Accelerated Second Language Acquisition and Endangered Language Revitalization

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Abstract: Since the 1990s, linguists have grown increasingly nervous over the loss of much of the world's linguistic diversity by the turn of the following century. However, linguists' response to such a crisis have been minimal at best, where much of the focus on endangered languages has been based in research and documentation. Language revitalization entails creating first and second language speakers in real time. This paper examines some methods for language teaching, highlighting the experiences of practitioners utilizing the Accelerated Second Language Acquisition (ASLA©™) method, the strongest contemporary method of second language teaching and subsequent endangered language revitalization.

Keywords: Accelerated Second Language Acquisition, Second Language Teaching

1 Introduction

Due to demanded assimilation implemented by the United States Government and Christian church affiliations, Indigenous populations in North America and Australia are now required to think outside of educational boxes to effectively instigate language revitalization through adequate methodologies. The most successful methodologies include language immersion programs and Accelerated Second Language Acquisition techniques (Greymorning 1997, 2019; HIDOE 2022; YLP 2021; Poole 2021; Shek 2020; Webb 2020). While this is true for many Indigenous communities around the world, this is most prominently observed in the United States, Canada, and Australia; around half of the Indigenous languages on these continents are no longer spoken (Simons & Lewis 2013). My higher education is grounded in the western knowledge and objective analysis of human language that is the field of linguistics. It became clear throughout this education that much of the research and data presented to me in order to mold my western view of language in linguistics was taken from communities who speak a language classified as "dying". It also became clear that linguists appear outwardly concerned about language endangerment, while at the same time, researchers in this field *do* very little to aid language revitalization, which entails creating real speakers of a target language in real time. Ultimately, linguists focus on linguistic research that contributes to their own career and the development of the knowledge within the field of linguistics. My higher education, on the other hand, occurred under the tutelage of Dr. Neyooxet Greymorning, a speaker of Hinono'eitiit (the Arapaho language), who spent most of his career dedicated to language revitalization. This began on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming, the first Indigenous language immersion program to open in the United States in 1993 (Greymorning 1997). Subsequently, Dr. Greymorning developed the Accelerated Second Language Acquisition methodology for teaching second language learners at an accelerated rate, with the goal of stabilizing the escalating ratio of language loss in a community (Greymorning 2020:201). ASLA is vital for communities trying at language revitalization, specifically those who lack time or resources to put children through immersion programs, as it *accelerates* the second language acquisition process of adults compared to any other contemporary language teaching method, ten-fold. In the sections that follow, I highlight a brief overview of and contemporary discussions about language endangerment (Section 2), followed by linguists' response to the crisis (Section 3). Ultimately, this paper judges the limiting nature of technology and teaching through literacy

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(Section 4) as juxtaposed to immersion programs and ASLA (Section 5 and Section 6). Conclusions are presented in (Section 7).

2 A Brief Overview of Contemporary Language Endangerment

Perhaps linguistic and cultural erosion is one of the most pervasively felt and endured of contemporary issues among Indigenous peoples around the world (Gibbs 2002; Grenoble 2005; Hinton 2003; Webb 2020). Simons and Lewis (2013:3) suggest that significant language loss results from systemic colonization of linguistic ecologies. Linguistics is a rather new area of social science within the realm of western knowledge. Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf were two groundbreaking linguists that paved the way for the rest of the field to flourish throughout the twentieth century. Even these linguists are notorious for their time and research spent with Indigenous communities in North America. However, in 1992, Krauss presented an alarming statistic at an endangered language symposium, predicting that half of the worlds 6,000 languages would cease to be spoken by the turn of the century (Gibbs, 2002:80). Linguists around the globe began to respond, taking stock, and engaging in language documentation and revitalization efforts. Simons and Lewis published a 20-year update in 2013 responding to this alarming prediction, providing statistics from around the world on endangered languages. They asserted that the ratio of language loss in Australia and North America is most significant compared to the rest of the world. Australia possesses 317 "dead or dying" languages of a predicted total of 388, and North America possesses 163 "dead or dying" languages out of a predicted total of 266 (2013:12 – 13). 82% of languages spoken in Australia are "dead or dying", compared to 61% in North America. These numbers are staggering and are nowhere near other areas of the world; the people and resources of these countries have been historically colonized and exploited by Euro-centric forces. With such alarming statistics, one would assume that experts and linguists would be racing against the clock to rejuvenate the selection of the world's most at-risk languages in these locations. Published in "Saving Dying Languages", Gibbs (2002:83) quotes a linguist, Sarah Thomason at the University of Michigan Ann Arbor, stating that no such effort is being organized. She even employs the word "fashionable" when describing working on endangered languages, asserting that it is "only recently that it is in style among linguists to do this work."

