners were more likely to practice Dakota in their heads, to make up practice exercises for themselves, and to prefer that the teacher use Dakota. Auditory learners were more likely than visual learners to practice inferencing but not selective attention, although as I discuss in the Limitations section, it was not clear if the inferencing item referred to listening, reading, or both, and the selective attention item specifically referred to both.

The findings here tend to support those found in other studies of adult second language acquisition. More successful learners engage in more self-initiated exercises, take more time to study and seek out supplemental opportunities, and try to use the target language as much as they can. Oddly, no one thought to put "attend community language table(s)" as a way in which they get additional exposure to the language, even though 43% of them were doing just that.

A different 43% of respondents provided feedback on the types of activities that they did to help themselves practice. Of these, all but one were students in the University Dakota classes (see Appendix B). This could be due to the fact that most of the language table participants filled out the questionnaires at the end of the class session, when they were eager to leave and were engaged in conversation with each other. It could also be that students in the university class had had more experience (or at least more recent experience) with homework and practice exercises than the general community members.

McKay repeatedly encourages his students to go beyond their assigned exercises. It could be that language table participants had not given sufficient thought to the options available to them for home-made exercises. One language table participant said on his questionnaire that he did not know how to study or critique himself. It could also be that university students are more motivated to push themselves with self-initiated exercises because of their interest in keeping up their grades. At community language tables there is no consequence for not studying. It is likely that participants of community language tables would benefit from some instruction in how to make up their own exercises and how to critique themselves.

Limitations.

Most of the limitations of this study concern the instrument of the questionnaire itself. Many of the items were ambiguous or confusing and ended up allowing multiple interpretations. On some items my instructions were unclear, so that not all respondents filled it out the way I intended. Even after going through three or four revisions, the instrument had major weaknesses.

One problem was that it was simply too long, and respondents were almost certainly tired of it by the time they got to the open-ended questions. Due to the small population size, qualitative rather than quantitative data will probably be more meaningful. It was difficult to assess the validity of this measurement because I did not have teacher-assessed data for all participants.

Another shortcoming of the questionnaire was that I did not leave any allowance for respondents who had exposure to Dakota at home (one or two of the respondents did, though they themselves were not fluent). I also did not include any option, under

motivations, for individuals who wanted to learn the language because their spouse or significant other was Dakota and/or learning the language. I should have thought of that because at least two of my colleagues fit that description.

Some of the questionnaire items were ambiguously worded. For example, on the item "What do you know now (or still don't know) that you wish you'd known when you started learning Dakota?" it was not usually clear if respondents were saying they knew something now, or still did not know it. Understandably, it would also be difficult for the truly beginning students to answer this question, since they likely felt that they knew nothing at all; a number of community language class participants either left this item blank or put "Everything," underlining the "still don't know" qualification. One thing that surfaced on this item was that many people's questions pertained to socio-cultural issues rather than the language *per se*. A number of non-Indians expressed concern over Dakota attitudes toward *waśicus* (non-Indians) learning the language or marrying into the culture, and several respondents indicated concern over locating and approaching native speakers.

The "want translation" item was ambiguous in that respondents may have interpreted it more broadly than I intended, taking "translation" as "know what it means." In retrospect, they may have been thinking about etymology; the nature of many Dakota words is such that they are comprised of assembled morphemes, which have an underlying meaning somewhat different from the final "translation." It may have been this feature of the language that respondents were thinking about. When learning a new word, particularly something polysyllabic, students will often ask, "How does the word break down?" In this sense, it is very useful, even mind-broadening, to know the "exact" translation. The problem with wanting an exact translation usually is that it limits learners

to bottom-up processing and is especially restrictive when dealing with culture-specific things that have no English equivalent. I had this latter definition in mind, but probably many people interpreted it as referring to the underlying etymology of Dakota words. This would actually indicate an interest in getting to know the language better. In the face of this ambiguity, and in the interest of space, I have not reported the data from this item.

Some of the instructions were not clear. For the ranking item on motivations, for example, some people used "1" for "most important," some people used "5" for "most important" and some people did not rank at all but just put check marks next to any that applied; some people checked **everything**. This complicated the analysis and I have omitted it from this paper.

The item on self-initiated learning tasks was also worded in such a way as to make it difficult to ascertain whether the responses people gave reflected things they actually **did**, or if they were just suggestions. There was considerable overlap between the items "I make up language practice exercises for myself" and "I consciously **make** opportunities to use the language, I don't just wait for a chance to use the language" (italics original). Often respondents gave similar information for both or put a note by the second question to refer back to the first.

Were I to conduct such a survey again, I would shorten it significantly and pay special attention to eliminating the ambiguous items. As mentioned above, a revised questionnaire should also allow for people who have exposure to Dakota at home or who have a partner or family member learning the language.

Future research should include interviews with learners to clarify responses on ambiguous items and to brainstorm with learners on learning strategies. Previous research

on learning strategies suggests that learners may improve just by being made more aware of **how** they learn, suggesting that interviews or having learners keep journals on their progress and study habits might be beneficial to the learners themselves.

Section V. General Discussion and Conclusions

Section I discussed how U. S. policies of assimilation continue to affect the Dakota language and other indigenous languages even today. Until the 1970s, Indian education equaled assimilation (McKay, personal communication, January 23, 2006). No matter what reformers and policymakers said about the benefits of education, the American education system was **imposed** on Native people. Indians have never comfortably fit in the American education system. They never were asked their opinions on how they would like to raise their children. Generations of children were taken away from their families and punished for speaking their native languages. Because of the history of enforced Indian education, boarding schools, and assimilation, there is a deep mistrust of education among many Native Americans today, especially of anything directed by non-Indians.

Section II discussed how, because of the historical trauma and endangered state of the language, teaching Dakota is not quite like teaching other LCTLs. LCTLs and indigenous languages have much in common, however, and could be valuable allies. Two challenges to overcome are 1) convincing Dakota people that the language is worth learning (Johnston & Janus, 2003), and 2) convincing speakers of the language that the language **can** be learned. There is a common attitude among native speakers that the language is too hard for anyone to learn who did not grow up with it. In addition, a number of problems divert attention from Dakota *wohdakapi*—use of the language for

communicative purposes.[14] These include well-meaning but insufficiently trained teachers; the teaching of only animals, numbers, colors, and other word lists; students who just want to know enough Dakota so they can say their Indian name; language activists and linguists arguing over how the language should be written; and arguments over whether or not Dakota should allow coinage of new words.

