OJIBWE ELDERS' PERCEPTIONS ON OJIBWE LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION

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DEDICATION

I want to honor and dedicate my dissertation to five generations of strong and beautiful Ojibwe women in my family. I inherited their resiliency, which greatly contributed to the achievement of my education goals. I want to honor my sister Dawn Stately, mother Lucille Naslund, grandmother Agnes Robinson, great grandmother Elizabeth "Lizzie" Jenkins, and great grandmother Hunter. For my sister Dawn, I want to acknowledge that I feel her spirit every day, and I am aware that she is protecting Cash and I.

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CHAPTER ONE

> What would happen to the Creator's law if the robin couldn't sing its song anymore? We would feel very bad: We would understand that something snapped in nature's law. What would happen if you saw a robin and you heard a different song, if it was singing the song of a seagull? You would say, "Robin, that's not your language; that's not your song." --Grand Chief Mike Mitchell, 1988 Aboriginal Languages Policy Conference (Noodin, 2014, p. 15).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Historically, the United States federal government forced numerous assimilation policies upon the Native American population. The federal government's most effective assimilation policy was the establishment of off-reservation boarding schools for Native American children in the late nineteenth century. Such an assimilation policy had a destructive impact upon the Native American population as the only language permitted to be spoken within the boarding school system was the English language. As a result of both the federal government's assimilation policies and the dominance and pervasiveness of the English language, Native American languages are either classified as endangered or extinct. Specifically, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has classified the Ojibwe language as severely endangered. Despite preservation and revitalization efforts, usage of the Ojibwe language is sharply declining. However, the very persistence of the Ojibwe language is a strong indicator of its vitality to survive into the twenty-first century.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

> "Indigenous peoples have the responsibility and right to restore, revitalize, use, develop, and transmit to future generations their languages, oral traditions, songs, philosophy, knowledge, writing system, and literature, and their heritage and visions" (Lambert, 2014, p. 1).

Lambert (2014) indicates, a "positive and strengthening research question" will lead to affirmative results and empower an Indigenous community; therefore, the following research questions have been developed for Ojibwe communities (p. 67):

What experiences and factors contributed to elders' fluency in the Ojibwe language?

How can the identified experiences and factors be replicated to reverse the endangerment status of the Ojibwe language?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Globalization has come at a severe cost to the world's languages, and the accelerating extinction of languages has no precedent (Fishman, 2001; Harrison, 2007). The estimates of the world's languages vary; however, it is projected that "of the world's 3,000 to 8,000 distinct languages," 300 are "power languages" and will survive into the twenty-second century (Fishman, 2001, p. 24). Moreover, it is estimated that the world will lose a language approximately every ten days (Harrison, 2007). The world's less prestigious and powerful languages are struggling for survival against "the myriad forms of economic, political, cultural, and linguistic oppression" (Fishman, 2001, p. 24). Furthermore, Harrison (2007) indicates "Indigenous cultures and languages are the most threatened globally" (p. 11).

One does not need to travel to remote corners of the world to witness language loss (Harrison, 2007). For instance, extensive loss of Indigenous languages among Native American tribes is evident and proceeding at an alarming rate (Fishman, 2001; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006). The United States will lose more Native American languages within the next sixty years than has been lost since European contact

(Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006). Recent estimates of Native American language speakers range from 372,000 to 397,000 (McCarty, 2013). Furthermore, census data reveals that "Over 1 in 5 . . . people aged 65 and over spoke [a Native American] language, . . . while about 1 in 10 people aged 5 to 17 did so" (McCarty, 2013, p. 9). It is crucial to indicate that census data do not indicate "how much" or "how well" the Native American languages are spoken (McCarty, 2013, p. 9). Specifically, the 2010 United States Census Bureau estimated that there are 8,371 speakers of the Ojibwe language in the states of Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin (McCarty, 2013). The Ojibwe People's Dictionary Project indicates a much more dire situation, and reports the Ojibwe language within the state of Minnesota as "severely endangered" and is "spoken by grandparents and older generations; while the parent generation may understand it, they do not speak it to children or among themselves" (http://ojibwe.lib.umn.edu/about-ojibwe-language). Furthermore, the Ojibwe People' Dictionary reports that there are approximately 1,000 Ojibwe language speakers, who are predominately over the age of seventy, in the states of Minnesota and Wisconsin with the majority of speakers residing in the Ponemah community located on the Red Lake Reservation (http://ojibwe.lib.umn.edu/about-ojibwe-language).

Despite the research source, the estimates reveal that the endangerment of the Ojibwe language is a key concern (McCarty, 2013). The last Ojibwe language voices may be preserved in print and digital sources; however, as the Ojibwe language serves as a repository of cultural knowledge, such sources do not reveal the wealth of knowledge when the language is spoken (Harrison, 2007). Harrison (2007) poses the powerful

question: "What exactly is lost when a language, the most massive, complex constellation of ideas we know, ceases to be spoken?" (p. vii).

The significance of this research study will be to generate a sense of urgency regarding the endangerment status of the Ojibwe language as well as to accentuate the language's resiliency and vitality to endure into the twenty-first century. Moreover, the research study findings will benefit and empower Ojibwe communities to address the current status of the Ojibwe language.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Endangered Language: For a definition of this term, a simplified definition developed by Leonard (2008) will be utilized. Leonard defines an endangered language as a language "in danger of being lost" (p. 28). Moreover, UNESCO defines an endangered language as when speakers cease to use the language and discontinue to pass the language on to the next generation resulting in no new adult or children speakers (McCarty, 2013). Furthermore, the following minimally modified table illustrates the language endangerment continuum as described by Leonard (2008):

Table 1: Endangered Language Spectrum

LESS ENDANGERED		**MORE ENDANGERED**		
Widely spoken languages associated with powerful groups	Languages associated with marginal groups	Languages that are not intergenerationally challenged	Sleeping languages	Extinct languages

Fluency: There are numerous definitions of fluency, and linguists will endlessly debate about the accurate definition (https://study.com/academy/lesson/language-fluency-definition-promotion-strategies.html). For the purposes of this research study, the following definition of fluency is adopted: Fluency is attained "when a speaker can confidently, easily, and accurately express themselves in a language" (https://study.com/academy/lesson/language-fluency-definition-promotion-strategies.html).

Indigenous: Cram, Chilisa, and Mertens (2013) indicate that the definition of Indigenous is burdened with conflicts associated with ethnicity, race, colonization, marginalization, culture, and relationship to the land. Moreover, definitions of Indigenous vary from federal government acknowledgement to self-identification (Cram, Chilisa, & Mertens, 2013). McCarty (2013) demonstrates that numerous terms are utilized to denote "Native peoples in the United States," and such terms may consist of American Indian, Native American, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, Indigenous, and First Nations (p. xxi). For the purpose of this research study, a definition of Indigenous developed by McCarty (2013) will be combined with a definition stated by Smith (1999) is adopted. The term Indigenous, which has its origins in the American Indian Movement (AIM), and interchangeably the term Native American will refer to individuals "whose ancestry within the land area now claimed by the United States" precedes colonization, and "whose oral and written traditions place them as the first occupants of ancestral homelands" (McCarty, 2013, p. xxi; Smith, 1999). Furthermore, Indigenous refers to tribal people "whose distinctive identity, values, and history distinguishes them from the other sections of the national community" (Lambert, 2014, p. 1). Moreover, Indigenous

refers to people who share experiences of being subjected to the colonization of their lands, languages, and culture, and the colonization continues to govern "the shape and quality of their lives" (Smith, 1999, p. 7). The term Indigenous refers to "the unfinished business of decolonization" (Smith, 1999, p. 7).

Intergenerational Dislocation. A term to describe the process of children not learning their heritage language at home from their parents (Grenoble & Whaley, 1998). Furthermore, intergenerational dislocation refers to limited individuals in the parent generation learning their heritage language from their parents, the grandparent generation (Grenoble & Whaley, 1998).

Language Revitalization: This term refers to the process of fostering new speakers of a language "already in use" (McCarty, 2013, p. 38). Language revitalization primarily consists of developing and implementing activities, which support new speakers to learn a language in everyday situations where language acquisition, usage, and transmission across generations is no longer present (McCarty, 2013).

Prior Ideological clarification: Grenoble and Whaley (1998) indicate that prior ideological clarification is a crucial and initial stage for language preservation. Prior ideological clarification refers to the process of facilitating an honest and open assessment regarding the current state of a [Native American] language, personal and community attitudes regarding the use and preservation of the language, and candid language preservation recommendations (Grenoble & Whaley, 1998). In essence, a language assessment will reveal the answer to the question of "Do we really want to speak and preserve the Ojibwe language?" (Grenoble & Whaley, 1998, p. 63). For this research study, prior ideological clarification will address the issues of "fears, anxieties,

and insecurities" regarding the use and preservation of the Ojibwe language (Grenoble & Whaley, 1998, p. 63).

Reversing Language Shift (RLS): Fishman (1991) originally developed the concept of reversing language shift (Grenoble & Whaley, 1998). For the purposes of this research study, the definition of reversing language shift minimally modified by Grenoble and Whaley (1998) will be adopted. Grenoble and Whaley (1998) define reversing language shift as "to alter the trend toward [language] loss by taking decisive and appropriate action" (p. 61). Furthermore, Grenoble and Whaley (1998) indicate "that over the last two or more generations, language use in most Native American communities has shifted, and the shift is toward the loss of the Indigenous, tribal language in favor of" the national language of the United States, the English language (p. 61).

Safety Zone Theory: This theory has been identified as a "critical sociocultural and enthnographic framework" to illustrate the conflicts regarding Native American language rights (McCarty, 2013, p. 42). The safety zone theory argues "language is 'primarily a means of control,'" and such control is evident in the historical language policies of the United States (McCarty, 2013, p. 42). To further illustrate this theory, McCarty (2013) utilizes a quote from legal scholar Arnold Liebowitz, who states restrictive language policies are enforced 'when an ethnic group [is] viewed as irreconcilably alien to a prevailing concept of American culture' (p. 43). Specifically, the conflict is whether Native American languages are classified as either "safe" or "dangerous" by the federal government (McCarty, 2013, p. 42). McCarty (2013) indicates the federal government will classify language efforts as "safe" if they are analyzed as non-threatening, and the federal government will be support the efforts through formal or informal means (p. 43).

Such federal government support may be perceived with the enactments of the 1990/1992 Native American Languages Act (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006). Historical United States policies dictate Native American languages were classified as "dangerous" in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as thousands of Native American children were subjected to Euro-American education (McCarty, 2013, p. 43). Moreover, the safety zone theory entails "physical, social, psychological and pedagogic[al]" constructs, which the federal government utilized through the use of educational policies and practices to purposefully and systematically suppress Native American cultural beliefs, values, practices, and languages (McCarty, 2013, p. 43). Lomawaima and McCarty (2006) further describes the safety zone theory:

> Drawing the boundaries between safe and dangerous cultural difference and illuminating the safety zone of American national culture lie at the heart of our history of American Indian education. The dilemma of the safety zone has endured to the present day. Which Native beliefs and practices might be judged safe, innocuous, and intolerable? Which beliefs and practices are too dangerous, different, and subversive of mainstream values? How best to manage or eradicate dangerous cultural expression? Federal Indian education policies and practices reveal how our nation defines itself and how it acts, to varying degrees, in liberating or repressive ways toward groups defined as different (p. 5).

In summary, McCarty (2013) indicates the safety zone theory is utilized to describe the federal government policy shifts regarding Native American languages.

Tribal Sovereignty: As previously mentioned, the term Indigenous denotes diverse terminology in the United States. However, Native Americans have a "unique legal and

political status" in the United States, and share in common "the principle of tribal sovereignty" (McCarty, 2013, p. 2). Tribal sovereignty may be simply defined as "the 'right of a people to self-government, self-determination, and self-education,'" and such a right encompasses "linguistic and cultural expression" (McCarty, 2013, p. 2). Furthermore, tribal sovereignty is an inherent right as it preceded the United States Constitution (McCarty, 2013). Chapter two contains a brief discussion of tribal sovereignty regarding linguistics with the federal government's passage of the 1990/1992 Native American Languages Act (McCarty, 2013).

ASSUMPTIONS

"If we have our Native language, we are unique and it identifies us, and we are spiritually whole. We have the complete circle."—Roseanna Thompson, Education Director, Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, interview, 29 June 2000 (McCarty, 2013, p. xvii).

As indicated in the previous section, prior ideological clarification addresses the question of "Do we really want to preserve the Ojibwe language?" (Grenoble & Whaley, 1998, p. 63). Grenoble and Whaley (1998) state that an appropriate answer to the question may be an absolute "Yes!" from Ojibwe communities; however, the truthful response may be "No." (p. 63). Moreover, what is the relevance of a "Yes" answer (Grenoble & Whaley, 1998)? An implication of an affirmative answer is an expectation for others to preserve the language with an absence of effort, commitment or involvement on the individual or community level (Grenoble & Whaley, 1998). Furthermore, a "No" response involves "fears, anxieties, and insecurities" pertaining to the acquisition, usage, and transmission of the Ojibwe language (Grenoble & Whaley, 1998, p. 63). For this research study, the assumption will be that the answer to the afore-mentioned question posed by Grenoble and Whaley (1998) will be a resonant "Yes!"

A second assumption regards the world's language diversity, and that such diversity is "an irreplaceable intellectual, social, cultural and scientific resource to its speakers and humankind" (McCarty, 2013, p. xix). Linguists indicate that language is a significant *enabling condition* for the priceless and precious creation of *human intellectual labor* (e.g., ideas, ways of knowing), and is beneficial for the world on the individual, family, community, and societal level (McCarty, 2013, p. xviii). Furthermore, McCarty (2013) states issues delve much deeper for cultures whose languages have been classified as endangered. The world's cultures facing an approaching "vanishing fund of human knowledge" are dealing with potential losses connected to the "sociocultural lives of their speakers" such as sovereignty, place of origin, and identity (McCarty, 2013, p. xix). Such beliefs or ideologies about language denote the essence "of what it means to speak, or know, or own a language" (McCarty, 2013, p. xix).

A third and final assumption is that numerous Indigenous cultures regard their language as a sacred gift, and it is essential to cherish, nurture, respect, and honor the giver of the language (McCarty, 2013). Oral tradition states that the Creator bestowed upon the Ojibwe people the gift of language as well as the gifts of freedom of choice, purpose, and a personal spirit name (Miller, 2015).

THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

When I was young I was told,
"Learn to be white, the old ways are gone."
I looked for my spirit in the military, it wasn't there.
I looked for my spirit in my job, it wasn't there.
I looked to my language, I listened, I heard,
in my heart's home, I found it (Anthony, 2011, p. 107).

Smith (1999) asserts it is challenging to discuss *research* and *Indigenous peoples* mutually without an analysis of European imperialism and colonialism (p. 2). Smith (1999) further indicates that "the word itself, 'research,' is probably one of the dirtiest words in the Indigenous world's vocabulary" (p. 1). Moreover, Smith (1999) asserts Indigenous peoples "are the most researched people in the world" (p. 3). Colonialism prospered within the context of research and is "a powerful remembered history" among Indigenous people (Smith, 1999, p. 1). In the name of research, colonialism coveted, confiscated, and claimed ownership of Indigenous knowledge, culture, and artwork while simultaneously renouncing the Indigenous people who created and developed such intellectual property (Smith, 1999). Moreover, this "powerful remembered history" endures as the means through which research is collected, categorized, and disseminated regarding Indigenous people persists to the present day (Smith, 1999, p. 1). Non-Indigenous researchers conduct research, present the research to the *West*, and subsequently through the *eyes of the West*, the research is presented to Indigenous people and supported by the imagery, vocabulary, doctrines, and institutions of imperialism and colonialism (Smith, 1999, p. 1). Smith (1999) denotes research is a means by which imperialism and colonialism are "regulated and realized" (p. 7).

Smith (1999) asserts that to concede to Western academic frameworks is an acceptance of all which has been recorded regarding Indigenous peoples. However, postcolonial criticism provides Indigenous peoples the opportunity for *resistance and hope* (Smith, 1999, p. 4). Tyson (2015) indicates that Indigenous resistance to their oppressors is as archaic as colonialism. Moreover, Smith (1999) states Indigenous resistance to the Western academic framework is to provide the alternate account "of

Western research through the eyes of the colonized" (p. 2). In regards to hope, Smith (1999) states that Indigenous peoples' histories, cultures, and languages have been marginalized; however, it is from this marginalization that Indigenous researchers can address social issues within the theoretical framework of "self-determination, decolonization and social justice" (p. 4). Furthermore, hope entails the usage of such terms as "self-determination, decolonization and social justice," which recognizes Indigenous peoples' presence and existence (Smith, 1999, p.1).

Tyson (2015) highlights the current circumstance of colonized people speaking and writing predominantly in the English language. The dominance of the English language is a *residual effect* of colonization, and is highly evident among Ojibwe people as the English language is prevalent in all aspects of their daily life—"politically, socially, culturally, and psychologically" (Tyson, 2015, p. 399). Tyson (2015) further posits that colonization has been thoroughly embedded that it is problematic to ascertain and separate the colonizer from the colonized (Tyson, 2015). Tyson (2015) identifies this particular phenomenon as *cultural colonization* defined as the persistent indoctrination of the colonizer's government, education, culture, and values resulting in an alienation of Indigenous people from their own cultures (p. 400).

