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insidious, painless, and fatal. The fate even of Siberian and Central Yupik could be sealed in a decade of this. Yet there is hope here too, for much more easily than an educational system (which requires much time and effort for the development of an alphabet, literature, teacher training, and literacy), television and radio cculd quickly be adapted to the service of Native languages. In contrast with the time it takes to learn to write and read, it takes little training to speak one's own language into a microphone, and no training to learn to enjoy hearing a broadcast in it. Furthermore, the technology of television has fewer cultural strings attached to it than do educational systems; it is much more readily convertible to the service of any language and culture. In fact, one must not think mainly of translated commercial or educational programs, or Native imitations of successful commercial or educational programs, but of actual Native content in Native languages, for example village news networks, Native cultural events, much of it village-produced for broadcast to other villages in the same language area. However, if this is not done soon and imaginatively, the potential these media have for strengthening Alaskan cultures and languages will be lost in their destruction. The final tragedy is unnecessary and can still be prevented, but only by understanding, determination, and courageous effort. Linguists, educational administrators, teachers, local school boards, and parents must work together to convert the

schools from the destruction to the strengthening of native languages. Imaginative and determined media personnel and villagers must work together to convert television and radio to the service of this heritage.

Finally, we must understand and remember that the only way a living language is transmitted from one generation to the next is by parents speaking that language to their children. A school and even a television set which inundates the children with another language, say English, do not themselves alone prevent the children from becoming bilingual, still able to speak their parents' native language, provided the parents speak that language to them, fully realizing that that is the only way the children will learn it. The amount of time the children are involved with the English-speaking school or television will of course detract from that spent with the Native language, but the ability to speak more than one language well is in fact very common throughout the world; it is perfectly normal and healthy. The most destructive effects of the school and media are in the attitudes they impose on both parents and children. They cannot take the knowledge of the Native language away, but through generations of punishment and brainwashing in English-only schools, and now more swiftly through the stunning and stupefying power of television, they destroy or paralyze the parents' will to transmit the Native language and the children's will to learn it, unless the

language is also respected, used, cultivated, and celebrated in them. With adequate Native-language programs in the schools and on television and radio, the basic responsibility for the survival of the Native language is more clearly seen to be where it has always been, with the parents to speak it to their children. Not bilingual education, not even bilingual television can themselves keep Alaskan languages alive; only parents speaking the languages to their children can do that, as has always been the way.

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APPENDIX I:

THE FUTURE OF ALASKA NATIVE LANGUAGES

1. Survival or Extinction?

The time has come to face the real future of Alaskan languages. There is no more time to waste deluding ourselves about the unpleasant and tragic aspects of this. Alaska Native languages are entering a period of final crisis for their future as living languages. Most of them are about to die.

The only way a language can survive as a living spoken language is if children learn that language as their first language and transmit it to their own children the way it was transmitted to them. All Alaska Native languages which have survived to this day have of course survived by this means and only this means. The language has been handed down for countless generations who have cultivated it, shaped it, perfected it according to their own culture into an intellectual heritage of complex beauty, unique to each people.

The thread can be broken irreparably in one generation. The generation that is now able to speak Native and English, but is speaking English only to its children, is directly

responsible for abandoning this heritage, irrecoverably. It is Native language suicide. That is a heavy responsibility to bear towards the coming generations. Such a decision should only be made consciously with full awareness of its consequences.

As far as we can predict from the present situation, the first half of the 21st century will see the death of the very last speakers of most Alaska Native languages. In fact, it is all too simple to calculate the approximate date of extinction of most of these languages. We need merely to add to 1980 the remaining life expectancy of the youngest speakers of the language, based on a generous estimate of, say, 75 years. If, for example, there is no one under 20 able to speak Koyukon, the language could be expected to become extinct about 55 years from now, in 2035, give or take a few years. (It does not matter how many people speak the language if the youngest children do not; even a language with a million speakers will not last significantly longer than one with a hundred, unless the children are learning the language. The only difference is minor: of a million people probably a few more will live to be very old, thus adding a possible 25 years at most before the still inevitable extinction.)

The youngest speaker of Eyak is past sixty. The youngest speakers of Alaskan Tsimshian, Alaskan Haida, Holikachuk, and Tanana are past forty. The youngest speakers of Tlingit,

Ahtna, Ingalik, Koyukon, and Han are in their thirties or twenties. Thus, the way things are going, and not allowing for miracles, of these ten languages Eyak will probably be extinct within this century; Alaskan Tsimshian, Alaskan Haida, Holikachuk, and Tanana will probably be extinct by 2015, and the very last speakers of Tlingit, Ahtna, Ingalik, Koyukon, and Han will all be dead by 2030. Next, there are five Alaskan languages which some children are able to speak to some extent in one or two communities, but these are already English-dominant or rapidly becoming so: Alutiiq (Sugpiaq) (at English Bay only--everywhere else, Kodiak, Alaska Peninsula and Prince William Sound no children speak the language), Tanaina Athabaskan (only at tiny Lime Village--everywhere else around Cook Inlet there are no young speakers), Upper Tanana (especially at Tetlin), Tanacross, and Upper Kuskokwim (especially at Nikolai). Again not allowing for miracles or radical changes, these five languages too will probably all be extinct within a lifetime, by about 2055. By that year, then, probably only 5 of the 20 Alaskan languages will still be spoken: Western Aleut (at Atka only); Kutchin Athabaskan (at Venetie and Arctic Village only); Inupiaq Eskimo (only in the Upper Kobuk and at Wainwright); Central Yupik (mainly in the Kuskokwim region); and Siberian Yupik (at Gambell and Savoonga). Of these, Western Aleut and Kutchin might conceivably survive indefinitely under "ideal" conditions; such conditions would probably have to include

continued isolation, but this is hardly likely. Inupiaq might survive in a few places also, but only if there comes in time great strengthening of awareness of and communication with the rest of the Inupiaq world in Canada and Greenland, of which Alaskan Inupiaq is only a small part. The way things are going, however, these languages too are likely to become extinct before the next century is over. Central Yupik and Siberian Yupik have by far the best chance of surviving indefinitely; Central Yupik because of the still large concentration of speakers of all generations in the Kuskokwim region and a few other parts of the Central Yupik area, and Siberian Yupik because of its isolation and great vitality on St. Lawrence Island.

We at the Alaska Native Language Center feel the responsibility for doing what we can to promote the survival of Alaska Native languages as living spoken languages. For this reason I am describing quite frankly what I fear is coming, without mincing words. I sincerely hope I am wrong. I hope that there are more, younger speakers of the languages than I know of. I hope that some parents at least are indeed consistently speaking the languages to their children, and I have simply not heard of them. I would welcome hearing from anyone who has information that I do not, where I am wrong in these mournful predictions. I am certain that I am not wrong in one thing: if the parents do not speak the language to the children, the language will die.

What I am certain that we as linguists and Native language specialists at ANLC and elsewhere can do (with adequate support) is to document the languages well, by compiling good comprehensive dictionaries of their vocabulary, good grammars of their structure, and also writing down texts, including stories and legends in the language, to preserve at least a significant part of their oral literary tradition. In this way an adequate record of the heritage can be kept for posterity, in the form, however, of some books on the shelf. In this sense at least, the language can certainly be saved. This important work is also the necessary basis for the development of teaching grammars and other materials for Native language programs in the schools.

2. Can school save the language?

Some people may believe that "bilingual education" is going to "save" Native languages. This is simply not so. English-only education, especially with prolonged periods away from home at boarding school, can kill a Native language. However, school could not do the reverse, bring a Native language back, unless it were Native-speaking only and involved a boarding school or the like, where children were discouraged from speaking anything but Native. Certainly no Alaskan "bilingual education" programs ever remotely resembled this.

In speaking of "bilingual education" we must carefully distinguish between programs for communities where children still speak the Native language as their first language ("first language" bilingual programs), and programs for communities in which children do not speak the language ("second language programs", not strictly speaking bilingual education, but something resembling more the way European languages are taught academically as second languages in traditional American city schools).

I shall here discuss realistic goals for the second language programs, where Native language is taught in school to children who do not learn to speak the language at home. Such programs can not teach the children to speak the language in a fluent way resembling their parents' or grandparents' native ability. That can only come from the parents or grandparents. The school can teach the children about the language, and teach the children words and phrases in it. Some children will learn quite a lot that way, but realistically, most will learn only a bit, even in a good program with well trained teachers and good materials.

Nevertheless, even that little bit is very important. It will at least give the children an idea of what their ancestral language was like, a sense that they know some of it, have some association with it, that it is still around. This knowledge will also enable them in a very real way to continue much of their culture actively in songs and

ceremonials. In this way the language will still continue to play some kind of role in the community, having a place of honor and respect, as an important part of whatever can be preserved of traditional culture in an advancing society. In this way it can still give essential life to the culture of the people.

Within the society there will have to be a small core of people whose specialized role in the community will be to preserve the language tradition by teaching it in the schools, generation by generation, even after the last native speakers have died. They will have to have in some sense a profound knowledge of the language, and for this the technical work of language specialists and linguists to document the languages now while they are still alive will be essential. The preservation of all Alaska Native languages in this way is still possible, as I have said. Its success will depend on the linguistic work that is done now (dictionaries, grammars, texts) and then on the materials and training available to the teachers.

I have some confidence that these goals of continuation in an academic or school setting can be achieved, and do not believe that they are going to face much political or administrative opposition. On the contrary, the support for them seems to be increasing and probably will continue to do so provided the programs are good. (Why is it, in fact, that <u>after</u> they realize their children no longer speak the

language, parents and children finally regret abandoning their language? Then they want to do something about it, but not before. The key is to realize what they stand to lose before they lose it, not after.)

There is, in fact, a very important way in which Native language programs in the schools, even good ones, may actually be doing more harm than good for the future of Native languages in these communities where the children do not know the language or have only a partial command of it. Many parents who are not speaking their Native language to their children are aware, dimly or keenly, that they are responsible for the impending extinction of their language, and feel to some degree relieved of this uncomfortable burden of responsibility by the program in the school. I have heard many times, "The school can save our language," that the school instead of the parents can teach the language to the children. I repeat, this is simply not true. As I have already described, the school cannot transmit the language at all as a parent talking to his child can. Those who claim that the school can save the language and that therefore the parents do not have the responsibility to talk it to their children, are fooling themselves. Parents must not expect this, and the school must not claim it. Otherwise the program is doing more harm than good in a community where the parents can speak the language to their children and are not doing so, counting instead on the program.

Better to cancel the program if then the parents will instead speak more Native to their children.

So long as there are parents or even grandparents who can speak the language, this remains the most important thing to do. The community must actively support the school program. Short of having a radical school program where for hours on end, or even years on end, the use of any language but Native is discouraged, there are several things that a community can do if it is serious about keeping the language alive or reviving it in a sense that it will actually remain or become a first, natural, fluent language of the children. Ways must be found which will motivate and help parents to overcome the initial difficulties of speaking the Native language to their children where they have not recently been doing so. The community could establish day-care centers or nurseries staffed by Native-speaking instructors, who speak nothing but Native to the small children. Similarly, seasonal but completely Native-speaking situations can be established, such as summer camps. Satellite or new communities could be founded where one of the purposes would be to maintain the language. In those cases where the language is stronger in another area, for instance Inupiaq in Canada and Greenland, or Central Yupik in the Kuskokwim, children could visit those areas (but only if they go there to learn Native, and do not by their presence undermine the language in those areas).

With determination and commitment, still very much can be saved of the Native languages, even where children no longer speak it. To the extent that children still do know or understand some, the potential may be greater or the task easier. However, one must absolutely not expect the school itself to save the language, to bring about any true revival of it. It is up to the parents and the community.

3. Can bilingual education maintain a language?

We must now look carefully at bilingual education in those communities where the children do speak the Native language. Here the term "bilingual education" means--or is supposed truly to mean--education in two languages, Native and English. The communities involved are mainly certain Central Yupik villages, especially those in the Kuskokwim heartland and nearby, and the Siberian Yupik villages of Gambell and Savoonga on St. Lawrence Island; to a lesser extent also Venetie and Arctic Village for Kutchin Athabaskan, the Upper Kobuk villages and Wainwright for Inupiaq, and Atka for Aleut; and perhaps to some extent English Bay for Alutiiq (Sugpiaq), Nikolai for Upper Kuskokwim, and Lime Village for Tanaina. How many of the schools of these communities, especially for Central and Siberian Yupik where Native is still truly the dominant language of the children, are there actually bilingual programs? Certainly not all. How many hours a day do the children in the lower grades

actually have instruction in the Native language? How many of these children past the third grade have any instruction in the Native language at all? These are hard questions, and I believe the answers to them would be shocking.