Section III discussed technology and the new tools it offers to language activists. Online tools offer a chance to link scattered communities, engage younger learners, and share materials, significantly audio and video archives of native speakers. Problems remain as to accessibility and a constantly changing electronic environment. Many existing Dakota language websites still do not go beyond a basic introduction to animals, numbers, and colors. Albert White Hat, Sr., Lakota language teacher and author of *Reading and Writing the Lakota Language* (1999), recalled the words of a colleague who said, "Right now we teach a surface understanding of language. We don't go into the philosophy. The translations we teach are geared toward Western thought patterns. They do not reflect the thoughts of our people." White Hat realized that "this past and often present approach to language is a tool for acculturation and assimilation purposes" (White Hat, 1999, p. 7). The University of Minnesota's Dakota language website is the first to offer interactive lessons where learners can hear authentic, unscripted speech, learn how to form sentences with proper word order, as well as history, cultural explanations, and the philosophy behind the language. As White Hat said, "Grammar without philosophy is teaching a dead language. My language is alive" (1999, p. 10). A website is not intended to replace a live teacher or conversational partner, but to enhance

[14] **wohdakapi**: 'conversation,' or 'conversing,' as opposed to **iapi**, 'language' or 'speaking.' I make this distinction because a living language ought to be used for *conversing* with other people, not simply *speaking* isolated words as is frequently the case.

students' learning and to assist adult students trying to learn Dakota on their own without a guide.

Section IV discussed strategy research and surveyed adult Dakota language learners in how they approached learning and processing the language. The findings, despite some weaknesses in the instrument, generally corroborated the findings of previous studies on other languages and other study and comprehension strategies. The practice of making up self-initiated language activities correlated with a higher self-assessed proficiency in Dakota, a general preference for Dakota to be used as the language of instruction, greater use of the strategy of inferring meaning based on context, and thinking in the language. There was also an indication that older students tended to be less proficient (or perhaps underestimate themselves), less likely to infer meaning based on context or think in Dakota, and more likely to prefer English as the language of instruction. Students in the university classes gave a wide range of answers as to how they help themselves learn, whereas students in the community classes had few suggestions. The findings suggest that less experienced language learners could benefit from some explicit instruction in learning and processing strategies.

Pedagogical Implications

There is a critical need for more young people teaching Dakota. The younger people are not first-language speakers of Dakota, but just possibly, because they have had to **work** for their ability in the language, they can empathize better with their students. As a first-language speaker of English who attended a year of English as a Foreign Language in Germany, and who is now nearing completion of a Master's program in teaching ESL,

I can say with confidence that being a native speaker of a language does not automatically mean you can teach it. In the absence of an actual training program for Dakota language teachers, the next best thing may be for second-language learners to teach the language, because they know what it is like to go through the learning process.

In addition to the need for younger teachers, there is a need for a Dakota teacher training program. This should include the reiteration that the language **can** be learned. Dakota teachers need to get beyond animals, numbers, colors, and word lists and use a more communicative approach. Younger people are more likely to coin Dakota words for new things, but it is important that they have a solid grounding in Dakota thought so that neologisms reflect a Dakota, rather than a *wašicu*, way of thinking. A few other languages have successfully formed lexicon committees for the development of new words. This has not happened yet in Dakota, possibly because, as Mr. Bill Iron Moccasin commented, "I guess we're still kinda territorial" (Iron Moccasin, 2003).

Dakota should be used as the language of instruction as much as possible, keeping grammar instruction to a minimum. Grammar can be offered via an outside medium such as course websites or textbooks for those so inclined. This has important ramifications for designers of Dakota language websites and curriculum materials when deciding what to include and how to present it.

A recurring problem for Dakota learners is access to native speakers. One idea would be to compile a list of native speakers willing to work with learners, even via telephone or occasional weekend trips. Learners may need advice on how to approach an elder and initiate conversation, or they may need to be introduced first.

Students should be prepared for the idea that things work differently in Dakota. A survey respondent (section IV) pointed out that certain words have cultural "weight" and social obligations that are lacking in English, and that it is important to teach that "weight" in addition to the surface translation that one would find in a dictionary. My students in Mendota have said they do not know enough about how to put words together into properly formed sentences. Nearly all of their prior exposure to Dakota has been through word-for-word translations.

At a training workshop for indigenous language teachers in the spring of 2005, workshop leader Stephen Greymorning opened with a discussion as to whether words and phrases were enough to save a language. There were nearly seventy participants, most of whom were Native. He asked the participants for a show of hands: "How many of you teach colors?" Everyone raised their hand. "How many of you teach numbers?" Everyone raised their hand. "How many of you teach animals?" Again, everyone raised their hand. "Now," said Greymorning, "how many of you have students who could say 'Over there I see seven women sitting around a table and three of them are wearing blue coats'?" Out of sixty-eight people, two hands were raised (Greymorning, 2005).

Suggestions for Further Research

Technology in indigenous language teaching is so new that there is very little substantive research out there yet. Scattered across the country there are adults who want to learn their heritage language but do not have access to speakers or a language community. Can the Internet, and cyberspace communities, help them learn their language when they have no one within 100+ miles they can use the language with? It is important to continue such research. Studies in the efficacy of distance learning could

contribute to indigenous language teachers' decisions in which tools to use. Of course, this assumes that those wishing to learn their language via such tools have access to the necessary hardware and software. Not everybody does.

Related to the study of technology and its uses is the need for Dakota words for modern things. The Hawaiian language has a Lexicon Committee that publishes a list of new words in the language each year (Wilson & Kamana, 2001). Dakota needs a comparable resource. At the very least, there needs to be an updated dictionary easily accessible to learners. The most accessible dictionary—that is, the one every student is able to find and purchase—is that by Riggs (1890/1992). It was compiled before automobiles and airplanes made their debut, let alone cell phones and computers; moreover, the Riggs (1890/1992) and Williamson (1902/1992) dictionaries are heavily colored by their Christian missionary slant. Newer dictionaries are being developed as online databases (see Section III), but are not accessible to all learners, and less versatile than a book one can carry around.