3 Response to the Crisis

The question remains: what is being done about this? What is the response, and, if intergenerational transmission and creating fluent first and second language speakers of a heritage language is the goal of language revitalization, which responses and techniques are most effective? It will become apparent throughout this paper that most common forms of pedagogical language teaching aiming toward language rejuvenation possess gaps that ultimately strain the language learner, cause the language instructor to grow impatient, as well as they equip anyone with only a mere smattering of a few simple phrases and words: colors, counting, animals, basic phrases, and basic grammatical constructions. Because these efforts fail to create a raw and effective environment of language acquisition prior to language learning, students who use these methods often fail to achieve fluency in the target language. It is also true that no data is found in the literature suggesting extraordinarily positive results from some of the most common pedagogies employed for language teaching, such as technological programs, software, grammar books, and dictionaries. There is no data to suggest that any adult has acquired (or become a competent speaker of) a language from a grammar book or computer program alone. Lack of data in the literature suggesting speakers rendered from these

pedagogies suggests that they are ineffective. The responses following Kraus' crisis in 1992 began to assess the best approaches to language revitalization efforts; for example, Jon Reyhner (1999) designates some 'basics' of language revitalization that look rather promising. Reyhner discusses Fishman's eight stages of language loss, asserting that stage eight is the most moribund stage where only a few elderly speakers possess the language, with no intergenerational transmission occurring. To move to stage five where "the language is still very much alive and used in the community" (1999:4) is a perquisite to moving even further to stage one, where the language is used widely and highly respected in all areas of society. Reyhner (1999:6) presents Leanne Hinton's eight points of language learning (eight for professor and eight for apprentice), which appear to be very promising as well. Some of these include being a creative and engaged teacher, eliminating English from the classroom, using gesture and Total Physical Response (TPR), rephrasing for both successful communication and added learning, and being willing to play with the language and imagination. This is language that revolves around central understandings about first language acquisition used in successful immersion school programs and in ASLA. Reyhner (1999) goes on to assert that the development of an orthography, as well as documentation, must be on the backburner and that programs such as language nests and immersion schools must be established when a community is racing against the clock. He asserts the importance of intergenerational transmission and language existing in the home and in primary discourse domains. Reyhner (1999:15) concludes with the three M's of language rejuvenation: methods, materials and motivation. Methods deals with techniques, and motivation describes people's attitude toward the language. The materials suggested for teaching is where the positive narrative dissolves; he suggests audio and videotapes, grammar books and dictionaries, textbooks, and computer software. These are teaching methods rooted in technology, that rely on a metalanguage (English) to teach through translation and literacy, which should be employed for more competent language apprentices who possess a strong base in the language. Reyhner (1999:13) also refers to the work and opinions of two linguists, Mizuki Miyashita and Laura Moll, stating that dictionaries are an effective and inexpensive use of technology that "aids language documentation and makes that information more accessible to Indigenous language learners."

4 Technology, Grammar Books, and Dictionaries

Over the next few decades, technology would prove to be a continual source for various attempts at language documentation and revitalization. Language learning programs and software for learning more widely recognized languages, such as *Rosetta Stone*, *Duolingo*, and more recently *Babble*, would come into widespread use. Dictionaries and grammar books on significantly more rare languages continue to be produced by linguists, and more recently, computer programs and applications have been launched for some Indigenous languages of North America that possess high speaker numbers. Whole doctoral dissertations and MA theses have been written on these topics. In 2013, Winoka Rose Begay submitted an MA thesis to the University of Arizona that assessed the effectiveness of mobile apps in Indigenous language revitalization. In addition, Nushi and Egbali (2018) published a review of the mobile App Babble. Ultimately, while these studies considered many different aspects of mobile apps such as interfaces and user friendliness, they nevertheless highlight the major inconsistencies observed in language learning through technology. These pedagogies use literacy (English) as a crutch for teaching, and thus do not spend enough time creating a foundation of language acquisition on which literacy and complex grammar can be built. Language learners find themselves straining their brains, attempting to memorize irrelevant grammar found in written but not spoken language; for example, French "-er" verbs (verbs ending

with the suffix *-er* in the infinitive) take '-s' suffix in the second person singular, when the first and third persons do not receive written distinctions. They are all pronounced the same. This causes huge problems for language learners using literacy as an avenue to learn language.