For one thing, still the majority of children who speak Alaska Native languages are in Bureau of Indian Affairs schools. Of an estimated 4,000 children in Alaska who speak Native languages, an estimated 3,000 are in BIA schools. Therefore, by far the greatest number of Alaskan children who do speak a Native language are not protected by the Alaska State Bilingual Education law. Since 1972 there has been a State law that all Alaskan schools which have 15 or more (now 8 or more) students whose primary language is other than English shall have a teacher fluent in that language, and an instructional program and materials in that language. The BIA school system, however, is not subject to Alaska State laws. To whatever extent it complies with those laws, its compliance is essentially voluntary. The BIA, like any human institution, does not change quickly. There are still teachers, principals, and administrators in both BIA and regional schools, who are indifferent or hostile toward Alaska Native languages, who are still very much a part of the old assimilationist tradition which for generations has been punishing or discouraging Native children from speaking their ancestral language.

Where bilingual programs are lacking for children who

speak a Native language, the reason is sometimes given that the people themselves do not want the program, and "local" control" should decide such questions. There are many wrong things that can contribute to such a decision, however. Since use of their own language in school was denied them, the parents may not even be aware of the possibility, or they may not have a clear idea of bilingual education, having heard only that the Native language is an obstacle to their children's progress, and that this would be regression "back to the blanket," especially if the option is still presented to them in this light. Eighty years of brainwashing have taken their toll. Generations have already been brainwashed with the notion that Native languages are inferior, disadvantageous to the children in their lives and careers; and with the rubbish that (because educators themselves speak only one language, English) it is unhealthy to overload one's brain with more than one language, or that it is impossible to speak two languages well. Even if that is the sincere belief of the educators (because most are not bilingual themselves) it is absolute nonsense. Learning to speak more than one language is normal, healthy, and advantageous.

Even if the parents want bilingual education, however, they may have elected a school board consisting of the "better educated" members of the community, who therefore represent more the educators' own assimilationist views than those of the "less acculturated" parents; and/or many members of the Board may be under the influence of a local

administrator indifferent or hostile to bilingual education. Thus, under the name of "local control" children are denied the right the State Bilingual Education law was designed to protect, their right to a truly equal opportunity in education.

There are two crucially different ways of looking at bilingual education, one as a "transitional" program, the other as a "maintenance" program. Both programs begin by teaching in Native, including reading and writing, and introducing English as a second language, say one hour a day in the first year. This might grow to two hours of English the next year, and to three or four the next. The "maintenance" program is one in which English would never entirely replace the Native language in the curriculum, but where both would have a place side by side in the school, and in which the Native language would never occupy a smaller part of the day than, say, one hour up through all the upper grades. The Native language would thus be maintained in the school along with English, cultivated, developed, honored.

In a "transitional" program, bilingual education is transitional, going from the Native language over to English in such a way that English totally replaces the Native language. The Native language is only used as a means of acquiring sufficient school ability and knowledge of English, so that once enough English is learned, the Native language can be abandoned. The unfortunate fact is that almost everywhere the bilingual programs are transitional, not

maintenance, both in their intent and practice. ESEA Title VII, which funds bilingual education as a special program, is expressly for these transitional purposes. Thus practically no elementary schools have any Native language past about the third grade. A few high schools have Native language programs as a kind of cultural enrichment. But by and large, even in those schools where the children's primary language is Native, education goes on more in English, mostly in English, or even exclusively in English.

Actually, it is not the exact clock-hours spent using one language or another which is the most important thing about a bilingual program, it is above all the attitude toward the languages which the program teaches. On the surface the maintenance and transitional types of program appear the same, at the beginning. However, the maintenance program honors and values the Native language and teaches that though of course the children should learn English as a second language because of its undeniable practical value, still the Native language is also of great value and should be maintained by the community, that the local language of the community, for the people to speak to each other, will continue to be Native. English they will learn as a second language, for communication with the rest of the world, but their own world continues to exist, and the potential of their own language for growth and development is also to be realized--the best of both worlds.

Transitional bilingual education programs, on the other hand, implicitly but constantly teach the attitude that English is basically better than Native, that the Native language is of no value, that it has no future, and should be replaced by English, as the people assimilate into the "mainstream" of society, and lose their own identity--the modern "final solution" to the "Indian problem."

Where the purpose of a first-language bilingual program is still basically assimilationist, and not sincerely in the interest of the survival and development of Native language and culture, it should be no surprise that all too often Native-speaking bilingual teachers are not given adequate administrative and moral support, or adequate opportunity for getting the training they need, and lack good bilingual materials often even where such materials exist. Administrators can cause a bilingual program, even with sincere and courageous teachers, to wither and fail by not supporting it properly, thus "proving" their own belief that Native languages do not belong in education, or belong only temporarily until they can be replaced with English, and then dispensed with.

Moreover, the persons in authority, the administrators and certified teachers, are generally not bilingual, and are unable to speak the language of the children. There is no requirement that they should be able to do so. On the other hand, bilingual teachers are often prevented from achieving

positions of authority by regulations prohibiting certified teachers from working as bilingual teachers. The bilingual teachers can only be subordinate aides, not the actual authority figure in the classroom. (The children certainly get the message.) If they become certified teachers, they are no longer qualified, or are "overqualified", for the position of bilingual teacher, and may then teach only in the conventional English-only way.

While the bilingual education that has developed in Alaska since 1970 is certainly a vast improvement over the unrelieved repression of Native languages before (1900-1970), we must not fool ourselves into thinking that in its present state bilingual education could yet effectively counteract the destructive influence on Native languages of the educational system as it still is. It is only a beginning. To the extent that teaching in Native languages is used in all schools where children speak the language, and at least to a significant extent, say one hour a day, in all grades where the children speak the language, including the upper grades; to the extent that the teachers are well trained, well supported, and have adequate materials; to the extent that the Native language is cultivated and truly honored in the school; only then will the school system strengthen instead of weaken the status of Native languages in Alaska. As things are now, although the destruction in the schools may be slowed down somewhat, I believe the

schools have by no means stopped undermining the future of Alaska Native languages even in those few areas where the children still speak the language. Thus, the danger is still very great that not just most but all the Alaska Native languages will die during the coming century.

4. Television and radio: Menace or opportunity?

So far I have discussed only the educational system and its effects on the future of Alaska Native languages. However, as threatening as the school situation still is, an even graver threat to the survival of Alaska Native languages is now upon us. This is the inevitable and rapid spread of English-language radio and especially television to every village and home. The cultural and linguistic battleground is now extending from the classroom into the living room. Within a few short years, practically every Native-speaking home will have a color television set receiving several channels of the usual commercial and educational programming in English to flood the home for several hours a day. The battle of the living room has begun with this invasion of what I call "cultural nerve gas"--insidious, painless, and fatal. The fate even of Siberian and Central Yupik could be sealed in a decade of this.

Yet there is great hope and opportunity here too, for television and radio can be much more quickly adapted to the service of Native languages than can an educational system. For one thing, educational systems depend heavily on the written word. Converting them to the service of Native

languages requires the development of an alphabet, development of a literature, training of teachers and writers, and requires the pupils and eventually the whole community to learn to read and write in the Native language. Compared to the time it takes to learn to read and write, for instance, it takes very little time and training to learn to speak one's own language into a microphone, and no time or training at all to learn to enjoy hearing a broadcast in it.

There is an important lesson in the way Citizens' Band radio has been adapted widely to the service of Native language and culture. People learn immediately to communicate with each other over CB radio in their own language, as they use it for their own purposes, for example in coordinating their movements in hunting and fishing. This shows how readily convertible electronic communications are to the service instead of the destruction of Native language and culture--but that has already been demonstrated for some time with the telephone and tape recorder. Even more important, the use of these and CB radio shows what happens when a communication system is truly controlled by its users.

So far, most radio and television in rural Alaska is not locally controlled at all. The systems right now being installed, especially television, are imposed from outside the Native language communities, as extensions of huge statewide and nationwide networks. The programs will be rained down from the heavens, for the people to accept as passively and unquestioningly as the weather, controlled by the gods in

Juneau or California. The systems are now being set up in this way with no real local input, control, or content. Instead of further losing control of their own cultural environment and fate, the people must immediately become actively involved in determining the kind of radio and television they will have. At the very least they must provide a supplement or alternative to the outside-controlled network programming, in the form of locally controlled systems that can serve the needs of the language communities.

The areas I am primarily concerned with here are those where Native languages are still spoken or at least understood by the children, so that they may survive if enough is done. The main instances are Central Yup'ik, Siberian Yupik on St. Lawrence Island, and certain Inupiaq locations. For Central Yup'ik there would have to be a network involving many villages, with broadcasting centers at Bethel, Dillingham, and perhaps also elsewhere. Local reporters or TV cameramen could tape local subject events to broadcast directly, or send the tapes to broadcast centers, and the centers could also produce a variety of programs. St. Lawrence Island would need mainly a system in which Gambell and Savoonga would broadcast to each other and themselves (and conceivably to what is left of their relatives in Siberia). Inupiaq would need a system something like that for Central Yup'ik but also extensive exchange of programs with Canada and Greenland. Other language areas with smaller numbers of speakers should have local

stations broadcasting in the language, perhaps especially 10-watt radio stations, which are relatively easy to set up. The importance of radio should not be underestimated: it is the sound and not the picture which carries the language; radio programming is cheaper and easier to produce; it is also easier to take in, since one can more easily do other things while listening to radio than while watching television. People speaking Native languages should learn to operate television cameras, local television and radio stations, and to produce programming in Native languages, for at least some significant part of the day, as an alternative to the nationwide network programs.

The problem is not that the nationwide programs are bad. It does not even matter much whether they are The Incredible Hulk or Masterpiece Theatre, Hee Haw or Sesame Street. The problem is that they are not Native. However, by Native I do not mean Native-language soundtrack or voice-over channels added to network programs, producing for example an Eskimo-speaking Archie Bunker (though that might be interesting). I also do not mean Native-language programs which are essentially imitations of network programs. That would be too expensive and in the end self-defeating. What is needed is programming conceived by and about the people themselves. I can only list here a few things which I might offhand imagine: radio or television broadcasts reporting a potlatch, or featuring a storyteller, a dance, a basketball game, beaching or even hunting a whale, a new baby, local community news, school

news, weather reports, bush radio messages, talk shows, personalities, Native affairs and politics. None of these are too expensive or beyond the ability of community people to learn quickly to produce.

Innovative and imaginative programming of this kind, and also appropriate local systems serving the language area, are not prohibitively expensive; they might cost much less than what is routinely spent on highway construction, for example, or on runway extensions or sports facilities. Moreover, a Native organization with a good proposal writer should stand an excellent chance in competing for grant money from funding agencies for innovative systems and programming of this type, for and by the Native language community.

There is another important way in which radio and television are more readily convertible to the service of the languages (aside from using the electronic rather than the written word): these media are a system with far fewer cultural strings attached than education has. Educators traditionally come with training in the English language and beliefs in Outside American culture, which they have come to spread. Radio and television, however, are at least partly available as empty systems, and at least many of those who bring them to the villages would in fact wish to see the system used for the local language and culture. The ideological battle here will be far less difficult, but the stakes are just as great.

I believe it is essential to understand and act on this threat--or opportunity--soon, vigorously, and imaginatively. Otherwise, the potential these media have for strengthening Alaskan cultures and languages will be lost in their destruction. Good bilingual education alone will not be sufficient to counteract the effect of English-only radio and television. The final tragedy is unnecessary and can still be prevented, but only by understanding, determination, and courageous effort. Just as linguists, educational administrators, teachers, local school boards, and parents must work together to convert the schools from the destruction to the strengthening of Native languages, so also imaginative and determined media personnel and villagers must work together to take active control and convert radio and television to the service of the Native heritage.