To my knowledge, there has been no comprehensive survey of Dakota speakers in the United States and Canada. There may be fewer than twenty speakers in Minnesota, but this is only an estimate. It is known that there are native speakers of Dakota on reservations in Nebraska, North and South Dakota, Montana, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan, but how many? Who are they? Would they be available for telephone calls or visits from learners, or willing to be recorded for educational materials? John Nichols, prominent Algonquian linguist at the University of Minnesota and long involved in the revitalization of Ojibwe, agrees that this would be a valuable survey (personal communication, February 10, 2006). Additional research should include locating

potential funding sources for such a survey, as well as finding sources for paying honoraria to these speakers. More publicity needs to be developed, both in rural areas and in the cities, to convey the value and importance of passing on Dakota to future generations (Johnston & Janus, 2003).

For most of U. S. history, Indian education meant cultural genocide. That boils down to: **education = genocide**. Not all agree, obviously, but educators—non-Indian educators especially—need to keep in mind that for the vast majority of Native Americans there is that association. Any educational initiatives involving Native Americans in the twenty-first century must proceed with caution, and should avoid dictating to Native people how their language programs should be run. Significant mental, spiritual, and communal healing needs to take place. A recovery of indigenous languages may be key to that healing.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire for Learners of the Dakota/Lakota/Nakota Language[15]

Please feel free to comment on any of the items in this questionnaire!

2. Age:_____

3. Gender:_____

4. My primary exposure to Dakota is through:
___ U of M Dakota class
___ community language table
___ other (please specify):

	Yes	No	
5.	__	__	I identify myself primarily as Native American/American Indian.
6.	__	__	I have D/L/Nakota ancestry.

7. What other languages (if any) are you familiar with? Using the following scale, please indicate your level of ability and whether or not you have opportunities to practice/keep up your skills in the language:

- **0**: You don't know anything about the language.
- **1**: "Beginner": You know a few words in the language (e.g. "thank you," "good," "yes/no") and can pick up a word here and there when listening. You have a general idea how to pronounce words when reading them, but don't know what most of them mean.
- **2**: "Novice": You're able to communicate minimally with learned material. Can ask basic questions. Not real clear on grammar, word order, etc.
- **3**: "Proficient": You can initiate and sustain simple conversations, and are able to understand the responses. Able to respond to questions from a native speaker. Can use the language to get around specific words you don't know. Have a general idea of word order and how things fit together in a sentence, simple grammar, etc. In listening, can pick out enough words to get a vague idea what the speaker is talking about (e.g. "I think he's saying something about his grandmother").
- **4**: "Intermediate": You can hold conversations with native speakers without too much trouble, though maybe not fluently (i.e. you may have to pause to think/plan what you're going to say next). Abstract topics are a little over your head. In listening to a speech you can usually get the gist of what is being said, even if you don't understand every word. You're starting to learn more complex grammar forms.
- **5:** "Advanced" or "near-native": You can speak without trouble on a wide variety of topics, able to participate fully in most conversational situations. Different regional dialects may still catch you off guard sometimes.
- **6:** "Expert": It's your native/first language.

Language	Level of ability	Language Actively Maintained? Y/N

8. Using the same scale, how would you rate your current ability in Dakota?

_____

[15] The actual questionnaire distributed to volunteers was not numbered. Items are numbered here for ease of reference.

9. Why do you want to learn Dakota? (Rank up to 5 in order of importance to you)

_____I am Dakota.
_____It shows a different perspective on the world and ways of thinking.
_____I want to be able to understand songs and ceremonies in the language.
_____Dakota is a beautiful language.
_____I want to be able to read Dakota books and documents.
_____It's an important part of being part of the community.
_____I want to be able to use the language with my children.
_____I would be able to talk to D/L/Nakota speakers from other parts of the U.S. and Canada.
_____Other (please specify):_____

10. What are your ultimate goals for learning Dakota?

_____I wish to achieve native-like fluency.
_____I want to be able to hold simple, basic conversations.
_____Just let me pass the class and satisfy my foreign language requirement!
_____Speaking it is less important to me than the socializing and sense of community.
_____I have not thought about it enough to answer.
_____Other (please specify):_____

Please circle the number that most closely describes your preferences for class sessions, for studying the language out of class, and for using the language:

0 = Never
1 = Rarely
2 = Sometimes
3 = Often
4 = Always

11. Preferences for Class Sessions

(11a) 0 1 2 3 4 I like it when the teacher speaks Dakota most of the time, using English to explain things only as a last resort.
(11b) 0 1 2 3 4 I like the teacher to use English for all explanations, so I can understand them.
(11c) 0 1 2 3 4 I want to know the exact English translation for each Dakota word I learn.
(11d) 0 1 2 3 4 I'm reluctant to speak because I'm afraid of making a mistake.

12. Study Preferences

(12a) 0 1 2 3 4 I make time in my regular routine to study/practice Dakota.
(12b) 0 1 2 3 4 I keep all my notes and handouts from my teacher in a notebook and review them regularly.
(12c) 0 1 2 3 4 I find all the Dakota-language materials I can (dictionaries, phrase books, online stuff, etc.) and learn from them.
(12d) 0 1 2 3 4 A basic introduction to the general structures of Dakota, how sentences and words are put together, etc., would help me.
(12e) 0 1 2 3 4 I make up language practice exercises for myself. **Please give examples (tips/ideas for other students)**:

13. Language Use Preferences

(13a) 0 1 2 3 4 I talk to myself in Dakota, rehearse saying things in my head, think about how I would say something in Dakota, etc.

(13b) 0 1 2 3 4 I listen to music and/or movies with Dakota/Lakota/Nakota and pay attention to the words.

(13c) 0 1 2 3 4 If there are one or two words I don't know, I focus on what I do know and try to figure out the rest from context.

(13d) 0 1 2 3 4 In listening or reading, I try to pick out words that I recognize, even if I have no idea what the whole text/speech is about.

