

**A Preliminary Analysis of
Secwepemc Language Acquisition by a Young Child**

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1. Introduction

In the face of the critical state of most North American Aboriginal languages, few studies exist of first, or even second, language acquisition of the first languages of this continent. As Allen (1994) and others have suggested, cross-linguistic acquisition research, especially with languages whose morphological and syntactic features are vastly different from those of English, contributes to the theoretical understanding of language acquisition. Moreover, as we will show in this paper, acquisition research can lead to the investigation of to date little understood syntactic and morphological features of Salish languages. Thus, for the student researcher in this project, acquisition research with the six-year-old subject led to the study of independent pronouns or emphatics in Secwepemctsin, which we found out had not been extensively described in the literature (see Kuipers 1974, 1989). The extensive use of independent pronouns by the subject, in turn, we argue, is at least in part an interference from English.

Beyond the contributions to syntactic and morphological knowledge of Secwepemctsin, this acquisition research has implications for efforts by Aboriginal communities to revitalize their languages not only with the help of second language school programs, but also with the help of "language-nest" and primary school immersion programs, as well as through in-home efforts. Our study shows the constraints and difficulties involved in the possibility of young Salish children acquiring their aboriginal language in the home in the face of the overwhelming dominance of English in the home and community, and in the face of young children having very few caregivers and individuals who communicate with them in the aboriginal language.

2. The Sociolinguistic Context

Like other Salish languages, and like most Aboriginal languages of North America, Secwepemctsin¹ is in an endangered state. Although the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples Report (Vol. 3, 1996) lists Salish as having 30% mother tongue retention, closer inspection shows that Salish languages are in worse shape. Thus, a 1995 survey by the Secwepemc Cultural Education Society (Ignace 1995) showed that only about 3.5% of Secwepemc people consider themselves and/or are considered by peers as fluent speakers of the language. Moreover, although Secwepemc language school programs have been in existence for nearly 20 years, they have not led to proficiency, let alone increased use of the language among the younger generation².

At present, almost no Secwepemc children are raised with Secwepemctsin as the first language in the home. Most Secwepemc communities have only a dozen or so people - almost all in the generation of 60 and over - who can converse in Secwepemctsin. Thus, learning the language is difficult for anyone in the younger generation, as it is becoming increasingly difficult to be exposed to speakers. The arrival of satellite television, VCRs, as well as the construction of new housing subdivision where many of the younger parents live, further increases the ubiquity of English. Even contemporary parents or grandparents who want to use Secwepemctsin in the household in order for

¹Also known as 'Shuswap', it is a Northern Interior Salish language.

²A Secwepemctsin Immersion program is available at Chief Atahm School, with the aim of reintegrating Secwepemctsin into the lives of the younger generation. Research into this program would be invaluable.

their children to acquire the language as a first language face an uphill battle against the dominant use of English in the home, the media, the community, school, daycare, in the community workplace, and, of course, everywhere off reserve. For any child in the contemporary world who acquires or learns Secwepemctsin in the household, it is extremely difficult to foster his/her communicative abilities in the language, since there are few or no peers who know or use the language, and since it is extremely difficult to enforce the use of the language in the home, let alone on the playground, in the neighbourhood or the community.

3. The Family Context of Acquisition: early Aboriginal and English language exposure

The child subject, JI, was born in November, 1990 to a household where both parents speak Secwepemctsin fluently. Her father is a native speaker of Secwepemctsin. He grew up in a multi-generational household, with a great-grandmother who did not tolerate any English from young people. Although JI's mother is not a native speaker of Secwepemctsin, she has achieved fluency in Secwepemctsin by the time JI was born. Even before JI's mother was completely comfortable with Secwepemctsin, her experience learning and working with languages allowed her to have native-like pronunciation. JI has two older sisters and two older brothers at the time of her birth. All four of JI's older siblings speak English, and understand only a few Secwepemctsin words.