Nushi and Egbali (2018) and Begay (2013) make very similar statements in the conclusions they draw about whether these methods for language teaching through technology are effective. Begay (2013:77) concludes that users of the Navajo, Cherokee, and Chicksaw Applications were pleased by aspects of the application such as its interface, aesthetic, and that they provide "an extensive amount of textual and audio media." Then, Begay goes on to write that users reported the app needing improvements in "accuracy in spelling and pronunciation". Those are two core aspects of human language and language learning in the context of literacy. In addition, accuracy of written Indigenous languages is a significant contemporary issue among many Indigenous communities, where inconsistencies in orthography block neurological pathways from creating meaning in the target language, causing the learner to rely on the primary language (English).[1]How is someone supposed to learn a language through literacy if the very sounds, both written and spoken, are not accurately represented? Nushi and Egbali (2018:13–14) arrive at similar conclusions after going through several exercises in French in the app Babble. They state that "some feel like half or even more of the app's text and language is presented in their native language rather than the one they're trying to learn". This will not create language learning, and certainly not acquisition; it will equip anyone with a simple study tool to learn a few phrases, colors, and numbers. The most effective application reported by Begay (2013:77–78) was the Navajo Toddler App. Logically, this makes sense; this app is designed around basic understanding of first language acquisition, relying on images and graphics, engaging cognition. It is still questionable whether these methods for teaching language are at all effective, as no data exist on possible speakers of a language rendered from solely studying a computer application, even a child. Compared to what follows, it's safe to conclude that technology proves ineffective for first and second pedagogical language teaching, and therefore, ineffective for immediate revitalization efforts of endangered languages.

5 Immersion Programs

Here, I briefly highlight immersion efforts and implemented programs as the most principally effective way a community can revitalize a language by creating a new generation of first language speakers. Elements of this discussion are crucial when considering ASLA, as it pulls from implicit learning styles employed in immersion programs. I begin with the Yuchi Immersion Program, a preschool in Oklahoma directed by Dr. Richard Grounds. It uses some of the most effective immersion teaching methods that create direct interactions between community Elders and the children in the program. The exercises are cognitively based, focusing on ways to foster first language acquisition in the target language, with the goal of producing the first generation of first language speakers of Yuchi in the last century (YLP: 2021, § "about"). This method for language teaching and subsequent revitalization is incredibly effective because it creates real speakers in real time: a new generation of first language speakers. The goal of immersion programs is to de-colonize the classroom; every single activity and utterance should be conducted in the target language. This is certainly the case for the Hawaiians who have employed some of the most effective language immersion techniques in the world. In this immersion program, all lessons, discourse, and activities are conducted in Hawaiian. The result is a whole new generation of children who *prefer* to talk, think, feel, do math and science in their own mind in Hawaiian. The Hawai'i State Department of

[1] See Hall (2019:212–227) for this discussion on orthography and neurology.

Education keeps detailed records and data on the results of the immersion programs, found on their website (HIDOE 2022). However, immersion presents a dilemma: it takes time. It takes many years to ensure children are grounded in a language. What follows is a key that resolves this dilemma.

6 Accelerated Second Language Acquisition

I first met Dr. Greymorning the spring of 2020 just before the arrival of the COVID-19 Pandemic. I was enrolled in his course titled 'Methods for Teaching Native Languages'. To my delight, I discovered that we would not be learning *methods* (emphasizing plural inflection) for teaching Native languages, but a single method that Dr. Greymorning has devoted much of his career to developing. As a second language learner of French and German, my experience learning Hinono'eitiit as a second language through ASLA surpasses every other language learning experience I have had in my career, ten-fold. Here, I highlight real practitioners of the ASLA method, as well as the experience of other students from Dr. Greymorning's classes. I begin with my own experience as a student and as an instructor with ASLA methodologies, finishing with a discussion of ASLA's ability to instigate effective language revitalization in Indigenous communities. The goal is to highlight the life-long work done by Dr. Greymorning and discuss his methodologies as they relate to contemporary literature and culturally driven understandings about Second Language Acquisition that have ultimately inhibited my ability to learn languages heretofore.

6.1 ASLA as a Student

ASLA methodologies require an instructor to turn the space that they use for teaching into a complete world of language. Like Hawaiian immersion, there is no English in the classroom, nor are there grammar books, nor is there any written homework. ASLA employs imagery that are hung in rows around the room. The order of the images is not random; they are sequentially placed to guide the learner through a series of cognitive exercises that initiate language acquisition, which transfers exponentially to language production. What begins with a few nouns and noun phrases grows exponentially to complex sentences in a language that, for years, has been described and classified by linguists and other experts as too complicated to give time to teaching in the classroom. The instructor works with individual students in cognitive exercises, which is modeled to the rest of the class. Everyone gets a turn, and as a result, the class does not move as slow as the weakest link but the whole class is ambitious to keep up with the most skilled. The learner is always engaged with the instructor when they are in front of the class, and always watching carefully when sitting down. This style of teaching naturally instills determination in all students. This directly reflects the methodologies employed in Indigenous language immersion programs as well as it provokes a sentiment within the language learner of learning a language for the first time. These sentiments, felt by me and other students who have learned Hinono'eitiit under Dr. Greymorning, are directly reflected in literature about first language development. Turnball and Justice (2013) highlight the many varying and complicated stages of first language acquisition observed among children. This work is a compilation of studies and research that amounts to contemporary western understanding and knowledge about language development in its basic theory and in practice. All these stages of first language acquisition are crucial in individual development and are observed from birth until late adolescence (around age 14), as well as all these stages can be *felt* by a language learner in Dr. Greymorning's classes. These stages begin with the development of a phonological

inventory, where a child is taking stock of all the sounds spoken by the language of his mother. This is followed by the production of a child's first word around year one. From there, children continue to take stock of what it is they hear and subsequently understand about the world through their language, and their competency in the production of their language begins to grow as they get older. Therefore, children often understand what they hear even though they may not be able to produce language. This also answers why children will employ grammatically correct utterances in the appropriate situations even if they are, at that point in time, still semantically oblivious to the quality of their utterances.