Awareness of self and control of self are as important for a culture as for an individual. A small nation lacking perspective of its cultural position and what it stands to lose will lose its culture. In the same way, a larger nation has a similar responsibility. If it cannot control its own growth ("you can't stop progress"), if it cannot prevent itself from destroying everything in its path, then it is a cancer which will end up destroying itself by destroying the life upon which it feeds.

Cultural survival or cultural suicide: A community responsibility

Finally, we must understand and remember that the only way a living language is transmitted from one generation to the next is by parents speaking that language to their children. A school and even a television set which inundates the children with another language, say English, do not themselves alone prevent the children from becoming bilingual. Children will still be able to speak their parents' native language, provided the parents speak that language to them, fully realizing that that is the only way the children will learn it. The amount of time the children are involved with the English-speaking school or television will of course detract from that spent with the Native language, but the ability to speak more than one language well is in fact very common throughout the world; it is perfectly normal, healthy, and advantageous. The most destructive effects of the school and media are in the attitudes they impose on both parents and children. They cannot take the knowledge of the Native language away, but through generations of punishment and brainwashing in English-only schools, and now more swiftly through the stunning and stupefying power of television, they can destroy or paralyze the parents' will to transmit the Native language and the children's will to learn it, unless the language is also respected, used, cultivated, and celebrated in them. With adequate Native-language programs in the schools and on television and radio, the basic

responsibility for the survival of Native languages is more clearly recognized for what it is and has always been: that of parents to speak their language to their children. Not bilingual education, not even bilingual television can themselves keep Alaskan languages alive; only parents speaking the languages to their children can do that, as has always been the way.

If Alaska Native languages die I frankly do not know what future there is for Alaska Native cultures. Language is in my view the most essential part of a culture. I do not know to what extent a culture, an identity, a nation, can survive without its own language. Language suicide may be cultural suicide.

I realize that much of what I have written in this series is not pleasant or easy to face. However, I consider it my responsibility and the responsibility of the Alaska Native Language Center to do what we can to preserve and promote Alaska Native languages as a heritage of Alaskans for the future of Alaska. I have tried to be frank about what I see, even if some people are offended or displeased. I would not want it said that we sat and fiddled while we saw Rome burning, and would not want it said that we failed to warn people of the dangers and losses they must face in the future of Alaska Native languages. At the same time, I have tried to include positive suggestions for what I myself see might be done to save what can be saved for the future. I hope this is more the beginning than the end.

APPENDIX II:

THE ESKIMO LANGUAGES IN ALASKA, YESTERDAY AND TODAY

This will be a very general introduction to the history and the present-day status of these languages. Their present-day status is, as we shall see, very much a result of the effects of government policies.

Alaskan Languages

There are two major language families in Alaska, the Eskimo-Aleut and the Athabaskan-Eyak-Tlingit, and two genetically isolated languages, Haida and Tsimshian, both recent immigrations to Alaska (18th and 19th century). Alaska may be called the "cradle of civilization" of two great modern language families, the close-knit Eskimo, and the somewhat more diverse Athabaskan. Eskimo may have originated somewhere in "Beringia," and Athabaskan more towards the Canadian border, in the interior. The contact between Athabaskan and Eskimo is probably fairly recent, since e.g. there are to my knowledge no Athabaskan words in Greenlandic, nor any Eskimo words in Navajo, and there are no important diffusions between the two groups even in the modern Alaskan border languages, except for obvious recent loanwords. We have no idea what languages were until recently in between the two families. They may of course very probably have included extinct languages related to

Athabaskan and/or to Eskimo. At any rate, the most important thing to keep in mind for the present day is that both Athabaskan and Eskimo are actually very successful language families, now more than ever, with excellent chances for indefinite survival. This remarkable fact, however, is mainly because they have both spread well beyond Alaska, through Canada, where they both continue to flourish, and far beyond Canada, where they have flourished in a rather spectacular way in the 20th century, a century which has proven fatal to many Native American languages. There are now many more Athabaskans (and Athabaskan speakers) than ever before, but 150,000 of the 180,000 speakers are Navajos. There are now also many more Eskimos (and Eskimo speakers) than ever before in history, over 90,000, but over half of the Eskimo speakers (42,000 of 78,000) are Greenlanders. Within the Inuit (non-Yupik) branch, of ca. 66,000 speakers, 42,000 (two-thirds) are Greenlanders, ca. 17,000 are Canadian, and at most 6,000 are Alaska, the largest number of non-Inuit-speaking Inuit being Alaskan. These are important figures and the reasons for them are certainly worth understanding.

By far the greatest linguistic diversity in Eskimo is to be found in Western Alaska. There is, for one thing, the well known sharp division between Yupik and what we in Alaska usually call Inupiaq. The famous border is at Unalakleet on Norton Sound, where there is certainly not any significant geographical barrier. The explanation seems to me doubtless that at one time there was something more like a continuum of Eskimo dialects along Alaska's western shores, and that two of these

dialects, Proto-Yupik and Proto-Inuit, began to spread, eliminated all the intermediate dialects, and met at Unalakleet (or rather on the Seward Peninsula, the southern shore of which was Yupik into the 19th century, and where earlier still some form of Yupik intermediate between Alaskan and Siberian might well have been spoken).

Yupik itself is rather more diverse than many people realize. The difference between Siberian and Alaskan Yupik is too great to permit ready mutual intelligibility, as is attested by many speakers who have tried it, and by a score of 65% for cognates on the basic 100-word list. Even within Alaskan Yupik we must recognize two different languages if we use the criterion of ready mutual intelligibility, Central Alaskan Yupik and Sugpiaq or Alutiiq. We thus have three Yupik languages in Alaska: Alutiiq, Central (Alaskan) Yupik, and, on St. Lawrence Island, Siberian Yupik. I shall deal with each of these languages individually, and with Alaskan Inuit or Inupiaq, after first giving a very brief history of government policies which have affected them.

Government Policies

By 'government' I refer, of course, to European powers in Alaska, not Native rule (at least not yet!). The first of these was Russian, which actively affected Alaska from the invasion of Attu in 1745 until 1867, when Alaska became a territory of the United States. The Eskimo peoples were spared intense contact with the Russians during the first and worst

forty years of their dominion over Alaska, a period of barbaric exploitation, pillage, and murder. (I must note here how sharp a distinction that bears with the Danish dominion over Greenland during the same period.) The Russians' victims were not Eskimos, but Aleuts, whose population was literally decimated. This was, however, not specifically by Russian government policy, but rather by commercial expansionism without government control. The Russian Alaskan venture became better organized in the 1780s with the establishment of the Russian America Company under Shelekov at Kodiak, where the first intense long-term Russian-Eskimo contact took place. The Russians' second forty years were more a period of enslavement than of massacre, as the Russians now used Aleuts (Aleutians and Alutiiqs) to do their fur-hunting for them, an activity which they expanded across the whole North Pacific as far as California and as far as the Kurile Islands.

The first Russian priests or missionaries arrived in Alaska, on Kodiak, in 1794. Thus began the first Russian efforts to educate and convert Alaskans to Russian culture and religion. By far the greatest work was that of the priest Ivan Veniaminov (later Metropolit of the entire Russian Church, and now St. Innokenty), a man of great energy, talent, and humanity. He spent ten years, 1824-1834, in the Aleutians. Working with the Aleut Ivan Pan'kov, he had already by 1826 produced a manuscript catechism in Aleut, and had printed the first book in Aleut in 1834. This was in a remarkably good orthography, distinguishing nicely k from q, g from r, gg from rr, for example.

The third forty years of Russian rule in Alaska, 1824-1867, began with the arrival of Veniaminov. For the Native peoples of Alaska, and especially for their languages, this period was clearly a rather good one. The first books were printed in the other "Aleut" language (Kodiak) in 1847-48, about which more later. The point here is that the Russian policy toward indigenous languages was basically then as it is today, benign or favorable, or at least utilitarian, favoring the creation of an alphabet and the establishment of literacy in an effort to educate, whether for Christianity or for Communism. As we shall see, this policy is in sharp contrast with the American. The Russians were worse for the people than for their languages, it might be said, whereas the Americans were worse for the languages than for the people, if that is possible. Whatever the negative effect the Russians had on the Alaskans, they did not attempt to exterminate their languages, but rather even strengthened their status by providing the beginnings of a literary tradition, especially in the case of the two "Aleut" languages (Aleutian and Alutiiq), and to a lesser extent Central Yupik and Tlingit Indian.

During the first twenty years of the American period, 1867-1887, there was very little cultural change for Native Alaskans. The Russian Church remained the only cultural or educational institution in Alaska until about 1890, when the Jesuits arrived in the Yukon Delta area, Moravians in the Kuskokwim Delta, and various other Protestant churches began their work on St. Lawrence Island, the Inupiaq area (Seward

Peninsula and the North) and in the interior. The Jesuits and Moravians soon began printing materials in Central Yupik. This competition even stimulated the hitherto complacent Russian Church to do likewise (and also to print more Aleut materials). In many parts of Alaska the period 1880-1910 was an especially favorable one for the languages themselves, with these reprintings and new books in Aleut, Central Yupik, and also several Indian languages. During the same period, however, the Commissioner of Education for the territory was the Presbyterian missionary Sheldon Jackson, who shaped the first American educational system in the territory. He also succeeded, until 1908, in getting federal support for the mission schools, in spite of the division between church and state, on the grounds that the only teachers who could be recruited were missionaries. Jackson was an energetic and talented man. However, his anti-Native language policy was quite clear.

> The Board of Home Missions has informed us that government contracts for educating Indian pupils provide for the ordinary branches of an English education to be taught, and that no books in any Indian language shall be used, or instruction given in that language to Indian pupils. The letter states that this rule will be strictly enforced in all government Indian schools. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs urges, and very forcibly too, that instruction in their vernacular is not only of no use to them but is detrimental to their speedy education and civilization. It is now two years and more since the use of the Indian dialects were first prohibited in the training school here. All instruction is given in English. Pupils are required to speak and write English exclusively; and the results are tenfold more satisfactory than when they were permitted to converse in unknown tongues.*

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*Jackson in North Star, Sitka, 1888. Note also the earlier statement by S. Hall Young, quoted here, p.23.

It took until about 1910 for this policy to become generally enforced, since strong starts had been made with Native language in Church education in several places, especially the Russian Church schools in Aleut and Central Yupik, and the Catholic and Moravian church schools in Central Yupik. Much less, or no Native language writing was done in the Protestant church schools, more under Jackson's influence (this included the whole Inupiaq area). By 1910, virtually all Native language education and literacy development in Alaska had ceased. The last Aleut church school teaching Aleut literacy closed in 1912. In the next fifty years there was a nearly complete ban on Native language education, and Jackson's policy of extreme suppression remained in full force. This was not simply Jackson's policy, of course, but rather this was the national American social philosophy of the time, the ideal of the "melting pot", of assimilationism, assimilation of immigrant peoples and "inferior races" (including indigenous races) to the vigorous and dominant white Protestant Anglo-Saxon culture, which Sheldon Jackson and his kind so perfectly represented in Alaska. This period was to last until the effects of the Civil Rights movements of the 1960s, the resurgence of ethnicity, and the decline of the "melting pot" philosophy which finally reached Alaska by about 1970.

During the 1960s missionaries, now the Summer Institute of Linguistics or Wycliffe Bible Translators, began creating new orthographies for several Alaskan languages, and also

sustained scientific work began at the University of Alaska. It must be remembered that at no time were there ever any official government policies or legislative acts concerning Native languages, or concerning any languages in America, including even English. It was simply assumed, unofficially but firmly, that this nation was to be English-speaking, and the more exclusively so, the better. However, our own personal attempts from the University of Alaska during the 1960s to influence the educational systems in Alaska which controlled most Native education (State-Operated Schools and the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs schools) to permit the use of Native language in school programs, including literacy, were met with firm refusal. "It would undermine the authority of the teacher," said the Alaska Commissioner of Education in 1968. The effects of the social changes taking place elsewhere in the United States during the 1960s were soon to be felt in Alaska, however. One of these was the passage of the national Bilingual Education Act of 1967, which for the first time explicitly permitted (but did not require) education in the children's language where not English. In the fall of 1970, my colleague Irene Reed persuaded the Bureau of Indian Affairs and State-Operated Schools to "experiment" with use of Central Yupik in four schools. We began to print materials in the new orthography and to train Yupik-speaking teachers. This "bilingual" program, the first in Alaska in sixty years, was such an immediate and spectacular success that we were soon able to persuade the Alaska State Legislature to enact a law requiring the schools to provide a

teacher who could speak the children's language and written materials and a literacy program in their language. This law was passed on June 9, 1972; at the same time the legislature established the Alaska Native Language Center at the University of Alaska to study and document all Alaskan Native languages, to develop literatures in these, and to train Native teachers for them. The 1970s have thus been a period of dramatic renaissance, in a sense, for many Alaskan languages, of an enormous increase in the new literatures begun in the 1960s, and of great expansion in scientific work and documentation of all Alaskan languages.