From the time JI was born and before she entered daycare when she was 10 months old, JI was taken care of exclusively by her mother, who speaks to her only in Secwepemctsin³. She was also away from her older siblings at that time. JI spent 4 days a week at an English-speaking private daycare starting at age 10 months, for 5 or 6 hours per day. Outside the daycare, she continued to be taken care of and spoken to by her mother virtually at all times. Her father also always speaks to JI in Secwepemctsin. At age 2 years 6 months (JI's age will subsequently be noted as year semicolon month: 2;3 or year semicolon month semicolon day), when JI's younger sister was born, JI started to spend time with her English-speaking older siblings instead of her mother, who had to take care of the new baby. A younger brother was born when JI was about 5 years old. Although at this time she had gotten used to using English with her older siblings, she also became aware that her parents only speak in Secwepemctsin to her two younger siblings as they do to her. English became increasingly predominant as JI entered preschool and elementary school. Although she continued to hear Secwepemctsin exclusively from both her father and mother, and occasionally uses it with her younger siblings, she would only reply in Secwepemctsin when prompted. At this time, JI also started to translate her parents' commands in the form of questions, which showed her comprehension, such as "*Why do you want me to get the cup?*".

Spontaneous responses in Secwepemctsin were the norm during the early stages of exposure to the language. Early tape recordings, logs and notes on JI's language acquisition between age 13 and 22 months reveal the following patterns, fairly typical for language acquisition patterns at that age: Between age 13 and 18 months, JI used a small range (ca 3) of single morpheme utterances which reduced forms such as (1) to a single-morpheme form such as (2).

- 1 kectsetsme
 you give to me
- 2⁴ [kəx] (age 1;1)
 give

While her passive vocabulary continued to expand during the subsequent two years, at around 2 1/2 years of age, English became far more dominant, initially through mixed English/Secwepemctsin utterances. The following utterances (Aug. and Sept. 93) show some typical ones for this period. (See 9-11 below for listing of intransitive clitic and transitive subject and object paradigms).

³16% (15/91) of English utterances in the sample collected for this research paper are direct translations of Secwepemctsin utterances spoken by her mother.

⁴JI's utterances are given with her age at the time of utterance. Utterances given in square brackets are in IPA.

3 [tyəx may ti:tsa]
spit(= S. ptixw) my shirt(= S. stektits'e)⁵
She spit on my shirt
Correct form: ptixwmtsems nen stektits'e

4 [Ay wAnna kwe-nt-e 7ene]
I wanna take-tr-2sg.imp this
I wanna take this
correct form: Me7 kwekwen yi7ene

5 I kwe.kwen oats
I take.redup oats
I take oats
Correct form: Kwekwen re "oats"

6 [aym mAk]
I'm hungry
I'm hungry
Correct form: memq'-ken

7⁶ M: pul-st-e re cmeye!
kill-tr-2sg.imp det fly
Kill the fly!

Jl: I pult* * cmeye (2;10)
I killed (the) fly.

8 M: Wi7-en ke 7-secwem?
finish-inter irr 2sg.poss-bathe
Did you finish bathing?

Jl: Wi7 secwem (2;8)
finish bathe

9 Intransitive Clitic Paradigm (Clitics)

	1 sg.	2 sg.	3 sg.	1 pl. incl.	1 pl. excl.	2 pl.	3 pl.
Indicative	-ken	-k	-Ø	-kt	-kucw	-kp	-Ø
Conjunctive	-wen	-(w)cw	-(w)s	-(w)t	-kucw	-(w)p	-(w)s
Possessive	n-	-7	-s	-kt	-kucw	-mp	-s

10 Transitive Subject Paradigm (Suffixes)

1 sg.	2 sg.	3 sg.	1 pl. incl.	1 pl. excl.	2 pl.	3 pl.
-(é)n	-(é)c	-(é)s	-(é)t/-(é)m	-kucw	-(é)p	-(é)s

11 Object paradigm (Suffixes)

1 sg.	2 sg.	3 sg.	1 pl. incl.	1 pl. excl.	2 pl.	3 pl.
-sém-/sm-	-sí-/s-	Ø	-é1-/l-	-kucw	-úlm-/lm-	Ø

Features of the sample presented are as follows: Although to this day, in comprehension of Secwepemc speech JI can distinguish the full range of intransitive pronominal clitics, transitive subject and object suffixes with good

⁵Since at an early stage of acquisition, JI used truncated versions of some words, these truncations are indicated by having brackets immediately following the gloss, with *S* indicating that it is in Secwepemc. The complete word follows *S*.