The first two classes I spent learning Hinono'eitiit were overwhelming because it was an entirely new way of learning language, and I had no idea what was expected of me, even as the semester progressed. But that answer is simple: be in class and pay attention. Pay attention in a way that removes English from your head. This was the first time someone was demanding that I learn a language implicitly, without the explicit teaching of a language through another, or through writing. Aside from living in France for three months in high school, this was my first experience *being* in a language that was not English. I left those first few classes with a question mark concerning the few sounds I was exposed to that were present in Hinono'eitiit but that were absent in English. I also left the first few classes with some loose sounds that were loosely associated with some images that were strung on the board, and since I'm a linguist, I began in technical terms. For example, we learned a few nouns and noun phrases in the initial class that set the foundational base for what Dr. Greymorning refers to as "building a house of language". Learning the word *niiniihen cebkoohuut* (meaning 'car') the first time felt intimidating: the word was long, and it was hard to even remember fully. But because we were beginning with a cognitive exercise (just as a child, where language begins with cognition) I knew, after a single exposure to the word, that 'car' was a long and complex word, and I could instantly identify *niiniihen cebkoohuut* when I heard that word in Hinono'eitiit. I could not, however, produce that word myself until class two or three. I had to begin with being able to cognitively identify the word matched to the object in the language. After this initial class, when I was not in the classroom and was not able to produce the word myself, I possessed sounds for the word. The word for a car had lots of nasal /n/ sounds, at least initially. Shortly after, I was not only able to cognitively identify nearly anything that Dr. Greymorning uttered to us in the language, but I was also able to say whole rows of images representing complex grammatical constructions on my own when asked to do so. What was perhaps most striking for me and others in this classroom environment was the realization of how ineffective other methodologies of language teaching prove to be when compared to ASLA, and that we had dedicated significant time and energy in our lives to learn languages in a way that not only strained our minds in the process but created rather incompetent speakers of these languages. My confidence in my ability in French quickly declined as I realized that while what I was able to say covered a wide range of vocabulary, my abilities in the language lacked complexity. Suddenly, I had words for actions and concepts in everyday life in which I was overwhelmingly competent in producing in Hinono'eitiit, but not French or German, which I had studied for most my life.

6.1.1 Powerful Moments

A very similar experience is detailed by Madeleine Shek (2020), a linguist working towards a Masters degree in Linguistics at the University of Montana who took the same course with me under Dr. Greymorning in 2020. Similarly, to my experience with French, Shek (2020) describes a scenario in which Dr. Greymorning asked her to produce a complex utterance in Hinono'eitiit from

English which she did effortlessly. Then, when Dr. Greymorning asked Shek to produce the same utterance in Mandarin, a language she had studied since high school, she was unable to do so. While I was never asked to demonstrate my incompetence in French as a result of and subsequent teaching point about the failures of occidental language teaching pedagogies, sitting in this classroom made me incredibly self-conscious about my abilities in French, the time I spent studying it and how I learned this language. I left each of Dr. Greymorning's initial classes with an ambitious urge to know the words and complexities that I didn't know in French but was now learning in Hinono'eitiit. For this I must be thankful, because among all things I have learned under Dr. Greymorning, this experience pushed me and what I thought were my restricted abilities, but what were, in reality, restricted pedagogical styles that did not allow students to arrive at the full fruition of potential that is implicit second language acquisition.