(13e) 0 1 2 3 4 I consciously *make* opportunities to use the language, I don't just wait for a chance to use the language. **Please give examples:**

How do you learn?
Please circle the number that most closely describes your learning style preferences:[16]

0 = Never
1 = Rarely
2 = Sometimes
3 = Often
4 = Always

(Visual Learning Style)

(14a) 0 1 2 3 4 I remember something better if I write it down.

(14b) 0 1 2 3 4 I take detailed notes during class.

(14c) 0 1 2 3 4 Re-writing/re-organizing my notes helps me learn the material.

(14d) 0 1 2 3 4 When I listen, I visualize pictures, numbers, or words in my head.

(14e) 0 1 2 3 4 I use color-coding to help me as I learn.

(14f) 0 1 2 3 4 I prefer to have written directions for tasks.

(14g) 0 1 2 3 4 I need to be able to see people to understand what they're saying.

(14h) 0 1 2 3 4 I get more out of a lecture if the instructor writes things on the board.

(14i) 0 1 2 3 4 I remember people's faces but not their names.

(Auditory Learning Style)

(15a) 0 1 2 3 4 I remember things better if I discuss them with someone.

(15b) 0 1 2 3 4 If I can tell a friend about what I'm learning, or explain something to a classmate, it helps me learn better myself.

(15c) 0 1 2 3 4 I prefer to have oral directions for tasks.

(15d) 0 1 2 3 4 I can understand what people are saying even if I cannot see them.

(15e) 0 1 2 3 4 I can identify people by their voices (e.g. on the phone).

(15f) 0 1 2 3 4 I easily remember jokes and stories that I hear.

(15g) 0 1 2 3 4 When I have the TV on, I listen to the sound more than I watch the screen.

[16] This section on learning style preferences was adapted from Cohen, Oxford, and Chi (2002).

(15h) 0 1 2 3 4 I like to listen to music when I study.
(15i) 0 1 2 3 4 In class I generally just listen, I don't take a lot of notes.
(15j) 0 1 2 3 4 I can learn new words fine if I just hear them.

(Kinesthetic/Tactile Learning Style)
(16a) 0 1 2 3 4 I'd rather just start right into a task, rather than listening to or reading the directions.
(16b) 0 1 2 3 4 I need frequent breaks when I work or study.
(16c) 0 1 2 3 4 I think better when I move around (e.g. tapping my foot, pacing, etc.).
(16d) 0 1 2 3 4 I doodle in my notebook during lectures.
(16e) 0 1 2 3 4 I move my hands around when I'm talking.
(16f) 0 1 2 3 4 I play with or chew on my pen during lecture or while I'm thinking.
(16g) 0 1 2 3 4 I need to eat something while I'm working or studying.
(16h) 0 1 2 3 4 I get nervous or fidgety if I sit in one place too long.

17. Personal obstacles to your learning and speaking the Dakota Language (Please rank as many as apply, 1 being the biggest problem, and so on)

_____Not enough time
_____Too many distractions (**Explain**:
_____Inadequate access (to teachers, classes, native speakers)
_____Inadequate materials (books, tapes, videos)
_____Language too difficult
_____Nervousness or anxiety when speaking
_____Other_____

18. In the year 2050, will people still be speaking the Dakota language? Explain why you think that.

19. What can an individual do to help keep the Dakota language alive? Make some suggestions.

20. Suppose you have a friend or family member who has expressed interest in learning Dakota. What suggestions/recommendations would you make?

21. What do you know now (or still don't know) that you wish you'd known when you started learning Dakota?

22. Additional comments?

Appendix B
Responses to Selected Items

(12e.) I make up language practice exercises for myself. Please give examples (tips/ideas for other students):

1. Have conversations with myself.—1st-year student
2. I talk to myself. —Mendota language table participant
3. Record yourself speaking. —1st-year student
4. Translating kids' books into Dakota, make grocery list in Dakota, keeping a journal, trying to say Dakota words when talking with friends.—1st-yr student
5. If we've done something particularly interesting in class, I like to post my comments in Dakota on our Yahoo website. For some basic things (commands, etc.) I will use Dakota instead of English--with my partner and my children (e.g. Wota! Wanna!)[17] —1st-yr student
6. I try to write dialogues between two people like the ones in the books.—1st-yr student
7. Thinking about things I'm doing in Dakota lang. Writing a lot (wocekiya iyececa)[18]—2nd-yr student
8. Label the foods in your kitchen. Listen to other people's conversations and translate them into Dakota.—2nd-yr student
9. Draw pictures and label them. Rewrite notes and organize them. —2nd-yr student
10. I have drawn pictures, posted Dakota words around my room. —2nd-yr student
11. Translate objects in everyday life, conjugate the verbs I use in life--biking, running, etc. —2nd-yr student
12. I often type up things from class, or explanations (i.e. how to construct time or age sentences) when I feel a study aid or basic reference explanation is lacking (from the teacher or TA) to help me & others. —2nd-yr student

(13e.) I consciously *make* opportunities to use the language, I don't just wait for a chance to use the language. Please give examples:

- One word will stick in my head so I'll use it—participant of Minneapolis language table
- Try to use the language when I see things like "Bird flying," "Dog running," "People walking".—1st-year student
- Get together with students in the class to talk or talk to my friends in 2nd year. We speak Dakota when we hang out sometimes. Try to go to community events where the language will be used--feasts, storytelling.—1st-year student
- Some Dakota words, use in everyday life--simple words like wanna, hananna, han.[19] —2nd-yr student
- I often translate things for friends to teach them and for myself. —2nd-yr student
- Everyday phrases w/ family & other students, commands, comments (hiyu, miega, inahni, mni wacin, etc.)[20] —2nd-yr student

18. In the year 2050, will people still be speaking the Dakota language? Explain why you think that.

1. Yes. Critical mass learning it now
2. Yes.

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[17] Wota! 'Eat!' Wanna! 'Now!'
[18] wocekiya iyececa: 'like prayers' (a literal translation, not proper Dakota, but understandable)
[19] wanna: 'now,' hananna: 'that's all,' han: 'yes' (women's speech)
[20] hiyu: 'come here,' miega: 'Hooray for me!' inahni: 'hurry up!' mni wacin: 'I want water.'