⁶The conversation participants' utterances will be coded either "M" for JI's mother, or "S" for the researcher.

accuracy, the speech production patterns at this age already showed a tendency to use stems without subject and object suffixes or clitics, although caregivers continued to model accurate speech in repetitions and prompting. The replacement of second singular imperative forms with the correct suffixes or clitics can be explained by the fact that in caregiver speech, imperative forms were likely the most frequently used and heard forms, and thus became parts of active vocabulary, although used incorrectly.

Jl's younger sister LI showed similar patterns of speech at a similar age. As can be seen from the samples above, at this age, Secwepemc pronominal clitics and suffixes were replaced by English independent pronouns in both Jl's and LI's speech. This became a noticeable feature of Jl's speech at age five and six, just before the acquisition study by I. S. Lai began. Both parents at this time, aware of the use of English pronouns in Jl's speech, emphasized the correct modelling of Secwepemc clitics and pronominal suffixes. At this time, interestingly, a feature of Jl's Secwepemc speech became the use of these forms in at least simple sentences making requests and statements; however, in addition to the clitics and suffixes, she would add independent pronouns or emphatics, which in correct Secwepemc speech can only be used in addition to the pronominal clitics/suffixes, and only in marking subjects (see Lai's article, this volume). Jl's utterances of this era, which carried over into the period of acquisition research discussed below by I. S. Lai included:

12 Mama, n-tsetswe7 meq'-ken (6;9)
mom, 1sg.poss-emph hungry-1sg.ind
Mom, I (emph.) am hungry

(12) uses the independent pronoun in a possible and correct form in addition to the intransitive 1st sing. clitic *-ken*.

13 *ki7ce, k7ep re n-tsetswe7! (6;10)
*mother, sick det 1sg.poss-emph
Mom, I am sick!

The above utterance omits the 1st person intransitive clitic, and uses the 1st person sing. independent pronoun instead, which without doubt is an interference from English.

14 *Mama, ke-c-t-se.ts.m-e te n-tsetswe te sestete7stem (6;11)
*mom, give-2sg.obj-tr-1sg.subj.redup-imp obl 1sg.poss-emph obl drink
Mom, give me a drink
Correct form: Mama, kectsetsme te sestete7stem!

This utterance correctly uses the subject and object pronominal suffixes (*you give to me*) with the verb, however, uses the 1st person emphatic/independent pronoun as an indirect object with the determiner *te*. As the syntactic analysis of independent pronouns reveals, the latter cannot function as indirect objects. In the above sample, the use of the determiner *te* with *sestete7stem*, however, is correct.

15 *Mom, wi.w.kt-(t)-Ø-en re newi7 te 7-kelc (7;0)
*mom see.redup-tr-3sg.obj-1sg.subj det 2sg.poss-emph obl 2sg.poss-hand
Mom, I see your hand!
Correct form: Mom, wiwkctsen te7 kelc/wiwkten re7 kelct

In the above utterance, the independent pronoun appears to have the status of a possessive pronoun, "your hand" but appears to also function as an attribute to "hand" in one of the correct functions of "te" as determiner". While *re newi7 re7 kelc* is grammatical as a subject alone, as an object it is not.

In summary, Jl's language acquisition between the ages of 13 months and 6 years of age showed a decrease in the active use of Secwepemc, as her exposure to English increased through daycare and pre-school, elementary

school, and play with older siblings and peers. While through the continued use of the language by her parents she continued to have good comprehension, her active use of Secwepemctsin decreased, and increasingly incorporated English stems and independent pronouns in replacement of Secwepemc pronominal suffixes and clitics.

The following part of the paper will present some of the analysis and results of elicitation of JI's Secwepemc language production during the time of study. Sections 4 and 5 give technical details on the collection, transcription, and coding procedures. The results presented in section 6 show that JI's performance in English is already much more advanced than in Secwepemctsin, and section 7 illustrates JI's overregularized use of Secwepemctsin independent pronouns.