Tyson (2015) indicates that a rejection of cultural colonization is through the reclamation of the Indigenous precolonial past. One such example of a reclamation act is for Indigenous researchers and authors to write in their traditional languages (Tyson, 2015). Grande (2004) asserts that "as language was central to the colonialist project," language is crucial for "the project of decolonization" (p. 56). Moreover, Native American languages are "a symbol and source of nationhood" (Grande, 2004, p. 53).

Ojibwe author Basil Johnston asserts that "language is a precious heritage" (Noodin, 2014, p. xvii). Such a "precious heritage" is not solely connected to identity, but to the history of oral traditions in Ojibwe communities (Noodin, 2014, p. xvii).

On the contrary, Tyson (2015) indicates there are Indigenous writers who prefer to communicate in their colonizer's language as it is the first language they learned to read and write. Tyson (2015) illustrates such a point by highlighting a statement made by Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe, "[F]or me there is no other choice. I have been given the language and I intend to use it" (p. 404).

As Smith (1999), this researcher is Indigenous and was born and raised within Native American communities where research is strongly associated with colonialism as the research solely serves and benefits the colonizers. As an Indigenous researcher, there will be the central premise of my participation within the research itself (Walter & Anderson, 2013). To illustrate, this researcher is an enrolled member of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, which is a federally recognized tribe, and is a member of the Eagle Clan. Thus, all aspects of this researcher's "physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual" essence will be integrated within the research (Walter & Anderson, 2013, p. 61). The Indigenous researcher Kahakalau (2004) summarized this central premise effectively when she indicated,

> I also bring my personal skills and experience, my hopes, my dreams, my visions, and my ancestral endowments, including the wisdom that my ancestors share with me while I sleep, as well as my knowledge my many teachers have imparted to me (Walter & Anderson, 2013, p. 61).

Moreover, this researcher writes in the English language. As Achebe, this researcher was given "no other choice," but to write in the colonizer's language (Tyson, 2015, p. 404). The English language is the first language this researcher learned to speak, read, and write. Despite numerous attempts, this researcher struggles to gain proficiency of the Ojibwe language. However, this researcher will adhere to the advice of Ojibwe author Kennedy-Kequom (2011), who states:

> the language is a very important part of being Native. It is going away because people are not speaking it. So we are all learning it to keep it with us . . . We learn as much as we can, so we can pass our language on . . . So learn the Ojibwe language. SO LEARN (p. 186).

Moreover, Basil Johnston writes,

> In the course of learning [Ojibwe] language, much more than speech is received. In the study of language much more than the ability to utter words or to express simple wants and sentiments is expected. The end of language is to glean some understanding of the transcendental, the abstract, the world, life, being, human nature, and laws both physical and human-inspired (Noodin, 2014, p. xx).

Kennedy-Kequom (2011) and Johnston strongly proclaim the Ojibwe language is central to identity. Sociolinguists Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015) indicate that "a key concept in the study of identities is that identity is not something you *have*, it is something you *do*" (p. 72). Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015) state that identity is formed through "linguistic practice" (p. 72). Therefore, through "the course of learning," practicing, and speaking the Ojibwe language, Ojibwe people are able to develop their identity (Noodin, 2014, p. xx; Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015).

As this researcher possesses limited proficiency in the Ojibwe language, the research study was conducted and written in the English language. In the meantime, this researcher will heed the advice of Kennedy-Kequom (2011) and continue to "learn the Ojibwe language" (p. 186).

SUMMARY

The United States federal government assimilation policies of the nineteenth century and the present-day pervasiveness of the English language have significantly contributed to the endangerment status of the Ojibwe language. Despite contemporary federal government policies reversing the prohibition of Native American languages spoken in the educational system, an *indelible mark* remains as there are critically reduced number of "speakers" of the Ojibwe language (Harrison, 2007, p. 9; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006, p. 148). However, the very persistence of the Ojibwe language is a strong indicator of its vitality to survive into the twenty-first century.

Presently, Native American communities are exercising their sovereignty through revitalization efforts to preserve and sustain their tribal languages. Such revitalization efforts are referred to as the "new American revolution" as it is a movement over fundamental rights at both the individual and community level (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006, p. 137). Central to Ojibwe language revitalization efforts is that the language, Ojibwemowin, is strongly connected to identity (Noodin, 2014). However, despite revitalization efforts, the Ojibwe language remains endangered.

As Smith (1999) indicates Ojibwe communities have not benefited from their prior contributions to non-Native American researchers. Therefore, a Native American researcher, an enrolled member of the Leech Lake Reservation, conducted a research

study to generate vital knowledge benefiting and empowering Ojibwe communities as well as create a sense of urgency addressing the endangerment status of the Ojibwe language.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

Smith (1999) declares it is an arduous undertaking to discuss research and Indigenous peoples synchronously without the mention of imperialism and colonialism. As this research study focuses on Ojibwe language, it is essential to provide an analysis on the history of Native American education, which primarily consists of the assimilation policies of the United States federal government. The federal government's most effective assimilation policy was the establishment of off-reservation boarding schools for Native American children in the late nineteenth century. Off-reservation boarding schools had a destructive impact upon the Native American population as the only language permitted to be spoken within the boarding school system was the English language. As Grande (2004) indicates "the American school was therefore a well-established weapon in the arsenal of American imperialism" (p. 11). As it is impossible to provide the entire history of Native American education within this research study, its importance is *duly noted* (Grande, 2004).

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE LITERATURE

Native American language loss is as complex as the history of colonization and imperialism in the United States (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006). Historically, the United States federal government forced assimilation polices upon the Native American population (Grande, 2004; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2016). Specifically, the destruction and endangerment of Native American languages can be directly attributed to the laws, policies, and practices of the United States government (Grenoble & Whaley, 1998).

Moreover, Grande (2004) indicates that the "miseducation" of the Native American population "precedes the 'birth'" of the United States of America (p. 11). Grande (2004) outlines the history of the Native American education by "eras that reflect the prevailing systems of power: (1) the period of missionary domination, from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries; (2) the period of federal government domination from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries; and, (3) the period of self-determination from the mid-twentieth century to the present" (p. 12).

The first era of Native American education history identified by Grande (2004) is the period of missionary domination. Grande (2004) depicts this era as having the dominant aspect of church and state possessing a strong collaboration to advance the civilization of the Native American population. This civilization process began in 1611 when the French Jesuits set precedent and opened the first missionary school with the primary purpose of educating Native American children "in the French manner" (Grande, 2004, p. 11). Throughout this era, the French Jesuit education model was replicated, and the sole intention was the civilization of Native American children (Grande, 2004). Furthermore, it was during this era that the revered higher education institutions of Harvard University (1636), the College of William and Mary (1693), and Dartmouth College (1769) were established with the initial mission of "civilizing" the Native American population (Grande, 2004, p. 11).

A major collaboration between church and state regarding Native American education was the enactment of the Civilization Fund Act on March 3, 1819 (Grande, 2004). The Civilization Fund Act was the United States federal government's response to the purportedly "decline and extinction of the Indian tribes" as contact among Euro-

American settlements and Native American tribes increased, and for the purpose of "introducing among them [Indian tribes] the habits and arts of civilization" (Prucha, 1978, p. 33). Therefore, Congress authorized an annual "civilization fund" in the amount of $10,000 to "promote and stimulate this work" (Prucha, 1978, p. 33). The Act provided instruction "in the mode of agriculture" for Native American adults, and "for teaching their children in reading, writing, and arithmetic" (Prucha, 1978, p. 33). Furthermore, Secretary of War John Calhoun proclaimed in 1819 that "it was the duty of all employees in government-funded missions, particularly teachers, to promote U.S. policies aimed at 'civilizing' Indians" (Grande, 2004, p. 12). To further promote the Act, Secretary of War Calhoun issued an edict to missionary agencies indicating the federal government would pay two-thirds of the construction and operation costs for schools built for Native American education (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). At the time the Civilization Fund Act was enacted, there were fourteen schools with a total of 508 Native American students (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). By 1824, missionary agencies expanded their efforts with the establishment of an additional eighteen Native American schools bringing the total number of Native American students to 800 (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). Missionary agencies continued to receive funding under the Act until it was repealed in 1873 (Reyhner & Eder, 2004).

In addition, the era of missionary domination was characterized by "a brief period of literacy and cultural exchange" between the missionaries and the Native American tribes as the English alphabet and writing system were introduced (Noodin, 2014). For instance, the mission schools primarily focused on teaching Christianity to the Native American population, and instruction was conducted in the language of the tribe (Spack,

2002). It was during this era that the first dictionary of the Ojibwe language was published, *A Dictionary of the Otchipwe Language Explained in English*, in 1853 by Father Baraga (Noodin, 2014).

Grande (2004) indicates that mission organizations retained significant control into the nineteenth century; however, it was during this period that the federal government initiated its effective domination over Native American education. Grande (2004) identifies the period of federal government domination as the second era of Native American education history. This era is marked by "swift and effective linguistic genocide" among Native American communities (Noodin, 2014, p. 8). In addition, this era was plagued with constant warfare between the United States federal government and the Native American population as a result of the Euro-American encroachment upon tribal lands (Spack, 2002).

Grande (2004) states the era of federal government domination initially commenced with the Indian Removal Act of 1830, which was devised by Thomas Jefferson and subsequently implemented by Andrew Jackson (Noodin, 2014). Due to this Act, numerous Native American tribes were dislocated from their homelands resulting in the decimation of their traditional economies (Grande, 2004). The Indian Removal Act had such substantial disastrous effects upon the Native American tribes it precipitated the formation of a Commissioner of Indian Affairs position within the United States Department of War (Grande, 2004). The Commissioner of Indian Affairs was assigned the responsibility of administering "a systemic effort to 'reeducate'" dislocated Native American tribes to adopt a "domesticated" life (Grande, 2004, p. 13). Such a systemic

effort of reeducation emphasized vocational training to further the assimilation process of Native Americans into the industrial society of the United States (Grande, 2004).

In the aftermath of the Indian Removal Act, church and state continued their collaborative partnership and established "manual labor schools" (Grande, 2004, p. 13). Manual labor schools implemented vocational training to domesticate Native Americans; however, as the term implies, the concept of forced manual labor was introduced and became an integral aspect of Native American education (Grande, 2004). Manual labor schools transitioned from the civilization model of Native American education first introduced by the Jesuit Priests into a for-profit model (Grande, 2004). Grande (2004) indicates that under the for-profit education model churches held hundreds of acres of land for Native American children "to plow, maintain, and harvest" (p. 13). As a result of such free manual labor and ensuing profits, churches increasingly competed for federal funding under the Indian Civilization Fund Act of 1819 (Grande, 2004). Such competition among churches led to "friction and discord," and ultimately led to the repeal of the Civilization Fund Act in 1873 (Grande, 2004, p. 13).

The second era of federal government domination was additionally characterized by increasing warfare between the United States federal government and Native American tribes. Due to the reaction to the warfare, the federal government formed a Peace Commission headed by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Nathanial Taylor (1867-1869) (Spack, 2002). Commissioner Nathanial Taylor, a former Methodist minister, adopted the phrase of "it costs less to civilize than to kill" to convince Congress to approve his proposal to introduce the English language as the uniform language for the Native American population (Spack, 2002, p. 17). The Peace Commission's report

emphasized “humanity and national unity,” and promoted the English language to assimilate the Native American population into “one homogeneous mass” (Spack, 2002, p. 17). Furthermore, the Peace Commission report recommended the establishment of compulsory schools for Native American children in which only the use of the English language would be permitted (Spack, 2002).

As Native Americans became confined within reservation boundaries and military warfare ceased, the federal government concluded the assimilation of Native Americans was not fully complete (Adams, 1988). Moreover, such afore-mentioned proclamations exalted by the Peace Commission would be demonstrative of the federal government’s recognition of an aggressive shift in assimilation policies to a “new ground” (Adams, 1988, p. 218). There was consensus among policymakers that this new ground would further continue on the platform of education (Adams, 1988). Moreover, the education campaign would solely consist of targeting Native American children as they had not “fully conformed to the old tribal ways of their ancestors,” and policymakers further reasoned that assimilation could be achieved within one generation (Adams, 1988, p. 218). Therefore, the new ground of assimilation policies would be “waged in the classroom” (Adams, 1988, p. 218). Adams (1988) indicates that as Native Americans were confined within reservation boundaries the issue was no longer to dispossess tribes of their land, but a transition for the federal government to possess their minds, hearts, and spirits.

The federal government required a school system for its educational campaign; however, there was disagreement regarding which type of school would be most effective

in accomplishing its assimilation policy: reservation day school, reservation boarding school or off-reservation boarding school (Adams, 1988).

The reservation day school typically was a one-room building located near tribal villages and possessed various advantages (Adams, 1988). Significant arguments in favor of the reservation day school was it received the least amount of resistance from Native American parents and was the least expensive to operate (Adams, 1988). Another advantage was that teachers would influence Native American parents through their children, who ideally served as "messengers of civilization" (Adams, 1988, p. 220). However, despite such advantages, the reservation day school was proven to be an ineffective assimilation measure as it permitted Native American children "too much proximity to their families and communities" (Grande, 2004, p. 13; Adams, 1988). A foremost complaint of teachers was that their efforts were futile as Native American children were permitted to return home in the evenings and on weekends (Adams, 1988). Furthermore, the reservation day school was limited in regards to its outreach and influence of a substantial population of Native American children (Adams, 1988).

The reservation boarding school evolved from the weaknesses of the day school approach (Adams, 1988). The federal government justified that it was essential to remove Native American children to a confined environment where every aspect of their lives would be controlled in order for assimilation to ensue (Adams, 1988). Therefore, each fall season, Native American children were summoned, generally by the reservation agency police force and at times by gun point, and transported to the boarding school for the nine-month academic year (Adams, 1988). During the academic year, Native American children's perspectives solely centered on the boarding school experience

(Adams, 1988). Under the absolute control of school officials, Native American children were forced into assimilation; they were instructed in the means of how "to walk, eat, sleep, pray, dress, and think" like the Euro-Americans (Adams, 1988, p. 221). The reservation boarding school proved to be more effective than the preceding education model; however, it was plagued with the identical problem associated with its predecessor, the day school (Adams, 1988). The reservation boarding school was in close proximity to the children's families and villages (Adams, 1988). When students returned home during the summer months, school and government officials observed the Native American children's immediate relapse to the cultural lifeways of their families and ancestors (Adams, 1988). As one government agent stated, "How soon they seem to forget all they have been taught, after they return to camp" (Adams, 1988, p. 222). The reservation boarding school progressed to the third and final education model, the off-reservation boarding school (Adams, 1988).

The final education model, the off-reservation boarding school, has been primarily credited to Lieutenant Richard Henry Pratt (Adams, 1988). Lieutenant Pratt was the founder of the Carlisle Indian Boarding School, which originated from an experiment of seventy-two Native American warriors held as prisoners under his supervision (Adams, 1988). In his experiment, Pratt converted a prison into an interim school, and the prisoners received a combination of instruction consisting of English, arithmetic, and manual labor (Adams, 1988). Pratt's education experiment was deemed an instant success and received substantial public recognition (Adams, 1988). Pratt had demonstrated that Native Americans were educable as he has transformed warriors into civilized men (Adams, 1988; Szasz, 1999). Pratt lobbied with Congress to obtain a

school where he could continue his experiment on a grander scale, and he was awarded a vacant military camp in Carlisle, Pennsylvania (Adams, 1988). Pratt argued that the solution to civilization was to isolate Native American children for a period of five years at an off-reservation boarding school (Adams, 1988). In October 1879, Carlisle Indian School began operation with 136 Native American students (Adams, 1988). Carlisle Indian Boarding School was deemed a success, and received a substantial congressional appropriation in 1882 (Adams, 1988; Szasz, 1999). Furthermore, the success of Carlisle led to a sudden expansion of off-reservation boarding schools (Szasz, 1999).

With the expansion of off-reservation boarding schools, the federal government strongly emphasized the enforcement of the English language as the only language to be iterated within its school system (Prucha, 1978). One of the strongest advocates of this federal assimilation policy was J. D. C. Atkins, Commissioner of Indian Affairs from 1885 to 1888 (Prucha, 1978). Commissioner Atkin's concept was not innovative as the "Peace Commission" of 1868 previously proclaimed the English language as the official language of the United States (Prucha, 1978; Spack, 2002). Prucha (1978) provides a brief excerpt from one of Commissioner Atkin's government reports to illustrate his strong viewpoint regarding the solitary use of the English language:

> In my first report I expressed very decidedly that Indians should be taught the English language only. From that position I believe, so far as I am advised, there is no dissent either among the lawmakers or the executive agents who are selected under the law to do the work. There is not an Indian pupil whose tuition and maintenance is paid for by the United States Government who is permitted to study any other language than our own vernacular—the language of the greatest,

> most powerful, and enterprising nationalities beneath the sun. The English language as taught in America is good enough for all her people of all races (p. 199).

Such a social and political discriminatory statement expressed as an official federal government policy strongly evoked for the destruction of Native American languages and identity (Harrison, 2007). Moreover, Harrison (2007) indicates numerous factors may hinder language transmission from one generation to the next; however, the loss and endangerment of Native American languages are rarely attributed to volition. The enduring message of the federal government's assimilation policies is that Native Americans are of the wrong race, language, religion, and culture (Grenoble & Whaley, 1988).