3. People are interested
4. I think a lot more people will be speaking the language because of the revitalization & reemergence of the lang./culture & traditions among the nations.
5. Yes! Cause we don't give up.
6. Yes. I know a lot of people from home, who are speaking Lakota at young ages.
7. Don't know but hope so!
8. There are more natives going to school and tryin to.
9. I hope so. I want to do everything I can to ensure this.
10. Yes because of steps are being taken today by charismatic leaders and determined young people to preserve the language through immersion, etc.
11. Yes, because I will be speaking the language and I think that these programs can and will work.
12. Yes, because there is more and more programs that are focusing on the language. I know my family will.
13. Yes because more people are beginning to understand a language helps to understand the culture.
14. I hope so but maybe not. Not many children are learning the language and we need a place where we can go and here [sic] Dakota all the time--like going to Europe. Then a person could pick it up quickly and well.
15. Yes. We have survived just about everything. As long as there are hearts of Indian people we will have our language.
16. Yes, at least from the perspective of all the people I see and hear about trying to maintain and revitalize the language.
17. Yes, within communities people will still speak. If for no other reason, people whom [sic] are religiously active will still know.
18. I hope so.
19. I hope so, as long as the world isn't trapped in some sort of futuristic nightmare like *1984* or *Brave New World.*
20. I hope so. It has been recognized that it is a problemand there are many efforts to keep the language alive. I think the future is hopeful.
21. Yes: more than ever it is coming alive.
22. Yes. This is part hope and part a belief that the Dakota people will not allow their language to be lost.
23. I think the Dakota people will be able to speak the language, and it will be more easily accessible to non-natives.
24. Cinto![21] They will speak the language because Dakota is being taught more now and through[?] that, people are understanding the importance.
25. I am working very hard to see that the future will hold young Dakota speakers.
26. Han, Dakota Oyate de was'ake Dakota iapi wiconi unkupi cee, Dakota iapi t'e sni.[22] Dakota will survive!!!
27. Yes. No language ever truly dies. The question will be how many speakers exist and whether the language is used in everday life.
28. Yes at some level. We will still be alive, hopefully still promoting, learning, teaching.

19. What can an individual do to help keep the Dakota language alive? Make some suggestions.

1. Speak it and speak about it.

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[21] Cinto: 'of course'

[22] not exactly correct, but says roughly "Yes, the Dakota Nation is strong and the language gives us life. The Dakota language will not die."

2. Start learning then teach the children.
3. Language camp
4. Learn & pass language on especially to the youth.
5. Speak it all the time.
6. Teach.
7. Learn, use.
8. Any if they take the time.
9. Teach their children, take classes, talk all native speakers.
10. Speak with & teach it to others.
11. Learn as much as s/he can about the language. Talk with others/fam[ily?]
12. Even if you only know a few things teach the children. That's what I do with my nieces & they're picking it up fast.
13. Teach others words and always share your knowledge.
14. Learn the language, even a little. Teach it to others. Tell people about the language and why it's important. Teach it to children, even if it's just a few words.
15. Encourage, share, affirm, be generous with your knowledge and desire to learn. Make time to meet outside the classroom.
16. Teach what you know to others. Use online sources to reach more people. Exercise, etc. People sometimes need to see it in order to become aware of it.
17. The language is alive if it is spoken in the home.
18. Tell people about it.
19. try to get others interested in learning the language.
20. Get people interested in learning it. Teach children. Use it whenever possible.
21. Participate
22. Take time to learn and use the language to the best of their ability. I would particularly like to see more classes made available to children.
23. Children—> teaching through coloring books, puzzles, stories, movies (with/in the language). make learning materials more accessible online.
24. Pass on their knowledge. I would not feel right if I did not pass on my learnings to my life--especially after spending two years learning it.
25. Becoming a better speaker of the Dakota language. Supporting activities such as the storytelling event at the U of M. Going to Dakota pow-wows--speaking the words you know to others.
26. Create curriculum, books, songs & games for children in the language. Language geared toward children--so that it can be carried into the future.
27. Take [time?] to study the language. Petition and lobby elected representatives to make funding available for indigenous languages in the public schools. Advocate that other people learn these languages.
28. Promote it, think of ways to create curriculum that attracts people, be a representative of the movement, participate!

20. Suppose you have a friend or family member who has expressed interest in learning Dakota. What suggestions/recommendations would you make?

1. Come to language class.
2. Come to a language circle.
3. Bring notebook to keep lessons.
4. Would highly recommend learning the lang. so it doesn't die & we can communicate in the after life.
5. Come to class.
6. Talk to elders, go to Native American community centers, get online.
7. Urge to try...

8. Come to class w/ me
9. Go to language table, talk to elders, take classes, find books.
10. Take a class, buy tapes, speak w/ someone who knows the language.
11. Take a class. I could help you learn, but I am not a teacher. I am excited for you.
12. Go for it
13. Give them tapes and books and try to get them to language classes and ceremonies.
14. Taking a class would be helpful but to start I would suggest you meet with people who speak it on a regular basis. Books can help, but not until you know a little already, so talking with speakers is the first step.
15. Go with a friend--or someone who knows the language a little bit at least--to a language table. This helps aleviate [sic] shyness or social anxiety. I think fear keeps us from doing a lot of things we truly want to do.
16. Learn some from myself. If still interested go to a language table and meet others who are interested, then try your hand at some actual classes.
17. Listen. Don't get frustrated, and be patient.
18. That they come to class.
19. Do it.
20. Learn it.
21. Come to language table.
22. Visit a Dakota language table in a community near them or register for a class at the University.
23. To look up where they can take classes near them.
24. To work hard and respect your classmates, teacher, and what you are learning because it is more than just the language that you learn, you are taught a lifestyle and a history.
25. Help them by teaching them. The more you teach the more you grow in the language. Start small and build on it.
26. Take classes, talk with speakers, read & learn.
27. Sign up for and take the language. Either in the university or as part of a program somewhere.
28. Come to free language table, talk to our teacher, let them watch you study (meaning maybe teach them what you're reviewing or give them an especially good, explanatory, interesting handout.) Read books like *Water Lily*.