4 Collection

The researcher's earliest samples of JI's Secwepemctsin speech were taken early in 1997, when JI was 6;3. Systematic visits were made between September 1997, when JI was 6;10, and March 1998, age 7;4. During this seven-month period, the researcher visited JI's home on average twice a month for 12 visits, resulting in a total of 7 recorded sessions.

16 Utterances recorded

Age at session	6;3	6;10;15	6;10;25	6;11;16	7;0;6	7;2;28	7;4;6
Utterances	18	26	68	64	11	107	10

For the sample collection sessions, JI was told that the researcher wanted to learn Secwepemctsin, therefore JI should speak in Secwepemctsin while playing with the researcher so that the researcher could learn it. Only the researcher, the mother, and JI were present at these elicitation sessions. Due to the researcher's lack of fluency in the language, she only used limited Secwepemctsin with JI, and communicated mostly in English with JI in and out of the sessions. JI's mother's use of Secwepemctsin with her was consistent.

Depending on the situation and JI's mood, each session ranged from 30 minutes to 60 minutes. Early on in the collection process, it was noticed that JI did not respond well to one type of elicitation process. This was expected of a child, and many different ways of elicitation were used throughout the data-collection period. They included imitation, in which JI repeated after her mother; games like 'Simon says' in Secwepemctsin, in which JI, her mother, and the researcher took turns issuing commands; observation of the child at play with her mother, and spontaneous conversations and games between the child and the mother.

In each visit to JI's home, the researcher spends approximately 7 to 10 hours in the presence of JI in addition to the actual elicitation session. It is estimated based on the researcher's experience at JI's home that JI uses English to spontaneously communicate with her older siblings all the time, while she uses English to spontaneously communicate with her parents and younger siblings about 80% of the time. It is therefore assumed that JI is much more comfortable and much more fluent in English than in Secwepemctsin⁷.

5 Data Transcription and Coding

A total of 305 intelligible utterances (see (16) above), including English, Secwepemctsin, and mixed utterances, were transcribed from the elicitations and entered into a database with the following fields:

- utterance number
- utterance

⁷A stronger assumption made based on the journal that JI's mother kept is that JI originally acquired Secwepemctsin as her first language, but that the predominance of English in her learning environment was so strong that it forced a switch in the status of English and Secwepemctsin, so that English became her first language and Secwepemctsin became her second language.

- language (Shuswap, English, or mixed)
- complete or incomplete
- number of morphemes per utterance
- yes/no or non-yes/no
- imitation or non-imitation
- pronominal reference (yes or no)
- non-independent pronouns used (enter each pronoun)
- independent pronouns used (enter each independent pronoun; if none, enter no)
- date collected
- additional notes

A brief explanation of each of the fields is given below.

5.1 Utterance

Each utterance is recorded in English or Secwepemctsin orthography. An utterance is determined by a continuous string produced by JI. If she pauses, and does not continue, the output string is considered broken, and the end of the utterance is reached. However, interruption of her speech which resumes immediately do not constitute the end of an utterance. For instance, (17a, b) each shows an utterance.

17 a JI: Yes you can. It means I see him, hmm, which one? Was it a girl or a boy? (7;2;28)⁸

b JI: I feed, me-, metét-ø-en re n-sqéxe (7;2;28)
 I feed, fee-, feed-3sg.obj-1sg.subj det 1sg.poss-dog
I feed, fee-, I feed my dog

5.2 Language

Utterances that are completely in Secwepemctsin or English are coded as so. Utterances are "mixed" when using morphemes from both languages. Words or expressions that cannot be easily categorized as English or Secwepemctsin are also coded as "mixed"; these include expressions like "hey", "huh" and proper names. However, if a name or expression that is unidentifiable as a particular language appears in a longer utterance that is completely Secwepemctsin or English, then the unidentifiable word is ignored, and the rest of the utterance is classified accordingly. For example, utterance (18) is classified as "mixed", while (19) is "Secwepemctsin".