The Carlisle Indian Boarding School was closed in 1918 primarily due to the high cost of operation and the federal government policy of removing Native Americans for the purpose of education was no longer perceived as a solution to the "Indian problem" (Reyhner & Eder, 2004, p. 147). As with the previous two education models, off-reservation boarding schools were inundated by problems. The students were unable to apply the education and vocational training they had received at the off-reservation boarding school as the instruction tended to be unrelated to their culture and environment of their tribal lands (Szasz, 1999). Physical conditions in the boarding schools were abhorrent with overcrowding, deficient meals, and insufficient medical care; all factors contributing to frequent epidemics among the student population. Furthermore, forced manual labor was a common practice among boarding schools. Students were responsible for the essential operations of the boarding schools by working long hours in

the shops, the gardens, and the kitchens. In addition, the children were subjected to harsh discipline and abuse at "the arbitrary will of the boarding school superintendent" (Szasz, 1999).

The deplorable conditions of the off-reservation boarding schools and the implacable treatment of Native American students led to the federal government to instigate a reform (Szasz, 1999). In 1928 *The Problem of Indian Administration*, more commonly known as the Merriam Report, was published, and it provided a critical analysis of the Indian Bureau (Szasz, 1999). The Merriam Report had a significant impact on Native American education (Szasz, 1999). The Merriam Report addressed the physical conditions of the boarding schools, the enrollment of preadolescent children, and the inadequacy of the school personnel (Szasz, 1999). However, after a period, the Merriam report had no appeal or received little attention. The report once again received attention in the 1960s, and it was asserted that the recommendations were still applicable to boarding schools as they were in the 1930s (Szasz, 1999). The problems identified in 1928 were still uncorrected forty years later (Szasz, 1999). As the Kennedy Report indicated in 1969, many of the Merriam Report recommendations "were 'yet to be accomplished"' (Szasz, 1999, p. 4).

The third and final era identified by Grande (2004) is the period of self-determination. The self-determination era coincided with the civil rights movement as Native Americans were protesting their discontent with the federal government's oppressive policies (Grande, 2004). Native Americans were advocating for self-determination, which is "the idea of 'letting Indian people . . . determine their own destiny'" (Grande, 2004, p. 16). The era of self-determination began with the establishment of numerous Native American

organizations such as "the National Indian Education Association in 1967, the Coalition of Indian Controlled School Boards in 1971, and the American Indian Movement in 1972" (Grande, 2004, p. 16). With such organizations, Native American educators and leaders advocated for educational reform (Grande, 2004). As a result of their efforts, two major studies on Native American education were published; 1969 study of "Indian Education: A National Tragedy—A National Challenge," commonly referred to as the Kennedy Report, and "The National Study of American Indian Education" in 1970 (Grande, 2004). These two reports assisted with the passage of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Act of 1975 (Grande, 2004). This particular act provided Native American parents control over their children's education consisting of special funding for reservation school programming, establishment of tribally-controlled schools, and tribally relevant and bilingual curriculum (Grande, 2004). Due to the Indian Self-Determination and Education Act, the first tribally controlled education institutions were established (Grande, 2004). For instance, the Rough Rock Demonstration School was established in 1965 (Grande, 2004; http://www.roughrock.k12.az.us/Welcome.htm). The Rough Rock Demonstration School, known today Rough Rock Community School, provides elementary and secondary education to the Navajo people while simultaneously maintaining the tribe's language and heritage (http://www.roughrock.k12.az.us/Welcome.htm). In addition, this era marked the establishment of the Navajo Community College, the first tribally-controlled college in the United States (Grande, 2004; http://www.dinecollege.edu/about/history.php). Today, the Navajo Community College is known as the Dine College (http://www.dinecollege.edu/about/history.php).

The era of self-determination is marked with the support for the revitalization of Native American languages, and is evident by the publication of dictionaries by Native American linguists (Noodin, 2014). Specifically, regarding the revitalization and sustainability of the Ojibwe language, linguists such as Richard Rhodes, John Nichols, and Earl Nyholm published dictionaries (Noodin, 2014). Recently, technology has made Native American languages readily accessible, and online dictionaries provide extensive Indigenous word listings along with pronunciation and sentence guides to further language revitalization (Noodin, 2014).

The self-determination era is prominent with federal government legislation regarding Native American culture and languages. Reyhner and Eder (2004) identify three specific events of the 1990s indicating the forward movement of this particular era: the Native American Languages Act, the U.S. Secretary of Education's Indian Nations at Risk Task Force, and the White House Conference on Indian Education.

In 1990, Congress passed the Native American Languages Act (NALA), which contains the three implications of a continuation of the self-determination policy of Native American tribes, reversal of the historical policy of suppressing Native American languages within the government school system, and a reaction to the policy of enforcing English the official language of the United States (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). The passing of NALA "confirmed the connection between indigenous language and identity," and the act states:

> It is the policy of the United States to . . . encourage and support the use of Native American languages as a medium of instruction in order to encourage and support . . . Native American survival, educational opportunity, increased student success

> and performance, increased student awareness and knowledge of their culture and history, and increased student and community pride (Sec. 104[3]) (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006, p. 134; Noodin, 2014; p. 15).

Furthermore, NALA authorized the use of Native American languages in schools funded by the Secretary of the Interior, and today, the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) administers "183 elementary, secondary, residential and peripheral dormitories across 23 states" (http://www.bie.edu/Schools/index.htm; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006). In addition, the BIE oversees the two higher education institutions Haskell Indian Nations University and Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (http://www.bie.edu/Schools/index.htm). NALA coincides with the inherent devotion of Native American tribes to retain their tribal languages and identity, and efforts to resist their language loss cannot be separated from struggles for wellness, self-determination, and cultural survival (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006).

The passage of the Native American Languages Act of 1990 has received criticism. Critics perceive NALA as being within the confines of the "federal safety zone" (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006). For instance, NALA is viewed as an emblematic action, and has been described as "locking the barn door after the horse is stolen'" (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006, p. 136). Furthermore, the passage of the Act was supported with meager funding (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006). NALA was not authorized for funding until two years after its enactment, and the act's average annual allocations are $1 million (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006). If the $1 million were to be distributed equally among the 581 federally recognized tribes, the amount would be approximately $1,800 per tribe annually (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006).

Lomawaima and McCarty (2006) identified the Indian Nations at Risk Task Force, which was chartered in 1990 by the Secretary of Education, as the second significant event in the self-determination era. The Indian Nations at Risk Task Force gathered testimony from the annual conference of the National Indian Education Association, made numerous school visits across the nation, and commissioned papers from national experts on American Indian/Alaska Native education regarding the "subjects of current conditions, funding, dropout prevention, and curriculum" (Reyhner & Eder, 2004, p. 311). As a result of such efforts, the Indian Nations at Risk Task Force made the recommendations of "establishing the promotion of students' tribal language and culture as a responsibility of the school," and "training of Native [American] teachers to increase the number of [Native American] educators and other professionals" (Reyhner & Eder, 2004, p. 314). In addition, the Indian Nations at Risk Task Force recommended that school officials and educators "integrate the contemporary, historical, and cultural perspectives of American Indians" and "give education a multicultural focus to eliminate racism and promote understanding among all races" (Reyhner & Eder, 2004, p. 314). The Indian Nations at Risk Task Force echoed the sentiments of NALA and supported the need for linguistically and culturally appropriate education for American Indian/Alaska Native students (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006).

A third significant event of the self-determination era was the White House Conference on Indian education held in January of 1992 (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006). The White House Conference on Indian Education purpose was to "explore the feasibility of establishing an independent Board of Indian Education that would assume responsibility for all existing federal programs relating to the education of Indians" and

"to develop recommendations for the improvement of educational programs relevant to the needs of Indians" (Reyhner & Eder, 2004, p. 316). At the White House Conference on Indian Education, 113 resolutions ranged from the governance of Indian education to safe, alcohol-free and drug-free schools, building on the work of both the Effective Schools movement and the Indian Nations at Risk Task Force recommendations (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). Following White House Conference, the federal government exhibited minimal initiative in the implementation of the resolutions (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). Such lack of action on behalf of the federal government supports the opinion and belief of yet another federal project to collect information, publish a report, and place the report on a shelf never to be read again or implemented (Reyhner & Eder, 2004).

Grande (2004) indicates that political documents such as the 1991 "Indian Nations at Risk" report and the 1992 "White House Conference on Indian Education" report highlighted the recent progress of Native American education; however, such documents also brought attention to the challenges. For instance, Native American students have the highest high school dropout rates and the lowest achievement rates (Grande, 2004). Furthermore, Native American students are forced to learn from Euro-centric curriculums, limited access to tribal relevant library and learning resources, and racism in schools (Grande, 2004).

There were significant legislative actions proceeding the events identified by Lomawaima and McCarty (2006). The Bilingual Education Act and the Indian Education Act are such legislative actions addressing the diversity and education in the United States (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). The Bilingual Education Act, passed as Title VII, an amendment of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1968, led to the

implementation of five public school Native American language programs the following year (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). In 1970, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools became eligible for Title VII funding, and by 1971, there were sixteen Native American language programs (Reyhner & Eder, 2004).

The Indian Education Act, passed in 1972, provided supplemental programs for Native American students in public schools located on and off reservations (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). The passage of the Act was an attempt to remedy some of the problems identified in the National Study of American Indian Education and the Kennedy report (Reyhner & Eder, 2004, p. 254). Public schools with ten or more Native American students were eligible to receive funding for supplemental programs to meet the needs of the students (Reyhner & Eder, 2004).

Szasz (1999) indicates federal government policy pertaining to Native American education serves as a barometer of the prevailing dominant attitudes of the nation. In the late nineteenth century, education was a prominent feature of the federal government's assimilation policies (Szasz, 1999). In the 1920s, Native American education was effected by the reform movement, which encouraged a return to Native American culture. In the 1940s, Native American education was subject to the federal government's policy of termination. Finally, in the late 1960s, federal government education policy responded to the movement of self-determination by recognizing Native American tribes should have an active voice regarding their own educational programs (Szasz, 1999).

Grande's (2004) outline of the three eras regarding the history of Native American education fails to acknowledge traditional education prior to Euro-American contact. Traditional Ojibwe pedagogy consisted of youth receiving informal instruction

conforming to the moral, spiritual, economic, and political standards of the tribe (Hilger, 1992). Informal instruction was provided by family, elders, and respected members of the tribe, and consisted of lectures, observations, demonstrations, and the imitation of elders in play or participation with elders in work or ceremonies (Hilger, 1992; Reyhner & Eder, 2004). Traditional Ojibwe education may be summarized as the "3 Ls" of "Look, Listen, and Learn" (McNally, 2009, p. 137). As children grew, traditional education became progressively gender specific and consisted of fathers and grandfathers instructing boys, and mothers and grandmothers instructing girls (Hilger, 1992; McNally, 2009). Another form of informal training was storytelling, which began in the season of fall and concluded in spring (Hilger, 1992). Grandparents played a crucial role in storytelling, which consisted of three types: "the Amusing, the Historical, and the Moral" (Hilger, 1992, p. 58). Moreover, apprenticeships were provided to youth seeking to become spiritual healers and leaders (Reyhner & Eder, 2004).

Today, the Ojibwe language, also known as *Ojibwemowin* and *Anishinaabemowin,* is "one of 27 Algonquian languages," and is recognized "as the ancestral language of over 200 communities" within the states of North Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan as well as in Ontario, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan in Canada (Noodin, 2014, p. 5). The Ojibwe language is more than mere words (Wub-E-Ke-Niew, 1995). The Ojibwe language is a source of history and culture, an embodiment of lessons and values, and a guide for daily living and survival (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Noodin, 2014; Wub-E-Ke-Niew, 1995). Ojibwe language etymology reveals its rich and varied history; old words, new words, patterns of speech and changes in usage (Noodin, 2014). Moreover, the Ojibwe language contains "the compiled wisdom of hundreds of thousands

of generations" of Ojibwe people (Wub-E-Ke-Niew, 1995, p. 215). Fishman (2001) made the following statement and it may apply to the Ojibwe language: "specific languages are related to specific cultures and to their attendant identities at the level of doing, at the level of knowing and at the level of being" (p. 3). As Fishman's (2001) statement indicates, the Ojibwe language encompasses every aspect of life, and it would be impossible to express in absence of the language as indicated by the subsequent comprehensive list: education, legal system, religious/spiritual beliefs and observances, self-government operations, literature, folklore, philosophy of morals and ethics, medical code of illnesses and diseases, interpersonal interactions (p. 3). The Ojibwe language is more than a mere tool for communication, but has been identified as a marker of cultural identity and a gift (Fishman, 2001).

The Ojibwe People's Dictionary Project, an online resource, reports the Ojibwe language as being in state of endangerment (http://ojibwe.lib.umn.edu/about-ojibwe-language). The 2010 United States Census Bureau estimated that there are 8,371 speakers of the Ojibwe language in the states of Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin (McCarty, 2013). Moreover, the census data does not indicate "how much" or "how well" the Ojibwe language is spoken (McCarty, 2013). The Ojibwe People's Dictionary Project indicates a much more dire situation, and reports the Ojibwe language within the state of Minnesota as "severely endangered" and is "spoken by grandparents and older generations; while the parent generation may understand it, they do not speak it to children or among themselves" (http://ojibwe.lib.umn.edu/about-ojibwe-language). Furthermore, the Ojibwe People' Dictionary reports that there are approximately 1,000 Ojibwe language speakers, who are predominately over the age of seventy, in the states

of Minnesota and Wisconsin with the majority of speakers residing in the Ponemah community located on the Red Lake Reservation (http://ojibwe.lib.umn.edu/about-ojibwe-language). The following table is adapted from the Minnesota Humanities Center (2009) publication of Aaniin Ekidong: Ojibwe Vocabulary Project highlighting the Minnesota Ojibwe language fluent speaker census:

Table 2: Fluent Ojibwe Language Speaker Population on Minnesota Reservations

Minnesota Reservation	**Fluent Speaker Population**
Boise Forte	20
Fond du Lac	0
Grand Portage	3
Leech Lake	90
Mille Lacs	250
Red Lake	400
White Earth	15

Language revitalization efforts have been dubbed the "new American revolution" (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006, p. 137). The battles over Native American language revitalization efforts is essentially a battle over fundamental human rights at both the individual and community level (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006). At the individual level, one should have the unconditional right to learn their Indigenous language, and at the community level, there should exist the right to preserve and speak an Indigenous language as a safeguard against cultural and linquistic demise (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006).

The "new American revolution" of Native American language revitalization efforts is evident throughout the state of Minnesota. Within Minnesota, there are seven Ojibwe Reservations and four Dakota Reservations. According to a 2011 report compiled by the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council, there are over one-hundred Dakota and Ojibwe

language revitalization programs and activities throughout the state (http://mn.gov/indianaffairs/documents/2011%20Dakota%20and%20Ojibwe%20Language%20Report%20to%20the%20Legislature-final.pdf). Such a span of language revitalization efforts highlights the importance of Indigenous languages; however, the report indicates that the programs and activities are plagued with numerous barriers. For instance, the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council report indicates that the majority of the language revitalization programs and activities are not designed to develop fluent speakers of the Dakota and Ojibwe languages (http://mn.gov/indianaffairs/documents/2011%20Dakota%20and%20Ojibwe%20Language%20Report%20to%20the%20Legislature-final.pdf). In her work *Pimatisiwin*, Young (2005) provided a personal account of this particular barrier. Young (2005) shared an Ojibwe woman's experience of enrolling in a beginning Ojibwe language course; however, she encountered difficulties in learning the language. The Ojibwe language course primarily consisted of rote memorization of Ojibwe word lists, and the experience was unfulfilling and unauthentic (Young, 2005). The Ojibwe woman stated,

> I was just memorizing those translations and it just didn't feel like an authentic experience. I could go ahead and memorize all these words but was I really speaking the language or just memorizing a bunch of words and trying to remember the way you are supposed to put them in grammar and always having to go back to English so I kind of just left it (Young, 2005, p. 56).

In addition, the language revitalization efforts lack qualified teachers, curriculum materials, and funding (http://mn.gov/indianaffairs/documents/2011%20Dakota%20and%20Ojibwe%20Langua

ge%20Report%20to%20the%20Legislature-final.pdf. In conclusion, the 2011 report indicates that language revitalization efforts within the state of Minnesota are in the developmental stage, and highlights the importance and urgency of continued language revitalization efforts.

Despite the continued revitalization efforts of the Ojibwe language, the usage of the language is sharply declining (Noodin, 2014). Harrison (2007) provides an intriguing concept regarding the revitalization of endangered languages. Harrison (2007) indicates that language revitalization is dependent upon a specific population, six and seven year old children, and they serve as a language barometer of their respective communities. According to Harrison (2007), this specific population is under duress and pressure to speak the dominant language, and subsequently influence the choice of language among the adult population. Moreover, Harrison (2007) warns that a language that is no longer utilized for everyday conversation ceases to be a language (Harrison, 2007). Harrison (2007) further indicates that an Indigenous language that is no longer being acquired and spoken by children is endangered as the language's days are numbered. There will be no new language speakers to replace the elder speakers (Harrison, 2007).

The Ojibwe language's endangerment status is a key concern; however, terms such as "death" or "sleeping" have not been applied to the language to date. Harrison (2007) merely describes a process of language abandonment. Harrison (2007) indicates that languages do not simply "die" or become "extinct." Technical terms are lacking to describe the process of languages being abandoned by their native speakers in favor of a more dominant and prestigious language (Harrison, 2007). As a result, metaphors are created, and terminology such as "language death," "language shift," "threatened

languages," "extinction," "last words," or "vanishing voices" is conceived to describe the process (Harrison, 2007).

A simplified definition of an endangered language contains the following concepts, and may be applied to the Ojibwe language:

> a distinct language (typically bearing a language name) associated with a particular group of speakers—a people or ethnic group—which is threatened by the absorption or replacement by some hegemonic language with which the endangered speakers are in contact (Guy & Zilles., 2008, p. 53).