As a student of Hinono'eitiit, there were numerous moments in the classroom that were incredibly powerful. These moments possess such power because they mimic the reality that is a child learning their first language. In her work on second language acquisition, Ortega (2009) highlights a key distinction between implicit and explicit language learning. These points are crucial when discussing ASLA, as the entirety of its methodology is structured around implicit language learning. There is no explicit explanation of the language, its properties, and how these properties relate to the world; you are simply being in and acquiring a new language and these properties through hearing and using the language, like a child acquires their first, beginning with cognition and continuing to grow. Shek (2020) details an experience after several weeks in the classroom that speaks greatly to these sentiments. Much like a child who learns their first language, this occurs in utter chaos, without any explicit guidance. Similarly, standing in front of a board with over one hundred images that represent grammatically complicated states and actions in a language you're just beginning to learn feels incredibly chaotic. Nevertheless, cognitive exercises in ASLA are not only effortless in such abundant chaos, but they are also illuminating if one pays attention to how their mind works through problem solving. Shek was engaged in a cognitive exercise with Dr. Greymorning in which he asks her what the lion is standing on. On the board, there were well over a hundred images, but in only a select few (maybe five images) was there a lion. In only a single image was a lion standing. Shek easily identified the correct image after a few moments and responded to the question accurately. Exercises like these create profound experiences for numerous reasons and subsequently equate to exponential language learning. Firstly, at this point in instruction, the learner can fully understand not only something about a lion, but all other integral components to the phrase: *standing* and *on*. They are also able to understand that they are being asked a question, and not just a yes or no question, a specific question that requires a specifically correct response. Next, the learner must identify the image on the board that is being discussed. Sometimes this requires scanning, others it does not. Nevertheless, if you do not see an image immediately in the utter chaos, it is worth it to take the time to find it rather than guessing or picking an image that you know is incorrect. This is logical thinking based in cognitive stimulation. Finally, if all is going as planned, the learner should be able to respond correctly. This was around 25 hours of instruction, a time when students would just begin verb conjugations in my initial French classes.

To be competent in discourse in such a way would take years in other language classes. In my experience, situations like this felt like I was looking at a board filled with images that begin entirely illuminated. As Dr. Greymorning speaks, the images that logically contradict the utterance lose their light, and those with logical sense and basis in the language grow brighter until a single image is illuminated. This is cognition stimulated through language at its finest. On a smaller scale, I felt

a similar experience in the first few classes. A student was engaged in a cognitive exercise with Dr. Greymorning in front of the class. After learning the words for 'airplane' and 'bird', we were given the word for 'butterfly'. It was the first time we had heard this word, but my eyes went directly to the image of the butterfly, and I innately knew that this was the word for butterfly. This innate knowledge was rooted in sounds shared between the three words that my brain was recognizing, that indicated *flying*. When the student accurately identified the image of the butterfly, I wanted to jump for joy, not only because I was experiencing actual language acquisition, but I was sitting with others and watching them do it, too. A final example of ASLA using implicit teaching methods, and subsequently creating implicit knowledge in a language, is with my experience learning the words for two specific predatory cats in North America. These words are *to'uu3eebexookee* and *3ouyoteebexookee*. I do not possess words for these cats in English. What I mean when I write that is, I do not know what words in English have been applied to these cats, respectively; I cannot provide a translation of these words like I can other grammatically complex sentences into English from Hinono'eitiit. The reason for this is because my only conscious knowledge of these words applied to these animals is in Hinono'eitiit, and these words in this language describe qualities of these cats. I could not give words, or even well-formed or accurate descriptors in English for these cats, but I am fully competent in not only identifying them but possessing a full implicit knowledge of them in Hinono'eitiit. If I am to be honest with myself, I also prefer my words for them in Hinono'eitiit.

6.1.2 Experiences with Language Learning through Literacy

Western culture and society greatly value literacy; the ability to read and write. Thus, until arriving in class with Dr. Greymorning in 2020, all my language learning experiences had been through an avenue that directly employed literacy as a technique to learn language. I remember my middle school French teacher writing consonant and vowel combinations on the board at age 12. Our job that day was to title the page of our notebook 'looks like sounds like' and copy all the combinations and descriptions of nuanced sound differences between the two languages that our teacher could muster up at that time. I spent my high school career studying French and German, memorizing verb conjugations in every tense and aspect, married to our grammar books as we struggle to gain competent skills in the language. What these experiences lacked was discourse and engagement, students and teachers taking time to use and be in the language rather than explicitly teach its properties. Thus, after ten years of studying French (nearly half my life) and around eight years of studying German, I possess solid confidence concerning my knowledge base in these languages, but *only in the context of literacy*. While I have thousands of French verb conjugations that float around in my head, I must pay very serious attention and often do not fully understand spoken French and German. When I watch French TV shows, I must put on subtitles (in either language) if I wish to fully understand.

I engaged in two semesters of Hinono'eitiit through ASLA, both of which occurred in the spring semester of 2020 and subsequent spring of 2021. Wedged in between was an Autumn semester of attempting to learn Japanese. I entered this semester knowing I should take more credits and signed up for Japanese, not only because it offered five credit-hours, but because I was feeling the pride of a linguist and was determined to get general knowledge of another language under my belt. That decision proved to be a grave mistake; the first two weeks of class we were required to memorize not one, but two syllabaries and their semiotic combinations (a writing system that represents syllables, Hiragana and Katakana), as well as we were then required to begin

memorizing Chinese characters through the semester. Hiragana and Katakana work together in complicated ways. Not only was the entire class a struggle, but I made absolutely no progress in language acquisition, or even language learning. Our whole course was based on our grammar book and was built around writing exercises. There were little to no speaking exercises inside or outside of class. I was thus married to my Japanese grammar book, and because I struggled to memorize the syllabary all semester (as I'm sure every other student did), I had to check back on the syllabary every time I wanted to write a sentence for homework. These are meticulously antagonizing tasks in which no student is interested in engaging, and everything about my experience learning Japanese, French, and German contrasts and juxtaposes that of my experience with Hinono'eitiit. Learning Japanese was a chore; I had to want to learn far beyond the classroom as well as it required me to struggle through the added lessons that piled on top of one another, weighing over me when I still didn't know how to write, but that was all I was expected to do. I very quickly felt like my feet were metaphorically kicked out from underneath me. Moreover, I felt as if my professor had set me up to fail. This entire experience provoked a plethora of negative emotions that ultimately did not reinforce my drive or desire to learn Japanese.