21. What do you know now (or still don't know) that you wish you'd known when you started learning Dakota?

1. ye vs. do—Monday night language table
2. everything.— Monday night language table
3. Everything: how to introduce myself.— Monday night language table
4. Who speaks out there...—1st-year student
5. I learned a lot of Lakota when I was younger so I knew a lot already but things are a lil choppy. There's some that's just reviews for me then there's something new that catches me off guard.—1st-yr student
6. meaning of words / how to change verbs.—1st-yr student
7. Word order. Parts of speech. The structure to conjugations.—1st-yr student
8. It's OK to make a fool of yourself sometimes. So what. —1st-yr student
9. I had a tendency when I first started the class to think that it was going to be too difficult to ever advance in very far on top of the fact that finding people to speak with was going to be difficult. The language is <u>not</u> too difficult...—1st-yr student
10. The dedication that is required to acquire fluency. —1st-yr student

11. When I started studying Dakota I was a little nervous of whether or not a non-Dakota individual such as myself should study the language, like not wanting to be disrespectful. Dakota is my fav[orite] class I've taken at the U. —2nd-yr student
12. That the Dakota worldview is entirely different. Concepts like time and space are very different. I am an AmIn studies major, so I came to understand it, but it may be confusing to someone not as involved in AmIn studies.—2nd-yr student
13. How to study and critique myself. —Mendota language table participant
14. Sdodwaye sni. I think Neil's class has been set up well, but I would like to learn more about ceremonial songs (the language & what they mean).—2nd-yr student
15. Certain respectful comments. What one should/shouldn't say in Dakota out of respect. But--Neil did do a good job of explaining the weight of some words such as koda.—2nd-yr student
16. I can't say just one thing. It's like a journey that you go on, you are continually learning new things.—2nd-yr student
17. That you really need other speakers to talk to to really learn & retain the language. —2nd-yr student
18. That adjectives can also be verbs. That is really cool. —2nd-yr student
19. (Still don't know) More about families & views on wasicus living here, maybe if or what Dakotas expect of us as occupants of this land or as co-members of the community? —2nd-yr student

Appendix C
Selected Lesson Plans

Listening activity for Dakota students using authentic text.

This activity is intended for first-year Dakota students in their second semester of learning the language.

Purpose: To familiarize students with traditional Dakota song practices and train students in how to distinguish meaningful words from nonsense syllables ("vocables") in Dakota songs.

Source: Wokiksuye Odowan (Memorial Song), from Earlwin Bullhead CD[23]

Pre-listening activity:
Explain to the students about the composition of traditional Dakota songs. To the untrained ear it may all sound like wailing of "heya, heya-ya." Explain that these parts of the song are called "vocables" and that English songs make use of such "nonsense syllables" as well. Example: "Deck the halls with boughs of holly, fa-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la!" The lines of vocables are interspersed with lines of meaningful words and usually also begin and end the song. The song itself usually consists of only two or three lines, interspersed with vocables and repeated four times.

Listening exercise 1:
Play the song for the students and have them write down any words they think they recognize. Monitor the students' reactions: they may feel the song is too long and get restless; or they may need to listen to the whole thing to get used to it.
Go around the room and ask students to share what words they were able to pick out. Write them on the board.

Listening exercise 2:
Give the students a sheet with the text of the song, with words missing. They listen to the song again and try to fill in the missing words. (Fortunately, the CD insert includes the lyrics for the songs.)

Post-listening activities:
1. The missing words are all ones they should know. Go over the sheet with the students to make sure they were all able to fill in all the blanks.

2. Now that the students have the full text in front of them, ask them to identify all the verbs in the song. They call them out and you write them on the board.
They should be able to identify all the verbs even if they don't know what they mean. They may separate "yuha" and "mani" but write them together on the board. Ask the students to identify the forms of each verb. That is, which ones are in 3rd-person singular and which are in 1st-person singular? For the ones in 1st-person, ask students to identify what the root form of the verbs are (wakiksuye: kiksuya; nawažiŋ: nažiŋ). Then make sure the students know the meaning of all these words. Does anyone know why I put "yuha" and "mani" together? How would you interpret that? They know that generally "yuha" is conjugated for person and means "to have." Give some

[23] Earlwin B. Bullhead. *Father to Son.* Winnipeg, Manitoba: Arbor Records, 2002.

examples of "yuhamani" without using English: carry something around the room, like a bag, or demonstrate walking with a cane. Teach them through actions that "yuhamani" means "walks with," then ask what this song is saying: who is walking with what?

3. Cultural explanations: Explain the literal and figurative meanings of "iyaye" (has left) and "ku" (is going home): iyaye can mean simply that somebody has left and gone elsewhere, it also refers to someone passing on or dying; ku can refer to someone being en route home, but can also refer to the belief that when a person dies, they return to their origins, the spirit world, which is "home." "Wanaġicaŋku" is the "spirit road," the path that spirits take to "go home." It is said that this is the Milky Way. It is a comfort to the grieving, that though they have lost their friend, they know the friend is going home.

Now students should understand that this song is in remembrance of a friend who has departed this life, and that the singer describes his friend as walking with a song on the spirit road.

Play the song one last time for them to follow, now that they have the full text and some understanding of the meaning.

Comments: Song is 5:22. Students may get restless if asked to listen to the entire song. Might stop the CD after the first verse.

Lesson plan for Tuesday, Feb. 22, 2005
Class: Beginning Dakota, 2nd semester (6 students)
Class is 50 minutes long. We'll meet in Folwell 46 (this was video-taped)

Topic	Money and shopping	Notes
Building on...	Monday (Feb. 21) we will introduce the students to monetary units, selling, buying, etc.	
Vocab to cover:	mazaska (money) kaŝpapi (dimes) okise (nickels) mazaŝa(daŋ) (pennies) oṗeṭuŋ (buy) wóṗeṭuŋ (shopping) iyawapi (priced) iyoṗeya (pay for) wiyoṗeya (sell) icazo (buy on credit) uŋ icazopi (credit card)	
Bring to class	10 prepared packets, one for the 6 students, 2 TAs, the 2 teachers: These contain: • play money • 3-4 3x5 index cards with pictures of things on them, and how much they cost • a "shopping list" of things the students need to acquire	Neil's got the fake money. I'm putting the cards and packets together. Example: *You have:* *a computer, a table, strawberries, a watch* *You need to buy: spaghetti, steak, a chair, pears*
First 10-15 minutes	Perform little skits where the teachers and TAs buy and sell things from each other, to demonstrate what we want the students to do.	Quickly review "Yuha" (to have). Write new vocab on the board
About 30 minutes	Turn the students loose to wander around and ask each other who has what, and buy and sell things. Teachers & TAs will participate in this as well as helping students with vocabulary	
Last 5-10 minutes of class, or as soon as everybody has all the things on their lists	Debriefing: Go around the room, ask the students what they bought and how much they paid for it.	