However, the long dark age, 1910 to 1970, of linguistic suppression in the schools had meanwhile done irreparable harm to the life of most of Alaska's twenty Native languages. Children were slapped, beaten, ridiculed, punished for speaking their own languages in school. This treatment continued through even the 1960s, wherever there were children who still spoke an Alaskan language, and their parents were advised to speak English to them, not to speak their traditional language which they were told (and began to believe) only held them and their children back from "progress." The effect of this policy has been devastating. Not one child now knows how to speak any Native language in Southeastern Alaska. The youngest Haida and Tsimshian speakers are in their forties, the youngest Tlingit speakers are in their twenties or thirties; Eyak is nearly extinct today (only three speakers alive); and at least nine of Alaska's eleven Athabaskan languages are almost certainly

doomed to extinction (six with no speakers under twenty years of age, two with none under ten, two with a very few bilingual children, and only one, Kutchin, with communities in which the children still nowadays converse mainly in Athabaskan: Venetie and Arctic Village).

The Aleut language is now spoken by young children only at Atka. Alutiiq is spoken by some young children only at English Bay. Both these languages are thus reduced to one single spark of life for a future as a spoken language--perhaps. The rest of the Eskimo languages have survived this tragedy in somewhat better condition. I shall now consider each of the Eskimo languages in Alaska individually. (As for Aleut, I have included that in these general considerations, but shall restrict the rest of this presentation to Eskimo, especially as the situation of Aleut has just been presented excellently by Professor Bergsland.)

Alutiiq

I shall deal first with the Alaskan branch of Yupik, and with the Sugpiaq or Alutiiq branch of that. Alutiiq is the people's own name for themselves, and the most acceptable modern term to them. (They have also been called Suk, Pacific Gulf Yupik, etc.) The term Sugpiaq, probably the best academically, is obsolete in their own usage for themselves. The people identify themselves as Aleuts, along with the Aleutian Aleuts, and not as Eskimos. Although the language shades toward Central Yupik on the Alaska Peninsula, it is also a

fairly well defined unit, with fair mutual intelligibility between the extremes of Prince William Sound and the Alaska Peninsula, with several important unifying traits distinguishing it from Central Yupik. There is a fairly strong dialectal division between the East (Chugach; Prince William Sound and Kenai Peninsula) and the West (Koniag; Kodiak Island and the Alaska Peninsula).

Their population, about 10,000 before European contact, suffered a drastic decline (though not so drastic as Aleutian Aleut) to about 3,000, mostly during the period of enslavement, ca. 1785-1825. Soon after the beginning of Aleutian Aleut literature, and of course also under the influence of Veniaminov (who himself published a brief grammatical sketch of Alutiiq in 1846), the priest Elias Tyzhnov working with the Kodiak Islanders Gerasim Zyrianov and Kosma Uchilishchev, finished in 1845 and printed in 1847-48 a primer, catechism, and Gospel of Matthew, the first books in an Alaskan Eskimo language. These were again in a remarkably good orthography for their time, basically adequate, except for the prosody (word lengths), an especially complex matter in Alutiiq. (The name Alutiiq [alu'tíq] is itself a good illustration of this point. Phonetically the u is longer than the ii, but the non-gemination of the l indicates that the u is underlyingly short and the higher pitch of the ii that that is long; the u is lengthened from being in an automatically accented open syllable and the ii is shortened from being in a closed syllable.)

For reasons that are not very clear, perhaps the more

intense American contact, Russian Church literature did not continue to develop here as it did in Aleutian Aleut and Central Yupik, for which new books were printed during the period 1890-1910. Thus there was absolutely nothing printed in Alutiiq for the 124 years between 1848 and 1972! This was in fact a period of complete silence with virtually no documentation even, the first exceptions being the work of the two late Danish scholars Kaj Birket-Smith (on Chugach in 1933) and L. L. Hammerich (on Kodiak in 1953). Finally in 1972 the Alaska Native Language Center printed the first new materials in Alutiiq. These were the work of Derenty Tabios and the linguist Jeff Leer, who made the first adequate analysis of the prosody.

In spite of neglect and repression, children continued to learn this language through the period of the establishment of American canneries and Gold Rush towns (Seward, Valdez, Cordova, Anchorage), 1890 to 1913, through the decline of the literary tradition and the establishment of English-only American schools. The U. S. Naval Base on Kodiak, built in 1939, was probably the final blow. Most Alutiiqs over forty can speak the language, but the only place where young children can still do so is tiny English Bay, population 60. Even here English is now beginning to predominate. Bilingual education efforts since 1972 have concentrated at English Bay, but the future of Alutiiq as a spoken language is at best extremely precarious.

New language materials, including preliminary dictionaries, have been printed for the Kodiak and Alaska Peninsula dialects

as well as the Kenai Peninsula. Leer is now compiling a major combined dictionary for all dialects.

Central Alaskan Yupik

The other branch of Alaskan Yupik, Central Alaskan Yupik, has now by far the largest number of speakers of all Alaskan languages. Unlike the Aleutian population, most cruelly affected during the first forty years of Russian domination, the Central Yupiks were little affected by the Russians until the third and most benign forty years of their domination. The Central Yupik population has in fact risen from a pre-contact estimated 10,000 to perhaps 16,000 today.

The Central Yupik language is a rather cohesive and well defined unit. Internal dialect differences are not sharp, the main aberrances being Nunivak and Hooper Bay-Chevak. Even with these, mutual intelligibility throughout the Central Yupik area is easy. Nunivak dialect, called Čux by Hammerich (along with Suk for Alutiiq) thus by no means deserved the status of a separate language as does Alutiiq.

For our purposes Central Yupik can be divided into basically three areas: Bristol Bay, the Kuskokwim, and the Yukon. In the 1890s the Jesuits moved into the Yukon, the Moravians moved into the Kuskokwim, and the Russian Orthodox Church renewed its efforts in Bristol Bay, all three churches beginning to print religious materials in the language. Each church has more or less retained its domination, but the Russian Church in Bristol Bay the most weakly, where also

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The Central Yupik language is a rather cohesive and well defined unit. Internal dialect differences are not sharp, the main aberrances being Nunivak and Hooper Bay-Chevak. Even with these, mutual intelligibility throughout the Central Yupik area is easy. Nunivak dialect, called Čux by Hammerich (along with Suk for Alutiiq) thus by no means deserved the status of a separate language as does Alutiiq.

For our purposes Central Yupik can be divided into basically three areas: Bristol Bay, the Kuskokwim, and the Yukon. In the 1890s the Jesuits moved into the Yukon, the Moravians moved into the Kuskokwim, and the Russian Orthodox Church renewed its efforts in Bristol Bay, all three churches beginning to print religious materials in the language. Each church has more or less retained its domination, but the Russian Church in Bristol Bay the most weakly, where also

American settlement and contact was the most intense. The Moravian Kuskokwim and Catholic Yukon remained under less anglicizing pressure for a while. These two churches had an invonsistent or ambivalent policy toward Yupik and continued sporadic religious publication in them even during the period of repression 1910-1960, mainly because with a dense and increasing population, almost entirely Yupik, the Yupik language remained so strong that the missionaries at least admitted it was necessary to use the language. Some of the missionaries even liked the language. After World War II, however, with the growth of the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs schools in the Yupik area and reassertion of assimilationist policy under the Eisenhower regime, the church, especially the Catholic in the Yukon, gratefully began to abandon Yupik as the schools forced an English-only policy upon the children. As a result, many young children in many Yukon villages no longer speak Central Yupik, and in most Bristol Bay villages no children speak it. But in most Kuskokwim villages most or all children still speak Yupik. Yupik is thus gravely weakened except in the major Kuskokwim heartland. Since the beginning of the bilingual education programs in four schools in 1970, now expanded to most schools where the children speak Yupik, the chances for survival of the language, at least in this Kuskokwim heartland, have been greatly improved. Still, there is very little Yupik language in education beyond the third grade, and bringing the schools into compliance with state and federal bilingual education regulations is a slow process. The Bureau of

Indian Affairs' cooperation is basically voluntary, since it is apparently technically exempt from both state and federal educational regulations.

Over 200 elementary school books have by now been published in Central Yupik, and perhaps 100 Yupik teachers trained. A major scientific and pedagogical grammar of the language was recently published by the Alaska Native Language Center and a major comprehensive dictionary of it by Steven Jacobson will soon be published.

Siberian Yupik

The Siberian branch of Yupik is spoken by perhaps 2,000 people, about half of whom are in Soviet Siberia and half in Alaska, on St. Lawrence Island. Here, ironically, Czarist Russian domination was too late and weak to be of significance. In fact, the trade vocabulary on both sides is English, from American whalers and traders, not Russian. (E.g. while in Alaskan Yupik the word for 'butter' is maasslaq from Russian máslo, in Siberian Yupik, both on St. Lawrence Island and in Soviet Siberia, the word is bara.) I shall not here take any time to describe the Eskimo language situation in the USSR. I have studied it with interest; it is such an interesting subject that in fact a whole lecture should be devoted to it. Here I shall confine my remarks to St. Lawrence Island.

That island is an old and important center of Eskimo culture. Until 1878 it sustained a population of perhaps 3,000 Eskimos in several villages, but that winter a plague

and famine killed most of the population, and only one village, Sivuqaq or Gambell, remained. A Presbyterian mission school was built there in 1894 by V. C. Gambell. Since then there has been a slow but steady growth in population, to over 800, now in two villages. The Presbyterian school here evidently for some reason did not follow Jackson's policy very closely. In 1910 there was even one small religious booklet printed in the language, but none after that, in keeping with the general silence. St. Lawrence Islanders and their Siberian relatives continued visiting each other rather freely even after the consolidation of Soviet power in Chukotka in the 1920s. The Islanders doubtless noted that by 1932 already their Soviet relatives were using and reading and writing their language in the schools, while they themselves were not. The visits were completely stopped in 1948. In the 1960s a new missionary alphabet was devised by a Wycliffe Bible translator, and in 1971 this was revised to its present form at the University of Alaska. In 1972 the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs, which runs both Island elementary schools, was persuaded to permit the use of the language in them, but still remains somewhat unsupportive of the Yupik language program beyond the first two or three grades. Nevertheless, perhaps because of the geographical isolation of the Island and the strength of its culture, St. Lawrence Island children still all speak Siberian Yupik. Though its population is not large, Siberian Yupik thus has an excellent chance of survival, the only Alaskan language which is still being learned by all the children.

Very important, however, for the future of Siberian Yupik on both the Alaskan and Soviet sides, will be the reopening of communication between the two halves of this single small linguistic community, completely cut off since 1948. It would be enormously enriching to both sides if they could renew their ties, as a natural cultural bridge between the two political hemispheres. International communication may in the end play a decisive role in the future of Siberian Yupik. In considering also the future of the Inuit language in Alaska, I shall return to this same point, one I feel to be of great and especially obvious importance at a meeting such as this one.

