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## Self-Assessed Dakota Language Fluency and Suggested Strategies for Language Revitalization on the Spirit Lake Nation

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SELF-ASSESSED DAKOTA LANGUAGE FLUENCY  
AND SUGGESTED STRATEGIES FOR  
LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION ON  
THE SPIRIT LAKE NATION

by

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A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

University of North Dakota

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

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2003  
D339

This dissertation, submitted by Ruth de Larios in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

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This dissertation meets the standards for appearance, conforms to the style and format requirements of the Graduate School of the University of North Dakota, and is hereby approved.

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To the *Mni Wakan Oyate*  
The People of the Spirit Lake Nation

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## ABSTRACT

This study provides a background of the status of the Dakota language as it is spoken on the Spirit Lake Nation in northeast North Dakota. The study examined Dakota language fluency, environments where the language is used, and suggested strategies for revitalization. In order to determine the aforementioned, a brief Survey for Grant for Revitalization of Tribal Languages (Survey) was implemented. This assessment of community fluency and interest was essential to obtaining an Administration for Native Americans grant to develop a language revitalization effort that came to be known as the *Dakota Ia Unspepi*/Language Preservation Program.

The Survey for Grant for Revitalization of Tribal Languages was developed from unstructured interviews with 30 members of the Spirit Lake Nation, ranging in age from 18-90. This led to a pilot survey which was tested on an informal committee of 19 people. The final Survey was administered to a representative sample of age groups ranging in age from under twelve to over fifty-five, with a total of 311 respondents. Both sexes were also adequately represented, an important factor as Dakota has male and female versions of the language. The data were analyzed with either Fisher's exact test or a chi-square test.

The status of Dakota language on the Spirit Lake Nation would appear to be in Stage 7 of Fishman's Graded Intergenerational Dislocation Scale, which implies that the language is not being transmitted in the home environment and the majority of the



speakers are elderly. However, combining all age groups who answered the Survey, 71.7% are aware that the language is at risk and 85.5% want to “learn or improve or practice Dakota”, which bodes well for possible revitalization. Of the respondents to the Survey, 38.9% had some degree of familiarity with Dakota orthography. The introduction, by the *Dakota la Unspepi*/Language Preservation Program, of elders into Head Start has stimulated more Dakota language curriculum development, and a Dakota culture teacher is now teaching in the Head Start centers. Her work is currently being funded by the Spirit Lake Nation.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This research is focused on the *Mni Wakan Oyate*, the people of the Spirit Lake Nation, and their use of, fluency in, and interest in various strategies for maintaining the blend of *Isanti* and *Ihanktuwan* (Yankton) dialects of Dakota language specific to their Reservation. The Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) classifies Dakota as a language of the Siouan family, with the three-letter code DAK (*Ethnologue*, 2003). This three-letter code “will soon be an international standard for language identification,” Albert Bickford, SIL Professor of Linguistics, University of North Dakota (personal communication, June 5, 2003). (For further discussion, see Chapter II, Dakota Language in the 21st Century.)

Originally the Tribe was called the Devils Lake Sioux by the United States government. “Devils Lake derives its name from the Native American name Miniwaukan [sic]. Early explorers incorrectly translated the word to mean ‘Bad Spirit’ bolstered by the many legends of drowned warriors and lake monsters. The name evolved into Devils Lake” (Devils Lake Area Chamber of Commerce, 2001). *Mni Wakan*, with the adjective following the noun, may be translated into English as Spirit Lake. “To be more culturally correct, and true to their heritage, the tribe changed their name to the Spirit Lake Sioux Tribe in 1996” (Morken, 2003).

"The Spirit Lake Nation Reservation was established by Treaty between the United States Government and the Sisseton Wahpeton Sioux Bands in 1867. The Reservation is located in East Central North Dakota. According to BIA Labor Force report as of 1998 there were 5,086 enrolled members of the Spirit Lake Tribe" (Spirit Lake Nation, 2002). "[I]t is estimated that only about 2,300 members actually live on the reservation" (Morken, 2003). "The topography of the Reservation is generally consistent with the Northern Plains region, with both flat terrain and rolling hills, and some wooded areas. The major surface water feature of the Reservation is Devils Lake, which comprises 90,000 acres of area stretched over 200 miles" (Spirit Lake Nation, 2002). "The Spirit Lake Tribe Indian Reservation covers approximately 405 square miles primarily in Benson County, and in the Southern part is Eddy County, Nelson on the east boundary and Ramsey County to the north" (Spirit Lake Nation, 2002). The total acres within the Reservation boundaries are 245,141 (Spirit Lake Nation, 2002).

In the fall of 1999, a cadre of interested persons, both enrolled members of the Spirit Lake Nation and non-Indians, most of whom were employees of the tribal college, Cankdeska Cikana Community College, discussed the possibility of initiating a language preservation program on the Reservation. (For definition of terms related to language preservation, see brief definitions in Background for the Study, below.) In order to determine language use and interest in revitalization, a one-page survey was designed and disseminated by the interested parties at the College. Every attempt was made to obtain a representative sample of all age groups over the age of twelve. This Survey for Grant for Survival of Tribal Languages (Appendix A), henceforth referred to as the Survey, was essential to obtaining an Administration for Native Americans (ANA) Grant so that



activities relevant to language revitalization and preservation could be funded. (See discussion of the ANA Grant, below, in Background for the Study.)

Having been an evaluator for the *Wounspe* Program, the bilingual program at what was then the Four Winds Tribal School, in 1995, the researcher was aware that children on the Spirit Lake Nation were not starting school with Dakota as a first language. This situation was common knowledge on the Reservation. Because the majority of indigenous languages in North America are no longer learned in the home as first languages, the pedagogy of second language acquisition must be applied in order for the languages to remain viable (Berlin, 2000, p. 26). Therefore, the Survey was developed with this assumption. The Survey provided not only a self-assessment of fluency in Dakota language but information on what language revitalization activities would be of interest to the *Mni Wakan Oyate*.

#### Background of the Spirit Lake Dialect

A Dakota speaker, Lorraine Grey Bear, current director of the *Dakota la Unspepi* [Learning Dakota Language]/Language Preservation Program, has frequently stated, “The people of the Spirit Lake Nation have their own unique dialect” (personal communication, October 19, 1999). This is due to the bands of *Pabaksa*, *Ihanktuwan* speakers, and the *Sisseton* and *Wahpeton*, *Isanti* speakers, that came to reside on what was originally the Devils Lake Sioux Reservation. S!L categorizes *Ihanktuwan* and *Isanti* as two separate dialects of Dakota language (*Ethnologue*, 2003). (For further discussion, see Chapter II, Dakota Language in the 21st Century.) This blend would make it possible to represent the language spoken on the Spirit Lake Nation as a “unique dialect” as described by Mrs. Grey Bear, above.

The classification of the language of the Spirit Lake Nation as a distinct dialect of Dakota is based on the perceptions of the speakers rather than on analysis by linguists. Today, Indian people are often confident about their own insights into their languages whether or not they are in accord with linguistic analysis. (See discussion of Assiniboine under Dakota Language in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Chapter II.)

### *Formation and Settling of the Spirit Lake Reservation*

The Dakota language of the Spirit Lake Nation resulted from a period in history that was a time of great turmoil for the Dakota people. In 1862, prior to the 1867 Treaty which established what was to be the Devils Lake Sioux Reservation, "Most were driven [from Minnesota] or fled onto the plains of the Dakota Territory while others fled to Canada. [...] The Sisseton and Wahpeton bands ... settled in northern Dakota" (Department of Public Instruction, 1997, p. 15).

"The approximate area that now comprises the Spirit Lake Nation was occupied by the [Cut Head] *Pabaksa* band," Louis Garcia, Dakota Culture Instructor, Cankdeska Cikana Community College (personal communication, March 13, 2001).

When the Sisseton and Wahpeton took possession of the land on the present-day reservation, there was a group of the 'Cut Head band' of the Ihanktowana (Yankton) Dakota living in the Grahams Island area, as were many mixed-bloods, Metis, and workers for the cavalry. The Cut Heads integrated and became a part of the Spirit Lake people. (Department of Public Instruction, 1997, p. 4)

Note that the 1867 Treaty, as mentioned in the previous section, was established between the United States and the Sisseton Wahpeton bands.

The reason for the flight of the Sisseton Wahpeton bands, among others, was the Mankato massacre, also referred to as the "Dakota Conflict", in Minnesota in 1862



(Linder, 1999). Some of the Isanti speakers fled to Fort Totten, North Dakota (Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux Tribe, n.d.). Late annuity payments had resulted in Indian agents refusing to distribute provisions to starving Dakota at the Lower Agency in Redwood, Minnesota. This brought about an uprising which led to the killing of hundreds of whites. Over three-hundred Dakota men were tried and 38 eventually hung, in Mankato, Minnesota, in what "stands as the largest mass execution in American history" (Linder, 1999). "In April, 1863, Congress enacted a law providing for the forcible removal from Minnesota of all Sioux" (Linder, 1999). Some of those people fled and found refuge on what is now the Spirit Lake Nation. All the Dakota who came were seeking a place where they could live as their lands were increasingly usurped by white settlers. Mrs. Grey Bear remembers an elder in her family often saying that Spirit Lake has been a sanctuary for many people (personal communication, October 22, 2002).

### *The Boarding School Era*

The unique version (or possibly several versions) of Dakota language on the Spirit Lake Nation faced tremendous obstacles to its survival. Among these was the gap in intergenerational transmission caused by placing Indian children in boarding schools, isolating them from their families, and forbidding them to speak Dakota. The Seven Dolors Sister School operated from the 1880s to 1926 in what is now the Fort Totten District (Lambert, 2001, p. 51). In a booklet co-written with, and printed by, her friend, Cherry Monson, *Dakota Hoksiyopa Wan "A Dakota Child"*, Grace Lambert (2001) a Dakota elder and life-long resident of the Spirit Lake Nation writes of her experience at the Sister School, "None of the children were allowed to speak the Dakota language, not even out on the playground" (p. 56). Not only were the children not allowed to speak

were as afraid of Sister Coleman as she was when she was their teacher. There were only three nuns that did not scare Grace” (p. 51). In addition, the separation from family for months at a time was emotionally devastating.

Even though many families resided at Fort Totten or were only a couple of miles away, they were seldom allowed to see their children. “Grace turned to wave at her family as they prepared to leave. She knew in her heart it would be many months before she would see them again” (p.52). “When her parents left, Grace experienced an emotional letdown. She went from great joy to the deepest sorrow at their parting. Her body shook as she sobbed the heart-breaking tears of a child” (p. 54).

Until attending the Sister School, Grace Lambert had been raised in a loving environment by her parents and extended family. At the Sister School she, like the other Indian children, was faced with separation from her family, was forbidden to speak her language, and was subject to punishments that were typical of the schools in that era.

When the children first arrived at the school they didn’t know a word of English, so in order for them to teach the children, they were often pushed or shoved. An especially inattentive child might have his or her ears pinched. Grace had never seen punishment at home. She and the other children were never treated this way before so they thought they were being abused. (Lambert, 2001, p. 56)

Grace Lambert, the researcher’s godmother, had frequently told how she was disciplined when she was a child living with her extended family. When she did something naughty, instead of getting a scolding, an adult in the family would say, “*He wakan ye*,” “That’s sacred.” In this way the children were taught to have respect for everything and not misuse objects or animals or be rude to people.



In contrast, at the Sister School, the children were taught that their Dakota culture was sinful and worthless. "The sisters thought they were pagan and often told them that they needed to change their ways. This made the children confused so they were shy and appeared backward. They even began to feel ashamed of their way of life" (Lambert, 2001, p.56).

*The Impact on Dakota Language of the Four Districts  
of the Spirit Lake Reservation*

Crow Hill, St. Michael, and Tokio (Wood Lake), form three of the four districts that comprise the Spirit Lake Reservation. Fort Totten, which became a district in 1938, is where the original military fort and Indian boarding school are located. Today, the Fort is an historical site which attracts tourists, but which is largely ignored by the Reservation community. The present-day district of Fort Totten, now the hub of the Spirit Lake Nation, is where the following are situated: the Blue Building which houses tribal offices, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the post office; the ambulance, fire and police stations; the elementary, middle, and high schools, as well as Cankdeska Cikana Community College; a store, gas pumps, and laundromat; three churches; a variety of tribal program offices; and various groups of housing. Also, Fort Totten, like all the districts, has a Head Start and a recreation/community center. Other than those facilities, Crow Hill has only housing. Tokio and St. Michael each have, in addition, a small store which houses a post office, and at least one church.

The distance between the districts (Appendix B) made communication less frequent in the days before cars and telephones. (Horses and wagons were still commonly used on the Reservation in the 1950s and few people had telephones.) The

relative isolation of the districts enhanced the development of nuances of speaking Dakota that evolved in each district.

Furthermore, prior to the 1960s, when people were more isolated, the districts often used distinct words and phrases to designate the same item or situation. A Dakota speaker in his fifties stated that when he was young, "You could tell which district a person was from by the way they talked" (personal communication, February 8, 1994). "[L]anguages differentiate internally as speakers distance themselves from one another over time and space; the changes result in the creation of dialects of the languages" (Wardhaugh, 1998, p. 131). While the four districts on the Spirit Lake Nation do not have distinct dialects, there are some variations in speech, particularly in the area of vocabulary. These variations are noticeable when speakers from the Spirit Lake Nation interact with each other and with speakers from other reservations.

On the Spirit Lake Nation, the tribal housing complexes, which brought together people from the rural areas of the districts, were established in the 1960s, but rather than strengthening the language, the housing complexes had a negative impact. "Ongoing government attempts to assimilate American Indian/Alaska Natives led to policies that resulted in further disintegration of the traditional kinship system [for reference to which, see Chapter II], breaking down the traditional locus for language and culture transmission. Among these were the urban relocation programs of the 1940s and 1950s and the building of HUD housing" (Berlin, 2000, p. 23). It is common knowledge that many people from the Spirit Lake Nation, then the Devils Lake Sioux Indian Reservation, were relocated to Chicago and California.

### *The Male and Female Versions of Dakota Language*

In addition, Dakota has special components which consist of what the Spirit Lake people call the men's and the women's language (see Chapter II). This can lead to another frustration for those who attempt to use the language if, for example, they are males who were raised by a grandmother. People often can't resist teasing them and telling them, "You talk like a woman." The researcher is personally acquainted with a woman who had four brothers and has been teased for talking like a man. Even though the teasing is in fun, people become self-conscious and won't speak Dakota. When a discussion of teasing came up at a meeting of the Dakota Language Preservation Advisory Committee, February 2, 2001, a young man in attendance gave this encouraging advice, "There are people who will laugh at you [if you don't talk right], but there's a lot of humor in our culture, so they don't laugh at you to put you down. You'll say it right the next time." Unfortunately, people may be so self-conscious about the way they speak that they just won't try anymore.

The miracle is that the Dakota language has survived at all. Tremendous obstacles including the increasing intrusion from the mass media in today's world for the past four decades, direct pressure from the federal government on reservation educational systems over the first six decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and from the federal government's squelching of the support of various churches for literacy in Dakota in the late 1800s, have conspired to eradicate Dakota language and culture. (Beyond the scope of this dissertation is the impact, on Dakota language and culture, of disease, genocide, and the, all too often coerced, signing of treaties.)



## Language and Culture

"It is a well-accepted notion among sociolinguists that language is not just an instrument of communication. It is also a symbol of social or group identity, an emblem of group membership and solidarity" (Grosjean, 1982, p. 117). Language is the main purveyor of values and culture, yet on the Spirit Lake Nation today, in the year 2003, English rather than Dakota is most often the language of choice.

In the case of Dakota, as with Flathead, an Eastern (Montana) Salishan language discussed by Thomason and Kaufman (1988, p. 101) ... "the language is not the only part of the culture that is being lost." That spoken English is seen as a necessity on the Spirit Lake Reservation, and that its use is generally accepted, is also indicative of the loss of many aspects of culture unique to the *Mni Waukan Oyate* (Spirit Lake People).

Although a few words are familiar to most residents of the reservation, such as *candi*, [pronounced chahndee] 'cigarette', Dakota language appears to be rapidly becoming fossilized, restricted to only a few environments with phraseology that would not be used in everyday conversation. For example, Dakota on the Spirit Lake Nation appears to be used ceremonially, such as offering a prayer of thanks at a tribal feed, rather than being the main vehicle for communication. As mentioned in the Introduction, children are not starting school with Dakota as a first language.

On the other hand, young people are involved in drum groups where they sing Dakota songs. These drum groups are often part of extracurricular activities at the Four Winds Community High School and the Tate Topa Tribal Elementary and Middle Schools. Further encouraging young singers, but beyond the scope of this study, is that Dakota is becoming somewhat of a pan-Indian language, as many drum groups on "the



powwow trail” sing in Dakota although the singers are from other tribes. Many of the people on the powwow trail are from tribes that do not have a tradition of powwows, so they emulate the Dakota. This may go back for generations, as was the case with a Pueblo man who stated that he was taught to pray in Dakota (Vivian Lohnes, personal communication, May 20, 2003).

On the Spirit Lake Nation, Dakota language may be spoken, at least to some degree, in homes where elders either live with the family or are raising their grandchildren. Some young people are at least able to understand the language on, perhaps, an intermediate level. Although the researcher has not studied the fluency of those of the younger generation who speak some Dakota, the researcher has heard repeatedly that the elderly speakers are able to use more of the language in terms of knowing complex constructions and ways to express concepts. The Dakota of the younger speakers may be indicative of a situation where

...the non-native language is employed less frequently and in fewer contexts. Reduction in use in turn reduces the 'input' on which new speakers of the language can draw in order to formulate their own internalized grammar. While this may not affect the most common constructions in the language, its effects can be greater on structures which are less frequently used. These may now be heard so rarely that learners find it difficult, if not impossible, to internalize rules which correctly account for them. (Hock, 1986, p. 530)

Also complicating matters is the fact that people are hesitant to use the language because they think they will “say something wrong”. This fear is due in part to the language not being generally used for conversation any more. A fluent Dakota elder in her sixties put the reason for the lack of the present day use of Dakota language thusly, “It’s because of feeling it’s not good to be Dakota. They made us feel so insignificant as Dakota people that we did not feel it was important to pass on the language” (Lorraine

Grey Bear, personal communication, November 4, 1999). "Based on their own boarding school experiences, many parents fear that learning the heritage language, at home or in school, may hinder their children's development in English and preclude them from future opportunities" (Berlin, 2000, p. 23).

In addition, even when dedicated fluent speakers try to develop educational programs for the schools, they find that no educational materials are appropriate. Because of the linguistic differentiation that has developed on the Spirit Lake Nation, even though fluent speakers from Spirit Lake and other reservations, including speakers of Lakota, can understand each other, educational materials designed for "Dakota" language are not suitable for the population of the Spirit Lake Nation, particularly because of differences in vocabulary and orthography. For example, *cepansi* [chepanshi] is a woman's female cousin and *sec'esi* [shech'shi] is a woman's male cousin on the Spirit Lake Nation. The apostrophe indicates glottalization, and [c] represents [ch]. However, a website to teach Dakota language, sponsored by the Native American Women's Health Education Resource Center (NAWHERC) of the Yankton Sioux Tribe, *Ihanktuwan* speakers, has the following forms: *ic'epansi* and *c'esi*. The writing system as well as the words are different as [c'] on the NAWHERC site indicates [ch] and glottalization is not marked. Another difference was *emac'yapi*, 'my name is', which would be *emakiyapi* on the Spirit Lake Nation (Dakoteyah Wogdaka!-Talk Dakota!, n.d.).