My experience learning Hinono'eitiit could not be more opposite. Learning this language through ASLA required nothing other than my ability to show up to class, pay attention, and engage in a discourse-oriented process that ultimately promotes acquisition in the target language and that has never so validated what it feels like to be human. I possess (a limited) implicit knowledge in an Indigenous language. Not only is it effortless to engage in cognitive exercises in such a setting, but they reinforce those naturally human sentiments when you get something right. Learning Hinono'eitiit through ASLA taught me an invaluable aspect of self-awareness: the ability to trust your gut. Implicitly learning a new language in this way is an odd thing, because you possess a conscious sense of innately knowing. I learned quickly to trust my intuition, that when I hear Dr. Greymorning say a sentence in Hinono'eitiit, there is no reason for me to second-guess myself, my intuition, my current knowledge in the language. While there were numerous occasions that I did not trust my gut, and chose another option that felt somehow more correct, that choice can also be incredibly valuable. It provides a good instructor with an opportunity to analyze what you are missing and guide you to the correct answer. Because ASLA is discourse-oriented, it always allows for the instructor to engage in this intimate way, which ultimately promotes positive language acquisition and positive reinforcement for language learning and learning about yourself. Learning to trust your intuitive gut through a process that is implicit language acquisition is not only positive in every aspect of learning a second language, but it has also deep, emotionally positive implications. There's something to be said about implicit knowledge in this way, that Indigenous people have been trying to tell the west for hundreds of years. My ability to read French allows me to extend reading to several other romance languages, such as Spanish and Italian. I see value in that; in fact, a recent trip to Puerto Rico reasserted this knowledge base when my little sister was eager to swim in an area of the ocean marked 'natación peligrosa' which she was under the impression meant 'big swimming area'. Nevertheless, I cannot, at this time, read and write in Hinono'eitiit, but I value my implicit knowledge base in Hinono'eitiit far more than I do my ability to read and write French, because when I hear Hinono'eitiit, I have a sense of knowing.

6.2 ASLA as an Instructor

To teach a practicum that fulfills a degree requirement, I taught French to Dr. Greymorning in the fall of 2021. Dr. Greymorning is one of the only professors in North America and Canada that

offers a post-secondary certificate that equips students with skills for language rejuvenation and maintenance, and he is the only professor that requires students to teach a foreign language. I was ultimately unable to acquire students to whom I could teach using the method but was able to instruct French to Dr. Greymorning. This allowed me to command ASLA on a more personable level as I had to design my skillsets not only for French rather than Hinono'eitiit, but also for a single individual who was attentive and keen at picking up language, rather than a whole class. From this, I was able to see just how adaptable ASLA really is; it can be used between two, ten, or a hundred people, and it can move as quickly or as slow as is required. It can be adapted to any language or any persons, so long as we are discussing human beings that share the same properties for language. What I was able to instruct to Dr. Greymorning in a semester greatly surpassed what any professor at our same university was able to cover in French in the first year, which is what is so striking about this method, its ability to *accelerate* language acquisition. From my experience, this method proves itself to be far more effective than any other form of pedagogical language instruction: it is backed up with data.[2] Below, I display data from my time instructing Dr. Greymorning in French and what I was able to teach. This was covered over a four-month semester which roughly equated 30 hours of instruction; at this point Dr. Greymorning demonstrated full cognition of, as well as full production of all the utterances presented as statistics in the data presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Total language at 30 hours of instruction.

Noun Phrases	180
Adjectives	20
Verb Phrases[3]	60
Reflexive Verb Phrases	11
Adverbial Phrases	10
Prepositional Phrases	6
Food Items	60

6.2.1 A New Level of Competency

I am currently writing this paper from Nice, France, where I am spending a month for vacation. I have visited France two other times in my life, and each time, I have been told by Francophones that I speak French well. Apparently, I have a strong accent and can respond quickly and promptly to questions and general discussion. However, on my fourth day in Nice, I engaged in conversation at a very small boulangerie with the shop owner herself, an 86-year-old woman who, by the end of the conversation, had tears in her eyes because my accent supposedly reminded her "of the way my sister used to talk in French". Anybody would be delighted to hear this from a local French woman. While it is true that I have received compliments in the past, it is evident to me this time around that the French have been particularly impressed by how I speak the language. This newfound

[2] See Greymorning (2019:201) for a discussion and presentation of data and analysis from class sessions. Also, see nsilc.org for recorded and written data and analysis from classes and other individuals from 2002-2017.