Inupiaq

The Alaskan Inuit, or Inupiaqs, were little affected by the Russian presence in Alaska. Their population, perhaps 6,000 at contact, has since about doubled. The language within Alaska is mutually intelligible even at the extremes, though with some difficulty, as Alaska is the western end of the Inuit dialect continuum, and is itself rather deeply differentiated dialectally. We recognize four main dialect areas, the North Slope, the Malemiut, the Qawiaraq, and the Wales. Wales dialect is the most distinctive of all, with consonant weakening, e.g. apun > avun, siku > sigu, iqaluk > iġaluk. The present populations of these dialect areas are Qawiaraq 1,600, Wales 1,100, Malemiut 4,000, North Slope 3,800. Qawiaraq and Wales have increased somewhat since contact, Malemiut increased greatly, and North Slope declined somewhat. The number of

speakers is a different matter, however: about 2,500 for the North Slope (of 3,800, including some children), but at most 500 for Wales (of 1,100, including at best very few children), and at most 500 for Qawiaraq (of 1,600, including no children). The two Seward Peninsula dialects have suffered the worst, obviously. The youngest speakers in the area are in their teens and are from the outlying islands, King Island and Diomede, both Wales dialect. The youngest speakers of Qawiaraq must be in their thirties or forties. Qawiaraq will probably be extinct in fifty years, and Wales perhaps a generation later. In the Malemiut area small children can speak the language only in the Upper Kobuk villages of Shungnak, Ambler, and Kobuk. In the North Slope, many children still speak the language especially at Wainwright, Nuiqsut, and perhaps Anaktuvuk Pass (Helge Ingstad's "stone-age" people of the 1950s may already have been speaking English to their children!); and a minority of the children at the important center of Barrow; but in the other North Slope villages, few or no children can speak Inupiaq. The future of the Alaskan Inuit language is thus gravely threatened. The causes of this situation are clear enough. The first schools in the area were Protestant missions of various denominations, which enforced as best they could Sheldon Jackson's English-only language policy. This policy was enforced even more effectively by the government schools which replaced the missions. The Nome Gold Rush and American settlement about 1900 particularly devastated the Seward Peninsula dialects, above all the

Qawiaraq. The long siege against the language in the schools finally began to take its toll even in the Malemiut and North Slope areas, as in the 1950s and 1960s many parents there too began speaking English and not Inupiaq to their children.

During the period 1890 to 1940 there were no attempts of lasting significance to establish an orthography and a literature for the Alaskan Inuit. The originator of Inupiaq literature was Roy Ahmaogak of Wainwright (1898-1967). A church translator in the 1920s and already thinking about writing Inupiaq, Ahmaogak experimented with written Bible translation in the 1930s. In 1946 he was finally able to realize his goal satisfactorily, working with the Wycliffe Bible Translators linguist Eugene Nida in Oklahoma. The Ahmaogak-Nida orthography is of high scientific quality. (Certain practical problems with it are probably well known to many of you, and will figure in the paper about to be presented by my colleague Edna MacLean.) Ahmaogak's great achievement of 1946 came in a cold, dark season indeed for Alaskan languages. Nevertheless, through the church literacy began slowly to spread in Barrow, and by the end of the 1950s it was beginning to take root at Noorvik in the Malemiut area as well, all this in spite of, not with the help of, the schools. The movement gained power and support with the arrival of Wycliffe Bible Translators in the 1960s, and Bible translations, hymnals, and even some secular materials were published. Inupiaq literature and literacy were thus very well prepared to expand as soon as state support came in 1972 with bilingual education. However,

during this same preparatory period, 1946-1972, the ban against the language in the schools had continued in full force, so that by the time the language was finally permitted in the schools, in very many villages it was too late; the children no longer spoke the language.

Since 1972 several hundred elementary texts have been produced for the schools, a considerable amount of traditional text has been published, and very significant scientific work has been done on the grammar, especially the lexicon. A major new dictionary will shortly be published by the Alaska Native Language Center, under the editorship of Edna MacLean.

The great question facing Alaskan Inuit now is the very survival of the spoken language. Although it is dying fast, there are several communities where the language is still viable, spoken by many of the children, including even Barrow. I personally believe that as an Inuit community isolated from the much larger and more powerful Inuit world of Canada and Greenland, the Alaskan Inuit language probably cannot survive. At this time the average young person in Barrow probably still learns in school more about Greece than about Greenland; he may not even know that Greenland exists. If his knowledge about the Inuit world is broadened, if natural communication and cultural exchange do not remain blocked for him, if he is able to experience the potential cultural strength of an international Inuit world, Alaskan Inuit may find the support it needs to survive, to stop withering in its isolation before the onslaught of acculturative forces such as the school, radio,

television, cinema, and White population pressure. Differences between the United States, Canada, and Denmark are not of an ideological or political nature to prevent this international communication. Let us hope that these problems are of a technical nature that can be overcome soon. There is much at stake in this for the Inuit of Alaska and for the whole Eskimo world.

1. Proto-Athabaskan [illegible] 70-100 pp.
ISBN 0-933769-81-8

2. Athabaskan [illegible]
ISBN 0-933769-[illegible]

3. Alaska Native Language [illegible]
By Michael Krauss [illegible] $20.00

4. Alaska Native Language Party [illegible]
ISBN 0-933769-[illegible]

5. Athabaskan [illegible] 210 pp.
ISBN 0-933[illegible]

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ISBN 0-[illegible]

7. [illegible]
ISBN [illegible]

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AMONG ABORIGINAL CHILDREN IN NORTHERN COMMUNITIES

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LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AMONG ABORIGINAL CHILDREN IN NORTHERN COMMUNITIES

1

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to review the research literature on the development of language proficiency among children in Northern communities, with specific reference to the situation of children from aboriginal backgrounds. The development of both oral and written language is within the scope of the report as is the bilingual child's proficiency in his or her two languages, i.e. English or French and the aboriginal language which may or may not be the child's first acquired language (L1).

The primary focus of the literature review is on Canadian research and experience but relevant research from aboriginal language situations in the United States and other contexts will also be discussed. In order to avoid duplication, research from other circumpolar contexts will not be reviewed in this report.

The term "aboriginal" (language, communities, children, etc) is used as a general term equivalent in meaning to "indigenous" to include both Native and Inuit issues or concerns. The term "Native" includes status and non-status Indian and Metis.

The report will first examine the notion of "language proficiency" to highlight both the scope of the discussion and the fact that many theoretical issues remain unresolved with respect to what exactly constitutes proficiency in a language. Language development is clearly central to academic success or failure in aboriginal settings insofar as students may be required to develop literacy in a language different from that of the home; alternatively, the variety of English spoken in the community may differ substantially from that used in school. Clarification of the nature of language proficiency is a prerequisite to understanding these relationships.

The second major section outlines the historical context and current trends with respect to educational policy and practice for aboriginal children. This context is important for present purposes primarily because until relatively recently educational policies were explicitly designed to eradicate the language and culture of aboriginal children with the result that today the survival of many aboriginal languages is threatened. A crucial issue for many communities is the extent to which reinforcement of the aboriginal language at school can reverse the trend towards language loss.

The third section focuses on the language development (including literacy achievement) of aboriginal students both in Canada and in other countries and outlines the types of programmatic intervention that have been implemented to reverse patterns of aboriginal language loss and school failure. Evaluation results of these programs are discussed and current efforts to promote first and second language development in the Canadian context are examined.

The fourth section attempts to integrate both the research results regarding school failure among aboriginal children and interventions that appear to be successful in at least partially reversing this pattern of school failure. This theoretical framework articulates the notion of "student empowerment" as a central component of programs that succeed in promoting language development and academic achievement among minority students generally and aboriginal students in particular. "Empowerment" refers to the development of both the personal confidence and language proficiency necessary to participate effectively in the schooling process and to reflect critically on and transform forces that limit our life possibilities.

The final section articultes future directions for both research and policy in the education of aboriginal students.

DIMENSIONS OF LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

SPIRITUAL AND INSTRUMENTAL DIMENSIONS

Clearly, high levels of proficiency in English (or French in Quebec) are required for effective participation in the wider society and thus there is little dispute among aboriginal communities about the importance of strongly promoting literacy in English (or French in Quebec) in the educational system. As documented below, however, education systems throughout the world have a dismal record in promoting literacy in the societal language among aboriginal communities despite education conducted exclusively through the societal language.

One of the reasons for this legacy of school failure is the fact that school systems (particularly residential schools) set out to eradicate the language and culture of aboriginal children under the guise of helping them to acquire English (see, for example, Barman, Hebert, & McCaskill, 1986; Haig-Brown, 1988; Johnston, 1988). Not surprisingly, this eradication of cultural and spiritual identity left most children without a personal or conceptual foundation for academic growth and is also seen as a major source of many of the social problems faced by aboriginal communities. The promotion of aboriginal language

programs by an increasing number of communities represents a means of reversing this disempowerment process and regaining the spiritual identity lost by many as a result of their "educational" experiences.

In short, for many aboriginal communities the aboriginal language has major spiritual significance and is closely tied to the maintenance of community identity. Thus, loss of language is both a contributor to and an effect of loss of communal identity. The spiritual significance of language for many aboriginal communities was eloquently expressed by Dr. Marie Battiste with reference to the Mi'kmaq language in a recent interview on the CBC program *Morningside*:

> "Our Mi'kmaq survival is a very important element here and it [the language] comes from our Creator. For in our beginning when we woke in the world lost and naked to all the things in it, we asked our Creator how we should live and our Creator told us how to hunt and fish and cure what we took and how to take life from the ground and how to get medicines from the earth. He taught us about the stars and the Milky Way and the constellations and the path of our dead through the Milky Way and He taught us all that was wise and good, how to sleep and how to pray and how to listen to our dreams and to the animals that would appear to us in our dreams. And after all of that our Creator gave us a language and that language was to pass on all that our Creator gave us for our survival. And in this world [where] the ecological balances in [different parts of] the world are all very different, all the Native peoples of the world have been given their own lessons from their Creator about how to survive; and when we move away from those lessons, when we move away from ourselves as aboriginal people we find ourselves lost and crushed in the outer world but when we begin to find ourselves again within our language, within our community, within our families, there we find the kinds of spiritual as well as secular survival, at peace with ourselves, that is necessary for our nations and our people to survive and to be able to build bridges between two cultures, or many cultures" (Interview with Peter Gzowski, *Morningside*, CBC Radio, March 30, 1990).

This perspective suggests that promotion of a strong spiritual and cultural identity is the schools may be a prerequisite for both personal and academic growth among aboriginal students. By the same token, growth in aboriginal language proficiency is likely to provide a conceptual foundation for subsequent academic growth in English.

CONTEXTUALIZED AND DECONTEXTUALIZED LANGUAGE

A number of investigators have pointed to a distinction between *contextualized* and *decontextualized* language as fundamental to understanding the nature of children's language and literacy development. The terms used by different investigators have varied but the essential distinction refers to the extent to which the meaning being communicated is supported by contextual cues (e.g. cues such as facial expressions, tone of voice, reference to immediate context present in face-to-face interaction) or dependent largely on linguistic cues that are independent of the immediate communicative context. The latter situation is typical of literate uses of language such as reading a text or writing for particular purposes. The transmission of cultural knowledge through myths and legend in oral cultures also

involves many decontextualized features of language.

Among the distinctions that have been made are Bruner's (1975) distinction between communicative and analytic competence, Olson's (1977) utterance and text, Donaldson's (1978) embedded and disembedded thought and language, Bereiter and Scardamelia's conversation and composition, Cummins' (1981, 1984) context-embedded and context-reduced language proficiency (recently labelled simply as conversational vs. academic language proficiency, e.g. Cummins, 1989) and Snow's (e.g. Davidson, Kline & Snow, 1986) contextualized and decontextualized use of language. Snow's terminology will be adopted in the present report.

There is considerable empirical evidence for this distinction in the sphere of second language acquisition. Several investigators (Collier, 1987; Cummins, 1984) have reported that between four and nine years is required even for socioeconomically-advantaged minority students to attain grade norms in English academic skills. Peer-appropriate conversational L2 skills are usually attained within a considerably shorter period when the L2 is the language of wider communication in the society or community (on average about 2 years of exposure to the L2) (Cummins, 1984; Gonzalez, 1986; Snow and Hofnagel-Hohle, 1978). Both Davidson et al (1986) and Gonzalez (1986) have reported that contextualized and decontextualized language skills are relatively independent of each other among bilingual students. In other words, competence in face-to-face communication does not necessarily imply commensurate competence in academic uses of language or in ability to manipulate language outside of the immediate communicative context. Investigators also emphasize, however, that ability to manipulate decontextualized language grows out of children's experience in processing language in contextualized situations (e.g. Cummins, 1984; Wells, 1986). Thus, if children have limited exposure to contextualized uses of the school language outside the school context, the initial instruction through that language in school should be highly contextualized and related to children's prior experience in order to provide input that children can comprehend.