Furthermore, it should be noted that "language death" or as in the matter of the Ojibwe language, "endangerment," does not occur in privileged communities, but occurs to the "dispossessed and disempowered" (King et al., 2008). Globalization, which has been referred to as the "motor of language shift," has been identified as the key factor, and its cost to the world has been extreme (Fishman, 2001, p. 6). One of the most fascinating aspects of our world is its astounding diversity (King et al., 2008). The world's diversity is reflected in its plant and animal species and ecosystems in nature, and in the cultures and languages in human societies (King et al., 2008). However, there is a growing body of factual evidence and supporting theory pointing to an impending extinction crisis in the realms of both biological and cultural-linguistic diversity (King et al., 2008). We are crossing a threshold of irreversible loss of species and languages into a fundamentally changed and less diverse world (King et al., 2008). The cultural and linguistic diverse populations of the world are evolving into "one world" with the ability to communicate across vast and complex geographical, cultural and linguistic boundaries (Fishman, 2001,

p. 23). As a result, a struggle exists to protect the survival of the less prestigious and powerful languages (Fishman, 2001).

Briefly, there are critics of language preservation. Such critics justify the world's language losses as a necessary form of evolution (King et al., 2008). "Language evolution" refers to the process of languages continually changing to meet the changing times of the world (King et al., 2008, p. 8). Furthermore, critics proclaim that such an evolution should not be interfered with as speaking a dominant or national language is a pathway to modernization (King et al., 2008). Moreover, critics state the world is not in endangerment of language loss as the world has the languages it needs (King et al., 2008). A number of critics of language preservation may acknowledge the decreasing number of world languages is associated with colonization and globalization; however, critics deemphasize the power imbalances and the social, political, and economic domination of small language communities (King et al., 2008).

Numerous barriers have been identified regarding the successful acquisition and transmission of the Ojibwe language. The federal government's assimilation policy regarding the placement of Native American children within the boarding school system has proven to be a substantial barrier (Grenoble & Whaley, 1998). A significant population of Native Americans have haunting boarding school memories of being physically and psychologically punished for speaking their Indigenous language (Grenoble & Whaley, 1998). As a result, there is a negative association with the acquisition and transmission of their language (Grenoble & Whaley, 1998). For instance, Grenoble and Whaley (1998) provide the following statement to illustrate such negative associations many Native Americans may have regarding their Indigenous language:

"They beat the language out of us in school, and now the schools want to teach it" (p. 65). Furthermore, such memories may transcend to a higher level resulting in Native American communities being plagued with a multitude of anxieties, insecurities, and hesitations regarding the value of their indigenous languages (Grenoble & Whaley, 1998).

An exception to negative associations with Native American cultural identity is traditional dance and music (Grenoble & Whaley, 1998). Language revitalization efforts have never reached the magnitude and popularity of these two Native American cultural aspects (Grenoble & Whaley, 1998). Traditional regalia and music and dance performance are readily identifiable and accessible manifestations of Native American culture, and are perceived as less threatening than learning one's Indigenous language (Grenoble & Whaley, 1998). Native American languages are perceived as difficult to learn, and may serve as a constant threat to an individual's cultural competence (Grenoble & Whaley, 1998).

Grenoble and Whaley (1998) indicate that language reversal efforts require community-level commitment and support (p. 97). To illustrate such a statement, Fishman developed a comparison of language reversal to the foundation and support structure of a building (Grenoble & Whaley, 1998). Fishman illustrates that the foundation and support structure of a building are not the same; the building foundation must be built first, then the support structure follows (Grenoble & Whaley, 1998). For language reversal efforts, the foundation is the family and community (Grenoble & Whaley, 1998). Language reversal efforts require an intense "do-it yourself" undertaking (p. 96). Grenoble and Whaley (1998) state that "language reversal cannot be done *to* one

or *for* one by others," and despite the best intentions of "outsiders" to "save" or "rescue" Native American languages, only the speakers themselves can preserve and encourage language reversal (p. 97; Harrison, 2007). Indigenous languages only survive in "communities of speakers" (Harrison, 2007, p. 9).

Another barrier identified are the strategies of problem and avoidance (Grenoble & Whaley, 1998). Problem and avoidance strategies involve the concept that language preservation is worthy; however, the burden of preservation is placed upon "them" rather than on "me" or "us" (Grenoble & Whaley, 1998, p. 70). Such a notion leads to the issue of identifying persons responsible for the acquisition and transmission of the Ojibwe language to address the endangerment issue (Grenoble & Whaley, 1998). Such strategies consist of two critical issues: (1) the perception of culture as alienable; for instance, "something that one puts on or takes off at will, like a shirt or blanket," and (2) the failure to see the connection between language use and transmission (Grenoble & Whaley, 1998, p. 69). The second issue may involve parents being fluent in the language; however, they fail to speak and transmit the language to their children (Grenoble & Whaley, 1998). In such instances, parents may have the assumption that their children will "magically" acquire the language or the language will continue to survive as others are still speaking it (Grenoble & Whaley, 1998, p. 69).

Grenoble and Whaley (1998) identify the "bureaucratic fix" as another avoidance strategy (p. 69). The "bureaucratic fix" involves the establishment of an organization to promote language and cultural preservation (Grenoble & Whaley, 1998). The bureaucratic fix may be perceived as a manner to transfer personal responsibility and blame if the language continues to be endangered (Grenoble & Whaley, 1998). Grenoble

and Whaley (1998) indicate that despite an organization assigned with such a task, the "efforts and cooperation" primarily is the responsibility of individuals and the community (p. 69). Grenoble and Whaley (1998) illustrate this by indicating that Native American language instructional materials can be compiled and produced, "but they are nothing unless people actually speak the language to each other in the home and community" (p. 70). Furthermore, "such organizations are too easily perceived as a place to transfer personal responsibility and to target for blame when things go wrong" (Grenoble & Whaley, 1998, p. 70).

Grenoble and Whaley (1998) identify the demand for "More tools!" which has been identified as a "technical fix," as an additional avoidance strategy (p. 70). Language tools consist of various Native American newspaper publications, literature, videos, online dictionaries, CD-ROMS (Grenoble & Whaley, 1998; McCarty, 2013). Today, technological innovations have provided numerous sophisticated tools for acquiring and preserving the Ojibwe language; however, is no substitute for effort to speak the language (Grenoble & Whaley, 1998; King et al., 2008). Furthermore, there is a justifiable need for language material development; however, the issue is not to allow such a need to serve as a rationalization for avoidance and procrastination. Grenoble and Whaley (1998) indicate that teacher training is required more than the development of additional language materials. Teacher training is needed in various teaching methods, utilization of existing language materials, and how to adapt the language materials to one's own teaching style, community setting, and grade level (Grenoble & Whaley, 1998).

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

Research Design

A qualitative research study was conducted to identify experiences and factors contributing to Ojibwe elders' fluency in the Ojibwe language, and how such experiences and factors can be replicated for younger generations in order to reverse the endangerment status of the Ojibwe language. In addition, information was revealed regarding the association of the Ojibwe language to Ojibwe identity (Kennedy-Kequom, 2011; Noodin, 2014). As the Ojibwe language contains generations and generations of knowledge, history, traditions, and values, such a heritage is strongly connected to identity (Noodin, 2014). Such wisdom gathered from Ojibwe elders may contribute to the sense of urgency regarding the endangerment status of the Ojibwe language.

A phenomenological approach was utilized for the research study, and this approach consists of posing two broad and general questions to the research participants (Creswell, 2007). For this research study, the two main questions are: "What have you experienced in terms of being a fluent speaker in the Ojibwe language?" and "What situations have typically influenced your experiences of being a fluent speaker in the Ojibwe language" (Creswell, 2007). Creswell (2007) further indicates that additional open-ended questions may be posed; however, the two afore-mentioned questions will gather data that will provide both a textural and structural description and an "understanding of the common experiences of the" research participants (p. 61).

The researcher was the sole interviewer, and each interview was audiotape recorded to ensure validity and accuracy. The following procedure for conducting the interviews was

adhered to: The interview procedure consisted of initiating preliminary telephone contact with each potential interview participant. In this initial contact, the researcher disclosed information regarding tribal and clan affiliation and family history information. This specific disclosure served the purpose of developing rapport, trust, and connection with each potential interview participant. In addition, the researcher informed each interview participant of their time commitment, an estimated time frame of six hours, and the purposes and goals of the research study. Upon gaining interviewee's acceptance to participate in the study, the researcher immediately followed up with written correspondence. Interview participants received the written correspondence within a week, and the correspondence outlined the purpose of the study and included a consent form for each interview participant to review and complete. The researcher and each interviewee collaborated on the date, location, and time of the interview. The researcher verified the protocols of the interview through additional written correspondence, which included the date, time, and location of the interview along with a copy of the questionnaire and consent form. Prior to beginning the interview, the researcher followed traditional Ojibwe protocol, which consisted of providing Ojibwe traditional gifts. It was estimated that the time frame to conduct the interview process would be approximately four to six weeks.

The researcher was the sole individual transcribing the audio-taped interviews, and each interview was transcribed into a hard copy verbatim transcript. As this can be a lengthy and time-consuming process, the researcher required approximately four weeks to complete the transcripts. Upon transcribing each interview transcript, the researcher utilized member checking as a procedure to follow-up with the interview participants.

Historically, Indigenous people have not been permitted to be actively involved in the research process regarding their knowledge, culture, and art; however, member checking provided such an opportunity for the interviewees (Smith, 1999). Each interviewee was provided a copy of the individual interview transcript to review for accuracy and completeness (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). The process of member checking ensured validity of the qualitative research study. Member checking was integral as it may reveal errors that can be corrected immediately, and there were no identified threats to the validity of the research study (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). The process of member checking did not prompt interviewees to volunteer additional information (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003).

Upon completing the process of member checking, the researcher began the process of analyzing the data and highlighting "'significant statements,' sentences, or quotes that provide an understanding of how the participants experienced the phenomenon" (Creswell, 2007, p. 61). This data analysis process is referred to as horizonalization (Creswell, 2007). The next step in the data analysis process was for the researcher to develop clusters of meaning from the identified significant statements to form themes (Creswell, 2007). Creswell (2007) indicates that such significant statements and themes are utilized to develop a description of what each research participant experienced. In addition, the significant statements and themes are utilized to develop a "description of the context or setting that influenced how the participants experienced the phenomenon" (Creswell, 2007, p. 61). The final step in the data analysis plan was for the researcher to compile a composite description, which presents the "essence" of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007, p. 62).

Upon completion of the research study, the researcher will seek the permission of the University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD) American Indian Learning Resource Center to store the audiotapes and transcripts as a resource in the department's library. The data will be stored for a time frame determined by the UMD American Indian Learning Resource Center staff, and will be accessible for current students and community members. The UMD American Indian Learning Resource Center is located at Kirby Plaza 318, 1208 Kirby Drive, Duluth, MN 55812-3095. It should be noted that this information was contained in the consent form, and each research participant was informed regarding the storage of their interview data.

As mentioned previously, each participant received a copy of the interview transcript and if so desired, a copy of the final draft of the researcher's dissertation would be provided. Historically, research results have not been shared with Indigenous research participants or their communities; therefore, it is an integral component of the research study to share the results with the participants and potentially with Ojibwe communities (Smith, 1999). The sharing of the research results with Ojibwe communities may be in the form of a public presentation at reservation district meetings, community gatherings, conferences, and tribal colleges. It should be noted that the hard copy verbatim transcripts will not be shared and/or provided with the public; however, the public may review such transcripts at the UMD American Indian Learning Resource Center.

Variables

As mentioned previously, the researcher conducted in-depth one-on-one interviews with research participants meeting the specified criteria. This research study addressed the research questions:

What experiences and factors contributed to elders' fluency in the Ojibwe language?

How can the identified experiences and factors be replicated to reverse the endangerment status of the Ojibwe language?

Measures

For this qualitative research study, the researcher utilized in-depth one-on-one interviews with Ojibwe elders consisting of open-ended questions. Each research participant was presented the identical questions to provide responses. The interview questions are as follows:

1. What have you experienced in terms of being a fluent speaker of the Ojibwe language?

    How do you define fluency of the Ojibwe language?

    What is the relationship between Ojibwe language and Ojibwe identity?

    What exactly would be lost if the Ojibwe language ceased to be spoken?

2. What situations have typically influenced your experiences of being a fluent speaker of the Ojibwe language?

    How can similar experiences be replicated to encourage Ojibwe language fluency?

    What are the greatest challenges in reversing the endangerment status of the Ojibwe language?

Transparency

Gall, Gall, and Borg (2003) define bias as "a set to perceive events in such a way that certain types of facts are habitually overlooked, distorted, or falsified" (p. 527). Gall, Gall, and Borg (2003) indicate that bias may be traceable to an individual's characteristics, experiences, and beliefs. The researcher was reasonably aware of the

positive or negative biases related to personal characteristics, experiences, and beliefs as indicated by Gall, Gall, and Borg (2003).

The researcher is an enrolled member of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, and is an intermediate speaker of the Ojibwe language. In addition, the researcher is knowledgeable regarding Native American history, culture, and traditions. However, such characteristics, experiences, and beliefs of the researcher neither had a positive nor negative influence upon the development of the questionnaire. In addition, there was neither a positive nor negative impact upon the research study findings, discussion, and conclusion. For this research study, the researcher's characteristics, experiences, and beliefs proved to be beneficial. Historically, research was utilized as to exploit Indigenous communities without any benefit to such communities (Cram, Chilisa & Mertens, 2013). Due to the researcher being a member of the Ojibwe community, the researcher had an advantage in obtaining the trust, cooperation, and support from the elder Ojibwe community members. Furthermore, the researcher had a cultural responsibility to be respectful in the interpretation of knowledge gathered and of the relationships established through the research process (Wilson, 2008). As previously mentioned, the one-on-one interviews with the research study participants were audio-taped, and each research participant was provided a complete verbatim transcript of the interview. Such measures ensured the researcher's accountability, and the research participants' had assurance that their words would be treated in a respectful manner (Siedman, 2006).

Coherency

Six research participants were involved in the research study on a voluntary basis.

Data was compiled through the process of interviewing each research participant on a one-on-one basis. Each research participant was presented with identical open-ended questions, and each interview was audio-recorded for accuracy. The researcher was the sole transcriber for each interview. Each research participant was provided a verbatim copy of their interview transcript to review for accuracy and completeness.

Competency

The researcher was solely responsible for conducting the research and discussing the findings. The researcher possesses prior qualitative research study experience, and possesses experience in the development of questionnaires and interviewing research participants. The researcher completed a qualitative research study to earn a Master of Arts Degree in Organizational Leadership from the College of St. Catherine in 2005. In addition, the researcher has completed the required doctoral coursework at the University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD), and has completed the required the Collaborative IRB Training Initiative Program (CITI).

Participants

For this qualitative research study, the researcher conducted face-to-face in-depth interviews with research participants meeting the criteria of: Ojibwe elder status, Ojibwe community member, and Ojibwe language fluency. An identified number of six Ojibwe elders were selected to participate in the research study through the "snowball" sampling method. A pilot interview was not conducted due to research studies indicating a limited number of Ojibwe elders fluent in the Ojibwe language.

Research participants were involved in the research study on a voluntary basis. If a research participant made a decision to withdraw consent and to not participate in the

research study, the researcher would destroy any and all correspondence relating to the specific research participant. To withdraw from the research study, the research participant would inform the researcher verbally and/or in written correspondence. However, no research participant withdrew their participation in the study. In addition, the research study did not involve issues of confidentiality. Each research participant voluntarily agreed to sign a consent form to participate in the research study. As is indicated within the consent form, each research participant agreed to share their name and any other pertinent information they were comfortable with disclosing. Furthermore, there are no foreseeable risks or benefits for research participants involved in the research study.

The following table identifies the research participants:

Table 3: Participant Traits

Participant Name	Indian Name	Clan	Reservation
Dan Jones	*Gaagigebines*	*Bizhiw Doodem* Lynx Clan	Nigigoonsiminikaaning First Nation
Larry Aitken	*Bezhigoogahbow*	Makwa Doodem Bear Clan	Leech Lake
Gordon Jourdain	*Maajiigwaneyaash*	*Bizhiw Doodem* Lynx Clan	Lac La Croix First Nation
Gloria Jean Beaulieu	*Waabigwaniins*	Unspecified	Leech Lake
Joseph "Bob" Jourdain	*Aanakwad*	*Bizhiw Doodem* Lynx Clan	Nigigoonsiminikaaning First Nation
Rosemarie DeBungie	*Asiniiyobiik*	Unspecified	Red Lake

Sampling

Research participants meeting the specified criteria were selected through the snowball method. The snowball method is a sampling procedure which consists of

inquiring with members of Ojibwe communities and having such members identify elders who are Ojibwe language fluent speakers (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). The researcher utilized the snowball method until it was exhausted, which occurred when the same names provided were repeated (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). Initially, it was estimated that the time frame to identify Ojibwe elders possessing fluency in the Ojibwe language would be two weeks; however, the time frame was extended due to the difficulty in identifying fluent Ojibwe language speakers. The research study was limited to the geographic area of the state of Minnesota.

CHAPTER FOUR

The purpose of this research study was to explore the experiences and factors contributing to Ojibwe elders' fluency in the Ojibwe language, and how the identified experiences and factors could be replicated to reverse the endangerment status of the Ojibwe language. This chapter presents the research study findings based upon conducting one-on-one interviews with Ojibwe elders. The following section provides brief background information regarding each research study participant.