[3] All verbs, verb phrases, and reflexive verb phrases were taught in the first, second, and third person singular, as well as the third person plural in the present and past tense. What was not covered was first- or second-person plural.

success in the language is due, in part, to my time spent teaching French to Dr. Greymorning using ASLA. Prior to this experience I had learned French through English, explicitly learning the linguistic properties of the French language, learning how to read and write, etc. When I sat down to develop skillsets for my French class, I began to panic. There's a lot that goes into developing skillsets in ASLA that is beyond the scope of this paper; describing such a process is often not even completely covered over a three-day language-teacher-training workshop. In short, one must be aware of the language(s) the learners know and one must choose their images thoughtfully and methodically to demonstrate properties of the language that compare and contrast through sounds (such as singular vs. plural) and are culturally specific to the language and people. As a result, my skillsets for French looked very different than the skillsets Dr. Greymorning uses for Hinono'eitiit. The panic I experienced came from a realization that while I could conjugate countless verbs in French in all persons and tenses, I lacked the ability to *conceptualize* in French because of how I had been taught the language. I could look at an image of a lion standing on a rock in front of a sunset and say "a lion is standing on a rock in front of a sunset" or *heneeceine3 3ii'ookuut teesiihi' hoh'onookee hee3e'eitee' nii'ni'iseet*. I can conceptualize that image in both languages, English and Hinono'eitiit. At the time that we saw this image in class, I could not conceptualize and say this in French. This left me thinking, on many occasions, "how *would* you say this in French?" This lack of ability to conceptualize in a language stems from two problems: (i) French is not my first language, and (ii) how I learned it as a second language through literacy. Learning grammar does not teach someone how to conceptualize a language and apply it to the world. Thus, when I was placed in a class, learning Hinono'eitiit from Dr. Greymorning through cognition and conceptualizations, I felt intimidated as it was. Furthermore, developing French skillsets for teaching illuminated exactly how incapable I was of conceptualizing in French, and so, in order to develop my skillsets and do a good job as an instructor, I had to begin with conceptualization.

6.2.2 "Everyday Language": Using it and Teaching it

Here is an example to consider. For those of us that are learning a language (even as speakers of English) there are certain qualities of our languages that don't make sense to us. These anomalies don't fit into western grammar books, and speakers of a language often ponder why certain forms are used in certain contexts. Why can't we comfortably pluralize mass nouns in English (words like sand, water, bread and knowledge)? This is a question a person learning English would ask, as it is specific to a property of English. In Hinono'eitiit, noun classes are based on animacy. A question that Dr. Greymorning is frequently asked by students is "why do some things get *nuhu'* and others get *nehe'*?" Instead of trying to explain the complicated notion of animacy, Dr. Greymorning responds to such a question simply by saying "you will figure it out". And students do! They arrive at an understanding of animacy, how it is reflected in the language and subsequently applied to the world without ever explicitly receiving a formal grammar lesson on the property of animacy in Hinono'eitiit through English. This is language conceptualization; how do the properties of the language actually apply to the world? How is the language *used* by speakers? A first language speaker and a highly competent second language speaker can look at a grammatically complicated image and say it in their language. To develop French skillsets, I began by identifying what I knew and didn't know about the language, conceptually. I knew where person, number, gender, tense and aspect, and possession were manifested, for example. This was easy and creating contrasts in the language to demonstrate these properties was easy. Choosing images for what I knew was easy. What was difficult was attempting to choose an image for parts of the language I was still unsure

about, those quirky aspects of the language that speakers generally are aware of and question but aren't sure what the rule is or why their language operates that way. These were the areas where I lacked conceptualization in the French language.