The Arizona Department of Education (1987) has applied this distinction in their framework for effective language teaching in Indian Bilingual-Bicultural Settings:

> ".. *for full, effective language use*, children need to be able to confidently, accurately and appropriately manipulate their linguistic knowledge - both their unconscious, tacit knowledge and their conscious knowledge *about* language - in such a way that they increasingly parallel the language of the community(ies) in which they participate. In many language communities, this involves primarily the oral dimensions of language use - listening and speaking. American Indian communities in particular have, until recently, emphasized primarily oral rather than written language as the chief carrier of cultural traditions. In language communities where written communication is valued in the native language and/or a second language (English) - as in many American Indian communities

> today - effective language use also involves the ability to accurately, confidently and appropriately manipulate the language domains associated with literacy as well" (1987, p. 15-17).

The development of increasingly sophisticated decontextualized language skills can help promote children's (or adults') ability to reflect on their experience and relate it to broader social issues. As expressed by McCarthy (1989):

> "Language acquisition, then, is a much more complex and subconscious process than repeating, imitating, and practicing. Through language, children relect on their experiences. Through language, they interpret and symbolically present their experiences to themselves and others ... **Language development is thus integrally tied to the development of children's thinking (cognition), and to the accumulation of their experiences in a given environment" (1989, p. 71).**

This accumulation of experiences and capacity to reflect on these experiences allows people to critically analyze issues and undertake concrete action to improve their lives.

In summary, the distinction between contextualized and decontextualized language use has been drawn by a considerable number of investigators and is supported empirically in a substantial number of studies. This distinction assumes particular relevance for aboriginal students insofar as there may be relatively little or no exposure to contexualized uses of English outside the school context. In addition, much of the instruction that students have traditionally experienced in school settings has been highly decontextualized with the result that they frequently have had difficulty making sense of the instructional content (Mackay, in press).

FORM AND SOCIAL FUNCTIONS OF LANGUAGE

In many English-as-second-language (ESL) instructional settings, teachers have traditionally focused on the form of the language and neglected appropriate uses of the language in social situations. The formal aspects of the language include the phonemes (sounds), morphemes (meaning units) and rules for arranging words into sentences (grammar). However, language also has social uses that reflect the relationships and interactions of its users. Power and status are often negotiated in these interactions. For example, when teachers valorize students' aboriginal language in the school context by encouraging its use, they are creating a context where the status of students' culture and the possibilities for personal empowerment are increased. On the negative side, there is considerable evidence that mismatches in communicative expectations and language use patterns between teacher and students can dramatically limit students' personal and academic growth (see, for example, Susan Philips' (1972) study of classroom interaction patterns on the Warm Springs reservation).

Of obvious relevance to the development of language and literacy skills in both English and

the aboriginal language are the functions that each language serves in the wider community and the domains within which each language is used (e.g. Church, school etc). For example, if there are few uses for vernacular literacy in the community and minimal literature or other texts in the language, then it is clearly unrealistic to expect students to develop high levels of literacy in the language. Similarly, the increase of access to television and other media in Northern communities is likely to increase the exposure to and prestige of English at the expense of the aboriginal language, resulting in language loss among the younger generation. Dorais (1989), for example, has carried out surveys in Northern Quebec and the Baffin region that suggest a marked decline in the use of Inuktitut when one shifts from inter-generational communication to communication among young people. In many aboriginal communities, however, the functions that vernacular literacy serves have increased in recent years through the publication of newspapers and other texts in the language (see Shearwood (1987) for a discussion of functions and domains of literacy among Inuit of Baffin Island).

Some investigators have argued that it is inadequate to view language and literacy just in terms of notions such as the functions they serve, domains of use and attitudes of users. Of more fundamental relevance is the extent to which the linguistic interactions people engage in promote individual and collective empowerment among previously subordinated communities. McLaughlin (1989), for example, has documented in a two year ethnographic study the expansion of functions that Navajo literacy serves in one Arizona community. He links the spread of Navajo literacy in Church and school domains to an increasing sense of control by the community over their own institutions; in other words, the increase in vernacular literacy, with respect both to growth in individuals' ability and the functions served by the language, is closely intertwined with what he terms "the individual's struggle for voice" within the institutional and ideological contexts of the community. Thus, the ways in which language and literacy are used contribute to the personal and collective identity and sense of empowerment of individuals and communities.

In summary, in examining processes of language and literacy development among aboriginal children, several dimensions of language need to be considered; first, the contextualized use of language in face-to-face situations needs to be distinguished from the more decontextualized uses of language that are linked to literacy development and are increasingly important for academic success. Students in school are required to manipulate language (particularly written text) and to think in progressively more abstract ways about language and content areas as well as about their own experience. This ability to use language to analyze the word and the world (in Paulo Freire's [1985] terms) is amplified through the acquisition of literacy and the functions that literacy serves within the

community. Literacy in the aboriginal language (or in English) may serve only marginal functions or it may be a vehicle for individual and collective revitalization of identity; in other words, it may serve empowerment functions by encouraging a critical reflection on the forces that affect our lives and opening up possibilities to transform these forces. This conception of literacy (in both L1 and L2) for empowerment is incorporated into the theoretical framework outlined in a later section as a major component of the process for reversing school failure among aboriginal students.

HISTORICAL AND CURRENT POLICY CONTEXT

The historical context of the education of aboriginal children has been amply documented in both the United States and Canada (e.g. Ashworth, 1979; Barman, Hebert, and McCaskill, 1986; Reyner and Eder, 1989). It is largely a history of cultural genocide and both physical and psychological violence against children and communities.

For aboriginal children in North America, education usually involved segregation not only from the mainstream culture but also from their own families. As described by Platero for Navajo students, the results have frequently been devastating:

> "For nearly a hundred years the policy of the United States government was to acculturate the Navajo, so that the Navajo could be assimilated into the White society. To effect this assimilation Navajo children were taken from the shelter of the family and sent to boarding school. Almost every child who entered the boarding school spoke only Navajo, and most of the people employed at the boarding schools spoke only English. When a Navajo child spoke the language of his family at school, he was punished. ... Kee was sent to boarding school as a child where - as was the practice - he was punished for speaking Navajo. Since he was only allowed to return home during Christmas and summer, he lost contact with his family. Kee withdrew both from the White and Navajo worlds as he grew older, because he could not comfortably communicate in either language. ... By the time he was 16, Kee was an alcoholic, uneducated and despondent - without identity. Kee's story is more the rule than the exception (Platero, 1975, p. 57-58).

Wilfred Pelletier (1970) paints a similar picture of the way the dominant society attempted to eradicate aboriginal languages and the consequences for parent-child relationships:

> ".. for many of us as children we were not even permitted to speak out own language. Of course we still tried to speak our own language but we were punished for it. Four or five years ago they were still stripping the kids of their clothes up around Kenora and beating them for speaking their own language... I was punished several times for speaking Indian not only on the school grounds but off the school grounds and on the street, and I lived across from the school. Almost in front of my own door my first language was forbidden me, and yet when I went into the house my parents spoke Indian.
>
> Our language is so important to us as a people. Our language and our language structure related to our whole way of life... At school we are taught English, not Indian, as our first language. And that changes our relationship with our parents. All of a sudden we begin saying to our parents 'you're stupid.'" (1970, p. 24-25).

In fact, eradication of identity was an explicit goal of most residential and missionary schools for aboriginal students in both the United States and Canada. As expressed more than one hundred years ago by the General Secretary of the Methodist Church of Canada, removal of children from the influence of their homes (for at least five years) was a necessary condition for both salvation and civilization:

> "Experience convinces us that the only way in which the Indians of the Country can be permanently elevated and thoroughly civilized, is by removing the children from the surroundings of Indian home life, and keeping them separate long enough to form those habits of order, industry, and systematic effort, which they will never learn at home. ... The return of children to their houses, even temporarily, has a bad effect, while their permanent removal [back home] after one or two years residence results in the loss of all that they have gained" (letter dated April 2, 1886, from A. Sutherland, General Secretary of the Methodist Church of Canada, Missionary Department to Laurence Vankoughnet, Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs. Quoted in Tschantz, 1980, p. 7).

Tschantz goes on to document the extreme violence used in these schools to dissuade children from using their mother tongue, the key to their identity.

> "Dolphus Shae's testimony to the Berger Inquiry (1977:90) of his experiences at the Aklavik Residential School describes not only the terrifying experiences which he and many other children endured, but also the resentment which lasted all his life: 'Before I went to school the only English I knew was 'hello' and when we got there we were told that if we spoke Indian they would whip us until our hands were blue on both sides. And also we were told that the Indian religion was superstitious and pagan. It made you feel inferior to whites ... We all felt lost and wanted to go home ... Today I think back on the hostel life and I feel furious'" (Tschantz, 1980, p. 10).

Tschantz notes that it is hardly surprising that even as late as 1972, 97% of all Indian students in Canada never graduated from high school. Yet it was only in the 1970's that the Canadian government began to wonder if these figures might be partially attributable to the "education" inflicted on children rather than to their presumed inherent inferiorities.

The educational experience of Native students in the Yukon Territory between 1890 and 1955 was summed up by Coates (1986) as follows:

> "Deemed to be marginal people living in a marginal part of the country, the Yukon Natives did not request support, or receive a workable education system. Instead they got a day school network and a residential school designed to placate the Anglican missionaries. Both were fraught with instructional irregularities and administrative problems and neither contributed much to the education of the children of the North" (1986, p. 147).

This legacy of miseducation and oppression, often focused on language, is likely to have instilled a sense of alienation and even shame among many aboriginal communities. To the extent that schools continue to impose oppressive structures on aboriginal students (albeit in more subtle forms), students will not develop the motivation for self-expression and the language development that underlies expression of self, in the school context. In short, unless language and literacy activities serve to help aboriginal students discover and value their identity, students will mentally withdraw from participation in the instructional

process in order to protect what is left of their identity.

RECENT POLICY AND PROGRAM INITIATIVES

The publication in 1972 of the National Indian Brotherhood's position paper entitled *Indian Control of Indian Education* represented a turning point in the education of aboriginal people in Canada. This paper was premised on the non-controversial (at least in the case of non-aboriginal communities) principles of Parental Responsibility and Local Control of Education and asserted that "only Indian peoples can develop a suitable philosophy of education based on Indian values adapted to modern living" (p. 3).

The position paper was accepted in principle by the Federal government and the past 20 years have seen an increasing involvement of aboriginal peoples in educational decision-making. Barman, Hebert and McCaskill (1987) summarize development since 1972 as follows:

> "Since 1972, much has happened. Numerous bands have taken over the operation of schools on reserves. Indian cultural survival schools have been established in several provinces. Curriculum products have been developed in almost every locality. Indian teacher education programmes and other post-secondary programmes have produced many graduates" (1987, p. 2).

In the Northwest Territories the move towards community control of education received a strong impetus from the 1982 Report of the Special Committee on Education entitled *Learning: Tradition & Change in the Northwest Territories*. This report recommended the creation of divisional boards of education that would have considerable autonomy in setting language and curriculum policy and these locally-controlled boards now have extensive control over educational policies in their jurisdictions.

The impact for language policy of the move towards aboriginal control over their own educational sytems can perhaps be seen most dramatically in the Kativik and Baffin Boards of Education in Northern Quebec and the Northwest Territories respectively. Rapid progress has been made in both jurisdictions during the past decade in implementing Inuktitut-medium instruction in the early grades of elementary school and in changing the curriculum to better reflect Inuit culture and traditions. For example, the Baffin Divisional Board has recently published Piniaqtavut, an Integrated Program based on traditional Inuit beliefs and perspectives and is in the process of publishing 250 Inuktitut language children's books to promote L1 literacy in the early grades.

Similar developments have taken place in Quebec among Cree and Inuit communities as a result of the James Bay Agreement. For example, the Kativik Board of Education that controls Inuit education in the province has strongly promoted education through the

medium of Inuktitut in the early grades of school. A variety of other teaching initiatives in band-controlled schools are described in Barman et al (1987) and Shkilnyk (1985).