The research study questions are:

What experiences and factors contributed to elders' fluency in the Ojibwe language?

How can the identified experiences and factors be replicated to reverse the endangerment status of the Ojibwe language?

PARTICIPANT BACKGROUND

The participants in this study were six Ojibwe elders fluent in the Ojibwe language. Each participant identified as a first speaker of the Ojibwe language. The research participants provided permission to use their real names in this study. Provided below is a summary of each research participant:

Dan Jones, *Gaagigebines*, was from the Nigigoonsiminikaaning First Nation in Ontario, and he belonged to the *Bizhiw Doodem*, Lynx Clan. Gaagigebines graduated from Bemidji State University, and for thirty-three years, he taught the Ojibwe language and culture at the post-secondary level. At the time of this interview, Gaagigebines was on sabbatical leave from the Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College, and employed part-time as an Adjunct Ojibwe Language Professor at the University of Minnesota

Duluth (UMD). In addition, Gaagigebines was an active participant in community Ojibwe language tables and immersion programs throughout Ojibwe Country. Unfortunately, Gaagigebines passed away on January 13, 2018, and he will be greatly missed throughout Ojibwe Country. As indicated in his obituary, Gaagigebines has stated "I am not gone, I'm just changing addresses" (https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/fort-frances-on/dan-jones-7728308).

Larry Aitken, *Bezhigoogahbow*, is an enrolled member of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, and belongs to the *Makwa Doodem*, Bear Clan. Larry Aitken founded the Leech Lake Tribal College in 1990, and he served as the Tribal College's first President. In recognition of his commitment to education and the Leech Lake Reservation, the Leech Lake Tribal College designated its new library, established in February 2015, as the Larry P. Aitken Bezhigoogahbow Library in his honor. Larry Aitken is a well-known spiritual leader and tribal historian for the Leech Lake Reservation. Larry Aitken possesses extensive teaching experience with his most recent position as the Endowed Chair and Director of American Indian Studies at the Itasca Community College in Grand Rapids, Minnesota.

Gordon Jourdain, *Maajiigwaneyaash*, is from the Lac La Croix First Nation in Ontario, and he belongs to the *Bizhiw Doodem*, Lynx Clan. During the research study interview, Maajiigwaneyaash emphasized that his English name is Gordon Jourdain; however, he identifies with his Ojibwe name of Maajiigwaneyaash. In the upmost respect, he will be identified as Maajiigwaneyaash from this point forward. Maajiigwaneyaash is currently earning a doctorate degree in Education from the University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD), and his anticipated graduation date is May 2018. Since 2013, Maajiigwaneyaash

has served as an Ojibwe Language Teacher for the Mesaabekong Ojibwe Language Immersion Program, which serves Kindergarten and grades one, two, and three at the Lowell Elementary School in Duluth, Minnesota. Prior to his employment at the Lowell Elementary School, Maajiigwaneyaash was the Director and Lead Teacher at the Enweyang Ojibwe Language Nest at UMD. In addition, Maajiigwaneyaash contributes to the Ojibwe Peoples Dictionary, a renowned online Ojibwe language resource established by the Department of American Indian Studies at UMD.

Gloria Jean Beaulieu, *Waabigwaniins,* is from the Leech Lake Reservation located in northern Minnesota, and she was raised in the Ojibwe community of Onigum. Gloria Jean Beaulieu has extensive experience in elementary education. Gloria Jean Beaulieu was employed for the Leech Lake Head Start Program for numerous years until her retirement. However, Gloria Jean Beaulieu returned to work after retirement, and for the past eight years, she has been employed at the Leech Lake Elder Services Program.

Joseph "Bob" Jourdain, *Aanakwad,* is from the Nigigoonsiminikaaning First Nation in Ontario, and he belongs to the *Bizhiw Doodem*, Lynx Clan. Bob Jourdain graduated with a Bachelor Degree in English and a Master's Degree in English from Bemidji State University. Bob Jourdain has been an English and Ojibwe instructor at the Leech Lake Tribal College for twenty-three years. In addition, Bob Jourdain is a recognized spiritual leader within the Leech Lake Reservation community.

Rosemarie DeBungie *Asiniiyobiik,* is an enrolled member of the Red Lake Reservation located in northern Minnesota, and she was raised near the Ojibwe community of Ponemah. Rosemarie DeBungie voluntarily participated in this research study, but requested that her interview not be audio-recorded due to her cultural beliefs. Rosemarie

DeBungie is a highly respected spiritual leader, and she possesses extensive experience in education. In addition, Rosemarie DeBungie contributes to Ojibwe language materials such as Aaniin Ekidong: Ojibwe Language Project.

FINDINGS

The findings of the research study will be presented in the order the interview questions were posed to the participants. The interview questions are followed by the varied responses from the research participants.

What have you experienced in terms of being a fluent speaker of the Ojibwe Language?

The first question posed to each research participant was "What have you experienced in terms of being a fluent speaker of the Ojibwe language?" The research participant responses led to the identification of a sole integral factor. This integral factor is the Ojibwe language was the primary language spoken in the home. The Ojibwe language was spoken consistently and uninterruptedly in the household by parents and grandparents. Each research participant learned and was encouraged to speak the Ojibwe language at a very young age. For instance, Gloria Jean Beaulieu stated, "as a young child, very young, I learned from my grandma . . . and she spoke strictly the Ojibwe language and never ever talking English when we were growing up, and that's how I learned to speak" (personal interview, January 4, 2018). Dan Jones shared a similar childhood experience. Dan Jones stated "I think that I'd been fortunate that when I was very young, I was only exposed to Ojibwe language . . . no English at all" (personal interview, November 29, 2017). Dan Jones further shared that his father could not speak English, and in order to communicate with his father, he was required to speak the

Ojibwe language. Another research participant Maajiigwaneyaash was raised in an isolated village on his reserve, and Maajiigwaneyaash indicated that everyone is his village spoke the Ojibwe language. Maajiigwaneyaash stated, "Nobody spoke English. In fact, we were ashamed to speak English at the time" (personal interview, January 13, 2018). Moreover, the Ojibwe language is holistic to Maajiigwaneyaash. Maajiigwaneyaash conveyed that "I can see, smell, taste, hear, and feel everything in Ojibwe first," and "when I'm thinking, I'm thinking in Ojibwe and . . . words come out in English" (personal interview, January 13, 2018). Other recollections reveal Maajiigwaneyaash's initial experiences with the English language. Maajiigwaneyaash recalls that teachers were flown into his isolated village, and the teachers instructed students in the English Language. Maajiigwaneyaash was immersed in the English language when he reached school age, and he recalled, "I still managed to be able to understand English fluently enough to be able to have a decent grasp of both languages" (personal interview, January 13, 2018).

Rosemarie DeBungie shares a similar experience with Maajiigwaneyaash. Rosemarie DeBungie is a highly respected Ojibwe elder and spiritual leader from the Red Lake Reservation located in northern Minnesota. Rosemarie DeBungie recalled that the Ojibwe language was the only language spoken in her childhood home located near Ponemah. Rosemarie DeBungie further recalled that the only time she heard the English language spoken was when her family traveled to the store located in nearby Ponemah. In adulthood, Rosemarie DeBungie married a fluent speaker of the Ojibwe language, and the marriage enabled her to continuously converse in her first language.

Larry Aitken provided another valuable perspective to this research question. Larry Aitken shared that his experience of being a fluent Ojibwe speaker is that the majority of people in Indian Country do not speak the Ojibwe language fluently. Larry Aitken described such individuals as having a "mediocrity in language" (personal interview, December 21, 2017). Larry Aitken clarified by stating that they, "do not speak the language, they hear it, they can follow along, but they don't understand the language" (personal interview, December 21, 2017). Bob Jourdain described such an ability as being a "fluent listener" of the Ojibwe language (personal interview, January 12, 2018). Larry Aitken further described language mediocrity as the ability to speak "conversational Ojibwe," which entails Ojibwe greetings, weather words, and protocol introductions (i.e., Indian name, reservation, and clan) (personal interview, December 21, 2017). Such a mediocrity leads to a lack of understanding of both the Ojibwe language and culture. Larry Aitken stated "they miss more of the culture because the culture and language are interchanged" (personal interview, December 21, 2017).

Bob Jourdain provided a distinctive response. During the interview, Bob Jourdain shared that he will soon reach the age of seventy-three, and his experience involves limited individuals to converse fluently with in the Ojibwe language. Bob Jourdain revealed "I noticed that as I age there's less and less people to talk to and I guess that's to be expected," and referred to this process as "attrition" (personal interview, January 12, 2018). Bob Jourdain further shared that "as I'm aging, I'm forgetting my English words, and at the same time, I have somebody telling me Ojibwe words I haven't heard for a long time" (personal interview, January 12, 2018).

The participants in this research study radiate the traditional Ojibwe value of humility. Despite being raised within the confines of the Ojibwe language and culture, Gloria Jean Beaulieu did not consider herself an "expert in the Ojibwe language" (personal interview, January 4, 2018). Dan Jones demonstrated humility by indicating that "when you know the language, the bottom premise is that humility" (personal interview, November 29, 2017). As indicated in his brief introduction, Dan Jones was an Ojibwe language instructor at the post-secondary level for approximately thirty-three years; however, he stated, "about ten years ago, I didn't really see myself as a fluent speaker" (personal interview, November 29, 2017). Dan Jones shared that uncertainties regarding his Ojibwe language speaking ability originated from his childhood experience of being forcibly removed to a residential school. Dan Jones recollected being chastised for speaking the Ojibwe language during his placement at the residential school, and an effect was disremembering segments of the Ojibwe language. However, Dan Jones disclosed that as his teaching career progressed, the Ojibwe words lost during his residential school experience gradually returned to him. In addition, Dan Jones described his experience of being a fluent Ojibwe language speaker as being placed upon a pedestal by Ojibwe people and communities. However, Dan Jones was prompt to indicate that "because you know more, doesn't mean you're better," and specified that there is an obligation to share one's knowledge of the Ojibwe culture and language (personal interview, November 29, 2017). Another stipulation of possessing significant knowledge of the Ojibwe culture and language was identified by Larry Aitken. For instance, Larry Aitken indicated that fluent speakers of the Ojibwe language are oftentimes assigned the responsibility of being a spiritual leader by Ojibwe communities. Such responsibilities

may consist of performing invocations in the Ojibwe language at community events and conducting healing ceremonies. Research participant Rosemarie DeBungie shared her experience of being recognized and honored as a spiritual leader. Rosemarie DeBungie recalled her childhood experience of being a first speaker of the Ojibwe language. Rosemarie DeBungie disclosed she never thought her Ojibwe language fluency would be contributing factor for her recognition as a spiritual leader in adulthood. Furthermore, two research participants displayed the traditional Ojibwe value of humility through modesty regarding their Ojibwe elder status. Gloria Jean Beaulieu revealed her age of as being seventy-three years old; however, she often talked about individuals she considered as her elders and conversing in the Ojibwe language with them. Bob Jourdain shared that he is approaching the age of seventy-three, and he made the statement, "I think I'm old enough now to being saying these kind of things" (personal interview, January 12, 2018).

How do you define fluency of the Ojibwe language?

The next interview question pertained to research participants' definition of Ojibwe language fluency. Research participants' responses were diverse, and the responses varied from formal to informal assessments; however, a commonality was the difficulty in providing an explicit definition. Larry Aitken indicated that identifying a definition of Ojibwe fluency is problematic. Larry Aitken asserted that such difficulty arises from the premise that Ojibwe elders are the authority regarding Ojibwe language and culture. Larry Aitken further stated that each time an elder passes, the elder departs with an abundance of wisdom; therefore, it is challenging to provide a standard definition of Ojibwe language fluency. In addition, Larry Aitken stressed the importance of documenting and preserving the Ojibwe language in various educational materials such

as stories, lullabies, and books. Dan Jones reiterated Larry Aitken's point regarding Ojibwe language fluency by stating, "I don't know . . . that there is a good definition to describe it" (personal interview, November 29, 2017). Bob Jourdain simply stated the inquiry was a "tough question" and a "difficult question" (personal interview, January 12, 2018). Maajiigwaneyaash provided a feasible explanation for the complexity of delineating Ojibwe language fluency. The Ojibwe language is not a written language, and according to Maajiigwaneyaash, fluency applies merely to written languages. Maajiigwaneyaash shared his astounding Ojibwe cultural knowledge regarding the Ojibwe language. The traditional cultural principle of the Ojibwe language is for the language to be voiced and unwritten. Maajiigwaneyaash shared cultural knowledge he received from his grandmother, who emphasized that the "Ojibwe language is a spirit" possessing remarkable healing properties (personal interview, January 13, 2018). The curative potency of the Ojibwe language was illustrated by Maajiigwaneyaash as,

> If I say something in Ojibwe, it comes out . . . it has been inside of me awhile and healing me inside . . . enough to the point when I release the language and it goes into somebody else to help them . . . and it heals them inside, all over inside their body until it is time to be able to release the language so it goes from person to the other like that (personal interview, January 13, 2018).

Informal assessments may determine levels of fluency in the Ojibwe language. Bob Jourdain applies his own personal informal assessment. Bob Jourdain revealed that he can ascertain an individual's level of fluency within a matter of minutes of conversing solely in the Ojibwe language. He further stated, "It doesn't take me any longer than that to determine whether . . . they know the language or not" (personal interview,

January 12, 2018). Moreover, Bob Jourdain indicated that he is cognizant of the varying levels of Ojibwe language fluency. Bob Jourdain briefly mentioned one particular fluency level known as a "fluent listener," and he defined a fluent listener as an individual comprehending the Ojibwe language with the inability to converse in the language (personal interview, January 12, 2018). Bob Jourdain shared that his wife was a fluent listener, and stated, "that's why I was able to . . . talk with her . . . she'd understand everything I said and . . . we had some good laughs" (personal interview, January 12, 2018).

Dan Jones provided various responses to the Ojibwe language fluency research question. As mentioned previously, Dan Jones modestly questioned his fluency in the Ojibwe language. Dan Jones indicated an informal measure of fluency is the ability to converse in the Ojibwe language without the usage of English. Dan Jones revealed that he intermittently encountered unfamiliar words during exclusive Ojibwe language conversations; however, he had the ability to overcome such impediments by posing such questions as "I didn't understand what you said," "What does this word mean?," and "I don't know what you are saying, please tell me again," strictly in the Ojibwe language (personal interview, November 29, 2018).

On the other end of the spectrum, formal assessments have been developed to measure varying levels of Ojibwe language fluency. One such assessment was collaboratively developed by Dan Jones, and the assessment was comprised of the Ojibwe language fluency levels of beginner, intermediate, and advanced. However, Dan Jones specified the assessment was flawed as it measured fixed content such as the recitation of months and everyday objects in the Ojibwe language. For example, an examinee may be unable

to converse in the Ojibwe language if the assessment was spontaneously altered and a random conversation in the Ojibwe language was initiated. Dan Jones asserted that such a situation does not necessarily indicate an individual does not possess a level of Ojibwe language fluency.

One research participant did not attempt to provide a definition of Ojibwe language fluency. In response to the research question, Rosemarie DeBungie inquired, "What is that? What is fluency?" (personal interview, January 25, 2018). During her childhood experiences, Rosemarie DeBungie indicated Ojibwe language was solely spoken; therefore, she is unfamiliar with the notion of fluency.

What is the relationship between Ojibwe language and Ojibwe identity?

There was a consensus among the research participants regarding the relationship between Ojibwe language and Ojibwe identity. The research participants revealed that Ojibwe language and Ojibwe identity are inseparable. Gloria Jean Beaulieu provided the simplified response of "the language really goes with the Ojibwe identity" (personal interview, January 4, 2018). Rosemarie DeBungie provided the brief response of "Ojibwe language and identity are the same thing." Dan Jones vividly described the connection between Ojibwe language and Ojibwe identity; however, he made the comparable statement of "Language is identity, and identity is language" (personal interview, November 29, 2017).

The research participants Larry Aitken and Dan Jones discussed Ojibwe language and Ojibwe identity in depth. For approximately twenty years, Larry Aitken was mentored by the revered Ojibwe Medicine Man Jimmy Jackson, and Jimmy Jackson emphasized three crucial attributes of being an Ojibwe. Larry Aitken shared the three attributes

identified by Jimmy Jackson, and the attributes are speaking the Ojibwe language, obtaining your Indian name, and praying with tobacco every day. As previously indicated, Ojibwe language and Ojibwe identity are intrinsically connected. Larry Aitken stated, "You identify yourself to your Indian name . . . and if you can't speak the language, you can't identify yourself" (personal interview, December 21, 2017). Moreover, "you got to know your language in order to know who you are" (L. Aitken, personal interview, December 21, 2017). Ojibwe identity further entails introducing oneself by their clan, *doodem*, and reservation, *ishkonigan* in the Ojibwe language.

Dan Jones' accounts elaborated upon Larry Aitken's experiences. Dan Jones shared that the "Ojibwe language is reflected in identity. Ojibwe identity is . . . your spiritual identity" (personal interview, November 29, 2017). Dan Jones reiterated the importance of expressing your Indian name and clan in the Ojibwe language. Moreover, an Indian name and clan are mutually interwoven into "spiritual identity," and both signify a connection to the beauty of Mother Earth (D. Jones, personal interview, November 29, 2017). To illustrate, Dan Jones provided the Indian names of Thunderbird Woman and Everlasting Thunder, and he shared that his granddaughter's Indian name is Little Red Bird. Dan Jones added that, "The spiritual names . . . it's who we are. We are connected with the earth, that's our family, and the language and identity is (sic) reflected of that" (personal interview, November 29, 2017). Moreover, Dan Jones indicated that exploring the intrinsic relationship between Ojibwe language and Ojibwe identity would be a "lifetime journey" (personal interview, November 29, 2017). If a person decided to embark upon such a journey, Dan Jones stated "they will never find the answer, but they will be satisfied with the knowledge gained" (personal interview, November 29, 2017).