18 Lizzie (6;3)

19 mama, ke-c-t-sé.ts.m-e t k cereal (6;3)
 mom, give-2sg.obj-tr-1sg.subj.redup-imp obl irr cereal
 Mom, give me some cereal

5.3 Completeness

Utterances that are holistic in nature are generally complete; for instance, if the child says "yes" in response to a yes/no question, "yes" is considered a complete utterance. Incomplete utterances consist of false starts and completions of previous utterances. False starts are utterances that do not finish (20).

20 n-tsetswe7, uh, me-, me- (7;2;28)
 1sg.poss-emph, uh, fee-, fee-
 I, ugh, fee-, fee- (JI is trying to remember the word for 'feed', *meteten*)

Completion of previous utterances include words or syllables that complete the child's own previous utterances or the mother's utterances. A typical completion case is given in (21).

⁸Each JI utterance is given with her age at time of utterance.

- 21⁹ JI: setsinem-s Sandra (7;2;28)
sing-3sg.ind Sandra
Sandra sings.
M: setsinem-
sing
Sing-?
JI: -ce Sandra
-2sg.imp Sandra
You (sing)! Sandra!

5.4 Number of morphemes per utterance

The same set of rules to calculate the number of morphemes per utterance is used for English, Secwepemctsin, and mixed utterances. The rules are as follows¹⁰:

- Since the notion “word” is not easily definable in an agglutinative language like Secwepemctsin, and Secwepemctsin has too many lexical items that are not free morphemes (lexical suffixes, for example), only morphemes will be counted.
- Any item with an identifiable independent meaning is counted as one morpheme. This includes clitics, affixes, and bound or free lexical items.
- Morphemes in exclamations are counted as one morpheme. “Huh?” may be used to mean “What did you say?”
- Morphemes in full and partial imitation utterances are counted.
- Morphemes in incomplete utterances are counted.
- Morphemes have to be complete morphemes in order to be counted; i.e., an incomplete morpheme, though recognizable, is counted as 0; for example, (22) is recognizable as *speqwel'tcw* ‘book’, but it is counted as 0 morphemes because it is incomplete.

- 22 -qwel'tcw (7;2;28)
-book (=S.speqwel'tcw)
book

5.5 Yes/No or Non-Yes/No

Any utterance containing English or Secwepemctsin “yes” or “no” is classified as Yes/No.

5.6 Imitation or Non-imitation

If the utterance repeats a previous utterance by her mother, or by the researcher, it is considered an imitation. These also include partial imitations with expansions on the utterances (23).

- 23 M: n-tsetswe7 ell-
1sg.poss-emph and-
I, and?
JI: n-tsetswe7 ell tsetse
1sg.poss-emph and younger sibling of same sex
I and younger sister

5.7 Pronominal Reference

⁹The conversation participants' utterances will be coded either “M” for JI’s mother, or “S” for the researcher.

¹⁰Productivity of these morphemes is ignored.

An utterance is coded “yes” if it has any kind of morpheme encoding pronominal reference, “no” if it has no morphemes encoding pronominal reference.

5.8 Non-independent pronouns used

Each pronoun used is entered. English pronouns include “I, you, he, she, it, we, they, my, your, etc.” and Secwepemctsin pronouns are entered as gloss (e.g.: *1sg.ind* for ‘first person singular indicative’) because they are all clitics or suffixes and may change their form depending on the environment.

5.9 Independent pronouns used

Independent pronouns are entered in this field if they occur in the utterance. If there are no independent pronouns in the utterance, “no” is entered.

5.10 Additional Notes

Relevant additional notes are entered here, such as context, gestures, etc.

6 Results and Analysis

From a total of 305 utterances by JI, 60.98% (186) were in Secwepemctsin, 29.83% (91) were in English, and 9.18% (28) were mixed. Within each language category, there are significantly more complete utterances than incomplete utterances. (24) shows detailed numbers of utterances in each language.