One such aspect of French that is particularly difficult deals with food. It is fairly common knowledge that the French love to cook. Subsequently, they have very specific ways in which they talk about food, recipes, and cooking styles, and the slightest mistake when discussing food can easily give away that you are not a French speaker. French prepositions *à* and *de* meaning 'to/at/toward/in/inside' and 'of/from/about/some of', respectively, are used all over the French language, and, conceptually, English speakers rattle their heads trying to learn and understand them, when and why they are used. The former is always a preposition, the latter is sometimes a preposition and sometimes a partitive article. These words are used with food, and I never understand why they were used in food phrases and expressions until I developed a food skillset in ASLA. Some food expressions take *à* while others take *de*. While developing this skillset, this was something I didn't understand and couldn't understand no matter how hard I tried; I read grammar forums, checked back on my old grammar books, checked my old homework. I even asked first and second language speakers of French, who never could tell me what the "rule" was, just which contexts were appropriate. One day, I was watching a French cooking show, and the "rule" became clear to me. It follows a rather conceptualized thought process about food and how it is made. *À* is used in situations where there is a key ingredient to be highlighted, but in which it is not the focus, and *de* is used when that ingredient is essential to the entirety of the thing produced. For example, *tarte aux fraise* and *confiture de fraise* both mean "strawberry tart" and "strawberry jam", respectively. Why do they take different prepositions? They're both food, and they both contain the signature component strawberries. The difference is what would happen if you took away the strawberries. If there weren't strawberries on the tarte, you would still have a tarte; it might be bland, but it would still be a tart. But the jam is rendered from the strawberries, and they're key in its production. What do you have if you take away the strawberries? Nothing really — just sugar. Thus, a better direct translation would be 'jam *from* strawberries'. After this realization, an even bigger question popped into my head: why was this never taught to me in my French classes? Not only is it a key component of French culture, but subtleties like this when discussing cuisine are a direct give away of a competent speaker. A good answer is that it's not possible to teach conceptualization through grammar rules. Regardless of the reason behind this, it is nevertheless one of many ways in which western notions of language and teaching have not made me a competent speaker of French. It took me developing a food skillset for French in ASLA to fully understand this aspect of the language and how it reflects French culture and world view. Developing French skillsets in ASLA was an invaluable experience because I had the opportunity to not only iron-out some of these anomalies in the language I didn't understand, but also to ground myself in a conceptual basis of how to use the language, and teach it to someone else accurately. As a result, my vacation experience has been rather seamless and pleasant, as I am a much more competent speaker of French, confirmed by both how I feel speaking the language and responses of French locals.

6.3 ASLA as a Key to Indigenous Language Revitalization

In my experience with Dr. Greymorning and studying the Indigenous languages of North America and Australia that possess speaker numbers so significantly low, communities often either feel an intense sense of urgency that prompts immediate action, or communities feel and subsequently

exhibit a sense of hopelessness about the situation at hand. Discussion of the various decisions made by Indigenous communities in attempts to revitalize and heal their heritage language and culture is beyond the scope of this paper; in the former situation, whole books could be written on the history and technique of these Indigenous communities and their language revitalization efforts, what they had to endure and how they arrived where they are today (such as the Hawaiians and the Maori), and the latter situation poses the question 'why?', for which I do not possess an answer. What I do know is that ASLA can be a complete key that unlocks the possibility for authentic language revitalization in communities who possess only a handful of speakers (or less). If adults are taught at an accelerated rate, they can become subsequent teachers. This is certainly the case for the Gumbayngirr community, who have used the ASLA method as their primary avenue for language revitalization, and the community has seen staggering results. Clark Webb is the CEO of the Bularri Muurlay Nyanggan Aboriginal Corporation (BMNAC) who first workshopped with Dr. Greymorning in 2014. Dr. Greymorning demonstrated his techniques to Webb and the community which became the primary teaching pedagogy of the language. Clark Webb took seven second language speakers of Gumbayngirr in 2015 and was able to produce another six second language speakers. These individuals became instructors that began leading language courses through ASLA. By 2019, Webb was able to expose up to 750 people to the language in in-school and after-school programs using the ASLA method (Webb 2020:348-349). More recently, Clark Webb is proud to be opening the first bilingual school in Coffs Harbour right in time for the commencement of the Decade of Indigenous Languages by the UN (2022-2032), which will welcome 15 inaugural students in 2022 (Exton 2021). These are huge strides made in the Gumbayngirr community, strides amounting to a new generation of first language speakers, which was ultimately driven by ASLA pedagogies.

7 Conclusions

It is not clear why Indigenous communities around the world continue to use methods for language learning, in attempting to revitalize their language, that are ineffective. Dictionaries, grammar books, mobile apps, and other language learning software's fail to give the language learner a strong base of language grounded in a cognitive environment. Mobile Apps and other modern forms of language pedagogies like grammar books and literacy rely on the crutch of English to translate. They do not result in actual, fluent speakers of a language; they merely equip someone with a few common words and phrases. These methods and technologies possess virtually no data in the literature on speakers of a language rendered as a result of those who use their products. Thus, these methods for teaching cannot be used to effectively instigate language revitalization. On the other hand, effectively executed language immersion programs create authentic environments in which children can be exposed to and acquire the desired language. If the goal is language revitalization, this is data; communities who can track and quantify a resulting new generation of first and second language speakers through immersion programs and ASLA. ASLA is an incredibly effective method for language revitalization, creating the equivalent of a second language immersion environment for second language learners, rendering highly competent second language speakers as a result. Results in the Gumbayngirr community have been exponential. The data from the Yuchi, Hawaiian, and Gumbayngirr communities is raw, and demonstrates that, when considering notions of language revitalization, experts must base their efforts in data, or in other words, their ability to produce fluent speakers of the language. ASLA is an avenue where communities may achieve these goals.

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