Two research participants provided complementary cultural knowledge regarding Ojibwe language and Ojibwe identity. In a traditional Ojibwe context, Maajiigwaneyaash shared that Ojibwe identity is foremost, and one subsequently acquires the Ojibwe language during development in the womb. Maajiigwaneyaash shared that Ojibwe identity is created in the "wombs of our mothers," and during development, one discerns everything inside and outside the womb (personal interview, January 13, 2018). If one hears the Ojibwe language spoken outside the womb, it significantly contributes to the formation of Ojibwe identity. In accord with Gloria Jean Beaulieu and Rosemarie DeBungie, Bob Jourdain stated that the Ojibwe language and Ojibwe identity are "almost the same thing" (personal interview, January 12, 2018). Bob Jourdain indicated Ojibwe identity is reflected in an individual's character and conduct. For instance, Ojibwe identity is exhibited in "how they treat others or how they talk" to others (B. Jourdain, personal interview, January 12, 2018). Bob Jourdain explained this concept by providing the examples of feeding guests in your home without questioning their appetites and reluctantly seeking assistance from others. Bob Jourdain further stated, "If you speak the language . . . you tend to put other people first" (personal interview, January 12, 2018). The following interview excerpt illustrates this cultural concept as Bob Jourdain utilizes the Ojibwe phrase *giga-waabamin*, which means "I will see you:"

> When you say '*giga-waabamin*,' *gi* is you. It's like saying 'you I will see.' When you speak that way, you tend to live that way. Even animals they say that. You see a dog, and say '*animosh niwaabam*,' 'that's the 'dog I see' so the dog is put first in the sentence . . . in a way the dog is more important than me. The dog

> is more important than I am because we have this connection to beings . . . it's equality of Creation (personal interview, January 12, 2018).

Moreover, Bob Jourdain asserted that the Ojibwe worldview of equality of Creation is epitomized in the Ojibwe phrase *gakina indinawemaaganag* meaning "all my relatives" (personal interview, January 12, 2018).

What exactly would be lost if the Ojibwe language ceased to be spoken?

As hitherto indicated from the research participants' responses, it is exceedingly difficult to delineate any distinction between Ojibwe language and Ojibwe identity. The interview question pertaining to what would be lost if the Ojibwe language ceased to be spoken further exemplified such complexity between language and identity. Gloria Jean Beaulieu and Rosemarie DeBungie shared comparable sentiments. Both research participants indicated it is evident that Ojibwe identity is presently endangered due to the Ojibwe language being marginally spoken. For instance, Gloria Jean Beaulieu indicated that "a lot of our identity has been lost because of us not speaking to each other in the Ojibwe language" (personal interview, January 4, 2018). Gloria Jean Beaulieu cherishes her childhood memories of conversing in the Ojibwe language with her parents and grandmother; however, speaking the Ojibwe language is challenging nowadays. Gloria Jean Beaulieu seeks opportunities to speak the Ojibwe language with her siblings and elders nonetheless it is a difficult undertaking. Gloria Jean Beaulieu stated, "It's hard for us to keep it going at times because of what's going on in this world today" (personal interview, January 4, 2018).

Another research participant's responses elaborated upon Gloria Jean Beaulieu statements. Previously, Maajiigwaneyaash's cultural knowledge presented that Ojibwe

identity and Ojibwe language are fundamentally created during development in the "wombs of our mothers" (personal interview, January 13, 2018). Maajiigwaneyaash further related the prenatal and childhood development of Ojibwe language and identity as a spiritual "story" (personal interview, January 13, 2018). The Ojibwe language is a formidable means to convey one's lifetime. Unfortunately, some individuals do not possess the Ojibwe language to share their story, and as a result, the connection to their "story is severed" (Maajiigwaneyaash, personal interview, January 13, 2018). In such circumstances, Maajiigwaneyaash indicated the option of taking a course to learn the Ojibwe language is available. Maajiigwaneyaash indicated that if individuals have "enough courage to take a few classes" to learn the Ojibwe language, they will learn how to articulate their "story" (personal interview, January 13, 2018).

Other research participants provided additional insight. Dan Jones revealed an Ojibwe prophecy that "if the Ojibwe language is no longer spoken, the world would end" (personal interview, November 29, 2017). Dan Jones clarified that this prophecy is to be considered in a figurative and spiritual context. Dan Jones elaborated by indicating that Ojibwe people would lose their identity as Ojibwe people. Dan Jones stated that "Ojibwe people would no longer exist. There would only be descendants of the Ojibwe" (personal interview, November 29, 2017). Research participant Larry Aitken's responses affirmed statements made by Dan Jones. Larry Aitken stated that "everything" would be lost if the Ojibwe language ceased to be spoken (personal interview, December 21, 2017). Larry Aitken further elaborated with the statement, "We cease to be Anishinaabe. We'd move into the culture of the white man. We'd speak English" (personal interview, December 21, 2017).

The loss of the Ojibwe language is an inconceivable concept for Bob Jourdain. Bob Jourdain's initial response was "I don't even want to . . . think about that" (personal interview, January 12, 2018). It is disheartening for Bob Jourdain to contemplate "all the knowledge . . . that would be lost" (personal interview, January 12, 2018). Bob Jourdain shared a distressing dream he had regarding the loss of the Ojibwe language. His dream was about a community meeting and the agenda involved a discussion of the Ojibwe language. All the Ojibwe elders had passed away, and the younger generations gathered at the community meeting to discuss which parts of the Ojibwe language should be retained. The younger generations were happy that the last elder passed away the previous night, and the young people were making statements such as, "Oh good. There's nobody left to correct us now when we say something wrong" (B. Jourdain, personal interview, January 12, 2018). Initially, the dream disturbed Bob Jourdain, but he stated "I came to appreciate that dream because I understood what that dream was about" (personal interview, January 12, 2018). His interpretation of the dream relates to how the Ojibwe language is changing and being spoken by the younger generations.

What situations have typically influenced your experiences of being a fluent speaker of the Ojibwe language?

The research participants provided diverse responses in terms of identifying influences of being a fluent Ojibwe language speaker. Gloria Jean Beaulieu shared that she is recognized as one of several fluent speakers of the Ojibwe language in the Leech Lake Reservation community, and upon request, she has served as a mentor in the Ojibwe language courses offered at the Leech Lake Tribal College. Rosemarie DeBungie, Larry

Aitken, and Dan Jones shared similar experiences of being recognized as being spiritual leaders and conducting ceremonies within Ojibwe communities.

A remarkable experience was provided by Maajiigwaneyaash, and it revealed his passion for traditional Ojibwe education. Maajiigwaneyaash emphasized the important educational role of Ojibwe elders. Maajiigwaneyaash shared that "In my family and in other Ojibwe families, our knowledge is passed down by our grandmothers and grandfathers" (personal interview, January 13, 2018). Maajiigwaneyaash further revealed that "I was one that was lucky to be raised by my grandmother from a baby," and "all of that intergenerational knowledge passing down to the next person has continued in my family, and I'm doing that right now" (personal interview, January 13, 2018). In his first grade classroom, Maajiigwaneyaash teaches his students in the identical manner that his grandmother nurtured him. A recent classroom experience involved students gaining knowledge about traditional Ojibwe medicinal plants and preparing healing teas. Maajiigwaneyaash continues the tradition of passing down Ojibwe cultural knowledge to future generations.

The Ojibwe elder Bob Jourdain shared stories about his family relationships. In particular, Bob Jourdain shared stories about his wife, grandchildren, and his great granddaughter. The Ojibwe word for great grandchild is *aanikoobijigan*, and Bob Jourdain disclosed that his understanding of this particular word means "my connection to the future" (personal interview, January 12, 2018).

How can similar experiences be replicated to encourage Ojibwe language fluency?

The responses ranged from hope to dismay in regards to replicating the Ojibwe language experiences of the research participants. Both Larry Aitken and Gloria Jean

Beaulieu believe that the Ojibwe language could be learned in the form of children's lullabies and stories such as Goldilocks and the Three Bears and The Three Little Pigs. Gloria Jean Beaulieu further elaborated that children should learn complete sentences in the Ojibwe language rather than one Ojibwe word. Gloria Jean Beaulieu provided the Ojibwe language full sentence examples of "*Giwiisin na*?" Are you eating?, and "*Giminikwe na*?," Are you drinking? (personal interview, January 4, 2018). Larry Aitken provided the comparable response of "telling stories in the Ojibwe language . . . you can tell a story and have a really good time," and "everybody knows The Three Little Pigs . . . tell it in Ojibwe . . . and it's funny . . . you learn to laugh, you learn to express yourself in Ojibwe and it brings up the language more fully" (personal interview, December 21, 2018).

Research participants Dan Jones and Maajiigwaneyaash strongly believe in Ojibwe language immersion programs. In fact, Dan Jones initially provided the one word response of "Immersion" (personal interview, November 29, 2017). Both Dan Jones and Maajiigwaneyaash are master speakers who actively participate in immersion programs to enable others to increase their proficiency in the Ojibwe language. Dan Jones shared one particular experience of conversing with a child in the Ojibwe language while participating in an immersion program, and he recalled, "it's always exciting going cause (it is) one of the few places where I can speak to a child" in the Ojibwe language, and "it warms my heart that I am able to do that" (personal interview, November 29, 2017). Furthermore, Dan Jones indicated that other language methods have been employed, but creating a "total immersion experience" is "the most successful" (personal interview,

November 29, 2017). Dan Jones compared the learning of the Ojibwe language to a journey, and the following interview excerpt illustrates his statement,

> All the language that you need for life, you can't grasp it all at once. You can't just download a program, and okay, I'm fluent. Wish you could, but the learning is within the journey. When you finally get there, you realize . . . that there's much more cause (sic) what happens is the path broadens (personal interview, November 29, 2017).

In association with Dan Jones, Bob Jourdain possesses extensive experience as an Ojibwe language instructor at the post-secondary level. With his years of teaching experience, Bob Jourdain shared that he realized it is important to teach Ojibwe language students content that is relevant in their lives, and he identified such content as being spiritual in nature.

The research participant Rosemarie DeBungie provided a dismayed response. Rosemarie DeBungie stated that "I am not sure you can replicate it. I don't think you can go back in time" (personal interview, January 25, 2018). However, Rosemarie DeBungie indicated that attendance in ceremonies is an approach to learn the Ojibwe language. In association with Rosemarie DeBungie's statement, Gloria Jean Beaulieu indicates revitalization efforts have been in effect for "twenty years or so, but it's not moving that fast" (personal interview, January 4, 2018).

What are the greatest challenges in reversing the endangerment status of the Ojibwe language?

There are numerous challenges in reversing the endangerment status of the Ojibwe language. Research participant Bob Jourdain shared his distinctive insight, and he

identified the effects of colonization as a major barrier. Bob Jourdain indicated it is crucial to convince Ojibwe people "that our language is powerful;" however, this is made difficult as a result of the colonization efforts of the United States government (personal interview, January 12, 2018). In reference to Ojibwe people, Bob Jourdain stated, "they hold onto . . . their colonized minds rather than admit that something is wrong . . . that their thinking is wrong" (personal interview, January 12, 2018).

Dan Jones identified the lack of resources and the pervasiveness of the English language as the greatest challenges. An example of resources are fluent Ojibwe language speakers. Dan Jones indicated Ojibwe communities are losing their fluent language speakers at an alarming rate, and stated, "When a fluent speaker dies, think of all the knowledge that person takes with them" (personal interview, November 29, 2017). In addition, Larry Aitken shared his sentiments regarding the loss of elders fluent in the Ojibwe language. The English language is the greatest challenge identified by Dan Jones. Dan Jones indicated the English language is "everywhere" and "it's overwhelming" (personal interview, November 29, 2017). The English language is prevalent in signage, television, and media, and English is the primary language being spoken in Ojibwe households. Dan Jones further stated, "If you choose to speak English rather than Ojibwe, what's the child going to learn? English" (personal interview, November 29, 2017). Other options identified to learn the Ojibwe language are attending language tables and enrolling in college courses. Dan Jones concluded his interview on a positive note, and he stated his confidence that the Ojibwe language will not diminish. Dan Jones stated, "The Ojibwe language is out there, we just gotta go get it" (personal interview, November 29, 2017).

The following is a restatement of the research questions, and common factors have been identified from the research participants' responses.

What experiences and factors contributed to elders' fluency in the Ojibwe language?

Each research participant identified that the Ojibwe language was the primary language spoken in the household by parents and grandparents, and the Ojibwe language was their first language. The research participants revealed that the English language was not spoken in the home. On occasion, the English language was overheard outside of the research participants' homes. Upon reaching school age, the participants were immersed in the English language.

The research participants shared comparable experiences of being fluent Ojibwe language speakers. The research participants are recognized as spiritual leaders in Ojibwe communities, and the participants conduct invocations at various community events and perform naming, pipe, and healing ceremonies. The research participants are actively involved in education and make major contributions in teaching the Ojibwe language to younger generations. Another common factor is that participants married spouses fluent in the Ojibwe language, and shared fond memories of conversing in Ojibwe with their spouses.

A common factor among the research participants was the traditional Ojibwe value of humility. Humility was expressed in terms of not self-identifying as an elder and not considering themselves an expert in the Ojibwe language. Moreover, the traditional value of humility is reflected in the grammar structure of the Ojibwe language.

Each research participant identified the strong and inseparable connection between Ojibwe language and Ojibwe identity. Furthermore, Ojibwe identity entails the ability to identify oneself by Indian name, clan, and reservation in the Ojibwe language.

How can the identified experiences and factors be replicated to reverse the endangerment status of the Ojibwe language?

The common factor identified was that Ojibwe language immersion programs are the most effective in replicating the experiences of the Ojibwe elders. An Ojibwe language immersion program would entail a complete immersion experience with the prohibition of the English language. Ojibwe language tables and courses were identified as resources to replicate the research participants' experiences. In addition, the utilization of children's lullabies and stories are an effective method of producing Ojibwe language fluency in younger generations.

In association, the research participants identified an array of challenges in reversing the endangerment status of the Ojibwe language. The primary factor identified was the dominance and prevalence of the English language. Other factors identified were the lack of interest of younger generations to learn the language, the long-term effects of colonization, and the lack of Ojibwe language resources.

CHAPTER FIVE

"The language of one's birth is a priceless gift. To lose it would be lose one's self and one's uniqueness. To withhold it from others would be to waste and lose, in selfishness, this priceless heritage; a gift from our Creator specifically for us" – Alecia Gonzales, 2000 (Neely, 2012 p**.** 90).

Honoring elders is a highly valued Ojibwe tradition (McNally, 2009). McNally (2009) indicates honoring elders is an enduring Ojibwe tradition that has survived generations and generations of "dispossession and assimilation" (p. 2). McNally (2009) describes Ojibwe elders as "the libraries of cultural memory, myth, ritual, and ethics" as they preserve and disseminate such wisdom for future generations; therefore, elders are integral for the well-being of Ojibwe families and communities (p. 27). Moreover, the Ojibwe language reflects the valuable and irreplaceable role of elders, and there are a number of words for elder in the Ojibwe language (McNally, 2009). For instance, *gichi-anishinaabe* and *gichi-aya'aa* are Ojibwe words for elders, and the words may be translated into the English language as meaning "great being" (McNally, 2009, p. 1). In addition, the Ojibwe word for "old man" is *akiwenzii*, which may be translated to "a long dweller on the earth" (McNally, 2009, p. 1). It is an immense honor for Ojibwe women to be referred to as *mindimooyehn*, which means "old woman" in the English language (McNally, 2009, p. 1). However, mindimooyehn denotes the "one who holds things together" in the Ojibwe language (Child, 2012, p. 63). I oftentimes refer to elders as "scholars" and "experts" of Ojibwe language, culture, and traditions. Based upon such cultural knowledge, I sought the wisdom of six elders regarding the Ojibwe language. The introductory quote is reflective of the six Ojibwe elders' dedication and commitment

of sharing the sacred gift of the Ojibwe language, and the quote represent "the driving force behind many language revitalization efforts today" (Noodin, 2014, p. 90).

Noodin (2014) recognizes that many Native American languages are endangered and indicated language revitalization efforts highly emphasize the connection among language, identity, and culture. Furthermore, Noodin (2014) indicates Native American languages are a "precious heritage" and are "infused with spirit" (p. xvii; p. 3). Ojibwe elders Dan Jones, Larry Aitken, Bob Jourdain, Larry Aitken, and Maajiigwaneyaash briefly emphasized the "precious heritage" (Noodin, 2014, p. xvii) and spirit contained within the Ojibwe language; however, Dan Jones statements are primarily highlighted.