However, despite tremendous odds many languages, including Dakota, did in fact survive. Paradoxically,



...language shift began to accelerate after the BIA abandoned its English Only policy. That is, linguistic assimilation seems to have proceeded more efficiently on a laissez-faire basis than it did through coercion. Pragmatic parents tend to see advantages in raising their children mostly or entirely in English, the language of social and economic mobility. (Crawford, 1996, p. 7)

In order to address the nature of language shift on the Spirit Lake Nation, the extent of use of Dakota language had to be evaluated, including fluency, literacy, and environments where the language is used. Interest in Dakota language and awareness of risk of language loss had to be determined, as well as possible activities that could stimulate Dakota language use. As a small first step, the Survey for Grant for Survival of Tribal Languages was implemented and is being reviewed in this study.

#### Background for the Study

Title I-Native American Languages Act, Public Law 101-47, October 30, 1990, SEC. 104. (1), (Appendix C) recognizes the special status of Native American languages and cultures and states that, "It is the policy of the United States to preserve, protect, and promote the rights and freedom of Native Americans to use, practice, and develop Native American languages." Title I SEC. 104. (2) further recognizes that teachers of Native American languages may be exempted from "teacher certification requirements." Vital to the fomentation of pride and respect for current and potential speakers of Native Languages, Title I SEC. 104. (3) acknowledges use of Native American languages as a means of instruction encourages and supports (C) "increased student success and performance", (D) "increased student awareness and knowledge of their culture and history", and (E) "increased student and community pride."

Native American language projects may be funded through private endowments; federally they are often administered through the Administration for Native Americans

(ANA), under the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), which, in turn, is under the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). At the Region II ANA T/TA Center Cluster Seminar, Robert Parisien explained that the ANA language projects are funded one time only for no more than three years (personal communication, April 24, 2002). Such funding, obviously, does little to offset years of government repression of and outright attacks on Native American languages.

The Federal Register, Vol. 63, No. 6, Friday, January 9, 1998/Notices, included the following: "ACTION: Announcement of availability of competitive financial assistance to assist eligible applicants in assuring the survival and continuing vitality of their Native American languages" (p. 51794). An application kit with the necessary forms could be obtained to apply for a grant.

Under Section E., Eligible Applicants, Program Announcement No. 93587-2002 stated that the eligible applicant, in this case the Spirit Lake Nation, may decide that its objectives "would be accomplished more effectively through a partnership with a tribal school [or] college..." (p. 51797). In the spring of 1999, Cankdeska Cikana Community College (CCCC), acting as the recipient organization, applied for an Administration for Native Americans (ANA) grant to design projects to "promote the survival and continuing vitality" (p. 51795) of the Dakota language on the Spirit Lake Nation, following the guidelines for the ANA Program Announcement No.93612982, with the Project Title *Dakota Ia Unspepi* (Learning the Language). Funding from the ANA Grant would be used to establish the *Dakota Ia Unspepi* [Learning Dakota Language]/Language Preservation Program.



Note the use of the phrase “promote the survival and continuing vitality”. This phrase is used repeatedly throughout the Program Announcement. Nonetheless, clear definitions of terminology relevant to promoting language vitality are provided.

## Part II: General Guide to Applicants

The following is provided to assist applicants to develop a competitive application.

### A. *Definitions*

- “Language preservation” is the maintenance of a language so that it will not decline into non-use.
- “Language vitality” is the active use of a language in a wide range of domains of human life.
- “Language survival” is the maintenance and continuation of language from one generation to another in a wide range of aspects of community life. (p. 51801)

In order to determine the status of a language, Part I A. Purpose and Availability of Funds declares,

While the Federal government recognizes that substantial loss of Native American languages over the past several hundred years, the nature and magnitude of the status of Native American languages will be better defined when eligible applicants under the Act have completed language assessments. (Federal Register, 2001, 51795)

Assessment was further stressed in the ANA application under Part C. Proposed Projects To Be Funded, Category 1-Planning Grants, which included the statement that, “The purpose of a Planning Grant is to conduct an assessment and to develop the plan needed to describe the current status of the language(s) to be addressed and to establish long-range goals to ensure its survival” (Federal Register, 2001, p. 51796). An immediate determination of the status of the Dakota language on the Spirit Lake Nation was deemed

necessary by the cadre of interested persons, both enrolled members of the Spirit Lake Nation and non-Indians, most of whom were employees of the tribal college, as mentioned in the Introduction, in the fall of 1999,

In order to achieve this end, the following methodologies were put forward, also under Category I-Planning Grants:

Data collection, compilation, organization and description of current language status through a "formal" method (e.g. work performed by a linguist, and/or a language survey conducted by community members) or an "informal" method, (e.g. a community consensus of the language status based on elders, tribal scholars, and/or other community members) ... (p. 51796)

A pilot survey which combined both aspects of the formal method was developed from the input of Spirit Lake community members and the researcher, in the role of the linguist. This pilot survey led to the development of the Survey for Grant for Survival of Tribal Languages (Appendix A). (The methodology will be discussed in Chapter III of this study. See also *Dakota la Unspepi* [Learning Dakota Language]/Language Preservation Program Goals, below.)

Vital to the process was that knowledgeable community members initiated and continued to have input into designing and administering the Survey. From the onset, emphasis and interest were on strategies for revitalizing the Dakota language as spoken on the Spirit Lake Nation. For that reason, a component delineating suggestions to "encourage people on this Reservation to learn Dakota" was included on the Survey.

#### Purpose of the Study

##### *Pilot Survey*

The Grant was written by Dr. AnnMaria Rousey; however, the researcher and Mrs. Lorraine Grey Bear, a speaker of Dakota language and an enrolled member of the

Spirit Lake Nation, collaborated with Dr. Rousey and were profoundly involved in providing input for the writing process. Prior to the development of the grant, the researcher and Mrs. Grey Bear received training in writing grants for language preservation and revitalization at a workshop sponsored by the Administration for Native Americans (ANA).

Utilizing both Mrs. Grey Bear's knowledge of the Reservation community and the Dakota language and the researcher's educational background in linguistics, the responsibility fell on them to conduct interviews with 30 enrolled members as to their opinions on the status of the community's fluency in and use of the Dakota language. This led to the development of a pilot survey administered to 19 people of a variety of ages.

The Survey for Grant for Survival of Tribal Languages underwent several revisions until it could be reduced to one page so that it could be readily answered without being intimidating. Anything that implied government authorship or an academic test was judiciously removed by both the interviewees and the respondents to the pilot surveys. (This will be discussed in Chapter III.) The final Survey was administered to 311 residents of the Spirit Lake Nation.

#### *Survey for Grant for Survival of Tribal Languages*

The purpose of this study was to determine the use of, fluency in, and interest in strategies for revitalization of the dialect of Dakota spoken on the Spirit Lake Nation. In order to discern interest in revitalization strategies, it was necessary to evaluate fluency and literacy in the language. This was cursorily accomplished through self-assessment using brief questions on the Survey for Grant for Survival of Tribal Languages. (The



Survey will be discussed in depth in Chapters III and IV.) Literacy was also briefly addressed. (Chapter II includes issues of literacy particular to Dakota speakers.)

An indirect way of assessing fluency was examined by two questions. The most telling was asking the respondent if they could carry on a conversation with elders in Dakota. (For more information see Chapter IV.) Another means of corroborating the respondents' self-assessed fluency was asking the environments in which Dakota language was used. (See Chapter IV.)

A vital component of developing the Survey was assessing the relationship of some of the goals (for revitalization of Dakota language) of the incipient *Dakota Ia Unspepi*/Language Preservation Program, which was eventually developed with funding from the ANA Grant, to the Survey for Grant for Survival of Tribal Languages. On the Survey, the strategies for revitalization were listed under the category, "What do you think would encourage people on this reservation to learn Dakota?"

As many goals of the *Dakota Ia Unspepi*/Language Preservation Program were out of the province of a brief, public survey, only the following goals, of those listed below in *Dakota Ia Unspepi*/Language Program Goals for Revitalization of Dakota Language, were investigated in this study. Discussed will be Goal 4, placing *kunsi/unkana* (grandmothers/grandfathers) in the Head Start Program; Goal 6, discussion groups in each district; Goal 9, developing Dakota language cassettes for sale; Goal 10 creating CDs for use in classrooms; and Goal 11, stories and lessons on KABU.

For the sake of brevity, the wording of the above Goals as described on the Survey differs from the wording in the Grant. This will be considered in the Methodology section.



One additional category was included in the Survey under the category, "What do you think would encourage people on this reservation to learn Dakota." This category was "college classes at Cankdeska Cikana." Because college classes in Dakota language are already being offered, there was no need to incorporate them into the goals of the Dakota Ia Unspepi Learning the Language Grant. However, this category was included on the Survey in order to assess community interest.

Need for the *Dakota Ia Unspepi* [Learning Dakota Language]  
Language Preservation Program

Overall in the Spirit Lake Nation, the current situation is that the Dakota language is generally not being transmitted in the home environment. In addition, educational opportunities for learning the language are limited. Head Start children on the Reservation are taught the colors, numbers, animal names, and simple commands in Dakota. Dakota language instructors teach at the Tate Topa Tribal Elementary and Middle School and the Four Winds Community High School. Much of what is learned in Head Start is carried over in the elementary and middle school classes as the grade and middle school instructors concentrate on colors, numbers, animals, and simple greetings. However, the students may also learn songs in Dakota and participate in drum groups. The high school children often give short presentations in Dakota at school assemblies.

Unfortunately, these activities are far from promoting fluency. For one thing, the scope of language use is restricted due to time constraints imposed on the Dakota language teachers in the classroom. Another difficulty has been, until recently, the frequent lack of support from the non-Indian classroom teachers. Dakota language and culture teachers would go into the various classrooms to teach, and report that they were

often 'welcomed' by the classroom teacher with a groan, rolling of eyes, and even negative comments. These scenarios have been discussed repeatedly at meetings of the Dakota Language Preservation Advisory Committee, of which the researcher is an honorary member. Dakota Language I and II are offered at Cankdeska Cikana Community College. However, these classes are only taught for three hours a week, transfer as humanities credits, rather than as language credits, and have few enrollees.

While these efforts at teaching the language are an important first step, their implementation has been uneven. "To succeed, language renewal policies require not only good intentions but enormous practical efforts" (Crawford, 1996, p. 7). "Virtually all [tribes] need assistance in developing and publishing curriculum materials. ... Another key task is teacher training, complicated by the fact that Indian language speakers often lack academic credentials, while outsiders lack essential cultural and linguistic knowledge" (Crawford, 1996, p. 7).

In order to determine whether the *Mni Waukan Oyate* (Spirit Lake People) were interested in using, learning, or practicing Dakota language, as well as what activities might stimulate interest in the Dakota language, the data from the Survey was used as a basis for ascertaining such interest. These data provided an integral part of the application for funding which was submitted to the Administration for Native Americans (ANA) in 1999 with Cankdeska Cikana Community College as the recipient organization. This funding would be used to develop the *Dakota Ia Unspepi*/Language Preservation Program. (See detailed discussion under "Purpose of the Study".)

## Proposed Goals for Revitalization of Dakota Language

The following language activities were proposed by the nascent staff and collaborators in the establishment of the *Dakota Ia Unspepi*/Language Preservation Program through the ANA grant:

- 1) Establishment of a Dakota Language Preservation Advisory Committee of fluent elders.
- 2) Holding monthly meetings of the Dakota Language Preservation Advisory Committee to review language activities and materials.
- 3) Increasing the number of Dakota Language Teachers in the Tate Topa Tribal Elementary and Middle School and the Four Winds Community High School by at least five and possibly ten. Prospective teachers will be recruited from younger, fluent speakers. These teachers will complete classes in writing Dakota and teaching methodology. They will then be eligible for certification as Eminent Scholars, through the State of North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (DPI). (College degrees are not a factor. The focus is on the crucial need for placing fluent speakers in the classroom as teachers.)
- 4) Placing *kunsi* (grandmothers) and *unkana* (grandfathers) as teachers in the Head Start Programs.
- 5) Producing educational materials and activities for the *kunsi/unkana*.
- 6) Monthly language activities in each of the four districts on the Spirit Lake Nation.
- 7) Implementing summer language immersion camps.



8) Developing a web page for the *Dakota Ia Unspepi*/Language Preservation Program.

9) Creating Dakota language cassette tapes for home use.

10) Creating Dakota language CDs for use in the school (or home).

11) Stories and lessons in Dakota language on the tribal radio station, KABU.

12) Establishing Dakota language archives in the Valerie Merrick Memorial Library housed in Cankdeska Cikana Community College.

#### Delimitations

The following delimitations apply to this study:

1. The researcher is a non-Indian who was an instructor, for eleven years, at Cankdeska Cikana Community College, formerly Little Hoop Community College, on the Spirit Lake Reservation. Among the classes taught were English Composition I and II, Introduction to Linguistics, Introduction to Sociology, and Basic English.

The researcher is an honorary member of the Dakota Language Preservation Advisory Committee and regularly attends meetings. A Dakota elder, Grace Lambert, now deceased, a language instructor for over twenty years, who was one of the original members of the Dakota Language Advisory Committee, adopted the researcher as a *takoja* (grandchild) many years ago.

The researcher is familiar with the Spirit Lake Reservation community both as a resident and as a participant in community activities, and interacts with friends, acquaintances, and students, of all ages (9 to 91), with all levels of proficiency in Dakota from fluent to knowing only a few words.

2. The researcher has worked closely with the *Dakota Ia Unspepi*/Language Preservation Program personnel and/or a consultant, who speaks Dakota and is an enrolled member of the Spirit lake Nation, at all stages of the writing and study process.

#### Assumptions

1. The Survey for the Grant for Survival of Tribal Languages served as a reliable tool for a preliminary assessment of the status of Dakota language, as well as community interest in strategies for revitalization, on the Spirit Lake Nation.

2. Insofar as possible, all members of the reservation community over the age of twelve were given the opportunity to participate in the Survey.

#### Definitions of Terms

Dakota Language. Unless otherwise designated, Dakota language refers to the specific manner of speaking Dakota language on the Spirit Lake Nation. These speech patterns appear to be a combination of *Ihanktuwan* and *Isanti* which developed from the settlement patterns of the Dakota bands on the Spirit Lake Nation. These unique speech patterns have never been categorized by linguists.

Enrolled member. A person having  $\frac{1}{4}$  or more blood quantum, in the case of the Spirit Lake Tribe. Blood quanta from other "Sioux" tribes are counted. Blood quanta from non-Sioux tribes are not.

Indian. "Indian" and "Native American" will be used interchangeably to refer to descendants of the aboriginal populations of the continent of North America.

Sioux. The term Sioux, often used to refer to the Dakota, Lakota, and Nakota people, will be used only when absolutely necessary, such as within a quotation, because some Dakota find it offensive. The term 'Sioux' is a corrupted version of an Ojibway-

Algonquian term 'Naud-o-wa-se-wug' meaning 'like unto the adders.' The term was later corrupted resulting in the retention of the syllable that sounds like 'Sioux'" (North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, 1997, p. 4). The next quotation gives the intermediate, French, version of the Ojibway word, showing the transition prior to the shortened version, 'Sioux'. "The United States government took the word Sioux from (Nado' -sioux), which comes from a Chippewa (Ojibway) word which means little snake or enemy. The French traders and trappers who worked with the Chippewa (Ojibway) people shortened the word to Sioux" (Sisseton Wahpeton Sioux Tribe, n.d.). Despite the negative connotation, the Dakota people do frequently use the word Sioux to refer to themselves, as is apparent by the source of the preceding quotation.

Spirit Lake Nation. This will be used interchangeably with the Spirit Lake Reservation, located in eastern North Dakota. The people called themselves the *Mni Wakan Oyate*. They were previously known as the Devils Lake Sioux Tribe, labeled thus by non-Indian entities. In 1996, the enrolled members voted to change their name to reflect a more accurate translation of the Dakota words, *Mni Waukan*, or Spirit Lake. At that time, the name of the Reservation was also changed. The first name given the Reservation, again by non-Indians, in 1867, was the Devils Lake Sioux Reservation.

#### Organization of the Study

Prior to beginning the research, the author and Mrs Lorraine Grey Bear, a speaker of Dakota language and an enrolled member of the Spirit Lake Nation, received training in writing grants for language preservation and revitalization at a workshop sponsored by the Administration for Native Americans (ANA).

Utilizing both Mrs. Grey Bear's knowledge of the Reservation community and the



Dakota language and the researcher's educational background in linguistics, the responsibility fell on them to conduct interviews with 30 enrolled members as to their opinions on the status of the community's fluency in and use of the Dakota language. This led to the development of a pilot survey administered to 19 people of a variety of ages.

The pilot survey underwent several revisions until it could be reduced to one page so that it could be readily answered without being intimidating. Anything that implied government authorship or an academic test was judiciously removed by both the interviewees and the respondents to the pilot survey, which emerged as the Survey for Grant for Survival of Tribal Languages (Survey). The process of developing the Survey will be discussed in Chapter III. The final Survey was administered to 311 residents of the Spirit Lake Nation.

### Summary

Chapter I provided a brief background for Dakota language as it is spoken on the Spirit Lake Nation in northeast North Dakota. The need for a language preservation program and the development of program goals were also discussed, as was the implementation of a Survey for Grant for Survival of Tribal Languages. Such a Survey was a necessary component of applying for an Administration for Native Americans grant to implement what eventually would become *Dakota Ia Unspepi* [Learning Dakota Language]/Language Preservation Program.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Status of the World's Languages

The rate at which languages are being lost has increased exponentially in the last 200 years (Nettle & Romaine, 2000, p. 7). The decline of indigenous languages is worldwide. A recent study by Massachusetts Institute of Technology linguist Ken Hale estimates that 3,000 of the world's 6,000 languages are doomed because no children speak them. Hale estimates that only 300 languages have a secure future (Linden, 1991, p. 48).

Nettle and Romaine (2000) begin their book, *Vanishing Voices: The Extinction of the World's Languages*, by presenting pictures of and background on the last surviving speaker of each of the following languages: Ubykh (Caucasus), Catawba (South Carolina), Cupeno (California), Manx (Isle of Man), and Mbabaram (Australia) (pp. 1-4).

Although the precise factors that destroyed their communities and left them as the last representatives of dying languages were quite different, their stories are remarkably similar in other ways. Unfortunately, their fates reveal a common pattern, which is but the tip of the iceberg: the world's languages are dying at an alarming rate. (Nettle & Romaine, 2000, p. 2)

"Using SIL's *Ethnologue* data, we can calculate that 90 percent of the world's population speaks the 100 most-used languages. This means that there are about 6,000 languages spoken by about 10 percent of the people on earth" (Nettle & Romaine, 2000, p. 8). Using the figure of 100,000 as a minimum base to ensure continuity of a language

in the twenty-first century, linguist Michael Krauss of the Alaska Native Language Center estimates that there may be only 600 “safe” languages (Nettle & Romaine, 2000, p. 8). “In other words, the overwhelming majority of the world’s languages may be in danger of extinction” (Nettle & Romaine, 2000, p. 8). As noted above, Hale estimates 300 languages have a “secure future” and Krauss estimates that 600 languages are “safe”. Whichever estimate is correct, the majority of the world’s languages are in crisis.

Although a plethora of reasons exist for the potential demise of the indigenous languages of the world, one typical commonality for their plight is that their political boundaries have been usurped by more powerful nations. Therefore, the speakers find themselves a minority group within their own territories (Hinton, 2001). Unlike immigrants to a new land, the speakers of indigenous languages have no “old country” to which to return and immerse themselves in the language and culture of their forbears (Hinton, 2001).