24 Break-down of JI’s language samples by language and completeness

	Secwepemctsin	English	Mixed	Total
Complete utterances	65.05% (121/186) of Secwepemctsin utt. 52.84% (121/239) of complete utt.	94.51% (86/91) of English utt. 37.55% (86/229) of complete utt.	82.14 % (23/28) of mixed language utt. 10.04% (23/229) of complete utt.	229
Incomplete utterances	34.95% (65/186) of Secwepemctsin utt. 85.53% (65/76) of complete utt.	5.49% (5/91) of English utt. 6.58% (5/76) of complete utt.	17.86% (5/28) of mixed language utt. 6.58% (5/76) of complete utt.	76
Percentage out of total utterances	60.98% 186/305	29.83% /30591	9.18% 28/305	305

Although the large percentage of complete Secwepemctsin utterances is encouraging, the Secwepemctsin incomplete utterances comprise of 85.53% of all incomplete utterances. This shows that JI finds it more difficult to start and complete utterances in Secwepemctsin than in English or mixed language situations. In comparison, there are only 5 cases (6.58%) of incomplete utterances in English, and 5 such cases in mixed language utterances.

25 JI’s incomplete utterances

Secwepemctsin	Incomplete: 85.5% 65	False start: 31 Completion: 34
English	Incomplete: 6.58% 5	False start: 2 Completion: 3
Mixed	Incomplete: 6.58% 5	False start: 2 Completion: 3

Virtually all of JI's imitations are in Secwepemctsin (27 in Secwepemctsin, 0 in English, 2 in mixed languages). The lack of imitation in all 91 English utterances shows her comfort with English, since she can produce spontaneous utterances on her own. Moreover, assuming that imitation is a learning strategy for the language-acquiring child, the asymmetry between Secwepemctsin and English or mixed-language imitation indicates JI's need to improve her Secwepemctsin skills. (26) shows that JI's acquisition of English is far ahead of her acquisition in Secwepemctsin.

26 MLU in Secwepemctsin, English, and mixed languages

Secwepemctsin		English		Mixed languages	
Length of utterance (morphemes)	Number of utterances	Length of utterance (morphemes)	Number of utterances	Length of utterance (morphemes)	Number of utterances
0	2	0	0	0	0
1	69	1	12	1	8
2	27	2	6	2	3
3	28	3	12	3	4
4	15	4	10	4	2
5	16	5	8	5	1
6	11	6	9	6	2
7	8	7	9	7	0
8	2	8	3	8	1
9	5	9	5	9	0
10	3	10	5	10	3
11	0	11	2	11	1
12	0	12	2	12	1
13	0	13	2	13	1
14	0	14	1	14	0
15 and more	0	15 and more	5	15 and more	1
Secwepemctsin		English		Mixed languages	
Total number of morphemes	= 556 = 2.99	Total number of morphemes	= 552 = 6.07	Total number of morphemes	= 140 = 5
Total number of utterances	186	Total number of utterances	91	Total number of utterances	28

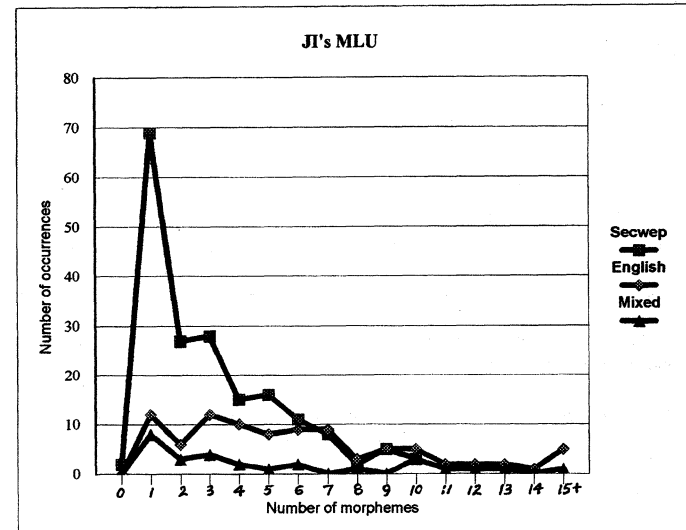
The longest Secwepemctsin utterance in the database is recorded at 10 morphemes per utterance, whereas the longest English utterance is 25 morphemes long, and the longest mixed language utterance is 15 morphemes long. The mean length of utterances (MLUs) for Secwepemctsin, English, and mixed languages are 2.99, 6.07, and 5 respectively. There is a big gap between the MLU for Secwepemctsin and the MLU for English, confirming that JI's performance in English is far more advanced than that of Secwepemctsin. Furthermore, the chart in (27) shows that it is in Secwepemctsin where there is a peak at one morpheme and a sharp decline in number of occurrences as the length of utterance increases. This is an indication that it is more difficult for JI to have longer utterances in Secwepemctsin because she is less fluent in this language.