Dan Jones indicated that the Ojibwe language is embedded with a multitude of concepts such as identity, culture, and spirituality, which cannot be successfully conveyed in the English language. This was evidenced in the preceding paragraph with the literal English translation of the Ojibwe words gichi-aya'aa, akiwenzi, and mindimooyehn. Ojibwe elder Dan Jones stated, "Anishinaabe language and culture are inextricably linked . . . You really can't talk about one without the other" (personal interview, November 29, 2017). Dan Jones succinctly compared the English language to the Ojibwe language to illustrate his statement. The English language is comprised mostly of inanimate nouns whereas the Ojibwe language primarily consists of verbs with inanimate and animate nouns. As a result, the Ojibwe language provides vivid descriptions of the Ojibwe worldview. Dan Jones provided the example of the Ojibwe word *animikiikaa*. A literal English translation of animikiikaa is "It is thundering;" however, in the Ojibwe language, animikiikaa means "There is an abundance of thunderbirds" (D. Jones, personal interview, November 29, 2017). Ojibwe elder Dan

Jones stated, “It sounds more beautiful when we give these objects animacy . . . the sun’s alive, the clouds are alive . . . thunderbirds come alive” (personal interview, November 29, 2017). As Dan Jones indicates, this worldview is “rooted in the language” (Young, 2015, p. 115). Moreover, Dan Jones indicated if second language learners exclusively rely upon an Ojibwe language dictionary to learn vocabulary, such learners lose the cultural and spiritual knowledge embedded within the language. In addition, as indicated previously, Ojibwe elder Bob Jourdain earned bachelor and master’s degrees in English. Bob Jourdain indicated the Ojibwe language defies interpretation to the English language. Bob Jourdain shared that he earned his degrees “so I could translate the Ojibwe language then to come find out my degree in English was pretty useless” (personal interview, January 12, 2018). As indicated, the Ojibwe language reflects an Ojibwe worldview, which is complicated to translate into the English language (Young, 2005). Dan Jones demonstrated that the Ojibwe language possesses verbs and animacy. To illustrate further, the Ojibwe language classifies nouns as either animate or inanimate, and verbs are gender neutral and in a third person context (Young, 2005). Examples are the Ojibwe words for tree, blueberry, and walking. The Ojibwe word for tree is *mitig*, which in an animate noun, and *miin*, which means blueberry in the Ojibwe language, is an inanimate noun (Young, 2005). The Ojibwe verb *bimose* translates to “she or he is walking” in the English language (Young, 2005). Ojibwe elders Dan Jones and Bob Jourdain reveal that magnitudes of cultural wisdom can disappear in the literal translation of the Ojibwe language into English.

The cultural knowledge embedded in the Ojibwe language as indicated by Dan Jones correlates with evidence previously specified by linguist Harrison (2007). In his book

When Languages Die, Harrison (2007) highlights the following quote by renowned linguist Sapir (1921) to illustrate that language serves as a repository of cultural knowledge: "Language is the most massive and inclusive art we know, a mountainous and unconscious work of anonymous generations" (p. 101). As a result, Harrison (2007) creates a sense of urgency by indicating that the potential disappearance of a language may lead to "an erosion or extinction of ideas, of ways of knowing, and ways of talking about the world and human experience" (p. 7). In concurrence with Ojibwe elder Dan Jones, Harrison (2007) indicates that grammar books and dictionaries serve as a valuable resource; however, such resources do not convey the richness and wealth of cultural knowledge contained in a language. As indicated previously, Harrison (2007) posed the question of "What is lost when a language, the most massive, complex constellation of ideas we know, ceases to be spoken?" (p. vii). In chapter one, statistics were provided regarding the endangerment status of the Ojibwe language, and the question posed by Harrison (2007) may be applied to the Ojibwe language in order to create a sense of urgency. The few Ojibwe word examples and their cultural definitions provided thus far provide the minutest insight as what would be lost if the Ojibwe language ceased to be spoken.

Each elder indicated that there is a strong connection between Ojibwe language and Ojibwe identity. Moreover, the Ojibwe elders revealed that the Ojibwe language, identity, and culture are inseparable. As previously indicated, Dan Jones stated, they are "inextricably linked . . . You really can't talk about one without the other. Once you remove one, you've already changed the whole thing" (personal interview, November 29, 2017). Dan Jones further stated that Ojibwe identity would be lost if the Ojibwe

language ceased to be spoken. Dan Jones indicated, "if we lost the Ojibwe language, we're no longer Ojibwe. We're only descendants of the Ojibwe" (personal interview, November 29, 2017). To further illustrate the statements made by Dan Jones, Indigenous educator Marie Battiste wrote,

> The language is the cement and the bonds . . . and when we begin to take that language away from the people, when we replace it with this other language called English, we tear the people away from the rudiments of that language in terms of the relationships of the people to each other, the relationship to the universe, their relationship to the animals and the plants. We take away their interconnectedness and we leave them empty, lost and alone. This is a tremendous loss the people feel, as I have felt (Young, 2005, p. 29).

In addition, Young (2005) shared the words of Aanung, an Ojibwe man, who stated,

> That's how we see the world. These concepts are ingrained in us and when we don't speak the language or we haven't been brought up hearing the language we lose that, we don't have it, it is not a part of our identity anymore. [I think] it affects the young who do not speak the language. It is becoming lost. We can be taught those things but it is not the same if we do not speak the language. Because it is a part of who you become [especially] if you grew up speaking the language (p. 116).

Peacock and Wisuri (2002) further reveal that the Ojibwe "language contains all the subtleties, nuances, and deeper meanings of culture and that without language" the Ojibwe culture will perish (p. 31).

The statements provided by the Ojibwe elders and the supplemental author quotes encompass the magnitude of loss for Ojibwe people if the Ojibwe language ceased to be spoken. The loss of the Ojibwe language would result in an immense demise of identity for the Ojibwe people. Ojibwe people would no longer have a connection amongst each other, and there would no longer be a shared history and culture. In addition, hundreds of generations and generations of knowledge and wisdom is compacted within the Ojibwe language. Such knowledge and wisdom would vanish if the Ojibwe language ceased to be spoken. As previously indicated by Ojibwe elder Larry Aitken's statement, the Ojibwe people would lose "everything" (personal interview, December 21, 2017). Larry Aitken further stated, "We cease to be human. We cease to be Anishinaabe. We'd move into the culture of the white man" (personal interview, December 21, 2017).

The Ojibwe elders' definitions of Ojibwe language fluency proved to be an interesting concept. The Ojibwe elders' responses were exceptionally diverse, and I was unable to develop an Ojibwe language fluency definition comprised of common characteristics. As indicated in chapter four, the Ojibwe elders revealed that such a definition is challenging and problematic. Linguists would be in agreement with the Ojibwe elders that fluency is a difficult concept to define.

Ojibwe elder Maajiigwaneyaash provided a powerful description of the Ojibwe language. Maajiigwaneyaash shared that Ojibwe culture is based upon oral traditions and fluency only applies to written languages. In connection, Ojibwe elder Rosemarie DeBungie was unfamiliar with the concept of Ojibwe language fluency. Moreover, Maajiigwaneyaash indicated that the Ojibwe language has a spirit and possesses healing properties when spoken. As previously indicated, Maajiigwaneyaash shared an

extraordinary account of the healing powers of the Ojibwe language, and the account is worth reiterating:

> If I say something in Ojibwe, it comes out . . . it has been inside of me awhile and healing me inside . . . enough to the point when I release the language and it goes into somebody else to help them . . . and it heals them inside, all over inside their body until it is time to be able to release the language so it goes from person to the other like that (personal interview, January 13, 2018).

In consideration of the Ojibwe elders' responses, a definition of the Ojibwe language fluency may be based upon an individual speaker's experiences. For instance, an individual may be considered an Ojibwe language speaker by exuding confidence when conversing in the Ojibwe language regardless of their accumulated vocabulary. More importantly, an individual may be considered an Ojibwe language speaker if the healing powers of the Ojibwe language are experienced. In addition, an Ojibwe language speaker may not understand each Ojibwe word in the conversation; however, the speaker understands the Ojibwe words in context. Moreover, the traditional Ojibwe value of respect, *manaaji'idiwin*, plays a crucial role. It would be disrespectful and judgmental to evaluate another Ojibwe language speaker on the Western concept of fluency. In retrospect, I did not realize the concept of Ojibwe language fluency would be difficult to define, and may be a prospect for a future research study.

Another interesting concept related to fluency is the ability to think in the Ojibwe language. Ojibwe elder Maajiigwaneyaash illustrated such a concept by stating, "I can see, smell, taste, hear, and feel everything in Ojibwe first long before I can . . . articulate that in English" (personal interview, January 13, 2018). In connection with

Maajiigwaneyaash's statement, I recall several Ojibwe elders making the statement of "You will know when you can speak the Ojibwe language because you will begin speaking Ojibwe in your dreams."

The endangerment status of the Ojibwe language is a crucial concern as is evident in the numerous revitalization efforts across Ojibwe country. Ojibwe elder Gloria Jean Beaulieu provided insight regarding Ojibwe language revitalization efforts. For the past twenty years, Gloria Jean Beaulieu has observed various Ojibwe language revitalization efforts within the Leech Lake Reservation community; however, she indicated such efforts are stagnant. In comparison, Neely (2012) focused on Kiowa language revitalization efforts and identified diverse factors for such stagnancy, which may be applied to Ojibwe language revitalization efforts. For instance, Neely (2012) indicated that fluent speakers of the Kiowa language tend to be elders over the age of sixty. This specific factor is evident in present Ojibwe communities as indicated by afore-mentioned statistics provided by the 2010 United States Census Bureau data and the Ojibwe People's Dictionary Project. One such statistic provide by the Ojibwe People's Dictionary indicates that the Ojibwe language is "spoken by grandparents and older generations; while the parent generation may understand it, they do not speak it to children or among themselves" (http://ojibwe.lib.umn.edu/about-ojibwe-language).

Another factor identified by Neely (2012) is limited opportunities to speak the Kiowa language. The opportunities available consist of prayer, ceremonies, pow wows, and the "symbolic use" of Kiowa words, greetings, and phrases "to index one's identity as a member of the Kiowa community" (Neely, 2012, p. 91). In association, an additional

factor is that few individuals comprehend speeches and prayers spoken in the Kiowa language (Neely, 2012).

Ojibwe elders Gloria Jean Beaulieu and Bob Jourdain both shared experiences indicative of limited opportunities to converse in the Ojibwe language. Gloria Jean Beaulieu stated she attempts to converse in the Ojibwe language with her siblings and other elders within the community; however, such attempts are daunting. Bob Jourdain is approaching his seventy-third birthday, and he stated there are "less and less people" to converse with in the Ojibwe language, and he is forgetting his Ojibwe vocabulary (personal interview, January 12, 2018). Bob Jourdain stated that it "is to be expected" and referred to this process as "attrition" (personal interview, January 12, 2018). Ojibwe elder and first speaker Larry Smallwood, *Amik,* of the Mille Lacs Reservation identifies with the statements made by Gloria Jean Beaulieu and Bob Jourdain. Larry Smallwood stated, "Indeed, I have forgotten a lot. I have forgotten many words. After all I don't use them every day anymore when I speak. That is why I forget. That is what is happening now" (Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Association, 2013, p. 28). Harrison (2007) indicates the lack of opportunities to speak one's first language may lead to feelings of isolation and invisibility. First speakers of the Ojibwe language are surrounded by speakers of the dominant English language, and as result, first speakers forget the language "due to lack of practice" (Harrison, 2007, p. 5). In addition, Gloria Jean Beaulieu identified the younger generations as not having an interest in learning the Ojibwe language, which is a factor identified by Neely (2012).

Ojibwe elder Larry Aitken identified the "symbolic use" of the Ojibwe language; however, he views such usage as a positive factor (Neely, 2012). Over the years, Larry

Aitken has witnessed an increase of community members adhering to traditional Ojibwe protocol, which primarily consists of introducing oneself in the Ojibwe language by Indian name, clan, and reservation. Larry Aitken further stated second language speakers "are getting better" at speaking the Ojibwe language (personal interview, December 21, 2017). Larry Aitken's statement concurs with observations made by Ojibwe elder and first language speaker Larry Smallwood. Larry Smallwood made the following statement:

> You see we have almost lost the Ojibwe language. Nobody spoke at length, and nobody pursued Ojibwe for very long. Nowadays, on the other hand, in the past five or maybe past ten years, they have started to try to speak Ojibwe. Indeed, they are doing a good job (Great Lakes Indian Game & Wildlife Commission, 2013, p. 17).

Associated with this factor is the evident lack of comprehension of speeches and prayers spoken in the Ojibwe language (Neely, 2012). Larry Aitken identified the lack of understanding, and he referred to community members as possessing "mediocrity" of the Ojibwe language or "conversational Ojibwe" (personal interview, December 21, 2017). Larry Aitken defined "mediocrity" and "conversational Ojibwe" as community member not being a fluent Ojibwe language speaker, but possessing the capability to speak traditional Ojibwe introduction protocol, greetings, and weather vocabulary in the Ojibwe language (personal interview, December 21, 2017). In association, Bob Jourdain termed "fluent listener" as an individual who can understand the Ojibwe language as it is being spoken, but the individual is unable to speak the language (personal interview, January 12, 2018).

Neely (2012) identified the effects of the boarding school era contributing to the limited usage and opportunities to speak Native American languages. According to Neely (2012), the home environment is an integral setting for intergenerational language transmission; however, boarding school experiences severely deterred this process. Neely (2012) illustrates with such examples of parents either not encouraging or expecting children to learn the Kiowa language, and parents speaking Kiowa to discuss matters not intended for children to hear. From such incidences, children may perceive the Kiowa language usage as exclusively reserved for adults and that they may learn Kiowa later in adulthood (Neely, 2012). As a result, Neely (2012) indicates discontinuity occurs in transmission of Kiowa to younger generations creating a divide between speakers and non-speakers of the Kiowa language.

In chapter two, the boarding school era and its impact upon the endangerment status of numerous Native American languages is presented. Ojibwe elder Dan Jones briefly shared his childhood experience of being forcibly removed from his reservation and placed in a boarding school. His experience involved being forbidden to and punished for speaking the Ojibwe language, and as a result, he suppressed segments of the Ojibwe language. Dan Jones specifically recalled a nun lecturing him with statements such as "Don't speak that language" and "You will never amount to anything using that language" (personal interview, November 29, 2017). Dan Jones disclosed that he had "to get over that mentality . . . of being ashamed of the language," and he eventually regained his confidence in being an Ojibwe language speaker (personal interview, November 29, 2017).

The boarding school era continues to be a powerful and effective influence upon Native American students and the usage of their tribal languages. For instance, the shame briefly described by Ojibwe elder Dan Jones was oftentimes successfully transmitted to future generations. Dan Jones described such instances of students having negativity towards the Ojibwe language. Examples provided by Dan Jones consisted of student statements such as "It has never done me any good," "When am I ever gonna use it?" and "I speak it, but when I try to speak it, they just laugh at me" (personal interview, November 29, 2017). An additional statement often made by Ojibwe language students is "What can I do with this language?" and Dan Jones indicated his response would be "What can't you do?" (personal interview, November 29, 2017). Neely (2012) indicates such statements may reveal a reluctance to speak a Native American language "for fear of 'getting it wrong' and somehow being disrespectful by doing so" (p. 103). Neely (2012) indicates this is another form of "language purism" (p. 103). In addition, the negativity towards the Ojibwe language entails boarding school survivors' children and grandchildren having a sense resentment and guilt. For instance, in her work *Pimatisiwin*, Young (2005) revealed the boarding school experience of an Ojibwe woman's father. The Ojibwe woman shared that her father was forced to attend a boarding school, and as result, he did not impart the Ojibwe language to his children. The Ojibwe woman expressed resentment towards boarding schools in general for the disconnection of not learning the Ojibwe language from her father and in her own home (Young, 2005). In addition, she expressed a sense of guilt for not being an Ojibwe language speaker in adulthood (Young, 2005). The Ojibwe woman shared, "A big part of

me feels really guilty that I haven't taken it upon myself and learned it by now" (Young, 2005, p. 55).

I personally do not have a boarding school experience; however, my grandparents and great grandparents were forcibly removed from the Leech Lake Reservation and placed in distant boarding schools. For instance, my maternal grandmother Agnes Robinson was removed from her home at the age of six, and she was initially placed in the Pipestone Indian Boarding School located in southern Minnesota. At a later date, my grandmother was transferred 670 miles away from her reservation home, and she was placed at the Haskell Indian Boarding School located in Lawrence, Kansas. My grandparents and great grandparents were first speakers of the Ojibwe language, and they were forced to learn and speak English in boarding school. Moreover, shame of speaking the Ojibwe language was instilled in my family. As a result, I can relate to the incidents provided by Ojibwe elder Dan Jones and Neely (2012). For instance, I recall my maternal grandmother only speaking the Ojibwe language if she wanted to discuss adult matters in front of children. Moreover, I was not encouraged or expected to learn the Ojibwe language. In addition, I have experienced a reluctance to speak the language "for fear of 'getting it wrong' and "being disrespectful by doing so'" (Neely, 2012, p. 103). As a result, I am not a speaker of the Ojibwe language.

In association, I strongly believe the "fluent listener" and "conversational Ojibwe" identified by Ojibwe elders Bob Jourdain and Larry Aitken is a residual effect of the boarding school era. I am aware of numerous Ojibwe elders who are fluent listeners and readers of the Ojibwe language; however, they do not possess confidence in publicly speaking the Ojibwe language. I believe the fluent listener concept is connected to the

shame previously described by Ojibwe elder Dan Jones as he shared his boarding school experience. Dan Jones shared that he was able to conquer his mentality of shame; however, not everyone has been successful as Ojibwe elder Dan Jones, and the intergenerational transmission of boarding school effects is prevalent in Native American communities. In recent years, this phenomenon has been referred to as either historic trauma or intergenerational trauma.