There may be approximately 6,000 languages in the world, but there are only about 200 countries - which means multilingualism is present in practically every country in the world. ... [H]owever, the boundaries of modern nation-states have been arbitrarily drawn, with many of them created by the political and economic interests of western colonial powers. Many indigenous people today, such as the Welsh, Hawaiians, and Basques, find themselves living in nations they had no say in creating and are controlled by groups who do not represent their interests – and, in some cases are actively seeking to exterminate them, as is the case with the Kurds in Iraq and Turkey. (Nettle & Romaine, 2000, p. 21)

The homelands of many indigenous languages were relatively small areas now enveloped by and governed by much larger political entities, leaving the original inhabitants without political status (Hinton, 2001). “A group that does not speak the language of government and commerce is disenfranchised, marginalized with respect to



the economic and political mainstream" (Hinton, 2001). Such situations most generally result in a shift to the dominant language.

### *Language Shift and Language Death*

The encroachment of a dominant language into a linguistic community to the extent that, "a community gives up a language completely in favor of another one" (Fasold, 1984, p. 213) is termed language shift. "The members of the community, when the shift has taken place, have collectively chosen a new language where an old one used to be used" (Fasold, 1984, p. 213).

This shift may not occur throughout all social environments. The researcher's brother was a foreign exchange student to Sweden in the late 1960s. He said his studies in electrical engineering were greatly enhanced by the fact that all the textbooks were in English (John de Larios, personal communication, December 29, 2002). "Bengt Streijffert, a top official at the University of Lund, one of Sweden's large state institutions, says that English is used for most intellectual discourse there and that Swedish may soon just be used 'at home and with the dog'" (Bollag, 2000, p. A77). Even though Swedish is a viable European language, one which would probably not be considered as a candidate for extinction, Bengt Streijffert's words indicate a reduction of the linguistic domains in which Swedish is used, an initial step in language shift. The above is an example of voluntary shift. "This is where a community of people comes to perceive that they would be better off speaking a language other than their original one" (Nettle & Romaine, 2000, p. 91).

While English does not have political dominance in Sweden, academics in institutions of higher learning have consciously chosen to switch to a language that they

consider necessary for international communication. Pressure from rapid change with increased global travel and trade has resulted in similar language loss throughout the world. For example, English is required for international pilots and air traffic controllers. The use of English as the language for commercial aviation augments its status as a dominant world language.

While the speakers of indigenous languages throughout the world may not have the same motives for switching to a world-dominant language as do the Swedes, the incursion of radio, movies, and television in English and other globally dominant languages, such as Spanish, has negatively impacted many indigenous tongues. (Computers have not influenced the daily lives of billions of those who are not members of the privileged classes.) Lakoff (1987) points out that in a twenty year period, from 1963 to 1983, the Dyirbal (Australian) culture and language were dying.

But in the years since 1963, the impact of white Australian society has been greater because of compulsory schooling in English and exposure to radio and television. ... Young people in the Dyirbal community grow up speaking English primarily, and learn only an extremely oversimplified version of traditional Dyirbal. (p. 97)

Language shift is not always voluntary. It may be forced (Nettle & Romaine, 2000, p. 91). On the North American continent language suppression is generally associated with race, with Whites forbidding use of native languages. However, globally, political machinations, rather than race; may be the predominant factor. The suppression of Welsh, for example, in many ways parallels that of the suppression of American Indian languages.

That is has survived at all is a tribute to the character of the Welsh people. Until well into this century Welsh was all but illegal. It was forbidden in the schools, in the courts, and at many places of work. Children who forgot themselves and



shouted it on the streets were often forced to undergo humiliating punishments. (Bryson, 1990, p. 43)

Extreme language shift may result in language death. "Language death occurs when a community shifts to a new language totally so that the old language is no longer used" (Fasold, 1984, p. 212). Language death has been a phenomenon throughout the history of humankind. Language death may be initiated through conquest; physical proximity; or sociological factors, such as prestige or economics (Hock, 1988, p. 530). "The number of languages naturally changes as tribes die out or linguistic groups are absorbed" (Bryson, 1990, p. 37). In the 21st century, this loss is due in part to the heritage of colonial imperialism, a posture which was most frequently based on race, or ethnicity as in the British colonization of India. Suppression of minority language has all too often been a bitter reality. "Many people stop speaking their languages out of self-defense as a survival strategy" (Nettle & Romaine, 2000, p. 6).

A summary of the intrinsic components of language death was expressed by James Crawford in his 1994 presentation, in New Orleans, to the American Educational Research Association:

Languages die from both internal and external causes, operating simultaneously. On the one hand, the process always reflects forces beyond its speakers' control: repression, discrimination, or exploitation at the hand of others, and in many situations all three. On the other hand, except in the case of physical genocide, languages never succumb to outside pressures alone. There must be complicity on the part of [the] speech community itself, changes in attitudes and values that discourage teaching its vernacular to children and encourage loyalty to the dominant tongue. (p. 5)

*Joshua Fishman: Language Shift and Language Death*

No discussion of language shift and language death can transpire without reference to Joshua A. Fishman an Emeritus Distinguished Research Professor of Social



Sciences at Yeshiva University and a Visiting Professor of Linguistics and Education at Stanford University. Every publication on language shift, language death, and language renewal makes reference to his theories, particularly his eight stages of “‘threatened-ness’ that make up the *graded intergenerational disruption scale* (GIDS)” (Grin & Vaillancourt, 1998). The following interpretation of GIDS is taken from the New Zealand Government’s *Analytical Survey of Language Revitalization Policies* (Grin & Vaillancourt, 1998). The references within the GIDS text are to Fishman’s seminal work, *Reversing Language Shift* (1991). RLS, below, refers to *reversing language shift*.

- Stage 8, representing the lowest rung of the ladder, describes the situation of a language that only has vestigial speakers (and often no written standard).
- Stage 7 represents the case where speakers of the threatened language are socially integrated, but are mostly past child-bearing age, meaning that “they can no longer contribute to the number of {minority-language} users demographically (1991: 90).
- In stage 6, there is reappearance of the intergenerational family functioning in the minority or threatened language. This is a strategically key stage, because, as Fishman puts it, “the lion’s share of the world’s intergenerationally continuous languages are at this very stage and they continue to survive and, in most cases, even to thrive, without going on to subsequent (‘higher’) stages” (1991: 92). Stage 6 is crucial to “home-family-neighborhood-community” reinforcement, a cluster that Fishman considers to be the core of RLS.
- Stage 5 includes minority language *literacy* in the home, school and community, that is, it enjoys virtually no official recognition and support. Reaching stage 5 allows a minority language to remain intergenerationally secure, provided, however, there is sufficient ethnocultural separation from the dominant/majority culture and the pull it may represent.
- Stage 4 represents a major break, because it is the stage in RLS where the minority language gains some official recognition and moves into mainstream formal education.

- In stage 3, use of the minority language is relegitimized in the “lower sphere”, thereby recovering one more domain.
- Stage 2 represents the case where the minority language is used in “lower governmental services” and the mass media, but “not in the higher spheres of either”. It clearly represents an important step towards full recognition in formal domains.
- At stage 1, the minority language is used in higher education and in the higher reaches of government, media, and professional life. It does not mean that RLS is complete and that language planning is no longer necessary; nevertheless, reaching stage 1 ensures that RLS has by and large succeeded in recreating a natural, self-priming mechanism for the reproduction of the language community. (Grin & Vaillancourt, 1998, p. 12)

The *graded intergenerational disruption scale* (GIDS) is also directly applicable to *reversing language shift*, (RLS) and will be discussed below in Joshua Fishman and Language Revitalization. While some of the GIDS may not seem relevant to small Native American tribal groups, it may be applied to them as will be discussed, also under Joshua Fishman and Language Revitalization, as well as in Chapter V.

Dakota language on the Spirit Lake Nation would appear to be in Fishman’s stage 7. As noted in Chapter I, in the Introduction, children on the Spirit Lake Nation are not starting school with Dakota as their first language. The results of the Survey for Grant for Survival of Tribal Languages indicate that the majority of the speakers are 55 and over. Furthermore, use of Dakota language is restricted in public with only 9.6% of the respondents using it in the tribal government offices at the Blue Building; plus, 43% of those who stated they did so were over 55 years of age. As for the home environment, 43.7% of the respondents claimed to use the language at home, yet children are not coming to school with Dakota as a first language. (See Chapter I, Introduction.) As 57% of the respondents stating that they used the language at home were under 19, it is



possible as Mrs. Lorraine Grey Bear has speculated that the children are learning a few words in school and using them at home, but the children are not fluent. (See Chapter IV, Section I, Oral Fluency.)

### The Impact of Language Loss

No matter whether the reasons be by force or voluntary, "Language death is symptomatic of cultural death: a way of life disappears with the death of a language" (Nettle & Romaine, 2000, p. 7).

"A language is simultaneously indexical of both the material and non-material realia of its traditionally associated culture (and of membership in that culture) and, therefore, like all symbols, easily politicized, and, finally, language is also part and parcel of the bulk of any culture (note the complete interdependence of language and laws, religion, education, jokes, riddles, songs, blessings, curses, greetings and the thousand pleasantries of everyday life). Culture and language are in large part identical rather than merely the co-occurrences or 'fellow-travelers' that they are all too often taken to be." (Fishman, 2002, p. 5)

Herein lies the tragedy, not only is the loss of a given language and culture a loss to the speakers, but it is a loss to humankind and to the scientific study of language relationships. Furthermore, as Michael Krauss (1992) wrote:

Surely, just as the extinction of any animal species diminishes our world, so does the extinction of any language. Surely we linguists can know, and the general public can sense, that any language is a supreme achievement of a uniquely human collective genius, as divine and endless a mystery as a living organism. Should we mourn the loss of Eyak or Ubykh any less than the loss of the panda or California condor? (cited in Crystal, 2000, p. 36)

And Russian writer Vjaceslav Ivanov (1992) sums it up this way:

Each language constitutes a certain model of the universe, a semiotic system of understanding the world, and if we have 4,000 different ways to describe the world, that makes us rich. We should be just as concerned about preserving languages as we are about ecology. (cited in Crystal, 2000, p. 36)



## Language Reconstruction and the Determination of Genetic Relationships

With language loss progressing rapidly on a global scale, one might ask what measures are being initiated to, if not preserve languages, at least determine their relationship to other languages. In discussing research design on endangered and minority languages, Joshua Fishman states that one must find the “proper ‘level of analysis’ for the topic or results being explained” (2002, p. 2).

There is no way of being entirely sure in advance that the explanatory variables are at the same level of analysis as are the consequent variables that we are trying to account for. Finally there is the problem of adopting a research design that permits us to tell, ‘at the end of the day’, how much of the variation (or ‘variance’ as it is referred to technically) in any consequent variable that happens to be the focus of inquiry has actually been explained by the antecedent variables that we have employed and how much remains unaccounted for. [...] Needless to say, this type of research design has rarely (hardly ever) been utilized in connection with research on endangered and minority languages. Such being the case, we have each gone our own way, methodologically and conceptually, and little meeting of minds has been arrived at. (Fishman, 2002, p. 2)

In the field of linguistics there is much controversy as to classifying the genetic relationships among languages. In historical linguistics, proto-languages are actually constructed in order to determine such relationships. As noted by Fishman, above, no agreed upon method exists for researching minority and endangered languages. Nor does agreement exist on the methodology for language reconstruction and classification. The diversity of methodology leads to a profound divergence of opinion on the relationships among languages.

### *Language Classification: Lumpers and Splitters-A Fundamental Controversy*

Linguists may be roughly divided into two camps, informally known as ‘lumpers’ and ‘splitters’ (Ruhlen, 2000, p. 194). Lumpers try to discern a common genetic origin

for all languages while splitters postulate that, even though there are identifiable 'language families' which are genetically related, language may have developed independently, and some languages may even be unrelated to any other known language. Such languages are termed 'isolates'; examples are Basque and Kutenai (an indigenous language of what is now northern Montana).

The genetic relationship of languages, as well as their origin, is hotly disputed.

Bernard Comrie (1989) refutes common origin:

If all the world's languages are descended from a common ancestor (either a single original language of the whole human species or one particular language that in the distant past happened to supersede all other languages then existing), then the time-depth between this ancestor and our earliest attestations of language is so great that we have little hope of establishing common origin, or of tracing the changes that separate Proto-World from attested languages. (p. 24)

Merrit Ruhlen (1994) is a determined advocate of the line of reasoning that all languages share a common origin. "The essence of the proof is that similarities among languages, and among language families, can only reasonably be explained by assuming that they reflect a prior unity" (p. 125).

Native American languages are at the forefront of the controversy with some linguists postulating a number of language families in North, Central, and South America, and Ruhlen (2002) hypothesizing only one family, "Amerind". Intriguingly, he places Eskimo-Aleut and Indo-European under the Eurasiatic family (p. 192). Although he categorizes languages into families, Ruhlen is diametrically opposed to Comrie and many other linguists. Ruhlen believes every language in the world is related and is descended from an original language he terms "Proto-Sapiens" (p. 192).



Contrasted to Ruhlen's Amerind, and indicative of the ongoing controversy in regard to classification, a round-table discussion with internationally known linguists, including Ruhlen, in reference to Native American languages, produced the following comment, "Of the sixteen hundred languages once spoken here, only a third exist today. It's estimated that these languages, both living and extinct, might include as many as two hundred language families" ... (PBS, 1997, p. 6).

*Language Classification: Data and  
Research Methodology Influence Linguistic Theory*

The mysteries of the linguistic controversy regarding a single proto-language as well as the genetic relationship of the world's languages, both modern and historic, may never be conclusively unraveled. Compounding matters, as more and more languages meet their demise, their genetic relationships may never be discerned. However, dying languages may be preserved. "[S]ocially vestigial languages may be saved from total extinction. But the question is whether 'that is really living'" (Fishman, 1995, p. 3).

In writing of archival collections, Fishman opines that once only a few speakers of a language remain, all you are getting is an approximation of the phonology, the lexicon, and the grammar. With only a few speakers, "You are often not getting the genuine article anymore. It has already changed in the process of attrition. It has changed and is not what it was even in linguistic terms" (Fishman, 1995, p. 2).

Particularly impacted are the prosody and rhythm of the language, which Fishman describes as "one of those elusive areas of the beauty of languages that are very quickly lost and very hard to note down and very hard to learn" (p. 2). Such factors impact the reconstruction of a language. "Even the relatively transparent task of making a linguistic



recording of an endangered language turns out to have many pitfalls” (Crystal, 2000, p. 91).

Furthermore, “[Working to reconstruct languages] is a very fascinating endeavor, because languages can change in unpredictable ways” (PBS, 1997, p. 3).

The further back in time you go, it becomes very difficult to distinguish between inheritance from a common ancestor and borrowing for another group, especially in a family where there are few historical records and where the written histories don’t go back very far. Also, it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish descent from a common ancestor or borrowing from sheer chance, accident, and any two languages taken at random in the world show a certain percentage of apparent similarities, even in basic vocabulary. That’s because there’s only a limited number of sounds in human languages, and there are certain built-in constraints of the form of human language, which makes accidental resemblance quite possible, and frequent in fact. (PBS, 1997, p. 5)

This statement was made by James Matisoff, Professor of Linguistics at the University of California at Berkeley.

Whether in language preservation, archiving, reconstructing language, or any other area, not only does the data used affect the resulting linguistic theory (as with any other theory for that matter), so does the methodology. Three methodologies that have been applied to language data are discussed below.

#### *Comparative Method of Historical Linguistics*

According to Ruhlen, linguistic similarity can be explained by convergence (either accidental or determined by common environment), borrowing, or common origin, with the last criterion being the most valuable (Gnoli, 2003). Classification of languages in *families* and higher groupings is done on the basis of similarities in their phonology, grammar, and vocabulary (Gnoli, 2003).

[L]anguage classification and reconstruction are always, necessarily, neither more nor less the drawing of INFERENCES about the unattested past on the basis of

attested language data. Hist[orical] linguistics is based on the assumption that particular patterns in language data (a set of sound correspondences between languages, a pattern of morphophonemic alternation within a language, etc.) necessarily, or plausibly, or possibly imply a certain process or a certain pre-attestation state of affairs. (Ratcliffe, 1998)

### *Numerical Taxonomy (Phenetics)*

American entomologist R. R. Sokal and English microbiologist P. H. A. Sneath proposed a technique called *numerical taxonomy* which was originally developed for biological classification but can be applied in principle to any kind of objects. In this method, a high number of characters common to all the objects investigated is collected, trying to avoid those varying in dependence on some other character; characters are coded by binary numbers, and ideally mapped onto a  $n$ -dimension diagram, where  $n$  is the number of the character considered; distance between two points in such a diagram is a measure of the similarity between the two objects; similarity is then expressed by trees, (*dendrograms*) connecting the most similar pairs of objects and of groups of objects. Any group of objects is called an *operative taxonomical unity (OTU)*, while there are no terms to identify different hierarchical levels in the tree. (Gnoli, 2003)

### *Cladistics*

While numerical taxonomy is an example of the typological approach, the multidimensional approach is adopted by *cladistic taxonomy*, begun by the German entomologist Willi Hennig ... . [This] school tries to carefully reflect the history of relationships between the groups (*phylogenesis*), by identifying the ancestors in which a given character first appeared, and stating that all descendant species sharing that character form a unitary (*monophyletic*) group. (Gnoli, 2003)

The relationship trees are termed *cladograms*. "Cladograms look similar to the dendrograms of numerical taxonomy, but they differ in that the former express historical relationships, while the latter express just present similarity" (Gnoli, 2003).

### *A Brief Discussion of Some Theoretical Limitations and Controversies*

Perusal of linguistic Listservs gives insight into the lively discussion of the relative merits of the methodologies summarized above. On occasion, linguists are criticized by other linguists for summarily dismissing rigorous methodology. Victor Golla, Professor of Linguistics and Native American Studies at Humboldt State



University, was critical of lack of methodology on the part of Joseph Greenberg, now deceased, formerly Ray Lyman Wilbur Professor of Social Science, Emeritus, at Stanford University, and a frequent collaborator of Merritt Ruhlen. Greenberg was a controversial figure in linguistics, a lumpers who classified all language into three families.

[R]egular phonemic correspondences in cognate forms in a group of genetically related languages—are part of the fabric of historical explanation. They are not a precondition for proposing a genetic grouping, but neither are they (as Greenberg sometimes says) mere pedantic frills that one can postpone working out until one has time for the exercise. (Golla, 1994)

Greenberg is also criticized by linguist Sarah Thomason, then of the University of Pittsburgh, now of the University of Michigan, one of whose specialties is Salish, a North American language. Thomason (1994), in a discussion, criticizes Greenberg, “[I]n Greenberg’s data, there are no patterns – either of the sort that would permit reconstruction or of the sort that would permit us to separate a few remaining remote borrowings from a few remaining inherited words” (Thomason, 1994). Note the discussion of Comparative Linguistics, above and the criticism implied by making inferences where there are no patterns!

Pheneticists and cladists are not spared. George Lakoff (1987), Professor of Linguistics at the University of California at Berkeley, cites a classic discussion by Gould (1983), from *Hen’s Teeth and Horse’s Toes*. Because the pheneticists “look at overall similarity in form, function, and biological role” and the cladists are concerned with “branching order” and “shared derived characters” (see discussion below), many of their classifications would conflict (cited in Lakoff, 1987, p. 119).

Gould informs the reader, “I regret to report that there is no such thing as a fish” (p. 119). “[C]oelacanths still look and act like a fish—and we might as well say so!



Cladists will put them with rhinos, pheneticists with tunas; traditionalists will hone their rhetoric to defend a necessarily subjective position" (cited in Lakoff, 1987, p. 120).