The positive effects of the move towards Indian control of Indian education were also noted in the recent Task Force Report on Access for Black and Native People in Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia (1989). While noting that historically both Blacks and Micmacs have been given limited educational opportunities and that the Nova Scotia school system still contains "strong racial connotations" (p. 86), the Task Force pointed to the optimism within the Micmac community about the benefits of Native control of reserve-based schools. According to Micmac Education Directors and Counsellors, those Bands that had assumed control of their schools were managing to improve the educational experience of their children and thereby enhance their prospects for subsequent academic success.

However, many barriers to effective educational participation for aboriginal students remain, as noted by the Dalhousie Report on Black and Native students in Nova Scotia:

> "The low level of Black and Micmac participation in post-secondary programmes in Nova Scotia was described as a manifestation of deep-rooted problems within the province's schools. ... [Respondents] described the latter as institutions which are remote from, ignorant of, and - not infrequently - hostile to the Black and Micmac communities. We were told that many Black and Micmac children experience school as an alien environment, where the curriculum fails to acknowledge their identity, and in which white teachers don't expect them to succeed. At locations throughout the province, we were told of the pervasive practice of "streaming" - whereby teachers and guidance counsellors channel Black and Micmac students into non-academic high school programmes. Few children surmount these barriers to emerge from the system prepared for university" (1989, p. 85).

Despite the persistence of institutionalized racism in some school systems outside reserves, the current policy context is one where new educational possibilities are opening up across Canada as a result of increasing aboriginal community control of education. The actual or threatened loss of language among young people in many communities has given rise to programs for teaching the aboriginal language, either as a subject or medium of instruction. However, many problems remain in this process, not least of which are lack of teaching materials, lack of trained teachers, the perceived low status of aboriginal languages among young people in many communities, and the lack of adequate funding for language teaching efforts.

Many of these problems have been highlighted by Shkilnyk (1985) in her report for the Secretary of State on aboriginal language retention. Shkilnyk notes that Quebec is the only region of the country where the accelerating trend toward language loss has been reversed and she attributes this to the fact that in Quebec both the federal and provincial governments have committed themselves to a dynamic and progressive policy of supporting

aboriginal languages. Thus, coordinated and supportive provincial and federal policies provide an important context for aboriginal language maintenance.

RESEARCH FINDINGS ON LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG ABORIGINAL CHILDREN

Empirical research on language development among aboriginal children is relatively scarce both in Canada and in other countries. Much of the research that is available involves the evaluation of children's literacy development in school and usually only in English. Virtually no longitudinal studies have been conducted in Canada and very few in other countries. However, certain conclusions are warranted based on the research that has been conducted. Specifically, bilingual programs that strongly reinforce the child's aboriginal language (whether it is the child's L1 or L2) appear to have considerable promise in helping both to promote aboriginal language development and reverse the legacy of educational failure among aboriginal students in English-only "submersion" programs.

CANADIAN RESEARCH ON LANGUAGE AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Patterns of Aboriginal Language Loss

Burnaby and Beaujot (1986), in an analysis of 1981 census data, report that continued use of an aboriginal language is highest among the Inuit and registered Indians and lowest among non-status Indians. There is little difference among the sexes but aboriginal languages are less likely to be spoken among younger as compared to older people. The highest level of aboriginal language use is in small isolated rural communities with the healthiest maintenance of aboriginal languages in Quebec where more than half the aboriginal population continue to use their L1. However, the isolation of many of these communities has decreased dramatically as a result of the advent of television (via satellite) and videotape machines during the 1980s and this intrusion of English into the home is likely to significantly affect languge use patterns. Burnaby and Beaujot also report that higher [illegible] are correlated with lower levels of aboriginal language use which is not surprising in view of the fact that all education beyond the primary grades is conducted exclusively in either English or French.

A generally similar picture comes from the survey carried out by Phillips (1985) which outlined the distribution of speakers and the use of aboriginal languages in schools across the country. Less than 25% of aboriginal children under the age of 15 have acquired an aboriginal language as their L1. English is the dominant language of about 75% of

Canadian aboriginal people and more than 50% of status Indian children had no contact with their aboriginal language. Threatened minority languages around the world have survived in conditions of geographic isolation, lack of media contact and self-sufficiency of traditional lifestyles and all of these conditions are rapidly disappearing with predictable consequences for many Canadian aboriginal languages.

Patterns of Aboriginal Student Achievement in Canadian Schools

In 1971, barely 3% of the Native out-of-school population had attained any postsecondary education but by 1981 the percentage had risen to almost 19%, although this figure is still only about half that of the general Canadian population (Siggner, 1986). The dropout rate for Native students has also lessened significantly. As of 1984-85, 31% of Native students graduated from grade 12, up from 18% in 1975-76.

A recent study of Native student dropout in Ontario schools (Mackay and Myles, 1989) reported that over the past decade the number of registered Indian students attending provincial secondary schools between grades 8 and 13 has risen from about 2,000 to 3,200, an increase of about 60 percent. While there is a trend towards greater retention rates, there is also wide variation across the province:

> "According to ... figures for this decade, retention between Grades 9 and 12 varies from an annual average of more than 90 per cent for registered Indian students attending provincial secondary schools in the Districts of Peterborough and Brantford to an annual average low of about 11 per cent for such students attending provincial secondary schools in the Nakina District and 9 per cent in James Bay District" (1989, p. 14-15).

The overall graduation rate for registered Indian students in Ontario provincial secondary schools between 1983 and 1988 was between 33 and 55 percent of the Grade 9 enrolment three years earlier.

Siggner (1986) attributes the greater participation of Native students in secondary schools to the increasing involvement of Indian communities in controlling the education their children receive:

> "Attempts have been made to make the curriculum more relevant to Indians' daily lives and culture; Indian teachers, Indian teachers' aides, and Indian elders are now common in the classroom; and Indian languages are being taught and in some cases used as the language of instruction" (1986, p. 8).

Despite greater participation in secondary school, the achievement of aboriginal students still remains significantly below that of their non-aboriginal peers. For example, Evans' (1988) large-scale assessment of writing abilities among grade 9 students across the Northwest Territories (NWT) reported that "85% of the 'English only' students and 40% of students of Native language background wrote marginal or better narratives; the figures

for exposition were 84% and 50% respectively" (1988, p. 21). Evans concludes that in general "students of Native language background were having great trouble meeting a standard of writing in English sufficient for them to manage secondary school academic programs" (p. 22).[1] Evans notes that three major types of problem in written English were apparent in the writing of aboriginal students:

- management of ideas as illustrated in a high proportion of choppy or fused sentences;
- grammar and idiom especially verb tenses, absence of articles and unidiomatic expression;
- lack of ability to express clearly what is intended, possibly reflective of a lack of extensive vocabulary.

He also suggests that some of these problems may be addressed by the "whole language" emphasis currently incorporated in the NWT English language arts curriculum and the spread of Native language programs throughout the NWT.

In a later assessment of grade 6 students' writing, Evans (1989) noted similar differences between the writing of Native and non-Native children:

> "It is certainly the case at present that non-Native students, usually concentrated in a few of the larger communities, manage written English more effectively. Many students of Native language background are coping with the demands of two languages, and do not have the same familiarity with written English. (They do have plenty of imagination, though; but it is a struggle for many at the Grade 6 level to find ... ease of expression)" (1989, p. 5).

A study carried out in Northern Ontario (Fort Albany) by Toohey (1985) reported differences in English oral proficiency between Cree-speaking and English-background students in grades 2, 4, and 6. In fact, the English oral proficiency (assessed through individual interviews with the students) of the grade 6 Cree-speaking students was only at the level of grade 2 English-background students. Toohey points to the significance of this pattern in that

> "... it throws into doubt the opinion of many teachers and administrators involved in Native education who believe that, after about three years of English-medium schooling, student mastery of English suffices to make it subsequently non-problematic in their schooling. The fact that sixth grade Cree-speaking students exhibit the English proficiency of only Grade 2 anglophone students indicates serious problems. The Grade 6 curriculum, for example, assumes English proficiency far beyond the level these students have" (1985, p. 283).

Toohey refers to an earlier survey carried out in Northern Ontario (see Burnaby, 1980; Burnaby, Nichols and Toohey, 1980) which showed that almost no teachers in Native

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[1] "Native" in this context includes Inuit students.

schools had had any training in second-language teaching techniques and few felt such training was important professionally for them. According to Toohey, "these teachers clearly did not believe that the language of school instruction was a problem for their students" (1985, p. 278).

Toohey's study points to the fact that although students' contextualized English language skills are weak, it may serve as a facade hiding even greater weaknesses in decontextualized language abilities. Teachers may not fully realize the extent of the difficulties posed by the increasingly decontextualized language of the academic curriculum that students are required to master in the later grades of elementary school and beyond.

An ethnographic study carried out by Mackay (1986) in a Baffin community provides further support for the importance of both students' language proficiency and the instructional environment they are exposed to in determining academic progress after the early grades. The basis for Mackay's study was an assessment of the English curriculum in the schools of the Kativik School Board in Northern Quebec. Visits to about ten of the communities and discussions with school principals, schoolboard commissioners, teachers, parents and village education committees revealed that the most common explanations for students' difficulty in academic subjects were (a) home environment, (b) irregular school attendance, (c) lack of student motivation, (d) bilingualism and lack of opportunity to practice English outside the school. Mackay (1990) was struck by the fact that these explanations tended to move the bulk of the responsibility for failure from the teacher and the school to the student and community, despite the fact that few teachers of either English language or content areas employed by the board at that time had any formal training in ESL. Classroom observations carried out by Mackay showed that teachers did the lion's share of the talking in class and in many cases copying from the blackboard was one of the most common activities students were required to engage in.

The more detailed study in the Baffin region was designed to explore the effects of patterns of classroom interaction on students' learning. Mackay participated extensively in the life of the school over a period of several months and focused on the patterns of interaction in a grade 6 and grade 7 class. The grade 6 teacher-student interaction tended to involve a wide range of classroom tasks and activities which frequently had a developmental sequence to them. Mackay describes this progression in terms of the degree of contextual support for the instructional message and the cognitive demands (i.e. amount of cognitive processing) placed on the learner in order to successfully carry out the instructional activity or task. The progression in the grade 6 class was from cognitively undemanding and highly contextualized activities to cognitively undemanding decontextualized activities, to

cognitively demanding contextualized activities and finally to cognitively demanding decontextualized activities.

By contrast, the grade 7 subject matter teachers often tended to start out with, or move rapidly to, tasks that required not only an understanding of the subject matter convered in class but also an almost native-like mastery of the use of English. If, as was usually the case, students experienced difficulty in this type of cognitively demanding decontextualized task, the teacher would typically reduce the activity to a much simpler one (e.g. completing worksheets) and they tended not to employ more cognitively demanding activities or contextualized tasks addressing language development. Thus, ironically, the language demands of the grade 6 teacher were greater and more varied than those of the grade 7 teachers and they also tended to incorporate a developmental plan. The instructional sequence in the grade 7 class tended to go from cognitively demanding decontextualized to cognitively undemanding decontextualized.

Mackay's research and theoretical analysis have important implications for curriculum planning and teacher preparation in Northern communities. His study points very clearly to the contributions that ineffective patterns of classroom interaction can make to students' inadequate language and literacy development.

The research reviewed above focused primarily on the difficulties experienced by aboriginal students in development of contextualized and decontextualized language proficiency in English. These difficulties are exacerbated by the lack of opportunities for meaningful interaction in English both in the school and outside the school in isolated contexts and also by the failure of educators to integrate language and content in the instructional process. The result is that students do not develop a conceptual foundation in the target language.

CANADIAN RESEARCH ON LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY PROMOTION PROGRAMS

This section will review Canadian research on programs designed to develop students' language proficiency (in L1 and L2) and reverse the pattern of school failure experienced by many aboriginal students. Most of this research is descriptive in nature, simply describing aboriginal language or other programs with respect to implementation processes, with little or no data on student outcomes. Where standardized tests have been given, caution is frequently expressed by the investigators because of the possibility of cultural and other biases in the test. Examples of this type of program evaluation are outlined by Hebert (1987) and Shkilnyk (1985) and detailed accounts of some programs have also been published (e.g. Battiste, 1987; Wyatt, 1985).