There is something to be said about the one-morpheme utterances in Secwepemctsin. Of all 69 occurrences, 56.52% (39/69) are either *me7e* 'yes' or *ta7a* 'no', used in response to JI's mother and the researcher's elicitations. JI's passive role in the use of Secwepemctsin is thus manifested. Other single morpheme utterances are evenly distributed between numerals, single nominals, predicate stems without pronominal markings (which are typical of JI's predicates), and free use of single bound morphemes, used primarily as completions to previous utterances.

JI uses yes/no answers very frequently. There are 43 utterances with yes/no word occurrences, 39 of which are single-morpheme utterances; in other words, only 9.3% (4/43) utterances have elaborations other than the yes/no

word. There are 12 yes/no utterances in English, and in this case, JI elaborates on 66.6% (8/12) of them. In mixed language utterances, there are 3 yes/no occurrences, and all of them have elaborations on the yes/no response. Therefore, I interpret the absence of elaborations on the Secwepemctsin yes/no utterances as another sign of JI's weakness in Secwepemctsin.

27 Chart of JI's MLU



7 Overregularization of Independent Pronouns

Based on the samples collected during the study period, JI's use of independent pronouns is extremely frequent. Nearly half (46.6%, 48/103) of all her utterances with pronominal reference employs independent pronouns. While adult speakers only use such pronouns in intensifying contexts, JI does not adhere to this restriction. This section examines the occurrences of independent pronouns in JI's database, and compares them to the use by adults.

Of the 7 independent pronouns available in Secwepemctsin, (see table in (28)) JI has only used the three singular forms. Their number of occurrences are recorded in (29). Since the first and second persons singular are the most easily accessible persons in the discourse context, and are used most often when JI's parents interact with her, JI uses them frequently too. The single use of the third person singular is interesting and more data is necessary to find out more about JI's knowledge of it. Furthermore, it is probably the case that JI does not know the plural independent pronouns, since her parents rarely, if ever, use them.

28 Independent pronominal paradigm (adopted from Kuipers 1974)

1 sg.	2 sg.	3 sg.
n-tse.ts-we7	7-enwi7	newi7-s
1sg.poss-tse(redup)-deic	2sg.poss-emp	emp-3sg.poss
1 pl. incl.	1 pl. excl.	2 pl.
wll-enwi7-kt	wll-enwi7-s-kucw	wll-enwi7-mp
pl-emp-1pl.incl.poss	pl-emp-3sg.poss-excl	pl-emp-2pl.poss
		wll-enwi7-s
		pl-emp-3sg.poss

29 **JI's use of independent pronouns**

Pronoun	Number of occurrences
n-tse ts-we7 'I'	37
7-enwi7 'you'	10
newi7-s 'he/she/it'	1

There are a total of 103 utterances with Secwepemctsin pronominal reference. 45 utterances containing 48 uses of independent pronouns are found. This means that there are 3 utterances in which independent pronouns are used more than once (This is a violation to the adult Secwepemctsin grammar; there can only be *one* independent pronoun per clause).

In 17 utterances of independent pronouns in full sentences, 35.3% (6/17) are grammatical; namely, the independent pronouns co-occur with the correct pronominal clitics and/or affixes on the predicate. However, the predicates in these clauses have a high frequency of use: 'give me, I love you, I want', suggesting the co-occurrence of pronominal markings on the predicate could be due to idiomatic uses of the predicates, and not due to knowledge of adult grammar. In fact, virtually all of JI's pronominally referenced utterances without independent pronouns either have common predicates that are found in everyday conversation, or are direct imitations.