Lesson Plan for Tuesday March 8, 2005
Topic: Continuing with clothing

Yesterday: Introduced articles of clothing.		
Bring to class: bag of clothes; handout/worksheet		
First:	Collect weekend assignments	
5-10 minutes, Review	Have students review vocabulary: I point to item and they name it. Want to get a good pace on this.	
Transition??		*English translations*[24]
Give example sentences:	• Naka haȟaŋna deced **mihduwi** ye. ... k'a...k'a... muŋ ye/do. • Tokedked **nihduwi** he? • Naka haȟaŋna saŋksaŋnica **yec'uŋ** he? • Naka haȟaŋna aokihena **wec'uŋ** ye. • Uŋzooǧe ṭo **muŋ** ye. • Saŋksaŋnica **nuŋ** he? • Mathias saŋksaŋnica **uŋ** he? • •	• *This is how I dressed myself this morning. I'm wearing ... and ... and ...* • *How are you dressed?* • *Did you put on a dress this morning?* • *I put on a vest this morning.* • *I'm wearing bluejeans.* • *Are you wearing a dress?* • *Is Mathias wearing a dress?*
Give commands/ ask questions	• Owasiŋ akaŋuŋpi kic'uŋ pi! • Waṗaha kic'uŋ! • Owasiŋ akaŋuŋpi hduṡdoka pi! • Cheo wapaha waŋ uŋ he? • Haŋpa hduṡdoka!	• *Everyone put your coats on.* • *Put your hat on.* • *Everyone take your coats off.* • *Is Cheo wearing a hat?* • *Take your shoes off.*
Short dictation: (Waŋna wowapiska waŋżi icu pi!) *(Everyone take out a sheet of paper)*	Read dictation (5): Wouŋspekuwa owapte tka, uŋkaŋ iwabdake kte ye. (read the five sentences, have students write them down, then I go around and look at them.)	

[24] Included in this version for the benefit of non-Dakota speaking readers, not in the original lesson plan

Handouts.	• Point out the error with "uŋzooġeṭo." • Read through sample sentences on sheet to facilitate comprehension: Have each student read one sentence and have them translate it into English (I hate having to do this, but at this point in my teaching career I'm not sure how else to check their comprehension)	
For tomorrow:	The other five sentences will be due tomorrow.	

Appendix D
Journals of Selected Classes

This session where we went to the computer lab I include because of its uniqueness. I believe this was the first time in the history of Dakota language teaching that students did an activity like this, using headsets to talk to each other as if on a telephone. The master computer at the front of the room enables the teacher to pair students with each other so they can talk to each other, but because they are in individual cubicles they are not face to face. It is an intriguing exercise because it forces the students to really *use* the language; they can't fall back on visual cues. The setup also enables the teacher to "eavesdrop" on student pairs, to see how they're doing and make sure they're not talking in English; with the press of a button the teacher can jump into the students' conversation, either to one pair or "broadcast" to the whole group.

The lab also allows the students to work at individual workstations or to view whatever is on the master computer's screen. At this time, however, the computers in the lab were not formatted to handle the special Dakota font we use. So for this activity we used only the audio feature, having the students simply practice conversation, and then doing a spot-the-difference task.

Friday Feb. 11, 2005

Today we took the students to the Digital Language Lab for the first time! Miraculously, they were all there, and more or less on time, too.
It was a lot of fun for us as teachers, I think. I hope the students liked it. It took us a little playing around at the start before we really had things under control and knew what to click on and how to make it work. We'd had training last week, and generally remembered what to do, but there was some experimenting we needed to do before we really got it.

I think the hard part was getting the students to talk to each other using this new medium. Understandably, they wanted to look at each other. That's not a bad thing in itself, but if you're talking on the phone, you can't see the person you're talking to. I'd like to see them build up their speaking confidence to the point where they could use Dakota on the phone.

Anyway, they weren't really sure what to talk about, especially given that just the day before they'd spent the entire classtime in conversation. Some of them do better than others, obviously. At one point when I listened in on August and his partner, August was speaking English. I jumped in, "August, waśicu ie śni!" *(don't speak English!)* and he looked up, surprised. He had not realized I was listening, heheheh. That was pretty much the only time I really heard anyone using English, aside from "Toked eyapse...?" *(How do you say...?)* For about the first 15 minutes or so, we let them just talk, eavesdropping on different conversations.

Then I assigned them different partners (Neil suggested the pairs: August-Cheo, Mathias-Carly, Kate-Scott; and I put the TAs Beth and Joe together). I explained, or tried to explain (in Dakota) the next activity they were going to do. I don't think I did a real good job; there were a lot of confused looks on their faces. Finally I passed out the pictures, laying them face down on the desks.

The pictures I had prepared ahead of time. They both depicted a bus (one white, one gray), a woman in purple next to a desk (one working at a computer, the other with a cup of coffee), a stack of books (different colors, and one had 3 books and the other 6), and one had a sun shining and in the other it was raining. Neil said they may not have known how to say "The sun is shining," but they could say "It's raining" or "It's not raining." I passed out the pictures to the students and tried explaining again what they were supposed to do, and they still didn't understand. So I asked a couple of leading questions, like "Scott, itowapi niṭawa ed wiçaśta iṭokśu duha he?" *(In your picture do you have a bus?)* and he said "Uh, hau." *(Yes)* I asked, "Wiçaśta iṭokśu niṭawa kiŋ owa tokeca he?" *(What color is your bus?)* and he answered gray. Then I asked his partner, Kate, if her picture also had a bus (yes), and asked if it was also gray (no). What color is your bus? My bus is white. Neil helped too, drawing a cartoon face on the board and modeling asking about it: "Ite wadaka he? Hau, ite wabdake do." *(Do you see a face? Yes, I see a face.)* I asked a couple more leading questions and kind of gestured meaningfully toward their pictures and they eventually figured it out.