The general point should be clear. There are at least two kinds of taxonomic models available to traditional biologists: the cladistic and the phenetic. Ideally, they are supposed to converge, and they do in a great many cases, but by no means in all. [B]oth have scientific validity. (Lakoff, 1987, p. 121)

Note that Lakoff, a linguist, is discussing biology. Both numerical taxonomy and cladistics originated in the life sciences and both have been applied to linguistics as well as to numerous other fields. For example, Williams (1974), a professor of statistics at the University of North Dakota, utilized numerical taxonomy in an article on faculty elections. "In a 1995 meeting of the International Federation of Rock Art Study Organizations, palaeontologist Shirley Chesney raised the question, 'Can cladistics be applied to the classification of palaeolithic representation?'" (Brooks, 1995).

All of the above methodologies have been applied, with varying degrees of success, to the study of linguistic phenomenon, and all are valuable in presenting a particular frame-of-reference but do not necessarily supply definitive answers. Moreover, the answers that are supplied are subject to interpretation. Even the choice of data to examine, as mentioned above, influences the results. As Albert Bickford, a linguist with SIL at the University of North Dakota, succinctly stated, "[T]he boundaries that identify a type of speech as a 'language' are fuzzy" (personal communication, June 5, 2003).

Successful results are extolled by the proponents of each methodology, and they regularly debate, and even disparage, as noted above, the results obtained by other researchers. A more in-depth discussion is beyond the scope of this paper.

As linguists strive for the answers to questions of genetic relationships and other unsolved quandaries in linguistics, it is to be hoped that more than 300 to 600 of the world's 6,000 languages survive, not only for scientific study but for the cultures and the speakers and because, to reiterate Ivanov (1992), "Each language constitutes a certain model of the universe, a semiotic system of understanding the world, and if we have 4,000 different ways to describe the world, that makes us rich" (cited in Crystal, 2000, p. 36).

#### American Indian Languages in the United States

In keeping with the above descriptions of the mystery of what Krauss (1992) terms our "collective human genius" (cited in Crystal, 2000, p. 36) any attempt to classify the indigenous languages of the Americas leads to either discovering lack of congruency in the definitions or to becoming embroiled in debates such as those described above.

Examples of lack of congruency are demonstrated by the following quotations. "When Columbus arrived in the New World, there were an estimated 1,000 languages. Today there are about 600" (Bryson, 1990, p. 37). "Native Americans spoke a bewildering array of languages-more than 400, belonging to some sixty-two language families" (Sutton, 2000, p. 8). Here are two very different estimates. This is due in part to the fact that even the most highly regarded linguists are, to this date, still in disagreement about how American Indian languages should be classified.

Therefore, a definitive classification is beyond the scope of this paper due to diametrically opposed linguistic analyses of the various language families of the Americas and their relationships not only to each other but to language families on other continents. In the statement below, Merritt Ruhlen (1994) illustrates a raging debate in the science of linguistics:



The traditional view throughout this century has been despite Edward Sapir's attempts at consolidation – that Native American families belong to a large number of independent families, such as Algonquian, Siouan, or Iroquoian, among which, it is asserted, there are no apparent genetic connections. By some estimates the number of such independent families in the Americas approaches 200. In 1987 Joseph Greenberg published *Language in the Americas*, a book in which he drastically reduced the number of Native American families. (p. 84)

### Dakota Language in the 21st Century

Regardless of whether the Siouan language, under which Dakota and Lakota are grouped, is classified as one of many independent families or is subsumed under Amerind, the only American language family postulated by Greenberg and Ruhlen (1994), it is one of the most viable Native American languages still spoken in the United States today. The Summer Institute of Linguistics, in its on-line site, *Ethnologue.com*, reports that the 1990 census counted 15,355 speakers in the United States, including 31 monolinguals. The *Ethnologue* site also notes, as of 1991, 5,000 Canadian speakers.

#### *Dakota and Nakota: Two Dialects of the Dakota Language*

When one refers to Dakota language, one may be referring to more than one entity. Understanding Dakota language classifications can be confusing because the name of the language (Dakota) is the same as the name of one of its dialects (Appendix D). Furthermore, the language family is termed Siouan, and the word Sioux is offensive to many Dakota people (See Definition of Terms, Chapter 1).

Dakota, according to the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) (*Ethnologue* 2002) consists of four languages: Dakota, Lakota, Assiniboiné, and Stoney (Appendix E). The latter two are spoken in what is now Canada. At this point one encounters information which is not in accord with the perceptions of the native speakers. The researcher has



heard repeatedly over the years that the people on the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation in northeastern Montana speak Assiniboiné. Fort Belknap Community College offers courses in Assiniboiné!

The two American Dakota languages, according to the Summer Institute of Linguistics' *Ethnologue* (2002), are Dakota and Lakota. Dakota consists of two dialects, Dakota and Nakota. These have alternate names, of which Santee, Santee-Sisseton, and Dakhota are listed under the Dakota category, and Nakoda, Yankton, and Yankton-Yanktonais under the Nakota category (Appendix D). *Isanti* in this study is an alternate name for the Dakota dialect of the Dakota language spoken by the Sisseton-Wahpeton bands on the Spirit Lake Nation. *Ihanktuwan* is an alternate name for the Nakota dialect spoken by the Cut Head speakers on the Spirit Lake Nation.

To make matters even more confusing, the homepage of Fort Belknap Community College offers greetings in Assiniboiné, followed in parentheses by Nakotz. The people in Fort Belknap obviously consider these to be synonymous names for their language. On the other hand, as discussed above, the Summer Institute of Linguistics classifies Assiniboiné as one of the Dakota languages and Nakota as a dialect of Dakota! While resolving such matters is beyond the province of this study, it is crucial to note the statements of linguists may be extremely divergent from the perceptions of the speakers of a language. This was confirmed by Albert Bickford of SIL, "Naming is ALWAYS a problem with minority languages ... So, it is not surprising if the names that people you know use are different from the ones reported in the *Ethnologue* or other literature" (personal communication, June 5, 2003).

While this might seem bewildering, reference might be made to English. In the United States alone, several dialects are in use. My maternal grandmother, Texas panhandle, would say, "That button's just fixin' to come a loose." *The American Heritage Dictionary* (1976) does list a "Regional" definition for the verb fix: "To make plans or preparations, to get ready." However, Hawaiian Pidgin English may have not only different connotations but different denotations than mainland English. A website "Pidgin 101" (n.d.) lists "grind" as meaning "to eat". This definition of "grind" is not listed in *The American Heritage Dictionary*. (Of course, some speakers can readily switch dialects, blithely leaving the problems of classification to linguists.)

This study, Self-Assessed Dakota Language Fluency on the Spirit Lake Nation, will primarily concern itself with *Isanti*, the Dakota dialect of the Dakota language, and *Ihanktuwan*, the Nakota dialect of Dakota language.

#### *Dakota Language Men's and Women's Speech*

An additional consideration is that the Dakota language family consists of a male and a female manner of speaking. *The University of Colorado Project* (1976) discusses the use of men's and women's speech in Lakshota. (Despite dialectical and pronunciation differences, this discussion is also relevant to Dakota.) "In all languages the speech of men and women differs in certain (sometimes very subtle) ways. ... In Lakshota men and women use different greetings, different exclamations, and often use different enclitics" (p. 2-25).

When defining enclitics, "'a separate but dependent word which is added following another word,'"... *The University of Colorado Project* mentions that they are

words which are “never used alone: some other word must always come before them” (p. 2-15).

*The University of Colorado Project* gives some illustrations of the use of enclitics by male and female Dakota speakers.

<i>he</i>	[to indicate a] ‘question’ Women use this enclitic all of the time. Men use it among friends and in most relaxed, informal situations. In formal speech men say <i>hunwo</i> .
<i>yedo</i>	This is an assertion spoken by a male.
<i>kisto</i>	This is an assertion spoken by a female.
<i>yo (wo)</i>	This is a command spoken by a male. Remember to use <i>wo</i> when the preceding word ends in ‘ <i>u</i> ’, ‘ <i>un</i> ’, or ‘ <i>o</i> ’. Use <i>yo</i> otherwise.
<i>ye (we)</i>	This is a command spoken by a female. Remember to use ‘ <i>we</i> ’ as described for ‘ <i>yo</i> ’ above.

Furthermore, the Dakota kinship system makes more distinctions than does English. The person who is speaking must keep in mind her/his own sex, the sex of the person spoken to, and the relative ages of the speakers. However, some words, such as *takoja*, grandchild, may be used by speakers of either sex regardless of the sex of the person to whom they are speaking. Obviously, age would still be a factor.

*Koda* is a word which is familiar to many non-speakers of Dakota. It means friend. It is used only by males speaking to other males and would never be used by women. *Koda* is often incorrectly used today.

The Dakota speakers of the Spirit Lake Nation do not have a specific word for a female friend. Instead, they use the word for a female cousin, *cepansi*. When speaking to a male cousin, a woman would use *sicesi*. No male would use these words to address a



woman. When speaking to a female cousin, the male would use *hankasi*. When speaking to a male cousin, he would use *tahansi* (Lambert, 1989, Lesson 17). No woman would use these words to address a man. Traditionally, people were addressed by such kinship designations rather than their names. One can see how loss of Dakota language leads to breakdown of kinship relations.

In addition, there are certain matters in traditional culture which would not be discussed by men, such as female functions.

### *The History of Written Dakota and Dakota Literacy*

Dakota, as is true with most languages of the world, was an oral rather than a written language. Missionaries to the Dakota (Lakota and Nakota) people, primarily of the Presbyterian, Catholic, and Episcopalian faiths saw the need to understand the Dakota language for the purpose of conversion. They deemed literacy in Dakota for the Indian people part of this process, and to that end some of the clergy worked diligently translating the Bible and Christian hymns into Dakota.

The most memorable of the Protestant clergy in developing written materials in Dakota were Stephen Return Riggs (b. 1812) and John Poage Williamson (b. 1835), both Presbyterian clergy. Both wrote Dakota dictionaries which are still in print, and are widely used, today,

The pioneer work by Stephen Riggs in developing the written language was based primarily upon the Santee dialect, and dates from his "Grammar and Dictionary of the Dakota Language" published in 1852. (Ullrich, n.d.)

A Dakota-English Dictionary of the Yankton dialect by J. P. Williamson was published in 1902. In addition to the scientific work, translations of the Bible, prayer books, and hymnals in these dialects were printed and widely used on the Sioux reservations. (Ullrich, n.d.)

The basic alphabet in which all the dialects have been written was that used by Riggs, and subsequent linguistic work has followed the pattern he set. (Ullrich, n.d.).

A tribal elder in her seventies, who has taught Dakota language for over twenty years, described the hymnals used by the Episcopalians as having Dakota on one side of the page and English on the other (Anonymous, personal communication, October 22, 2002).

By means of an alphabet system devised by the early Presbyterian missionaries, nearly all of the men can read and write their own language. The printed literature includes religious works, school textbooks, grammars, and dictionaries, and miscellaneous publications, and three current mission journals, Catholic, ... Presbyterian, and Episcopal, all three entirely in Sioux. The earliest publication was a spelling-book by Rev. J.D. Stevens in 1836. In linguistics the principal is the "Grammar and Dictionary of the Dakota Language", by Rev. S.R. Riggs. (The Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. XIV, 1912)

Among the lesser-known books produced by the Presbyterian missionaries were publications such as *Maka-oyakapi. Guyot's Elementary Geography in the Dakota Language*, apparently a translation, by S. L. Riggs, L.L.D., and Rev. A. L. Riggs, published in New York in 1876 (see Appendix F). The *Model First Reader. Wayawa Tokaheya*, (S. R. Riggs, 1873) which consists of illustrated word lists, the Dakota alphabet, and simple sentences, is preceded by "Hints to Teachers", which discusses systems for teaching reading (see Appendix G).

In addition to the work of the Presbyterians and Episcopalians, several Catholic clergy of various orders produced publications in Dakota, apparently using Riggs' orthography.

In 1841 Father Augustine Ravoux began work among the Santee Sioux in the neighborhood of Fort Snelling [Minnesota] .... Applying himself to the study of the language, in which he soon became proficient ... [he] printed a small devotional work "Katolik Wocekiye Wowapi Kin", which is still used as a



mission manual. (The Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. XIV, 1912)

Literacy and use of Dakota language in the schools extended to what was then the Devils Lake Sioux Reservation. Compare the use of language below, to Grace Lambert's perceptions of boarding school in Chapter I.

In Fort Totten, Rev. Jerome Hunt, O.S.B., who arrived in 1882, 'has written and published in the Sioux language, a Bible history, prayerbook with instruction and hymns, and a smaller book of prayer, and for eighteen years has published a paper in Sioux.' (The Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. XIV, 1912)

"In 1890 Father Jerome started printing a newspaper in Sioux. It was called *Sina Sapa Wocekiye Eyapaha*, the Catholic Sioux Herald" (Blue Cloud Mission Press, 1974).

"Ignatius Court, an Indian associate of Father Jerome" ... "translated Bishop Gilmore's *Bible History* into Sioux and 2,000 copies were printed at St. Michael at the end of 1897. Two thousand prayer books and 1,000 catechisms in Sioux were also printed later" (Blue Cloud Mission Press, 1974). (See Appendix H.) Considering the Reservation population was probably much less than it is today (approximately 2,300), this is an incredibly large amount of written material. Amazingly, this activity was transpiring even after it was forbidden by law to teach Dakota language, 1887.

Grace Lambert (b. May 7, 1909) told the researcher on many occasions that she remembered Father Jerome teaching prayers in Dakota at the "Sister School" but this was eventually stopped. The historical facts concerning how teaching in Dakota language continued after it was forbidden in 1887 are unknown to the researcher at this time, but a pamphlet on the history of "Saint Michael's Mission 1874-1974" (Blue Cloud Abbey Press, 1974) does mention, "[T]here were continual shifts in [federal] policy which caused uncertainty ..." Apparently the Catholic clergy resisted the ban on teaching



Dakota language as long as they could.

On the other hand, there were possibly other ways, at present undocumented, of learning to read Dakota. Mrs. Grey Bear reports that her mother, now deceased, could read the language, but she does not know how her mother became literate in Dakota (personal communication, October 22, 2002). The elder who discussed the Episcopalian hymnals mentioned that her mother was literate in Dakota, but she does not know who taught her mother or where she learned. Grace Lambert, a Dakota language teacher for twenty-six years, disclosed that her parents, who were Presbyterian, "used to go somewhere to learn to read and write. When they came home, they would go in the bedroom, close the door, and practice the alphabet" (personal communication, February 17, 1999). It is possible that the parents of the present-day elders learned Dakota orthography from deliberate attempts by the clergy to promulgate literacy, but perhaps they learned from the bilingual hymnals, or were teaching each other.

The elder who described the Episcopalian hymnals was of the opinion that Mrs. Lambert's Presbyterian parents were probably practicing hymns and prayers. As Mrs. Lambert is now deceased, it is not possible to verify this; however, the lack of knowledge on the part of the children (now elders) as to how their parents learned to read ties in with specific government threats that went out to government schools from J. D. C. Atkins the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1887.

English language only must be taught the Indian youth placed there for educational and industrial training at the expense of the Government. If Dakota or any other language is taught such children, they will be taken away and their support by the Government will be withdrawn from the school. (cited in Reyhner, 1993, p. 4)

## Native American Language Policy in the United States Past and Present

Aside from some missionaries who became fluent in various native languages and encouraged literacy for the purpose of propagating various forms of Christianity, Native American people have been subjected to linguistic oppression, this despite the guarantee of freedom of speech under the American constitution. Joshua Fishman (1989) cites an enquiry by Noah Webster, of Chief Justice John Marshall, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, about "whether there could be a law or a constitutional amendment declaring 'The American language' to be our sole and national and official language" (p. 204). Fishman writes that Chief Justice Marshall was of the opinion "and our highest courts have agreed with him ever since" that "any such legal provisions on behalf of English would be counter to the freedom of speech and freedom of religion provisions of the American constitution" (p. 204).

Justice Marshall's concern for linguistic rights under the category of freedom of speech has seldom been applied to America's original inhabitants who were not made full citizens until an act of Congress in 1924 (Fuchs and Havighurst, 1989, p. 10). Despite citizenship, many Native Americans were still denied the right to vote by the state in which they resided. "It was not until 1948 that Arizona and New Mexico were required by court decision to permit Indians to vote" (p. 10).

Besides deprivation of full citizenship and voting rights for Indian people, Native American languages were "targeted by the U.S. government in a campaign of linguistic genocide" (Crawford, 1996, p. 6). J. D. C. Atkins, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, wrote in 1887, "In the difference of language lies two-thirds of our trouble. ... Schools



should be established, which children should be required to attend; their barbarous dialects should be blotted out and the English language substituted ” (Crawford, 1996, p. 6).

Commissioner Atkins blatantly advocated the denial of constitutional rights of free speech to the indigenous peoples of what is now the United States.

True Americans all feel that the Constitution, laws, and institutions of the United States ... are superior to those of any other country; and they should understand that by the spread of the English language will these laws and institutions be more firmly established and widely disseminated. ... **[As the Indians] are in an English-speaking country, they must be taught the language which they must use in transacting business with the people of this country.** (Reyhner, 1993, p. 4)

The addition of ‘bold’ is the researcher’s. Atkins was most assuredly a proponent of manifest destiny. It is doubtful that Atkins perceived the horrendous irony of teaching civilization by “blotting out barbarous tongues” or the warped reasoning of the Indians being “in an English-speaking country”. Undoubtedly, the Indians assumed themselves to be in their own countries.

Taking the opposing viewpoint were many missionaries, including Reverend Stephen R. Riggs, of Dakota dictionary fame. Even though ... “missionaries favored ending tribal traditions” (Reyhner, 1993, p. 5), they at least wished to use the Indian language to communicate their intentions. A missive from a correspondent traveling with Secretary of the Interior Schurz included the following:

Mr. Riggs is of the opinion that first teaching the children to read and write in their own language enables them to master English with more ease when they take up that study; and he thinks, also, that a child beginning a four years’ course with the study of Dakota would be further advanced in English at the end of the term than one who had not been instructed in Dakota. (Reyhner, 1993, p. 5)



The controversy between the Indian Bureau of the 1800s and the missionaries reflected that of bilingual education decades later, with one side espousing monolingualism and the other cultural pluralism. (For discussion of bilingual education, see below.) Despite some espousal of using Indian languages as vehicles of learning flickering occasionally in the Indian Bureau of the 1800s and early 1900s, poor funding and lack of teacher training in cultural awareness "meant that the Indian Service was often the last resort for teachers who could not find employment elsewhere" (Reyhner, 1993, p. 7). This resulted in teaching for Indian children consisting of ... "grinding, drilling, and driving English into them" (Reyhner, 1993, p. 7).

Writing in 1928, "Luther Standing Bear, a former Carlisle student and agency teacher from about 1884 to 1890" felt:

The Indian children should have been taught how to translate the *Sioux tongue* into English properly; but the English teachers only taught them the English language, like a bunch of parrots. While they could read all the words placed before them, they did not know the proper use of them; their meaning was a puzzle. (Reyhner, 1993, p. 7)

The lack of relevance, either linguistically or culturally, contributed to the tradition of failure in the Indian boarding school system. "Albert H. Kneale (1950) remembered monotonous lessons at the turn of the century boarding school where he taught in Oklahoma" (Reyhner, 1993, p. 7).

Few of the pupils had any desire to learn to read, for there was nothing to read in their homes nor in the camp; there seemed little incentive to learn English, for there was no opportunity to use it; there seemed to be nothing gained through knowing "c-a-t" spells cat; arithmetic offered no attraction; not one was interested in knowing the name of the capital of New York. (Reyhner, 1993, p. 7)

Compare the apathy described above to the intense interest in literacy when Indian people were taught in their own languages. Writing in 1869, Reverend S. D.

Hinman reported, “[T]hree adult Yankton (Sioux) warriors rode back and forth from their agency forty miles every week to learn to read and write in their language” (Reyhner, 1993, p. 5).