The most detailed account of bilingual literacy development is provided in research conducted by the Kativik School Board (Stairs, in press). The study was designed to examine the relationship between early Inuktitut proficiency and later English (L2) proficiency. The sample consisted of children in grades 3 and 4 during 1984-85. These children were selected because they were the oldest to have experienced Kativik-developed Inuktitut programs in their initial school years. Predominantly second language (English or French) instruction begins by at least grade 3 in most communities. In total, about 180 children from 10 communities participated in the initial year but this number was reduced by half for the English pahse of the study in 1985-86 due to the fact that approximately half the children enrolled in the French second language program.

Inuktitut writing samples were collected by means of an 8-page story book that had a picture and a blank lined space for writing on each page. Teachers discussed the story in class prior to students' writing, using a series of large coloured pictures. One year later (in grades 4 and 5) many of the same children were given a writing test in English which included scores based on fluency, grammatical structure, and creativity. The battery also yielded an English speaking score and an overall English proficiency score.

For each Inuktitut writing sample, counts were made of the number of expressions (sentences), the average number of clusters (words) per expression, of chunks (morphemes) per cluster and affixes per root. These writing samples were also independently rated by four experienced Inuit teachers into "strong", "average", and "weak" categories.

Inuktitut writing could be classified according to fluency and complexity indices; the first category was defined by number of expressions and clusters per expression while the second was defined by length of word structures (chunks per cluster and affixes per root). These indices were largely unrelated to each other.

There was a significant positive relationship between the quality of children's Inuktitut writing and their subsequent writing in English one year later. English speaking skills, however, were largely unrelated to Inuktitut writing.

In addition, communities with higher averages in grades 3-4 Inuktitut writing also showed higher averages in English writing and total English proficiency score. The two settlements with the highest overall scores in English writing and overall English proficiency were two of the three top-rated settlements in Inuktitut writing. In addition, the two settlements ranked lowest in English writing and overall English score were two of the three lowest-rated in Inuktitut writing. These community results show that the

positive relationship between English and Inuktitut writing skills is not based only on the intelligence or general language aptitude of individual students.

At the grade 4 level, English speaking and writing scores were significantly correlated but not at the grade 5 level. This suggests that English speaking and writing become two separate skills after two years of learning the second language; or expressed differently, contextualized and decontextualized language skills become progressively differentiated as proficiency and contexts for use increase.

Level of Inuktitut was relatively low in those communities that spent less time in the early grades through the medium of Inuktitut. However, the additional time through English in these settlements did not lead to any superiority in either spoken or written English. Thus, there were no differences in English proficiency between communities that had exposed children to only two years of English instruction (grades 4/5) and the community that had spent five years (grades 1-5) in English-medium instruction.

This study supports the position of interdependence between the development of academic (or decontextualized) language skills in L1 and L2. Early academic proficiency in Inuktitut was a significant predictor of later academic profiency in English and strong promotion of the aboriginal language between Kindergarten and grade 2 had no adverse impact on later development of English skills. A considerable amount of research also suggests that development of bilingual skills is associated with increased awareness of language, and ability to manipulate language in decontextualized contexts (see Anthony, 1984). In other words, there are potential enhancements of language functioning that may result from bilingualism and biliteracy.

Several aboriginal language immersion programs have been instituted across Canada during the 1980s as a means of revitalizing languages that are threatened with extinction (e.g. in the Six Nations reserve in Brantford, Ontario). One of these programs has been evaluated with respect to its impact on students' academic achievement, namely, the Mohawk partial immersion program in the Kahnawake School system near Montreal. The research looked at students in grade 1 and 3 whose parents had enrolled their children, starting at kindergarten, in the program and compared these children to equivalent Native children in the same school but in English-only instruction.

Students in the immersion program were individually matched with the control students with respect to both vocabulary and nonverbal reasoning and compared on end-of-year achievement in English and content areas. At the grade 1 level, children in the immersion

program who had spent more than half their instructional time through Mohawk performed at a significantly higher level than the control group in Matematics, Social Studies, and Language skills, with no differences in reading comprehension. At the grade 3 level no differences were apparent between immersion and control students on any of the measures. At this level the amount of Mohawk was reduced to 90 minutes per day (compared to 3.5 hours for English) and French was also taught as a subject. The authors interpret these results as follows:

> "This means that the immersion and control pupils, although receiving different amount of English instructional time, are essentially alike on a large array of English language tests, ranging from measures of English reading skills and language competence, to science, math, and social studies. In other words, the greater instructional time devoted to Mohawk apparently has not disrupted the English language and academic development of the immersion pupils at the grade 3 level. This is so even when very careful controls are applied to equate immersion and control pupils on basic reasoning skills and vocabulary skill" (1984, p. 12-13).

This evaluation clearly demonstrates the feasibility of immersion programs in aboriginal languages as a means of promoting proficiency in the language at no cost to the development of proficiency in English. Concern among parents and policy-makers about the development of English academic skills, however, has been an impediment to the initiation of strong aboriginal language programs. Shkilnyk (1985), for example, refers to the experience of the bilingual education program at Cross Lake in Manitoba which started in 1972. Cree was used as the medium of instruction for about 80% of the instructional time in kindergarten, 60% in grade 1, 40% in grade 2 and 20% in grade 3. the program appeared to be very effective in reinforcing Native language and identity but was cancelled against the wishes of the community by the Department of Indian Affairs in the early 1980s on the grounds that the children were too far behind in English. This type of decision reinforces the rationale and urgency of "Indian control of Indian education".

The previous studies have examined the development of literacy in the aboriginal language and English primarily with respect to its academic functions. However, a major goal of recent educational innovations for aboriginal students is to revitalize not only their language but also their sense of cultural and personal identity. In other words, a major goal of the school is empowerment of students. This is particularly so in the case of Indian Cultural Survival Schools which emerged in the late 1970s and attempted to create educational structures that valued Indian culture and traditional belief systems while at the same time providing students with the academic and personal foundation necessary to participate in the mainstream society (McCaskill, 1987). Descriptions of such schools suggest that they incorporate many of the components identified in the research on effective schools (see Stedman, 1987, summarized below). Evaluation data on these schools

is scarce but Kettle (1983) reported that 67% of students at Vancouver's Spirit Rising School felt better about themselves after being at the school for five months than when they were at a regular public school.

Regnier (1988) describes the pedagogical approach of the Saskatoon Native Survival School, particularly its focus on drama and story circles. Since its inception in 1980, this school has expanded from 45 students in grades 7-10 to 130 students in grades 7-12 in 1987. The curriculum includes substantial Native components and perspectives and the school also tries to respond to the social problems likely to be faced by students - for example, homelessness, incarceration, alcoholism, drug abuse, suicide and unemployment. Regnier points out that in one year, 72 out of 77 students in the school lived in single-parent families, group homes,. with one another, or with relatives rather than in two parent arrangements. The improvizations and drama activities encouraged by the school have been so successful that plays developed by the students and staff are regularly performed before live audiences.

Although no formal evaluation has been conducted, Regnier's description suggests that students have discovered a sense of belonging and control over their own lives in the school as well as a reaffirmation of cultural identity. In other words, the school program appears to have been successful in reducing the alienation and sense of failure experienced by many Indian adolescents.

> "What seems so extraordinary about experiences at the Saskatoon Native Survival School is not the quality of the acting - because making actors of these kids wasn't the highest priority - but the quality of the group experiences. From very hesitant beginnings, the students transform themselves into confident, caring human beings who are as much concerned with one another as they are with the performance" (1988, p. 40)

Regnier cites the example of one student whose standardized test scores in the area of Reading Comprehension went from 6.8 to 9.1 in the space of four months of involvement with drama.

The experience of the school with respect to the power of drama to help students articulate a sense of pride and dignity supports theviews expressed in the Preface to a book of three plays focusing on Native themes (Heath, 1986):

> "The question is: robbed of its traditional lifestyle and livelihood, and demoralized by the Janus-faced threat of discrimination and assimilation, how does a people get its pride back? There are, of course, many perspectives on this question and many individuals and groups engaged in the struggle ... While these economic and political struggles continue, there is, at least in some circles, an awareness that a fundamental component of the restoration must be cultural, and an understanding of the individual and communal need to voice aspirations, values and struggles. Out of this awareness has come, along with renewed interest in various forms of spiritual and artisitic expression, native theatre in Canada" (1986, p. vii).

The educational implication of this perspective is that drama and other art forms should be strongly emphasized in the education of all aboriginal students.

In conclusion, the documentation available on outcomes of special intervention programs for aboriginal students suggest that improvement in students' educational achievement is likely to be dependent on the extent to which students' interaction with adults in the school context affirms the values of students' cultural identity and generates a sense of academic and personal confidence among students. Meaningful community participation in developing curriculum content and in the operation of the school also appear to be of major importance. Kirkness (1988) identifies a similar constellation of factors necessary "to empower Native students through language"; specifically, it is necessary:

> "1. to accept the 'home language', whether it be another language, dialect, or accent.
>
> 2. to develop proficiency in their Native language; and
>
> 3. to develop proficiency in English through 'real' [i.e. whole] language" (1988, p. 7).

RESEARCH ON ABORIGINAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMS IN THE UNITED STATES

Within the United States context considerable attention has been devoted over the past decade to identifying characteristics of "effective schools". According to Stedman (1987), schools that achieved and maintained grade-level success with low-income minority students had the following characteristics:

- *Cultural Pluralism.* Effective schools reinforce the ethnic identity of their students;
- *Parent Participation.* School personnel involve parents in their children's education;
- *Shared Governance.* Mechanisms for administrators, parents, teachers and students to participate in school governance are provided;
- *Academically-Rich Programs.* Students are actively engaged in learning through tasks that can be related to their own experience;
- *Skilled Use and Training of Teachers.* A collaborative learning community is established on the school campus where teachers share practical teaching techniques;
- *Personal Attention to Students.* Lower teacher-pupil ratios and extra attention to at-risk students become possible largely through increased volunteers as a result of positive school-community relations.
- *Student Responsibility for Student Affairs.* Effective schools encourage students to air their concerns and involve them in school governance.

This formulation appears to match characteristics highlighted in successful programs for aboriginal students in both Canada and the United States; for example, emphasis on

valorization of minority students' language and culture, community participation and intrinsically motivating and challenging academic tasks for students are all emphasized in evaluations of successful programs for aboriginal students and incorporated into curriculum and program development activities (e.g. Piniaqtavut in the Baffin region).

These same components are also emphasized in recent publications focused on Native American students. For example, the Arizona Department of Education (1987) has drawn up a blueprint for reversing Indian students' low achievement that attempts (a) to change the philosophy and structure of Indian education so that programs capitalize on the linguistic and cultural strengths Indian students bring to school; (b) to involve parents and communities actively and meaningfully as equal partners in the education of their children; and (c) to promote broader social changes that promote positive intercultural attitudes among non-Indian students and educators and give tribes a more powerful voice in determining the process and content through which Indian children are educated (1987, p. 5-6). McLaughlin (1989) also argues on the basis of his ethnographic study that

> "To reverse the widespread pattern of school failure, the educators of Navajo and other minority students need to reinforce the cultural identities of the children, structure the active collaboration of parents, integrate standard and vernacular forms of cognitively complex language into all aspects of classroom life, and locate the source of students' difficulties in structural conditions in society rather than in innate processing deficits of the children" (1989, p. 287).

One of the few programs for Indian students that has been evaluated longitudinally (Rosier and Holm, 1980) is consistent with these principles in suggesting that the use of students' L1 (Navajo) as a partial medium of instruction throughout elementary school together with reinforcement of students' cultural identity can result in significantly better achievement levels (in English). As expressed by Holm and Holm:

> "the importance of the Rock Point data was that they showed, contrary to the conventional wisdom, that being rural and speaking Navajo need not lead to doing poorly in school. But it is not such data that enabled students to perceive themselves as competent students: it was their own sense of progressive mastery.... Most Rock Point graduates came to value their Navajo-ness and to see themselves as capable of succeeding because of, not despite, that Navajo-ness" (1989, p. 184).

These same components are also incorporated in the inquiry-based curriculum development project at Rough Rock school on the Navajo reservation (McCarthy, Wallace, & Hadley Lynch, 1989) and in the Hualapai program in Peach Springs, Arizona (Brandt and Ayoungman, 1989).

In summary, despite the scarcity of longitudinal in-depth evaluations of programs for aboriginal students in either Canada or the United States, there does appear to be an