The Ojibwe elders provided insight to challenges of Ojibwe language revitalization efforts. In association, as indicated in chapter four, the Ojibwe elders had difficulty in providing a definition of Ojibwe language fluency. The definitions of "fluent listener" and "conversational Ojibwe" by Bob Jourdain and Larry Aitken was previously discussed. Ojibwe elders Rosemarie DeBungie and Maajiigwaneyaash provided further insight regarding Ojibwe language fluency. Rosemarie DeBungie did not attempt to provide a definition of Ojibwe language fluency. In fact, she was unaware of the concept of fluency. Maajiigwaneyaash indicated that fluency only applies to written languages, and the Ojibwe language is an oral tradition. Maajiigwaneyaash illustrated the power of oral tradition as he recalled fond memories of his grandmother. Maajiigwaneyaash stated he was fortunate to be raised by his grandmother, who lived to the age of one hundred and fourteen, and she passed on intergenerational cultural knowledge to him. Maajiigwaneyaash further shared that his grandmother received intergenerational knowledge from her grandfather, who lived to the age of one hundred and twenty. Maajiigwaneyaash stated, "In my family, and in other Ojibwe families, our knowledge is passed down by our grandmothers and grandfathers" (personal interview, January 13, 2018). Maajiigwaneyaash's reminisces are indicative of the crucial roles grandparents

possess in Ojibwe culture. McNally (2009) indicates that "there are few relationships as important or intimate as that between grandchild and grandparent," and grandparents serve as primary educators for future generations (McNally, 2009, p. 1). Moreover, Maajiigwaneyaash indicated that "all of that intergenerational knowledge passing down to the next person has continued in my family and I'm doing that right now" (personal interview, January 13, 2018). Today, Maajiigwaneyaash continues this Ojibwe tradition and shares his wisdom with elementary school students. In retrospect, Rosemarie DeBungie is a highly valued and respected spiritual leader, and she may have been referring to Ojibwe language as an oral tradition; therefore, she was unable to provide a definition of fluency.

The Ojibwe language is well documented, and the language has been preserved in numerous mediums such as books, dictionaries, tape recordings, and videos. As mentioned in chapter two, Father Baraga published the first Ojibwe language dictionary in 1853. However, as Ojibwe elder Maajiigwaneyaash indicated, the Ojibwe language is an oral tradition. Harrison (2007) describes oral tradition as a "living tradition" that is both "robust" and "fragile" (p. 145). Oral traditions are robust as they contain hundreds of generations of cultural knowledge transmitted to future generations; however, oral traditions are fragile and may survive the transition to written form (Harrison, 2007). Harrison (2007) cautions that once an oral tradition is written down, the story becomes "fixed, canonized in a rigid form" and "ceases to be a living tradition" (Harrison, 2007, p. 145).

Despite the endangerment status of the Ojibwe language, the Ojibwe elders Dan Jones, Larry Aitken, and Maajiigwaneyaash expressed optimism regarding Ojibwe

language revitalization efforts. Moreover, immersion programs, stories, and lullabies were identified as a common theme to reverse the endangerment status of the Ojibwe language. As indicated in chapter four, both Dan Jones and Maajiigwaneyaash identified immersion programs as a primary and successful resource to gain Ojibwe language fluency for second language learners. Both Dan Jones and Maajiigwaneyaash are master speakers of the Ojibwe language, and they possess extensive experience in teaching the Ojibwe language. Moreover, Dan Jones and Maajiigwaneyaash exhibit tremendous passion and dedication, which was reflected in the experiences shared for this research study. One powerful experience emerged as Dan Jones reminisced about conversing with a child in the Ojibwe language while participating in an immersion program. Dan Jones recalled, "it's always exciting going cause (it is) one of the few places where I can speak to a child" in the Ojibwe language, and "it warms my heart that I am able to do that" (personal interview, November 29, 2017).

Ojibwe elders Larry Aitken and Gloria Jean Beaulieu indicated that storytelling is an effective resource to encourage Ojibwe language fluency. In addition, Peacock and Wisuri (2002) indicate that "the Ojibwe are a story people," and storytelling is a powerful method to convey Ojibwe culture, identity, and history (p. 28). Ojibwe writer Lenore Keeshig-Tobias highlights the power of story with the following passage:

> Stories were and are a record of proud nations confident in their achievements and their way of life. Stories contain information about tribal values, patterns of the environment and growing seasons, ceremonial or religious details, social roles, geographical formations, factual and symbolic data, animal and human traits (Bruchac, 1996, p. 74).

Larry Aitken stated, "You can tell a story and really have a good time" and "you learn to express yourself in Ojibwe" (personal communication, December 21, 2017). Moreover, Ojibwe elders Dan Jones and Larry Aitken indicated that the humor is inherent in the Ojibwe language. Larry Aitken further stated,

> the Ojibwe like to laugh, and they tell stories to each other. So if they are joking with you that means they love you, and you can poke fun at yourself too. Say I love you back. And that goes with harmony and balance in your life (personal interview, December 21, 2017).

Neely (2012) complements Larry Aitken's statements by highlighting storytelling as a major source of entertainment and identity. Storytelling enables the transmission of language, cultural values, etiquette, and history (Neely, 2012). In addition, storytelling is influential in unifying and strengthening family and community connections (Neely, 2012). In addition, Ojibwe Elder Larry Aitken identified lullabies as a method to learn the Ojibwe language. Neely (2012) indicates that traditional songs or lullabies as indicated here are equally important as storytelling in teaching Native American languages.

Rosemarie DeBungie was the sole Ojibwe elder who identified ceremony attendance as an approach to learn the Ojibwe language. Succinctly, Rosemarie DeBungie stated, "If you want to learn the language, you need to attend ceremonies" (personal interview, January 25, 2018). In his contributions to the bilingual book *Dibaajimowin: Anishinaabe Stories of Culture and Respec*t, Mille Lacs Reservation elder Larry Smallwood identified ceremonial attendance for beginner Ojibwe language speakers (Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Association, 2013). Larry Smallwood advised that

beginner Ojibwe language speakers "should pursue more of the ceremonies, and the various things we do as Anishinaabe" (Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Association, 2013, p. 17). In terms of "various things we do as Anishinaabe," Larry Smallwood briefly identified praying with tobacco, offering spirt dishes, and receiving Indian names and visions (Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Association, 2013, p. 17). Larry Smallwood's statements resonate with the three fundamental elements of being Ojibwe previously identified by Ojibwe elder Larry Aitken. The three elements identified are: Speak the Ojibwe language, receive an Indian name, and pray daily with tobacco.

In addition, Rosemarie DeBungie suggested beginner Ojibwe language speakers learn five Ojibwe words per day, and she made the statement of "imagine how many words you would learn in a week, a month, and in a year" (personal interview, January 25, 2018). Rosemarie DeBungie's powerful words regarding the Ojibwe language resonated within me. Approximately two weeks after interviewing Rosemarie DeBungie, I personally followed her sage advice, and I have learned five Ojibwe words per day. As a result, the process is profoundly impacting my worldview and identity as an Ojibwe woman, and I am having a deeper appreciation for the Ojibwe language and culture.

As indicated in chapter two, Ojibwe language revitalization efforts are numerous. Moreover, revitalization efforts include the creation of vocabulary to reflect new ideas and concepts of the past two centuries. In fact, the Ojibwe people highly value "innovation and creativity" as is evident in the myriad of new words (Bunte, 2012, p. 51).

Ojibwe elder Bob Jourdain revealed that he does not wish to witness any changes being made to the Ojibwe language. Bob Jourdain made the statement, "I've always told my students that I don't want to be around to listen to how much the language changed"

(personal interview, January 12, 2018). However, Bob Jourdain believes future generations "are going to keep some of the good parts" of the Ojibwe language (personal interview, January 12, 2018). Specifically, Bob Jourdain is not fond of the creation of new Ojibwe words to address such modern concepts as technology and advanced mathematics. Ojibwe elder Bob Jourdain may be considered a "purist" as he values the traditional and detests innovations made to the Ojibwe language (Bunte, 2012, p. 51; Harrison, 2007, p. 207). Harrison (2007) acknowledges that Indigenous languages are encoded with "an ancient layer of cultural knowledge," which "has been memorized, passed down, and cared for" for hundreds of generations (p. 115; p. 133). Neely (2012) recognizes that tribal languages are a sacred gift. This ideology is a form of language purism, sometimes referred to as "elder purism" which holds that change to a language should be avoided at all costs, since it might threaten the language's integrity (Neely, 2012, p. 103).

On the contrary, Harrison (2007) recognizes that "languages are highly complex, self-organizing systems in constant flux" (p. 207). Furthermore, Harrison (2007) indicates "individual speakers of any language can and do make up new structures," and this is evident by the impact of contemporary mass media (p. 207). For instance, Indigenous languages can adapt and reflect innovative ideas and concepts such as "blog," "computer," and "emoticon" (Bunte, 2012, p. 51; Harrison, 2007, p. 115). Neely (2012) indicates it is advantageous to connect traditional tribal languages to the modern world as it makes the language relevant for younger generations. If such language changes endure, the newly created words are listed in Indigenous language dictionaries (Harrison,

2007). However, Harrison (2007) advises that such newly formed words in Indigenous languages do not contain generations and generations of accumulated wisdom.

As indicated, the Ojibwe language abounds with newly created words and Ojibwe people are inclined to "uniting tradition and innovation" to create new vocabulary (Bunte, 2012, p. 51). For instance, Ojibwe words have been created for innovative concepts such as pizza (*bimike'igan*), computer (*mazinaabikiwebinigan*), television (*mazinaatesijigan*), and telephone (*giigidowin*). Such innovative Ojibwe words have endured, and the words are displayed in Ojibwe language resource materials.

I have presented pros and cons regarding the induction of newly created words into the Ojibwe language; however, I am inclined to concur with my Ojibwe elders Bob Jourdain, Rosemarie DeBungie, and Larry Smallwood. I initially began learning the Ojibwe language approximately twenty-five years ago, and my first Ojibwe language instructor was the esteemed Earl Nyholm, Bemidji State University Professor. I recollected my memories of my grandmother Agnes Robinson speaking the Ojibwe language, and I wanted to learn the language in honor of her. Moreover, I specifically wanted to learn the Ojibwe language in order to speak and send my prayers to the Great Spirit, *Gichi-manidoo*. In addition, I wish to attend Ojibwe ceremonies, and I want to comprehend the spiritual leaders and their prayers. In this context the Ojibwe words for pizza, computer, television, and telephone have no purpose. Furthermore, as my Ojibwe elders and Harrison (2007) indicate, such words do not contain the wisdom and generations of cultural knowledge of my Ojibwe ancestors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Ojibwe elders primarily identified the immersion program model to reverse the endangerment status of the Ojibwe language. I strongly agree with the Ojibwe elders' recommendation of not only immersion programs, but their identification of storytelling, lullabies, and ceremonial attendance. However, of the recommendations provided, the immersion program model closely resembles the experiences of the Ojibwe elders. As described by the Ojibwe elders, immersion programs permit the Ojibwe language only and prohibit the usage of the English language; however, immersion programs have severe limitations of limited funding and scarcity of fluent Ojibwe language speakers. Ojibwe elder Dan Jones specifically identified the limited resource of Ojibwe language speakers, and the proper protocol to compensate this valuable resource. Dan Jones stated,

> in order to do it the proper way, you need to offer them a decent honorarium. You need to make it worth their while . . . cause (sic) you respect the knowledge they have, you're respecting the . . . time that they're sharing with you (personal interview, November 21, 2017).

Currently, there are two Ojibwe language immersion models in operation within the state of Minnesota. One model is available in a limited number of elementary schools typically at the pre-school level. In this model, children are immersed in the Ojibwe language during school hours only, and then return to their English language speaking homes. The other immersion program model, commonly referred to as a language camp, either entails an intensive two-day experience, which typically occurs during a weekend, or a one-week experience during the summer. As with the elementary school immersion model, participants return to their English-speaking homes and communities after the

immersion program experience. Both immersion program models are highly beneficial and valuable; however, the models encounter prominent challenges and marginally contribute to the reversal of the endangerment status of the Ojibwe language.

An identified challenge is that both the elementary school immersion and the language camp models are an extremely scarce resource. For instance, only three Ojibwe language immersion programs are currently in operation within the state of Minnesota. Two of the immersion programs are at the elementary school level. There is the Niigaane Program at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School located on the Leech Lake Reservation, and the other program is the Misaabekong Ojibwe Language Program at the Lowell Elementary School located in Duluth. The elementary school model is burdened with severely limited space availability, funding resources, and qualified teaching personnel. In addition, the immersion programs are burdened with extensive student waiting lists. As mentioned previously, students return to their English speaking households at the end of the school day and week. Oftentimes, the parents are not conversing in the Ojibwe language with their children in the home. As a result, children are not encouraged to speak the Ojibwe language outside of the classroom.

The third immersion program is Ojibwewigamig (Ojibwe Immersion House), which was developed in partnership with the University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD) and the Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College and the program is primarily for adult learners of the Ojibwe language. As mentioned previously, the language camp typically occurs during selected weekends and one week during the summer. The language camp model shares similar challenges as the elementary school model. Language camps are a scarce resource with limited space availability, funding resources, and Ojibwe language

speaker availability. As with the elementary school immersion program model, language camp participants return to their English speaking households and communities. Furthermore, there are scarce resources and opportunities to converse in the Ojibwe language outside of the language camp experience. In addition, another challenge is that numerous individuals do not have the resources to be absent from their employment and families to attend a language camp either for a weekend or a week.

It is evident there is a lack of state-wide and tribal government support for the development of additional Ojibwe language immersion programs at the elementary and secondary level and at the language camp level. For instance, the lack of elementary school immersion programs and language camps on the remaining Minnesota Indian reservations is indicative of a lack of support on the tribal government level. Currently, both immersion program models do not adequately meet the needs of Ojibwe communities, and are not fully effective in reversing the endangerment status of the Ojibwe language. In both models, students and participants return to their homes and communities where the English language is pervasive and dominant. In addition, there are limited opportunities such as language tables and courses to converse in the Ojibwe language.

In the early stages of my research study, I recall conversing with an Ojibwe elder who shared a statement made by her mother, an Ojibwe language speaker. The statement made was that the Ojibwe language could be mastered with a one-month immersion into the Ojibwe language and culture. Throughout my research study experience, I often contemplated this particular statement, and I have attempted to envision the possibilities of a one-month Ojibwe language immersion program.

I strongly believe that the recommendation of a one-month Ojibwe language immersion program would greatly contribute to reversing the endangerment status of the Ojibwe language through the development of second language speakers. The one-month program would be a total immersion experience for participants; only the usage of the Ojibwe language would be permitted. Male and female Ojibwe elders, who are speakers of the Ojibwe language, would serve as facilitators for the total immersion experience for a selected number of interested and committed participants. Participants would have an opportunity to learn the Ojibwe language, and gain a deeper understanding and appreciation for Ojibwe culture, traditions, and history.

At this point, I have more questions than answers by what means a one-month Ojibwe language immersion program would emerge. My initial thoughts are that the one-month immersion may be structured in the format of a cohort model. For instance, a selected number of participants would gather for the one-month Ojibwe language immersion program during the summer, and thereafter, the same participants would gather for selected dates throughout the first year of the program. The cohort model would ensure the continuity of the Ojibwe language among the selected participants; therefore, ensuring the development of second language speakers. The following year, a new group of participants would begin a second cohort of the Ojibwe language immersion program.

A number of the initial questions that arise in terms of the development of an one-month Ojibwe language immersion program are: Program responsibility, determination and approval of an isolated location, funding sources, identification of Ojibwe elders, selection of participants, and level of community and tribal government support. Furthermore, in order for such a program to attain the beginning stages of development, a

sense of urgency regarding the Ojibwe language's endangerment status needs to be created.

A second recommendation to reverse the endangerment status of the Ojibwe language is to develop a formal master-apprentice program. In this particular program, a master speaker of the Ojibwe language would be paired with an adult, and the master and apprentice would devote a specified amount of time ranging from ten to twenty hours per week. The master and apprentice relationship would entail one-on-one interactions, and the conversations would consist of limited usage of the English language. Such an apprenticeship program, would greatly contribute to the development of second language speakers. As with the one-month Ojibwe language immersion recommendation, I have more questions than answers. Questions that arise are very similar to the ones previously indicated: Program responsibility, funding sources, identification of Ojibwe elders, selection of participants, and level of community and tribal government support.

In conclusion, both recommendations of a one-month Ojibwe language immersion program and a master-apprenticeship program are highly intensive and require a great deal of commitment and dedication. However, the recommendations may be necessary in order to reverse the endangerment status of the Ojibwe language. As indicated in chapter two, there are numerous Ojibwe language revitalization efforts currently in effect; nonetheless, there is a deficiency of Ojibwe language speakers. For instance, Neely (2012) indicates that language courses are exclusively insufficient in developing Ojibwe language speakers. Ojibwe language students require opportunities external of the classroom to hear and speak the language (Neely, 2012). Such opportunities enable students to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of the Ojibwe language (Neely,

2012). Furthermore, such opportunities enable students to develop a level of confidence in speaking the Ojibwe language (Neely, 2012). I am in agreement with Neely (2012) that such opportunities need to be created. Neely (2012) indicates that the danger of language loss is "completely real and immediate" and there are potential consequences for tribal identity, cohesion and culture (p. 91). As with my Ojibwe elders Dan Jones and Maajiigwaneyaash, I am optimistic and believe that the Ojibwe language will not be lost. In closing, I strongly believe in the wisdom of renowned Ojibwe elder and Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe member, Larry Smallwood, Amik, "our language . . . will lead us into the future" (Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission, 2013, p. 17).

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