The success of missionaries in spreading the new Dakota orthography is indicated by the report of Mr. Janney, Quaker, to the Board of Indian Commissioners in 1871. He wrote that, ‘A very small number portion of the tribe, so far as I could discover, speak or write the English language, but a large number speak and write their own, and are able to hold correspondence with those who are in Minnesota and Wisconsin. (Reyhner, 1993, p. 2)

Forbidding the use of spoken, as well as written Indian language in which the people were very interested, became part of the apathy of Indian children and their families toward school. To some extent, this apathy still exists today, handed down whether or not the person speaks their native tongue. Erich Longie (2003), an enrolled member of the Spirit Lake Tribe, president of Cankdeska Cikana Community College for six years, and now director of Spirit Lake Even Start, tells of his high school experience in Maddock, North Dakota, where the Indian students boarded five days a week.

I hated most of the teachers and non-Indian students in that school for many reasons, but the biggest reason was that we were treated like dummies. All the Indian students along with the poor/slower white students were automatically put in the same group/class. No matter what the subject was, we were always several chapters behind the other group/class. I may not have been the best student back then, but I knew I had more ability than I was given credit for.

After World War I, a brief respite was provided by John Collier, Commissioner of Indian Affairs under Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Collier astutely observed that “[T]he administration of Indian affairs [is] a national disgrace—A policy designed to rob Indians of their property, destroy their culture and eventually exterminate them (Reyhner, 1993, p. 8). Today problems with the Bureau of Indian Affairs continue unabated. Recall the 1996 class-action lawsuit *Elouise Pepion Cobell et al v. Bruce Babbitt et al* concerning



“the gross mismanagement of an estimated \$10 to 20 billion or more in Individual Indian Money [IIM] accounts” (Taliman, 2001, p. 52).

During Collier’s all too brief era, day schools were built on reservations so that children could remain with their families, some native language textbooks were developed, and culture, to some degree, was taught in the classroom (Reyhner, 1993, p. 9).

A conservative reaction developed after the Second World War and off-reservation boarding schools were reinstituted. “The ‘final solution’ Congress came up with for the Indian problem was to let the Indians become ‘free’ by terminating their reservations” (Reyhner, 1993, p. 9). Incredibly, despite almost impossible obstacles ... “a core of leadership was developing that could tell the federal government what American Indians wanted. This leadership was almost unanimous in opposing termination” (Reyhner, 1993, p. 10).

The 1970 National Study of American Indian Education was instrumental in the passage of the Indian Education Act, Title IV of Public Law 92-318. Title IV provided funds for special programs for both reservation and urban Indians and also called for parental involvement in planning the special programs and developing culturally relevant and bilingual materials (Reyhner, 1993, p. 10).

Still, “Many tribal leaders did not find schools, whether BIA or public, responsive to their demands for local control” (Reyhner, 1993, p. 11). These demands led to the passage of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act Public Law 93-638 in 1975 (p. 11).



As regards legislation specific to indigenous languages, the Native American Languages Acts of 1990 and 1992 (see Chapter I, Background for the Study) were supposed to assist tribes with language maintenance and revitalization. However, funding was poor. (Crawford, 1996, p. 9) "So, although the federal government now has a strong policy statement on file favoring the preservation of indigenous tongues, its real-world impact has thus far been limited" (Crawford, 1996, p. 9).

#### Bilingual Issues from the Legal Standpoint

Richard Ruiz (1994) concludes that the major conflict in bilingual education in the United States is between a concern for the "internal colonialism" directed toward minority groups and integrating such groups into the American mainstream (p. 113). He terms this polarization "maintenance" and "transitional" attitudes, which respectively represent the two antithetical ideologies of cultural pluralism and assimilation. Complicating the conflict is that, "... the two sides, at different times and places, often use the same arguments" (p. 113).

"The prevailing position during the 1980s was that children must learn English, even if that meant the subordination of non-English languages and the cultural traditions that came with them" (Ruiz, 1994, p. 113). Bilingual education ... "quickly turned into a curious paradox: The essential (some would say only) goal of bilingual education in the United States must be to teach English to those who are deficient in it" (Ruiz, 1994, p. 113). As a result ... "'bilingualism' has come to mean not proficiency in two languages, but deficiency in English, and 'bilingual' education has come to stand for English monolingualism" (Ruiz, 1994, p. 113). The researcher has personally observed this phenomenon when hired as an evaluator for the Wounspe Program, a bilingual

education program at the Four Winds Tribal Elementary School in 1993 and 1994. The scenario was for the evaluator to train school Wounspe staff to administer the Basic Inventory of Natural Language Test. The evaluator's conclusion was that the children were scoring poorly due to the manner in which the test was being administered. In keeping with Richard Ruiz' assertions, this was considered a positive because only if the children's scores indicated limited English proficiency could funds be obtained for the bilingual program!

"The 1980s saw a flurry of legislative proposals the principal object of which was to 'protect' and 'enhance' the status of English in the United States" (Ruiz, 1994, p.113). The primary strategy of the leading organization, U.S. English, has been English Language Amendments to state constitutions with the goal of amending the federal constitution (Ruiz, 1994, p. 114). In the opinion of the researcher, this ethnocentrism cloaks prejudice.

"Some efforts to use existing legislation such as the Indian Education Act and the Bilingual Education Act to strengthen these languages by funding curriculum and materials development on the reservations have had some success, but there are few such programs. Furthermore, these acts generally aim at academic attainment and proficiency in English rather than language maintenance as such" (Ruiz, 1994, p. 116).

"Several developments of the past few years suggest a change in this situation. The passage of the Native American Languages Act (Public Law 102-524 1992, Select Committee on Indian Affairs 1992) is an effort to deal with the problem of language maintenance and even reversing language shift"... (Ruiz, 1994, p. 116). Furthermore, there have been renewed efforts recently to add provisions to the Bilingual Education Act



that would recognize the unique status of Indian languages and create programs aimed at their preservation and revival” (Ruiz, 1994, p. 116).

## Native American Language Preservation and Revitalization

### *History*

From the beginning, Native Americans were concerned about maintaining their respective languages. Benjamin Franklin, quoted in Fuchs and Havighurst (1983), states that Indian leaders [tribe not stated] declared that ... “our Ideas of this kind of Education happen not to be the same with yours” (p. 3). Further research revealed this pronouncement was made by Canassatego, an Onondaga leader, whose people were members of the Iroquois League. It was Canassatego who suggested that the colonists “would be stronger if they formed a league like that of the Iroquois” (*American Literature*, 1997, p. 30). Canassatego was replying, in 1744, “to an offer from the Virginia government to educate some Iroquois youths at the College of William and Mary” (p. 30). Further among the criticisms expressed by Canassatego were that the “young people who were formerly brought up at the Colleges ... when they came back to us ... were ignorant of every means of living in the woods” and “were totally good for nothing.” Of particular note is his concern that the young people also “spoke our Language imperfectly” (p. 30).

Some two-hundred years later, Indian people were still expressing the same concern for their languages. The 1970 National Study of American Indian Education found that ... “a majority of the parents interviewed wanted some recognition of tribal language and culture by the school” (Fuchs and Havighurst, 1983, p. 211).

Over the centuries of European/American contact, Native Americans faced



incredible prejudice and ignorance regarding their languages. Generally, non-Indians perceived the native languages as savage barbarisms and the necessity of their eradication as given. Only a few individuals recognized their depth, complexity, and value to humankind. One of these individuals was Major John Wesley Powell, a Civil War veteran and a non-linguist who became well-known among linguists for his "excellent classification of the languages north of Mexico" (Haas, cited in Dil, ed., 1987, p. 208). In the United States from the time of the early settlement until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there existed a supposition that a language reflected the state of civilization of its speakers, with European languages and civilizations being, of course, the most advanced and the most refined. Major Powell, writing in 1880, disputed this egocentric viewpoint:

Students of Indian languages have sometimes fallen into error about their rank or value as instruments for the expression of thought .... The assumed superiority of the Greek and Latin languages to the English and other modern civilized tongues, has in part been the cause of the many erroneous conceptions of the rank of Indian tongues. When the student discovers that many of the characteristics of the classic languages appear in the Indian which are to a greater or less extent lost in the modern civilized languages, he has at once assumed the superiority of the Indian tongue; and when he has further discovered that some of these characteristics are even more highly developed than in the classic ones he has been led to still further exalt them. (Haas, 1987, p. 208)

Regrettably, this understanding of and respect for Native American languages never became part of public opinion, let alone federal policy.

### *Joshua Fishman: Reversing Language Shift*

As discussed above, under Joshua Fishman: Language Shift and Language Death, the *graded intergenerational dislocation scale* (GIDS) can also be applied to *reversing language shift* (RLS). Fishman's work has been utilized in many books and articles. Below is an adaptation of GIDS from Jon Reyhner (1999), Professor of Bilingual and

Multicultural Education at Northern Arizona University, and of RLS from David Marshall (1994), Professor of English and Linguistics at the University of North Dakota. Juxtaposing this information from their articles succinctly illustrates factors relevant to intergenerational dislocation and the necessary components of language revitalization.

## **GIDS**

### **Current Status of Language**

**Stage 8:** Only a few elders speak the language;

**Stage 7:** Only adults beyond child bearing age speak the language.

**Stage 6:** Some inter-generational use of language.

**Stage 5:** Language is alive and used in the community.

**Stage 4:** Language is required in elementary schools.

**Stage 3:** Language is used in places of business and by employees in less specialized work areas.

**Stage 2:** Language is used by local government and in the mass media in the minority community.

**Stage 1:** Some language use by higher levels of government and in higher education.  
(Reyhner, 1996, p. 1)

## **Reversing Language Shift**

Reconstruction and adult acquisition as a second language;

Cultural interaction primarily involving the community-based older generation;

The intergenerational and demographically concerned home-family-neighborhood activities (this stage is crucial for maintenance);

Schools for literacy acquisition in the language: for the old and the young, but not in lieu of compulsory education

Schools in lieu of compulsory education and substantially under another language's curricular and staffing control;

The local/regional (i.e.) non-neighborhood work sphere, both among the language's native speakers and non-native speakers;

Local/regional mass media and governmental services;

Education, work sphere, mass media, and governmental operations at higher and nationwide levels  
(Marshall, 1994, p. 20)

Note that Reyhner presents a simplified version of the GIDS, which is quite helpful in providing an overview of the basic concepts. Marshall (1994), presents the



GIDS as a model for “measuring language maintenance and revival” (p. 22), again an overview. The state of Dakota language in terms of the GIDS will be discussed in Chapter IV. Language revitalization strategies as relevant to the results of the Survey for Grant for Tribal Languages and their relationship to RLS is also discussed in Chapter V.

### *Language Preservation and Maintenance*

Language preservation and language maintenance are generally synonymous throughout the literature. “Language maintenance is the effort to counteract slippage in number of speakers and to guarantee the expansion of a repertoire already attained” (Marshall, 1994, p. 24). “Language maintenance, *per se*, can be defined as the preservation of a language in the domains which it commands” (Marshall, 1994, p. 24). Note that Marshall’s definitions of maintenance indicate that the language is still in an active state and that the word “preservation” is used in terms of retaining it in its domains.

While maintenance and preservation are often used synonymously, preservation may be used to apply exclusively to archiving a language. In Fishman’s Stage Eight, when only a few elderly speakers know a language, such measures as recording and videotaping the speakers and transcribing alphabets may be utilized; however, “[T]his archiving of language knowledge can be tantamount to an admission of defeat, with the language becoming a museum piece” (Reyhner, 1996, p. 3).

### *Language Revitalization*

Again it must be noted that a variety of terms, such as revival, exist for revitalization. “Language revival is the adding of new domains” (Marshall, 1994, p. 24). Domains are the situations in which a language is used. “Most problematic is the absence



of communicative situations in which the language can be used meaningfully” (Hinton, 2001). “Another major problem is that as the length of time that its speakers have not spoken it increases, they begin to lose their competency; they start feeling self-conscious and are afraid to make an error, especially in front of other speakers (Hinton, 2001).

Leanne Hinton, Professor of Linguistics at the University California at Berkeley, and Ken Hale, now deceased, formerly the Ferrari P. Ward Emeritus Professor of Linguistics at MIT ( 2001), edited the *Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice*. In her article, “Language Revitalization: An Overview”, Hinton delineates some basics of language revitalization. “It is the learners who must bring the native speakers back into language use. In a language revitalization program, perhaps the most important first step of second-language learning is to teach the learners things they can say to speakers”. “Another way to encourage the speakers to use their language is to get them to teach it” (Hinton, 2001). This does not have to be in a formal classroom situation. “[A] learner can simply ask the speaker to teach him”. Community support may be provided by events such as potlucks where language use is encouraged (Hinton, 2001).

While revitalization generally refers to increasing fluency in a language that is still spoken, it may also refer to restoring a language that is no longer used. In “Diversity in Local Language Maintenance and Restoration: A Reason for Optimism” (Ash, Little Doe Fermino, & Hale, 2001), the word “reclamation” is used as a synonym for restoration in reference to the reconstruction of Wampanoag, an indigenous language in what is now Massachusetts. Wampanoag has “had no fluent speakers for a century or more.”

*What to Revitalize and Some Impediments  
to Revitalization*

A myriad of factors must be considered in the revitalization of a language. Just as people do not intuitively comprehend what will keep a language alive (see Understanding Language Loss, below), they may disagree on what speech forms are 'authentic'. "The linguist's response to the first set of questions is unequivocal: the *whole* of a language is authentic, in all its dialects, varieties, and styles" (Crystal, 2000, p. 114).

"First Nations educators are aware that dialect differences and other issues can fragment the community, making the process of language renewal very difficult" (Rubin, 1996, p. 2). The researcher has heard repeatedly that speakers of Dakota language on the Spirit Lake Nation can tell which of the four districts a given speaker is from. People on the Spirit Lake Nation today, where Dakota language is not commonly used in daily life, may be self-conscious about using their language with speakers from other districts. Thus, the existence of differing speech patterns in the four districts has contributed to a lessening in the use of Dakota language. An example of fragmentation is the name of the tribal college on the Spirit Lake Nation, Cankdeska Cikana formerly Little Hoop. Everyone familiar with the language agrees that *cankdeska* means 'hoop', but *cikana* is 'little' in *Ihanktuwan*, and *cistina* is 'little' in *Isanti*, so people will say, "Why does the College have an *Ihanktuwan* name instead of *Isanti*?" A naturally occurring linguistic phenomenon, language change, has instead caused friction. "The true life of any language is found in the breadth of its variation and its readiness to change, to adapt itself to new circumstances" (Crystal, 2002, p. 116).



Of course, Dakota language was not allowed to change in a natural way. Severe disruptions in intergenerational transmission have been wrought by the boarding schools, relocation, and a variety of other factors as discussed above. Without the language being spoken in a variety of environments, what remains of it in people's minds, often associated with a beloved, deceased relative, becomes sacrosanct. In how many ways might we rephrase a certain simple expression? "Hi." "Hello." "Howdy." "Hi there." "Well, hello." But if we only remember one word or phrase that our grandmother used in a particular instance, such as a greeting, and if we are not accustomed to hearing the normal, everyday speech of others in the language our grandmother spoke, it is human nature to perseverate on the phrase that our grandmother used. This can lead to problems in improving facility in the language because different ways of wording may sound "wrong", and people may be resistant to learning them. They may think that what is being taught in a language preservation program is inaccurate.

In some instances, people speaking a particular variety of the language may even feel compelled to correct others. "Even though the elders in a community will be naturally conservative in their attitudes, there is nothing they can do to stop linguistic change" (Crystal, 2000, p. 116).

It is therefore critical for an indigenous community to adopt an appropriately flexible and inclusive attitude towards language variation, especially in relation to the forms used by younger people, if they do not want to alienate large sections of their society from the task of language maintenance. (Crystal, 2000, p. 117).

Dr. Richard Littlebear (1997), Northern Cheyenne, President of Dull Knife

Memorial College in Montana, comments:

We must sensitize our elders and fluent speakers to the needs of potential speakers of our languages. ... [W]hen they criticize or make fun of a person



trying to speak one of our languages they are taken very seriously, and some people will not even try to speak the language when they have been criticized by a respected elder of that tribe. When this happens, it hastens the death of that language. Somehow, we must turn this negativity around. (p. 3)

The male and female versions of the Dakota language, discussed in Chapter II, can also lead to self-consciousness about using the language if the speaker was raised by a member of the opposite sex and fears being teased.

On the other hand, people may be aware that there is much more to Dakota language than they remember. This may lead to them being shy about speaking the language because they are afraid of making mistakes (Chapter I). How many speech errors does each of us make during a day? Probably more than we care to acknowledge. Speech errors are common enough to have been “the subject of both casual and scientific interest for centuries” (Akmajian, et al., 1987, p. 431).

However, when a language is used seldom, if at all, people become especially self-conscious. “There appears to be a consistent relationship between various forms of anxiety and language proficiency in all situations” (Krashen, 1981, p. 29) with low anxiety being “associated with greater success” (p. 30). While we think speech errors in children are cute, speech errors in adults are frowned upon. Obviously, being self-conscious and shy can impede both language use and language acquisition.

Negative reactions can be even more painful for someone trying to learn an endangered indigenous language than for someone learning a second language for travel or business. The person using the indigenous language may be so mortified by even the possibility of making a mistake, that they just will not use it. Richard Littlebear (1997), addressing Cheyenne speakers, advises:

As long as we can understand each other, we are doing all right. Understanding each other in our languages is the main criterion, not our errors in pronunciation and grammar. Later on we can work on correct pronunciation, but first let us get people talking our languages and this latter aspect is going to take time. (p. 3)

### *Understanding Language Loss*

Crystal (2000) notes “from experiences the world over” that “one of the loudest complaints to eventually emerge” is of the “‘if only’ type: ‘if only my parents had ...’; ‘if only my grandparents’ generation ...’” (p. 105). When a language has been lost, people may long for the ancestral language. However, when a language is in the process of being lost, people may not take the initiative to ensure its survival. However, they may not realize the true extent of the loss (See below), and even if they do, they may not know how to go about saving their language.

The seeming lack of concern is representative of a pattern world-wide. “For it is a fact that people on the whole *are* extraordinarily unaware about the nature of language-and here I am not talking only about indigenous peoples” (Crystal, 2000, p. 107).

In particular, most people are unaware of the stages through which a language passes as it becomes increasingly endangered. They do not know how quickly a bilingual community can become monolingual. They do not know about the phenomenon of rapid, catastrophic language shift. They do not see the tell-tale signs, such as the growth in bilingualism, or the gradual increase in loan-words from the dominant language. They look around them, see others still speaking the language, and conclude that the language is strong, and that ‘someone out there knows the stories’. They may deny that there few speakers left. ... They refuse to accept that their language is ‘endangered’, ‘vanishing’, ‘dying’. (Crystal, 2000, p. 108)

Interestingly, this all-too-common lack of awareness seems not to apply to the Spirit Lake Nation in terms of at least perceiving the language is “at risk” (see Chapter IV, Section V). However, people appear to be uninformed, at this point, about how to



personally and tribally assume the responsibility for ensuring the survival of the dialect of Dakota used on the Spirit Lake Nation. People may be unaware of how to go about saving a language, and they may also be unaware of “what the consequences of language loss are” (Crystal, 2000, p. 109).

An additional perspective, and one that is world-wide, is the “genetic fallacy” (Crystal, 2000, p. 110). This concept can act as an impediment to learning the native language because people think that other members of their racial or ethnic group should either know the language or be able to acquire it easily.