Most of the time (47%, 8/17), independent pronouns are used by JI as a regular argument without pronominal marking on the predicate, exactly the kind of construction that English has. (30) provides the details.

30 **Correspondences between independent pronoun and pronominal markings on the predicate**

Occurrence of independent pronoun	Frequency
with correct pronominal morphology on predicate	35.3% (6/17)
with wrong pronominal morphology	17.7% (3/17)
with zero pronominal morphology	47.1% (8/17)

In the 45 utterances containing independent pronouns, a striking 91% (41/45) are used in non-imitation cases, yielding a high number of spontaneous independent pronoun use. This finding is significant. If JI is most comfortable using independent pronouns rather than pronominal bound morphemes, the implication is that she is more comfortable with an analytic grammar system. There is little doubt that this is a result of the influence from English, the dominant language of her peers and her community. Indeed, a telling example of English influence in her Secwepemctsin acquisition is manifested in (31).

- 31 n-tsetswe7 ta7a qwenmin yi7ene
 1sg.poss-emp neg want deic
 I don't want this

This is almost a direct translation from English, with a one-to-one correspondence between Secwepemctsin lexical item and English lexical item. Compare (31) to the grammatical adult form.

- 32 ta7a k s qwenmim-ø-en yi7ene
 neg irr nom want-3sg.obj-1sg.subj deic
 I don't want this
 Literally 'it is not the case want-it-I, this'

8 **Conclusion**

Since JI's language samples in the database are collected when she is instructed specifically to use Secwepemctsin, and only 60.98% of the total utterances are in Secwepemctsin, it can be deduced that JI uses much less

Secwepemctsin in other contexts. The investigations and results reported by this paper illustrate that JI performs much better in English than in Secwepemctsin in all respects. Despite her continual exposure to Secwepemctsin, she experiences difficulty with it nonetheless. Furthermore, it appears that it is English's analytic nature that is influencing JI's overregularization of independent pronouns. There is no question that the overwhelming dominance of English and the insufficiency of social context in which to use Secwepemctsin are the main impediments for JI in reaching proficiency in Secwepemctsin. Given that JI is one of very few children to be in the fortunate position of having active Secwepemctsin speaking parents, the two main impediments just mentioned would be even greater barriers for children with less opportunities of being exposed to the language. It is thus of utmost importance for the preservation of the language to involve learning the aboriginal language into all aspects of the language learners' life - in the home, at school, and at social gatherings.

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APPENDIX A: ABBREVIATIONS

aut=autonomous; caus=causative; conj=conjunctive; det=determiner; perf=perfect; dir=direction; emph=emphatic; excl=exclusive; fc=full control; hab=habitual; imp=imperative; ind=indicative; inter=interrogative; intr=intransitive; irr=irrealis; neg=negative; nom=nominative; obl=oblique; obj=object; pas=passive; pl=plural; poss=possessive; ptc=particle; redup=reduplication; sg=singular; subj=subject; top=topic; tr=transitive; unsp=unspecified.

APPENDIX B: KEY TO SECWEPMCTSÍN/SHUSWAP ORTHOGRAPHY:

Ortho- graphy	Phonemic script	Ortho- graphy	Phonemic script	Ortho- graphy	Phonemic script	Ortho- graphy	Phonemic script
p	p	l	l	x	x̲	ʔ	ʔ
p'	p'	l'	l'	xw	x̲ ^w	c	ə
m	m	k	k	r	ʔ		
m'	m'	k'	k'	r'	ʔ'		
t	t	kw	k ^w	g	ʔ		
ts	tʃ	kw'	k ^{w'}	gw	ʔ ^w		
ts'	ts	c	x	gw'	ʔ ^{w'}		
s	s	cw	x ^w	h	h		
n	n	q	q	w	w		
n'	n'	q'	q'	w'	w'		
t'	ʎ	qw	q ^w	y	y		
ll	ʎ	qw'	q ^{w'}	y'	y'		