The most fun part was listening to them, observing how they handled this task. I wish we could have recorded it. It was clearly a challenge for them, but they mostly did OK. I overheard students saying things like "Winyaŋ miṭawa peżutasapa yatke" *(My woman is drinking coffee)*, and most of the students knew "computer" (wisdodye).

At times Neil listened in while I walked around the room and listened specifically to one student. Then they knew I was listening and could ask questions. I took this opportunity (the whole lesson, not just the wandering around listening) to introduce "yuha" *(have)* and remind them of "waŋyaka" *(see)*. They have encountered these verbs before, but have not focused on them yet. Towards the end of class I asked one student if he knew "waŋyaka"—he said sort of, that Neil had sort of skimmed over it last semester, but he hadn't really learned it.

Up at the front of the room, hiding behind the teachers' computer, Neil and I talked quietly in English about the activity. He wanted me to take the last few minutes of class to go explicitly over "Taku duha he...Caŋwiyowa bduhe...Kate taku yuha he?" *(What do you have...I have a pencil...What does Kate have?)* Somehow I ended up not doing exactly what he suggested. Instead, we took the last 10 or so minutes of class to go around the room and ask the students what they had found was different about their pictures. They got quiet again! We had to really prompt them. **I thought that next time we do such an activity, it would be useful to give them some kind of checklist of things to look for; this time it was a little unguided.** Neil stood at the front of the room and asked a few leading questions like "Who has a gray bus? Raise your hands" (in Dakota). There were three of each picture, so for each question there should have been

three hands up; there weren't. I couldn't remember who had what, so I went around and looked at the students' pictures. Then it became apparent they didn't all know "yuha/bduhe/duha/etc." So when Neil said "Who has a computer in their picture" or "Who sees a computer in their picture?" I could see who did, and wasn't raising their hands, and I coached them.

The following class log illustrates one of my Mendota sessions. I wanted to do an activity that was simple and yet interactive. I had observed that many of the students needed practice in shifting between first, second, and third person. I wanted to include practice with objects, colors, and numbers while maintaining complete sentences. One of my most important goals for the group is to enable them to use the language with each other, which means they have to be able to ask, understand, and answer questions. Sometimes the questions have to do with who the students are, where they live, their children, etc., and sometimes I employ toys so the students can talk about concrete things right in front of them. This makes it easier to not have to resort to using English. It sounds like a really simple activity that adults might find demeaning, but in my experience, it's about the level they are able to handle.

Mendota Aug. 18, 2004

Two main activities tonight. I got out my toys and asked various students what I had, and how many.
Examples:
Taku **bduha** he? Zitkada/iwatokšu/iyeciŋkopte **duhe.**[25]
What do I have? *You have a bird/truck/car.*
Zitkada tonakca bduha he? Zitkada [yamni] duhe. (I had up to six birds, 2 trucks, and three cars)
How many birds do I have? *You have [three] birds.*
Then I passed one or more toys to someone else and asked them:
Taku **duha** he? Zitkada/iwatokšu/iyeciŋkopte **bduhe**.
What do you have? *I have a bird/truck/car.*
Then asked the other students:
Taku yuha he? Zitkada/iwatokšu/iyeciŋkopte **yuhe**.
What does s/he have? *S/he has a bird/truck/car.*

I also asked what colors the various toys were (blue, black, yellow, white, red, brown, and spotted)
Introduced "police car" and "hawk."
"Hotun" *(make a sound)* and "dowan" *(sing)*—some of the birds make a noise when you squeeze them: 3 are songbirds, one is a hawk. So the songbirds use "dowan" but the hawk uses "hotun." Then for the 2 birds that don't make a sound I went over "šni" *(not)*.

[25] English translations in gray text are provided for the benefit of readers who don't speak Dakota; on the original lesson plans or lesson logs I did not usually bother with a translation, I just wrote in Dakota.

We did this for about an hour or longer. In retrospect, I think it was too long, I probably should have varied the activity more. At one point I had to step out and told the students to practice asking each other what they had, while I was gone. When I came back I heard them asking each other things like "Wowapi bduha he?" *(Do I have a book?)*—"Hiya, canwiyowa duhe" *(No, you have a pencil)*. So that was good. I may try more of that next time.

The second activity was more grammatical in nature, since students had indicated that they wanted some instruction in sentence structure. Time and again, when asked what they wanted to learn or what they most needed help on, students said they did not know enough about putting words together in complete sentences. All their prior experience in learning Dakota had been in memorizing word lists and looking up words in the dictionary. They may have known the words for "store," "yesterday," "I went" and "not," but they couldn't say "I did not go to the store yesterday," nor did they understand a question like "Did you go to the store yesterday?" I wanted to give them practice on this kind of thing.

The other main activity I did was with the "substitution rod" (for lack of a better term): where they could see explicitly the sentence order. I had two handouts to go with this. One was a substitution table and the other was a list of time adverbials for them to memorize. We went through some of the possible combinations on the rod, including past, present and future, statements and questions. It occurs to me I forgot to put "śni" *(not)* on the rod, so I'll try to add that for next time. They got to see various combinations, not all of which worked: "ȟtanihaŋ" *(yesterday)* + "kte" *(will)* for example. I talked them through a few, then flipped over random cards and asked the students if the sentence was valid or not, and if not, what was wrong with it. They (at least, the more advanced students) did pretty well. We did that for maybe 45 minutes (interspersed with answering miscellaneous questions) and then it was time to quit.

Towards the end of the session I was reminded of the challenges of teaching a class where the students are at all different levels, coming and going from one session to the next. Here I am focusing on sentence structure, and a young woman finally asked, "How do you say 'Hi' in Dakota?" I wish I could give an easy answer to that.