The adult native speakers may believe that, if children have the same ethnic background as themselves, the task of learning their language as a second language will inevitably be simple. The fact of the matter, of course, is that all children learning an ancestral language as a second language in a tutored setting have to work hard to achieve success, regardless of their ethnicity. (Crystal, 2000, p. 110)

#### *Under Funding of Federal Mandates*

It has been the observation of the researcher that these seemingly good intentions on the part of the federal government are poorly funded with tribes interested in language preservation and revival having to compete with each other. The struggle for funds is ipso facto to the declared interest. To use a cliché, words are cheap. First should come funds to all interested tribes to develop materials and train speakers of the native language as teachers. If Congress has any intention of living up to its statement in Public Law 101-477, Title I—Native American Languages Act, “EVALUATIONS (9) languages are the means of communication of the full range of human experiences and are critical to the survival of cultural and political integrity of any people;” funds should be on an ongoing basis.



Of course federal funds are only part of the answer to the demise of Native American languages. Each tribe wishing to preserve, maintain, or revitalize its language must have the support of the tribal members. People must be self-motivated. There must be valued milieus for the use of the language, and these must exist beyond the walls of the school. Dr. Stephen Greymorning (Southern Arapaho), assistant professor of anthropology and Native American studies at the University of Montana states,

If you want the language to survive, it has to be everywhere that English is. It has to infiltrate every medium-music, books, television, even the street signs on the reservation. Every time they turn around, the kids should bump into the language. (Stark, 1996, p.18)

### Summary

Chapter II reviews the precarious status of the majority of the world's languages. The fates of perhaps 3,000 of the existing 6,000 languages are at stake because no children speak them. Language shift, the encroachment of a dominant language, and language death, the demise of a language are defined. The impact of the type of data and the research methodology used to ascertain the genetic relationships among languages is considered. The blend of *Isanti* and *Ihanktuwan* spoken on the Spirit Lake Nation is placed in the context of the Siouan language family, and the role of the men's and women's languages is recognized. The history of literacy in Dakota on the Spirit Lake Nation is delineated. The components of language preservation and maintenance are illustrated and contrasted to language revitalization.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Unstructured Interviews and Development of the Pilot Survey

Preparatory to applying for an Administration for Native Americans (ANA) grant to revitalize and preserve the dialect of Dakota on the Spirit Lake Reservation, in the fall of 1999, it was necessary to assess the state of the language. In the process of developing the assessment tool, a brief questionnaire that came to be known as the Survey for Grant for Survival of Tribal Languages (Survey), a fluent speaker and the researcher conducted non-structured interviews with 30 tribal members, including elders, parents of school children, and tribal administrators.

The nature of the unstructured interview is that it does not have a pre-constructed set of questions but is a technique “in which interviewees are asked to respond to broad, open-ended questions” (Department of Anthropology University of California Santa Barbara, n.d.). The choice of this technique allowed for input from the Reservation community. The broad questions were not written down beforehand. They were in the form of categories presented in a conversational manner. These categories were the respondents’ perceptions of use of the Dakota language, fluency in the language, places where the language was used, and what might interest people in learning and using the language, i.e. strategies for revitalization.

While the American Psychological Association designates a specific format for personal interviews, that format is not used in Chapter III if the person was giving information in an unstructured interview or was critiquing the pilot survey. At the time the interviewing was done, this study had not been proposed. The interviewees were guaranteed anonymity if they so desired, so names were generally not recorded. All that were noted, aside from their ideas, knowledge, and other contributions, were age, gender, and a brief description of fluency. In addition, exact dates were not recorded as they were not relevant to information needed to develop or critique the pilot survey.

The age span was of the 30 tribal members participating in the unstructured interviews was 72 years, with the youngest person being 18 years of age and the oldest 90 years of age. People recognized that the language is in decline and that much information is being lost. "When I listen to the old men talk, they use verb forms that I can't use. I know how to say things, but I can't say them right." (male, late fifties, moderately fluent in Dakota) "There are so many plants that are gone. There are so many words we don't use any more. Our lives are different now. We don't have words for the modern things. The other day I was talking to my friend (middle eighties) on the phone. I used a word she didn't know because she hadn't heard it for so many years." (female, 90, fluent)

In the unstructured interviews, one of the most prevalent themes among the middle aged (36-55) was, "I understand Dakota when people are talking, but I can't speak it." The researcher has heard this repeatedly in eleven years of teaching on the Reservation and in interactions with tribal members outside of school. This lament is typical for middle-aged people on reservations across the United States. Grosjean (1982)



quotes Governor Robert Lewis speaking at the National Indian Bilingual Education Conference in 1974,

I forgot my language because I went to boarding school when I was six. I mean the way of speaking it. I understood clearly whatever was spoken to me. When my parents or grandparents would come to meet me, I would understand them and be able to greet them, but since I could not speak, I would get embarrassed and run away. ... I had to relearn the language. (p. 73)

[Note: The Gila River Indian Community refers to its tribal Chairperson as 'Governor'.]

This concern with being able to comprehend, but not speak, was incorporated into the pilot survey as Question 4, "I can understand Dakota when others are speaking."

Mrs. Lorraine Grey Bear has repeatedly stated that. "We have such a wealth of knowledge on our Reservation. We have to reach the ones who understand Dakota and get them talking."

While there is strong support for and identification with the language, as evidenced by the interviews, people are often embarrassed that they might make mistakes when they try to use it; therefore, they, like Governor Lewis above, may be afraid to try. The result is an ironic juxtaposition of pride in the language and fear of using it incorrectly. Pride is evidenced by the following remark from an unstructured interview. "Nothing would make me happier right now than to be able to converse in Dakota with the elders and other Indians. And I believe most Indians who are really proud of who they are feel the same way.... How can we say we're Dakota and not be able to speak the language?" (male, forties, non-speaker)

This pride is, unfortunately often coupled with an unwillingness to actually use the language. In the spring of 1994, the researcher asked a fluent speaker in his fifties, a

nationally known powwow announcer, who was at that time a cultural specialist for the Wounspe Program, about the attitude of the young people toward the language. His observation was that even if they knew it, they wouldn't speak it. He pointed out a young person (approximately 12) whose family is known on the Reservation for their fluency, and made the remark, "See that young lady. I always talk to her in Indian. She doesn't answer me, but she knows what I'm saying." This situation is all too typical on Indian reservations across the United States. In corroboration of the cultural specialist's comment, Grosjean (1973) quotes Governor Lewis as saying, "I have talked to our young people, even in high school, and I have tried to teach them our language. But you find that after a while they lose interest and revert to English" (p. 73).

Yet, one can frequently observe young people wearing shirts that have such slogans as "Native Pride". This paradox of pride and reluctance to use the language lends itself to the necessity of considering these, at times seemingly diametrically opposed, attitudes of the Spirit Lake people when designing a survey. First of all the final survey was anonymous. The goal was to obtain information, not to label people according to their proficiency in Dakota. Secondly, it was designed to be non-threatening. A formal assessment of fluency involving evaluation of an individual's linguistic knowledge in terms of the lexicon, as well as syntactical, phonological, morphological, and expressive skills could have been not only intimidating but antithetical to the ANA's intent that the assessment must come from the people.

A further consideration is that a person may be fluent in Dakota but not literate in it. The use of Dakota language was not allowed in the boarding schools attended by the majority of the living Dakota elders and middle-aged (35+) persons. "Prior to the advent

of bilingual legislation, the most likely place a Spirit Lake Tribal member might learn written Dakota was from the hymns transcribed by clergy of the Catholic, Episcopal, or Presbyterian Churches.

Therefore, in order to determine fluency using a formal assessment based on the principles of linguistic analysis, oral interviews in Dakota would have been necessary. Aiken (1997, p. 31) makes it clear that this type of interview would have been extremely time consuming and expensive. For those reasons, the number of respondents would have been dramatically reduced.

In addition, the physical presence and behavior of the questioner can influence the respondent's interpretation of the questions and how they are answered. For example, the comments and body language of the person who is asking a series of questions may indicate approval or disapproval of certain subjects and influence the respondent's answers (Aiken, 1997, p. 31).

Considering the all-too-common hesitancy to even use Dakota language, data obtained through a formal assessment type of interview would have been fraught with extraneous variables. One must also consider that among the people who would be interviewed, the majority of the ones who still speak Dakota are the very ones who were traumatized in school by not being allowed to speak their language.

... washing the mouth out with soap was popular: as a Tlingit man from Alaska put it – 'Whenever I speak Tlingit, I can still taste the soap.' But whatever the mechanism, the result was the same: a growing sense of inferiority or shame about one's language, a reluctance or embarrassment to use the language for fear of evoking further condemnation, and a natural desire to avoid having one's children exposed to the same experience. (Crystal, 2000, p. 85)



Individuals who had been punished or humiliated for speaking their language could not be expected to consider an interview situation concerning their language a positive, or even neutral, experience.

Pressure from formalized oral interviews to determine fluency could have been seen as an invasion of privacy and such a perception could have had the possible result of reduced participation in the proposed activities for language revitalization funded by the ANA grant.

Another paradox exists here. After centuries of trying to destroy Indian languages and cultures, the federal government has, all too belatedly, recognized their value and is trying to preserve them. This reversal can be very insulting to Indian people. A "seventy-year-old woman in AZ [Arizona], a member of a very small tribe" was quoted as saying, "It seems like we have worked all our life to civilize ourselves, so to speak, then they turn around and want us to do it the other way" (Fuchs and Havighurst, 1972, p. 188). A long-time Head Start Program grants writer in her fifties, on the Spirit Lake Nation, became irate when a non-Indian government worker stated that the Program was not doing enough to teach the children the Dakota language. "You people have done everything you can to destroy our language. How dare you criticize us for not using it now!" (personal communication, May 15, 2002)

On the positive side, people were almost unequivocally encouraging about the potential written survey and had many helpful ideas. Themes suggesting strategies for preservation of the language emerged from the unstructured interviews. People were particularly interested in cassettes, with accompanying booklets, which would allow them to practice at home. Repeatedly people emphasized, when computerized materials in

Dakota were suggested, that cassette tapes would be better because, "Everybody has tape recorders."

### Pilot Survey

Using the information derived from the unstructured interviews, a pilot survey was distributed to an informal committee of 19 people who critiqued not only the original draft, but the various revisions. ANA stipulations were that the assessment was to come from the people. (See Chapter I, Background for the Study.) Formal education in linguistics and familiarity with the community, as well as the researcher's availability to meet the usual time constraints of a last-minute grant application, combined to give her the task of devising, utilizing the unstructured interviews, an acceptable pilot survey in the form of a questionnaire. An attempt was made to use everyday dialect and to accommodate the reading comprehension of all ages and educational levels.

Because the pilot survey was to be anonymous, it needed to be short, one-page. (More pages would necessitate numbering, or some other means of identification, so that separated pages could be accounted for.) The intent was to briefly encompass the areas of fluency, literacy, language use, and recommendations for language renewal. The pilot survey provided input as to how the format and questions were interpreted, in other words, whether or not the desired information would be elicited. The pilot survey allowed for feedback and input from the Spirit Lake people (*Mni Wakan Oyate*).

Every one of the informal committee members who was given the survey was told, "This is just the rough draft. Any suggestions that you have are welcome." Because the researcher is used to interacting with the people on a casual basis, the pilot survey originally used the word Sioux, as the people often use it in their daily speech.



For the purposes of the pilot survey, however, the informal committee found the word Sioux to be objectionable, even though it was the former name of the Tribe (Devils Lake Sioux Tribe) and even though people frequently refer to themselves as Sioux in conversation. The pilot survey (Appendix I) had used Indian (Sioux) and Sioux/Dakota.

1. I know how to talk Indian (Sioux).  
a lot                      a little bit                      not at all
2. I can understand Sioux/Dakota when others are speaking.  
a lot                      a little bit                      not at all

Three surveys were returned to the researcher's mailbox at Cankdeska Cikana Community College (CCCC) with Sioux crossed out and replaced with the word Dakota. One of those three, a Dakota language teacher, spoke personally to the researcher about it. Five other people also questioned why the word Sioux had been used. "The questions should be sensitive to the feelings and values of the particular individuals to whom the questionnaire is administered. Otherwise, strong emotions and defensiveness, rather than accurate answers, will be likely reactions" (Aiken, 1997, p. 38).

While the researcher had perceived the survey as informal, due to its not having a more standardized format with a Likert scale, some of the pilot survey respondents possibly perceived the process of collecting information itself to be at least somewhat of a formal process. Perhaps this influenced their requests that the word Sioux not be used. The researcher used the phrase "talk Indian" because that is how the question about one's speaking ability was (and is) typically expressed, "Do you talk Indian?" At times people may ask, "Do you talk Sioux?"

However the negative reaction to the word Sioux led to the complete elimination of the word Sioux and the use of the word Indian only once, in the first question on the



Survey for Grant for Revitalization of Tribal Languages (see below). There were no objections to the use of the word Dakota in the final format. (Nobody complained that the word Sioux was not used.)

Mrs. Lorraine Grey Bear, then a full-time Dakota language instructor at the Four Winds Tribal School (now Tate Topa Tribal Elementary and Middle School) and adjunct faculty at CCCC, was the consultant integral to the success of the final survey. After perusing the pilot survey, she suggested a question (which became Question 9 on the Survey for Grant for Revitalization of Tribal Languages), "Are you aware that the Dakota language is at risk of being lost forever?" She was also one of the individuals who had been firm about the word "Sioux" being changed to Dakota.

Mr. Erich Longie, then president of CCCC, requested the addition of a question on the final survey, "How many people do you know who talk Indian?" This quote illustrates some aspects of a dilemma similar to the use of Sioux versus Dakota. People use the phrase "talk Indian" in casual speech (as well as the word Sioux), yet some of the informal committee members objected to Indian being used in place of Dakota on the final survey. Because the phrase "talk Indian" as used by Mr. Longie, above, is so common, the informal committee members agreed to it being retained as Question 1 on the Survey for Grant for Survival of Tribal Languages.

1. I know how to talk Indian (Dakota).  
a lot                      a little bit                      not at all

Unfortunately, Mr. Longie's question, "How many people do you know who talk Indian?" while excellent, was not used. For one thing, the focus of the survey was on the individual respondent. For another, in order to maintain anonymity, as discussed above,

the survey would have to be one page. As regards keeping the length to one page, there was also the cost of paper to consider, and approaching the final draft, space was becoming a priority.

During the critique of the pilot survey, an astute observation of the linguistic situation on the Spirit Lake Reservation was made by a respondent in her fifties, a Dakota speaker. She noted that when she was young, each district on the Reservation spoke its own "dialect" of Dakota. She suggested a question asking the respondent which district "dialect" of Dakota he or she spoke, that of Fort Totten, Crow Hill, Mission/St. Michael or Tokio/Wood Lake. Consultation with the other participants in the informal committee, led to the elimination of this proposed question. Mrs. Grey Bear, especially, felt that the people needed to come together to learn and to use the language and that the current linguistic situation was not helped by separating the language into districts. Besides, "Everyone can understand each other."

An administrative assistant, at CCCC suggested the question, "Do you want to learn Dakota?" This question was revised to, "Do you want to learn, improve, or practice Dakota," to accommodate those already familiar with the language, and became Question 8 on the Survey. (This question was, however, discourteous to fluent elders. Unfortunately, this was overlooked at the time.)

The title of the pilot survey was the same as that used on the final survey, Survey for Grant for Revitalization of Tribal Languages. Cox (1996) cautions that a clever title should not introduce bias (p. 29). However, in the case of Native Americans, who have been forbidden to use their language in the schools and have been themselves, or are descendants of people who have been, placed in boarding schools with the intention of



breaking down the native language and culture, it is important to clarify from the start the stance of those presenting the questionnaire. Therefore, the researcher takes exception to Cox and offers the above explanation for the title, Survey for Grant for Revitalization of Tribal Languages.

Mrs. Hermina McKay, a Spirit Lake elder and long-time Dakota language and culture teacher at the Four Winds Community High School and the Tate Topa Tribal Elementary and Middle Schools, critiqued the initial formal request, as sounding too patronizing, more of a demand than a request, and possibly insulting to elders of the Tribe. The original wording, written independently by the researcher, was,

Cankdeska Cikana Community College will be sponsoring this grant. In order to see what the reservation community needs and wants, the College requests that you please answer this survey.

The initial explanation of the survey (request for participation) was re-written and approved by Mrs. McKay and the other informal committee participants in the pilot survey. The revised wording was as follows:

Cankdeska Cikana Community College is applying for a grant. Please help us to encourage Dakota language use on our reservation.

The explanation offered above, in reference to the title, serves as a basis for the sentence, "Please help us to encourage Dakota language use on our reservation."

#### Survey for Grant for Revitalization of Tribal Languages

Questionnaires are used to gather five major kinds of information:

- Background and Demographic Data. A sprinkling of demographic questions is included in almost all questionnaires ... even if the researcher's main concern is not with accumulating facts about the respondent's age, sex, income and other characteristics. Answers to them allow the researchers to break the sample down into subgroups and, by doing so, increase the value of their insights into responses to other questions. (Behling & Law, 2000, p. 7)



The Survey for Grant for Survival of Tribal Languages (see Appendix A) included two demographic questions, the respondent's age and sex, Questions 6 and 7 respectively. This allowed for categorization of the respondents so that it might be observed if differences existed. While it is common knowledge that Dakota fluency is widespread among those over 55, and decreases with each succeeding generation, this "folk wisdom" did need to be corroborated. In addition, any differences among the age groups or males and females' knowledge of or interest in learning Dakota, if indicated by the Survey, might be a factor in presenting language revitalization strategies to the reservation community.

- Behavioral Reports. Many researchers seek to understand the prevalence and frequency of certain behaviors (Behling & Law, 2000, p. 7).

The Survey asked five behavioral questions. The first question asked respondents to rate themselves on their ability to speak Dakota. The second question asked respondents how much they understood the language, the third whether they could talk Dakota to elders, and the fifth whether they were able to read the hymns in Dakota. Question 4 dealt with asking the respondents to identify the places where they engaged in the use of Dakota language.

The respondents were asked to rate themselves using three choices for the first two questions: "a lot", "a little bit", "or not at all". Questions 3 and 5 asked for a rating of "easily", "a little bit", or "not at all". Question 4 asked the respondent to circle the place or places where she or he used the Dakota language. Finer distinctions were not made because of the informal nature of the Survey as well as because of the fact that the rating was based on self-assessment rather than standardized criteria.

The respondents were not tested for language fluency (or lack of it) but were asked to self-assess. To actually test the fluency of over 300 people would have been an overwhelming task. In addition, factors such as relationship to the tester could have influenced the results. In the small reservation community of some 2,300 people, most people know each other, and many are related in some way. Choosing individuals to test might have been difficult. Despite public broadcasts and information in the tribal paper, talk could have arisen in the reservation community regarding why certain individuals were chosen, and this could have caused consternation such as to why certain people were either being picked or were not included. Behling and Law (2000) observe ... "cultural acceptability impose[s] important constraints on the design of questionnaires and research instruments" (p. 15).

Aiken further elucidates some potential difficulties with face-to-face administration of questionnaires,

A major disadvantage of face-to-face administration is that it is more expensive and time consuming than other procedures. In addition, the physical presence and behavior of the questioner can influence the respondent's interpretation of the questions and how they are answered. For example, the comments and body language of the person who is asking a series of questions may indicate approval or disapproval of certain subjects and influence the respondent's answers. (Aiken, 1997, p. 31)

Another complication would have been in which district a person had been raised. While any distinctions in speech are mutually intelligible and have largely blended together, social factors would have entered had a speaker from one district been tested by a speaker of another.

Because the respondents were asked to self-rate their fluency, rather than being objectively evaluated, the questions regarding fluency and language use are heretofore



considered behavioral rather than knowledge-type questions.

- Attitudes and Opinions. Opinions may be thought of as judgments ... (Behling & Law, 2000, p. 7)

Two attitude/opinion questions were asked. One was a simple yes/no question asking the respondents if they wanted to learn, improve, or practice Dakota. If people expressed little interest, it would be difficult to justify applying for a grant. However, a high affirmative response might indicate a false positive, as it is almost unconscionable to express a negative attitude toward Dakota language.

However, few people actually use the language, in their daily life. Aside from a smattering of single words and expletives, Dakota appears to have become fossilized into ceremonial use. Even at gatherings such as the monthly "Elders Day Out," the bilingual elders generally do not visit with each other in Dakota, which was usually their first language. The difference in attitude and actual behavior may indicate that Question 8, "Do you want to learn (to improve or practice) Dakota?" may have little predictive validity.

The other question that had to do with attitude was Question 9, concerning whether or not the respondent was aware that the Dakota language was at risk of being lost forever. This also appeared on the Survey as a simple yes/no question. As the respondents may not have had access to the information that the language is, in fact, at risk, this would not qualify as a test question. (See discussion below under "Knowledge.")

- Knowledge. "Tests provide a means of evaluating knowledge. Some may attempt "to measure learning in courses or other educational experiences ..." (Behling & Law, 2000, p. 7)



The respondents were not tested on their knowledge of Dakota language but were asked to self-assess. (See discussion under "Behavioral Reports," above.) No written testing materials are available in the dialect spoken on the Spirit Lake Reservation, and few, if any, members of the present-day tribal members have had the opportunity to learn to read and write their language. To further complicate matters, the written language is not standardized and several forms of transcription are available including the alphabet developed in the mid-1880s by Rev. Stephen Return Riggs, later utilized by Catholic missionaries; the International Phonetic Alphabet; and a variety of alphabets designed by native speakers, mostly of Lakota.

As mentioned above, any tests for language proficiency would have to have been designed specifically for the populace of the Spirit Lake Tribe and administered orally. This would have not only been extremely time-consuming but could have caused some tension in the community. Those who do not speak the language, or lack confidence in their ability to do so, might have reacted adversely to being officially labeled, and their reactions could have carried over into their opinions about the incipient *Dakota Ia Unspepi*/Language Preservation Program.

Question 9, the only question that could be categorized as a knowledge question, asked the respondents if they were aware that the Dakota language is at risk of being lost forever. However, while the mechanisms of language loss are common knowledge among linguists, they may not be common knowledge on the Spirit Lake Reservation. At any rate, Question 9 is not a knowledge question in the sense that the participants in the Survey necessarily had prior access to that information, so this question would be more in the category of an opinion.

- Intentions, Expectations, and Aspirations. While these are obviously very different categories, they are grouped together "because all three deal with the future" (Behling & Law, 2000, p. 7).

One question concerning expectations was included in the Survey. This question asked the respondents what they thought might encourage people to learn Dakota. Six possible choices were provided. The question was reworded for the students in elementary school as the Disciplinary Officer pointed out that children are egocentric and could relate to the question better if asked, "What would encourage you to learn Dakota," rather than asking them what they thought would encourage others to learn.

The respondents were given six choices of possible activities for revitalization although this technical term was not used on the Survey. Five of the choices were brief versions (designed to fit on the one-page Survey) of the goals of the *Dakota Ia Unspepi*/Language Preservation Program. The sixth was classes at Cankdeska Cikana Community College. (For in-depth discussion, see Chapter I, pp. 18-22.)

#### Distribution of the Survey for Grant for Revitalization of Tribal Languages

Unlike formal surveys, a variety of venues were utilized in order to obtain the results for the Survey for Grant for Revitalization of Tribal Languages. Every attempt was made to account for external validity as opportunities for the subjects to participate were both random and representative of the age groups and genders of the Spirit Lake Nation.

The range of age-groups in the Survey was a contributing factor to Survey dissemination. For example, many elders who are homebound attend "Elders Day Out", a monthly lunch with accompanying activities, to which they are transported. The



researcher attended one such lunch with Mrs. Grey Bear and Mrs. McKay. The nature of the Survey was explained in a brief presentation by the researcher, and most, if not all, of the elders filled out a Survey. Locating all these elders in their homes would have been very time-consuming; plus they might have felt uncomfortable and perhaps would have thought they were being singled out.

With the permission of the Spirit Lake Tribal Council, a box of surveys was placed in the Blue Building, the location of the Tribal offices, BIA, and post office. This method had the lowest response. The box of Surveys left at the Blue Building had no one there to explain the nature of the Survey or to give a "pep talk" about filling one out, and not many were filled out. Surveys were also distributed at Cankdeska Cikana Community College. Students asked questions, and almost everyone who was asked filled one out. Four Winds Community High School and Tate Topa Tribal Elementary School cooperated, and Surveys were passed out in grades seven through twelve. Students filled them out during class, and there was a high rate of return.

#### Nature of the Research

"In addition to their widespread use in research, questionnaires are administered and surveys are conducted in innumerable practical settings to provide information for decisions and planning involving ... education and training ... and many other matters" (Aiken, 1997, p. 18). As was mentioned above, the Survey was originally designed to fulfill one of the criteria for obtaining an Administration for Native Americans grant so that activities relevant to language preservation and revitalization could be funded.

Data on behaviors, demographic characteristics, and other objective facts, as well as opinions, attitudes, interests, values, abilities, and related personal and social variables, may be collected. Analysis of such data ideally provides a sounder



basis for organizational and individual decision-making than total reliance on supposition or conjecture. (Aiken, 1997, pp. 18 & 21)

Despite preconceptions about the status of Dakota language on the Spirit Lake Nation, the nature of the research was purely exploratory in that it was hoped that "... something interesting will be discovered--some new fact or phenomenon that may be useful for some purpose" (Aiken, 1997, p. 14). Additionally, the Survey was of the descriptive type in that, rather than trying to find a cause or an explanation for the present status of the language, "The investigator wishe[d] to obtain data that describe the characteristics of certain people, objects, or events" (Aiken, 1997, p. 14).

### Summary

Chapter III described the nature of the unstructured interviews with 30 members of the Spirit Lake Nation, ranging in age from 18 to 90, which provided information on Dakota language use and fluency, environments where the language was spoken, and possible activities which might lead people to use the language more (revitalization strategies). Information from the unstructured interviews led to the development of a pilot survey which was distributed to 19 members of an informal committee. From their input, the Survey for Grant for Revitalization of Tribal Languages was developed and disseminated, in diverse settings, to a total of 311 people (out of an approximate on-reservation population of 2,300) ranging in age from under 12 to over 55.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

#### Introduction

First, simple frequencies for each item were completed. Selected items were cross tabulated, with either Fisher's exact test or a chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test. The Kolmogorov-Schmirnov measure was used to test for differences between age groups and usage of Dakota (Siegel and Castellan, 1988).

Chapter IV approaches the data by dividing the Survey for Grant for Survival of Tribal Languages (Survey) into sections: Section I/Oral Fluency in Dakota, Section II/Literacy in Dakota, Section III/Environments Where Dakota Language Is Used, Section IV/Gender and Dakota Language Use, Section V/Awareness of Dakota Language Being at Risk, Section VI/Desire to Learn, Improve, or Practice Dakota, and Section VII/Revitalization Strategies. Within each section, the data were reviewed in terms of age. The data were analyzed using Pearson's chi-square.

In the *Sociolinguistics of Society*, Fasold (1984), cautions,

[T]he distinction between the research hypothesis established by a statistical procedure and what the researcher makes of it can easily be missed. It is a very crucial distinction; typically only part of an author's conclusions is supported directly by the statistical procedure employed. The rest is inference, based more or less on common-sense reasoning, and is open to challenge on common-sense grounds. (p. 97)

Such a caution is particularly important to remember when the research is with another culture, as this study with the Spirit Lake Nation.

### Section I/Oral Fluency

Section I concerns self-assessed fluency in Dakota language. The Survey addresses oral fluency in Questions 1, 2, and 3.

1. I know how to talk Indian (Dakota).
2. I can understand Dakota language when others are talking.
3. I can talk to elders in Dakota.

The above research questions guided what comparisons were made with the pertinent data. The assumption based on linguistic research about indigenous languages, combined with observations on the Spirit Lake Nation, was that within the seven age groups (under 12, 13-18, 19-25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, above 55) perceptions of what constituted as "talking Indian" are likely different. This difference could be due primarily to those above 55 being raised in an environment where Dakota language was the main means of communication at home and in public (aside from school); those in the middle age groups being raised with English being the primary language with Dakota relegated to the background at home (such as people using Dakota when they did not want the children to understand) and not used in public; and those under twenty-five seldom encountering Dakota at home or in public (except for ceremonial reasons, drum groups, and a few words and phrases in school). (See Chapter II, Joshua Fishman: Language Shift and Language Death.) The above assumptions are based on a very typical pattern world-wide of the state of indigenous languages, many of which are more and



more being replaced by English. Additionally, different age groups in any culture may perceive a variety of issues in different ways.

Relevant to the above discussion, Berlin (2002) offers a “scale designed specifically for the classification of language endangerment in indigenous communities in North America” (p. 20). Below is a variation of the scale:

A		B		C		D	E
*		*		*		*	
Elders		Elders		Elders		Elders	No one
Grandparents		Grandparents		Grandparents			
Parents		Parents					
Children							

In order to determine the state of Dakota language on the Spirit Lake Nation, the use of the language according to age groups needed to be determined, as well as the gender specific use of Dakota. The latter is particularly important in this study because Dakota has male and female versions. Most obvious is that males and females end their statements with gender specific qualifiers. More subtle is that males and females may use vocabulary not typically used by the other sex, and in the traditional culture one gender may speak of certain topics not generally spoken of by the other sex. (See discussion Chapter II, Dakota Language Men’s and Women’s Speech.)

The second youngest age group, 13-18, constituted the largest number of respondents due to data collection being most accessible in the school system. Also, the large number of respondents in the lower age groups is actually congruent with the population of the Spirit Lake Nation, over 51% of which is under eighteen (Rousey, 2000, p. 2).

Using the results in Table 1, all age groups under +55, 76.3% answered that they could talk Dakota “a lot” or “a little bit”. The results are statistically significant. When

all age groups are combined, again a majority of the Mni Wakan Oyate (Spirit Lake people) assert that they can talk Dakota “a lot” or “a little bit”, 75.5%, Table 1. While being able to speak “a lot” and “a little bit” undoubtedly encompasses levels of fluency from competence in Dakota language to knowing only a few words, at least they have some awareness of the language.

Table 1. Question 1 - I know how to talk Indian (Dakota).

Age Groups	A lot	A little bit	Not at all	Row Total
Under 12	5	16	2	23/7.4
13-18	2	95	34	131/42.1
19-25		26	13	39/12.5
26-35	2	7	13	22/7.1
36-45	1	20	8	29/9.3
46-55	6	13	4	23/7.4
Above 55	28	14	2	44/14.1
Column Total	44/14.1	191/61.4	76/24.4	311/100

$\chi^2=137.49$ ,  $p<.00001$

However these results are not congruent with Berlin’s scale of language endangerment in Native American communities, nor are they congruent with observed use of Dakota language on the Spirit Lake Nation. Note the especially high percentage of those claiming to talk Dakota “a little bit” in the following age groups: ages 19-25, 66%, and ages 13-18, 75%. Of course the Survey did not attempt to test for vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, etc. It merely asked people if they could speak the language.

However, there was a more telling self-assessment of fluency, Question 3, "I can talk to elders in Dakota".

Table 2. Question 3 - I can talk to elders in Dakota.

Age Groups	A lot	A little bit	Not at all	Row Total
Under 12	2	12	9	23/7.4
13-18	2	39	90	131/42.1
19-25		9	30	39/12.5
26-35	2	7	13	22/7.1
36-45	1	11	17	29/9.3
46-55	5	10	8	23/7.4
Above 55	26	10	8	44/14.1
Column Total	38/12.2	98/31.5	175/56.3	311/100

$\chi^2=127.74, p<.00001$

When the same individuals in the seven age groups were asked if they could talk to elders in Dakota, suddenly their perceptions of self-assessed fluency decreased dramatically, particularly in the 13-18 and 19-25 age groups (see Table 2). Of the 131 respondents in the 13-18 age group, 95 of whom (75%) claimed, Table 1/Question I, they could talk Dakota "a little bit", only 39 (30%) claimed that they could talk to elders even a little bit, Table 2/Question 3. Testing the 13 to 18 year-old age group for differences in the cumulative proportion using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (Siegel and Castellan, 1988)  $K-S=.42748, p<.01$ . This confirms that the likelihood of 13 to 18 year olds conversing in Dakota with elders is less than their self-reported knowledge of Dakota.



This could, perhaps, indicate that youth have inconsistent criteria for evaluating the questions that they are being asked, or it could imply that the thought of conversing with an elder was a 'reality check'.

A reversal also existed for the 19-25 age group, 26 (66%) of whom answered that they could talk Dakota "a little" bit in Question I. When asked if they could talk to elders, only 9 (23%) of the 19-25 age group claimed to be able to do so (Siegel and Castellan, 1988). Table 3, below, is a cross-classification of knowing how to talk Dakota and the ability to talk to elders in Dakota.

Table 3. Cross-Classification of Question 1/I know how to talk Indian (Dakota) and Question 3/I can talk to elders in Dakota.

		A lot	Question 1 A little bit	Not at all	Row Total
Question 3	Easily	33	5	0	38/12.2
	A little bit	9	87	2	98/31.5
	Not at all	2	99	74	174/56.3
	Column Total	44/14.1	191/61.4	76/24.4	311/100

$\chi^2=243.80$ , (p.00001)

While chi-square analysis does not determine cause, the possibility exists that younger people were over-inflating their ability to talk Dakota, but when confronted with the thought of engaging in an actual conversation with an elder, they may have realized that it was beyond them, or they may even feel scared. (See Chapter III, Unstructured Interviews and Development of Pre-Survey Strategies.)

As was mentioned above, Mrs. Lorraine Grey Bear, a long-time instructor of Dakota language at the Four Winds Tribal Elementary School and the Four Winds Community High School, observed that the children may learn Dakota words and phrases in school, but they have no one to practice with at home. "They forget everything over the summer" (personal communication, October 22, 1999). However, when a child is asked to answer Question 1, "I know how to talk Dakota", they might think they can because they know, or learned during the school year, a few words and phrases, yet they may have no or limited conversational experience. Despite their self-analysis of being able to talk Dakota, Question 3, "I can talk to elders in Dakota" could serve as a reminder of the limits of their Dakota language skills. As with all self-response questionnaires, the meaning placed on the question by the respondent may vary considerably, and of course, their experience may vary depending on age.

Additionally it is possible, for all age groups under 55, that the more fluent someone rates themselves, the less likely they would rate themselves as being able to talk to elders in Dakota. The more one knows about the language, the more one might realize areas in which they might be deficient or feel insecure. They could also be aware of the fact that the fluent elders know more complicated verb forms and phraseology, as well as being cognizant of words for cultural items and procedures no longer used in today's society. This hypothesis was not addressed in this study but may warrant analysis at a future time.

Examining Question 3, "I can talk to elders in Dakota", and the response of the age groups, finds that of the 38 respondents who answered that they could talk to elders 'easily', 26 were above 55 (see Table 3). This is to be expected given the state of the

language which, as is typical with most native languages, is spoken mainly by elders. These results were almost perfectly congruent with the age results for those above 55. Twenty-eight in that age group also answered Question 1, "I know how to talk Indian (Dakota)" by circling "a lot". This finding supports Berlin and other linguists' evaluation of elders typically being the most fluent speakers of indigenous languages.

Disregarding age and comparing Question 1, "I know how to talk Indian (Dakota)" and Question 3, "I can talk to elders in Dakota", shows that of 311 respondents, 33 indicate that they can both talk Indian "a lot" and talk to elders "easily" (see Table 3). On the other hand, 99 of those who claim to talk Dakota "a little bit" answer that they cannot talk to elders at all (Siegel and Castellan, 1988).

Recall that in Table 2, 26 people 55 and above stated that they could easily talk to elders in Dakota. When knowing how to talk Dakota is compared, as above in Table 3, to being able to talk to elders, age is still a factor.

Yet another consideration enters into the data. This is that many people on the Spirit Lake Nation state that they can understand Dakota but that they cannot speak it. Therefore, Question 2, "I can understand Dakota language when others are speaking", was included in the Survey (see Table 4). Several variables, not accounted for in this study, may have contributed to this situation, but they could not be considered in such a short survey. Those who understand but do not speak have a firm foundation for fluency. This was discussed under Chapter III, Methodology.

The data appear to be remarkably consistent between Table 1, Question 1, "I know how to talk Indian (Dakota)" and Table 4, "I can understand Dakota language when others are speaking", for the following age groups, under 12 and 19-25. The data for the



Table 4. Question 2 - I can understand Dakota language when others are speaking.

Age Groups	A lot	A little bit	Not at all	Row Total
Under 12	3	16	4	23/7.4
13-18	3	61	67	131/42.1
19-25	0	23	16	39/12.5
26-35	3	12	7	22/7.1
36-45	4	16	9	29/9.3
46-55	11	8	4	23/7.4
Above 55	36	7	1	44/14.1
Column Total	60/19.3	143/46.0	108/34.7	311/100

$\chi^2=169.80, p<.00001$

13 to 18 year-olds fluctuates considerably. Testing this specific group for differences in the cumulative proportions using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (Siegel and Castellan, 1988) K-S=.42748 (p.<.01).

The data for the age groups above twenty-six, changes positively in terms of them being able to understand more than they speak. This is to be expected as per the typical status of Native American languages as demonstrated by Berlin and as discussed in Chapter II.

#### Section II/Literacy in Dakota

The Survey addresses self-assessed written fluency in Dakota, cursorily assessed in Question 5:

5. I can read the hymns in Dakota.

5. I can read the hymns in Dakota.

It should be pointed out that Dakota historically, like most languages, was an oral, not a written language. Written versions (orthographies) of Dakota, from the time of the first encounter with Europeans, were attempted approximations of spoken Dakota. The various Dakota alphabets were composed by priests, linguists, self-made historians and other interested parties. As the bulk of the material printed in Dakota was published by diverse Protestant and Catholic missionaries for the purpose of converting the Dakota people, hymn books would probably be the most common place where people would see the language written (see Chapter II).

Question 5, "I can read the hymns in Dakota", was truly a 'loaded' question, but it was an expedient way to obtain at least a rough assessment of Dakota literacy on the Spirit Lake Nation (see Table 5). The majority of the residents on the Reservation are at least nominally Christian, and the three major denominations on the Spirit Lake Nation, the Catholic Church, the Presbyterian Church, and the Episcopalian Church, have since the late 1800s utilized hymnals written in Dakota in their services (see Chapter II).

Impressively, with an almost complete lack of formal education in Dakota language, 121 of the respondents, 38.9%, assert that they can read the hymns in Dakota either "easily" or "a little bit".

"Even with legislation claiming to promote bilingual education, such as the *Bilingual Education Act* of 1968, and subsequent legislation to promote its implementation"... (Berlin, 2000, p. 22) languages such as Dakota were seldom, if ever, taught in school on a par with English. To further complicate matters, as mentioned above, there are several orthographies for writing Dakota. The Catholics based their

Table 5. Question 5 - I can read the hymns in Dakota.

Age Groups	No Answer	A lot	A little bit	Not at all	Row Total
Under 12	1	1	10	11	23/7.4
13-18		6	44	81	131/42.1
19-25		2	11	26	39/12.5
26-35		1	4	17	22/7.1
36-45	1	3	8	17	29/9.3
46-55		2	7	14	23/7.4
Above 55		13	9	22	44/14.1
Column Total		28/9.0	93/29.9	188/60.5	311/100

$\chi^2=42.50$ ,  $p<.00094$

methods of writing Dakota on those of the Protestant clergy (Ullrich, N. d.), and these are likely the orthographies with which people on the Spirit Lake Nation might be the most familiar. Considering these factors, asking whether one could read the hymns would at least give some insight into the respondents' familiarity with written Dakota.

### Section III/Environments Where Dakota Language Is Used

Section III concerns self-assessment of actual physical locations, Question 4, where respondents perceive themselves as using Dakota language.

4. I use Dakota language in the following places:

(Circle the ones that apply.)

at home    at the Blue Building    at powwows    at ceremonies  
at friends' houses    on the telephone.



Although this categorization was not used on the Survey, Table 6 could be construed as representing private usage and Table 7 public usage of Dakota language. At home, at friends' houses, and on the telephone could represent "private" uses. At the Blue Building, at powwows, and at ceremonies could represent "public" usage. These data are most interesting as each figure in the Column Totals, for both Tables 6 and 7, is decreased by almost half from the previous category. For example, in Table 6, 43.7% use Dakota language at home, 23.5% use Dakota language at friends' houses, and 10.6% use Dakota language on the telephone. Speculation might be that homes where the language is used might have an elder present, or perhaps the parents use some Dakota phrases or encourage the children to use what they learned at school. At any rate, whatever is transpiring in the home environment does not seem to be carried over in to communication with friends, or to use on the telephone. The results for Table 6 were statistically significant for all categories.

However, that significance does not account for the precipitous drop among the categories. Using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (Siegel and Castellan, 1988) to compare use at home to use at friends' houses,  $K-S=.202$ ,  $p<.01$ ; to compare use at home to use on the phone,  $K-S=.331$ ,  $p<.01$ ; and to compare use at friends' houses to use on the phone,  $K-S=.129$ ,  $p<.01$ . Perhaps the lack of behavioral cues when talking on the phone would address at least some of the decline in use of Dakota language.

The idea of asking about using Dakota language on the telephone came from the researcher's grandmother, Grace Lambert, who often spoke Dakota, on the telephone, to her peers. Asking about phone use also provided another check on fluency. Obviously it is difficult to maintain a phone conversation unless one is fluent because on the phone

Table 6. Question 4 - I use Dakota language in the following places. PRIVATE

Age Groups	Home Yes	Home No	Friends' Houses Yes	Friends' Houses No	Phone Yes	Phone No	Row Total
Under 12	15	8	5	18	1	22	23/7.4
13-18	58	73	16	115	5	126	131/42.1
19-25	10	29	5	34	3	36	39/12.5
26-35	9	13	6	16	3	19	22/7.1
36-45	8	21	9	20	3	26	29/9.3
46-55	10	13	8	15	3	20	23/7.4
Above 55	26	18	24	20	15	29	44/14.1
Column Total	136/43.7	175/56.3	73/23.5	238/76.5	33/10.6	278/89.4	311/100
X <sup>2</sup> =16.8799 p<.00973			X <sup>2</sup> =38.1346. p<.00001		X <sup>2</sup> =33.0690. p<.0001		

one receives no expressive cues from facial expressions or gestures, or from the environmental context. Only thirty-three people, 10% of the 311 respondents, used Dakota language on the phone, and 15 of them were above 55.

The categories in Table 7, below, also show a decline among the categories. The designation of public is somewhat arbitrary.

Although a powwow is a public place, it is based, despite far-reaching adaptation to the present-day, on traditional Native American activities. Dakota songs are always heard at powwows. They are an event where people should certainly be comfortable speaking Dakota and 22.5% of the respondents do so. It must be kept in mind that not all members of the Spirit Lake Nation attend powwows, so it is a positive sign for Dakota language use that 22.5% of the respondents are using the language at powwows.

Table 7. Question 4 - I use Dakota language in the following places. PUBLIC

Age Groups	Powwow Yes	Powwow No	Ceremonies Yes	Ceremonies No	Blue Building Yes	Blue Building No	Row Total
Under 12	4	19	2	21	0	23	23/7.4
13-18	27	104	20	111	6	126	131/42.1
19-25	8	31	3	36	3	36	39/12.5
26-35	5	17	1	21	1	21	22/7.1
36-45	4	25	7	22	3	26	29/9.3
46-55	5	18	2	21	4	19	23/7.4
Above 55	17	27	15	29	13	31	44/14.1
Column Total	70/ 22.5	241/ 77.5	50/ 16.1	261/ 83.9	30/ 9.6	281/ 90.4	311/100
X <sub>2</sub> =8.5378 P<.20129			X <sub>2</sub> =18.1004 p<.00599		X <sub>2</sub> =28.73002 p<.0007		

Ceremonies are less public in that they are not open for people coming and going as are powwows, yet on the Spirit Lake Nation they may include people from British Columbia and Sioux Valley in Canada, or such states as South Dakota, Montana, Washington, and Oregon. People do not talk freely during a ceremony, as it is based on prayer; however, it is conducted in Dakota, Lakota, Nakota, or a combination of the three, and it is an environment where people should be at ease speaking their native language at the meal following the ceremony. The data show that 16.1% of the respondents use Dakota language in some manner during ceremonies.

Some respondents may not attend ceremonies, so they most probably answered "no". Those respondents who do talk Dakota may use English if they are self-conscious about their ability to speak Dakota, so they may also have answered "no".



The Blue Building referred to in the Survey is where the Spirit Lake Nation's tribal government offices are located, along with the post office. It is the most public of the environments. As recently as the 1980s at least some of the tribal business was conducted in Dakota. Elderly gentlemen are still seen, sitting on benches in the hall outside the post office, visiting in Dakota. The Blue Building is a place where everyone goes almost on a daily basis. Even though only 9.6% of the respondents maintain that they use Dakota there, it is still encouraging that even that many people feel comfortable using Dakota in public.

With the exception of use of Dakota language at powwows, the results (see Table 7) for "public" use of Dakota language were statistically significant. In the case of powwows, it might be conjectured that a sense of group cohesion in an "informal" yet traditional environment may encourage use of Dakota language disregarding errors in discourse. Perhaps the informal environment with many different native languages has a less rigid expectancy of correctness, and a person may practice their language and make occasional errors with a smaller chance of embarrassment.

An omission on the Survey was that respondents were not asked if they used Dakota language in school. One child, when answering Question 4, "I use Dakota language in the following places", wrote in "school". That child was more perceptive than the writers of the Survey in identifying a category that would have given valuable information. Important data could have been supplied if the study determined whether or not the main place the younger age groups used Dakota language was in school. Mrs. Lorraine Grey Bear (personal communication, February 7, 2000) speculates that the reason the younger age groups rate themselves as being able to talk Dakota "a lot" and "a

little bit” (combined figures for age groups under 12 and 13-18, Table 1, 75.6%) was because of their exposure at school.

Mrs. Grey Bear (personal communication, February 7, 2000) has also observed that the exposure the children get at school is generally not reinforced in the home. Note that her observation is corroborated by combining the data for age groups under 12 and 13-18, Table 6, as 54.5% indicate that they use Dakota language at home. Compare this figure to the figure of 75.6% for overall language use in the previous paragraph.

Crystal (2000) notes that, “The importance of using the language at home is critical” (p. 17). If the actual language use of Dakota language at home were established, it is probable that Dakota is not the first language as there are not children entering the school system speaking Dakota rather than English. This study did not presume to examine use of Dakota language in-depth in any given environment, so it is important to remember Crystal’s caution, ... “a closer look at the statistics shows a very different picture” (p. 16). Possibly, this would be true if the extent of Dakota language use at home of the young people under 12 and 13-18 were analyzed in-depth.

#### Section IV/Gender and Dakota Language Use

7. I am male.                      I am female. (Circle one.)

The data comparing males and females’ self-assessment of their ability to speak Dakota language were not statistically significant in terms of gender differences (see Table 8). This is a positive sign for language preservation and revitalization because Dakota, as discussed in Chapter II, has male and female versions of the language...

Table 8. Question 7 - I am male. I am female. (Circle one) by Question 1 - I know how to talk Indian (Dakota).

		A lot	Question 1 A little bit	Not at all	Row Total
Question 7	Female	24	107	49	180/57.9
	Male	20	84	27	131/42.1
	Column Total	44/14.1	191/61.4	76/24.4	311/100

$$\chi^2=1.8268, p<.40116$$

These data (see Table 8) are particularly interesting as the male/female ratio is very close. For the females, 13.3% marked that they could talk Dakota "a lot", and for the males, 15.2% marked that they could talk Dakota "a lot".

Many people on the Spirit Lake Nation state that they can understand Dakota but not speak it. This pattern is typical of language shift world-wide (see Chapter III, Unstructured Interviews and Development of the Pre-Survey). Therefore, it could be assumed that those who can talk Indian "a little bit" (Table 8) should be able to understand "a lot" when others are speaking (Table 9). However, comparing those categories indicates the opposite. In Table 8, 59.4% of the female respondents indicate they can speak Dakota "a little bit", but only 21.1% of the female respondents (Table 9) indicate they can understand "a lot" when others are speaking. Also in Table 8, 64.1% of the males indicate they can speak Dakota "a little bit", but only 12.2% of the male respondents (Table 9) indicate they can understand "a lot" when others are speaking.



On the other hand, comparing those who do not speak Dakota "at all" (Table 8) to those who understand "a little bit" when others are speaking (Table 9) shows an expected increase in the ability to understand. For the female respondents, 27% answered that they could not speak Dakota at all, but 46% of the female respondents answered that they

Table 9. Question 7 - I am male. I am female. (Circle one.) by Question 2 - I can understand Dakota language when others are speaking

		A lot	Question 2 A little bit	Not at all	Row Total
Question 7	Female	38	83	59	180/57.9
	Male	22	60	49	131/42.1
	Column Total	60/19.3	143/46.0	108/34.7	311/100

$\chi^2=1.20146$ ,  $p<.54841$

could understand "a little bit" when others were speaking. For the male respondents, 15% answered that they could not speak Dakota at all, but 45.8% of the male respondents answered that they could understand Dakota "a little bit" when others were speaking.

Further study of a more in-depth nature is warranted.

Table 10 examines sex by fluency, in terms of being able to talk to elders. For the females in Table 8, 13.3% answered that they could talk Dakota "a lot". Note that this is exactly the same number who indicated that they could talk Dakota to elders.

As regards the males, 15.6% marked (see Table 8) that they could talk Dakota "a lot", while when asked if they could talk to elders in Dakota, 10.6% answered that they could talk to elders "a lot" (Table 10). This drop is not explained by the current study, and further research is warranted.

Table 10. Question 7 - I am male. I am female. (Circle one.) by Question 3 - I can talk to elders in Dakota.

		A lot	Question 3 A little bit	Not at all	Row Total
Question 7	Female	24	57	99	180/57.9
	Male	14	41	76	131/42.1
	Column Total	38/12/2	98/31.5	175/56.3	311/100

$\chi^2$  .56033,  $p < .75566$

#### Section V/Awareness of Dakota Language Being at Risk

##### 9. Are you aware that Dakota language is at risk of being lost forever?

Question 9 is seemingly straightforward. Lorraine Grey Bear wrote it in order to obtain information on how the people of the Spirit Lake Nation perceived the state of their language. Over 50% of each age group perceived their language as being at risk, from a low of 55% for the 26-35 age group to a high of 91% for the 46-55 age group. Overall, Table 9 shows that 71.7% of the respondents are aware that the language is at risk of being lost. This data was significant, for "yes" with the majority of the respondents to the survey are aware that the Dakota language is at risk.

The youngest age group and the 25-36 age group are least aware of this risk. There is a strong contrast between two adjacent age groups, the 26-35 and the 36-45, in relation to their perception being "at risk of being lost forever".

It may be observed that the older school aged children (13-18) and 19-25 age group are very aware of Dakota language being at risk. Mrs. Lorraine Grey Bear

surmises that an important reason the younger age groups are aware of the language being at risk is because of the Dakota language classes that they have had in elementary and grade school (personal communication, February 7, 2000). Older age groups may be aware of the language being at risk because it is just not used as much as it was in their own younger days. Table 11 shows that, overall, 71.1% are aware that the language is at risk of being lost, and this awareness is an important first step addressing the issue of language shift. (See Chapter II, Understanding Language Loss.) However, the people may still be unaware of how to go about saving a language.

A 2002 Composition I student, age 21, at Cankdeska Cikana Community College on the Spirit Lake Nation, offered his personal observations after being assigned an article on the loss of Native American languages.

The native language nowadays is, I think, fading away very fast, and I don't know if we are too late to save it. When I was a little boy, I would always see and hear elders talking traditionally. But in today's society, I hardly ever hear someone speaking the traditional language any more. When I was smaller, I would hear someone speaking the traditional way at least five days out of the week. Now I only hear it about once or twice if I'm lucky. (Longie, 2002)

Section VI/Desire to learn (or improve or practice) Dakota

8. Do you want to learn (or improve or practice)  
Dakota? (Check one.)  
☐ yes ☐ no

Now that knowledge of Dakota language being at risk has been established, do the people of the Spirit Lake Nation want to reverse the situation? Question 8 address interest in revitalization and preservation. A long-time staff member of Cankdeska Cikana Community College (female, fifties, speaks Dakota) suggested this excellent question, one which is most important for revitalization strategies.



Table 11. Question 9 - Are you aware that Dakota language is at risk of being lost forever?

Age Groups	YES	NO	Row Total
Under 12	13	10	23/7.4
13-18	89	42	131/42.1
19-25	31	8	39/12.5
26-35	12	10	22/7.1
36-45	25	4	29/9.3
46-55	21	2	23/7.4
Above 55	32	12	44/14.1
Column Total	223/71.7	88/28.3	311/100

$$\chi^2 = 15.26913, p < .01826$$

Obviously, Dakota language can have a chance at survival if the Mni Wakan Oyate (Spirit Lake People) have the desire to keep the language alive (see Table 12). The data are significant, and it is encouraging that 85.5% of the respondents answered "yes".

Unfortunately, this data may have unintentionally misrepresented the most vital Dakota speakers, the elders. Table 1 illustrates that 75.5% of the elders can talk Dakota either "a lot" or "a little". Asking them if they want to "learn or improve or practice Dakota" may have been insulting. At any rate, the elders may not have seen the need to answer "yes" to this question, and 38.6% did not (Table 12). Moreover, there is no way to determine conclusively if the fluent speakers answered "no" because they did not see the need or if those who answered "no" were comprised of the 24.4% who did not speak Dakota language at all (Table 1).

Table 12. Question 8 - Do you want to learn (to improve or practice) Dakota?

Age Groups	YES	NO	Row Total
Under 12	22	1	23/7.4
13-18	110	21	131/42.1
19-25	34	5	39/12.5
26-35	22	0	22/7.1
36-45	28	1	29/9.3
46-55	23	0	23/7.4
Above 55	27	17	44/14.1
Column Total	266/85.5	45/14.5	311/100

$\chi^2=33.47118$ ,  $p<.00001$

#### Section VII/Revitalization Strategies

8. What do you think would encourage people on this Reservation to learn Dakota? (Put an 'X' by all that apply.)
- ☐ small language discussion groups in each district
  - ☐ elders speaking Dakota in Head Start classes
  - ☐ Tribally developed Dakota language CDs for use in classes (pre-school to college)
  - ☐ Tribally developed Dakota language cassettes for sale
  - ☐ college classes at Cankdeska Cikana
  - ☐ lessons or stories on KABU

Section VII, which discusses Question 9, has been divided into four arbitrary subsections. These were not apparent on the Survey: The first subsection reviews public use of Dakota language in "small language discussion groups in each district". The

second section covers teaching Dakota language in the school environment and includes “elders speaking Dakota in Head Start classes”, “college classes at Cankdeska Cikana”, and “Tribally developed CDs for use in classes (pre-school to college)”. The third section is “Tribally developed Dakota language cassettes for sale”. The final section discusses utilizing public media, in terms of the tribal radio station, KABU, to teach Dakota language.

*Public Use of Dakota Language in “Small Language  
Discussion Groups in Each District”*

In terms of language revitalization strategies, this is the most important question in the entire Survey. Reyhner (1999, p. 11) discusses “The Three ‘M’s’ of Indigenous Language Education”, one of which is motivation, meaning the speakers, potential speakers, and educators recognize “the usefulness of the indigenous language in the community.” This response implies that 55% of the respondents are willing to risk using the Dakota language in public informal discussion groups with their neighbors!—or that they at least think it would be a good idea for others to do so! (See Table 13.)

Dakota Language Preservation has begun holding district discussion groups with language immersion activities in partial fulfillment of the Dakota *Ia Unspepi* Preservation of the Language ANA Grant, Goal 1: To develop a Language Immersion Program for the families of the Spirit Lake Nation (Rousey, 2000, p. 7). (See Appendix J). The proposed *Dakota Ia Unspepi*/Language Preservation Program Goals for Revitalization of Dakota Language (see Chapter I) included Goal 6: Monthly language activities in each of the four districts on the Spirit Lake Nation. These idealistic goals were beyond the limited staffing resources of the Language Preservation Program. Monthly activities in each



Table 13. Question 10 - What do you think would encourage people on this Reservation to learn Dakota? (Put an 'X' by all that apply.). Small Dakota language discussion groups in each district.

Age Groups	YES	NO	Row Total
Under 12	11	12	23/7.4
13-18	65	66	131/42.1
19-25	23	16	39/12.5
26-35	13	9	22/7.1
36-45	16	13	29/9.3
46-55	13	10	23/7.4
Above 55	30	14	44/14.1
Column Total	171/55.0	140/45.0	311/100

$$\chi^2=5.51943, p<.479111$$

district would entail a tremendous amount of time, one activity per district per week, so an attempt has been made to have an activity in each district once every four months. These activities involve a lunch, which always attracts people, some handouts, such as the Dakota alphabet, and some activities. Unfortunately, this does not constitute immersion.

*Teaching Dakota Language in the School Environment*

All the discussion in this subsection refers to Table 14.

Table 14. Question 10 - What do you think would encourage people on this Reservation to learn Dakota? (Put an 'X' by all that apply.)

Elders speaking Dakota in Head Start classes

College classes at Cankdeska Cikana.

Tribally developed Dakota language CDs for use in classes (pre-school to college).

Age Groups	Elders Head Start YES	Elders Head Start NO	College Classes YES	College Classes NO	Dakota CDs in school YES	Dakota CDs in school NO	Row Total Number/Percent
Under 12	15	8	10	13	13	10	23/7.4
13-18	71	60	79	52	65	66	131/42.1
19-25	30	9	33	6	29	10	39/12.5
26-35	13	9	16	6	17	5	22/7.1
36-45	18	11	22	7	22	7	29/9.3
46-55	17	6	18	5	14	9	23/7.4
Above 55	27	17	23	21	19	25	44/14.1
Column Total	191/61.4	120/38.6	201/64.6	110/35.4	179/57.6	132/42.4	311/100%
$\chi^2=8.54887$ P<.20058		X2=19.42764 p<.00350		X2=19.20018 p<.000384			

#### *Elders in Head Start*

Elders have been teaching at the Head Start centers in each of the four districts on the Spirit Lake Nation almost since the inception of the ANA grant. Placing elders with the children to teach Dakota language reflects a typically suggested strategy for language revitalization in speech communities where mostly elders speak the language. Marshall (1994) calls for: "Cultural interaction primarily involving the community-based older

generation beyond child-bearing years” (p. 20). (See also Chapter II, Joshua Fishman: Reversing Language Shift.)

It is a positive sign for language revitalization that almost two-thirds of the respondents felt that “Elders speaking Dakota in Head Start classes” could contribute to language revitalization on the Spirit Lake Nation. Having the elders come into the classroom could increase the status of Dakota language and also give the elders some incentive to use the language more frequently.

The Dakota *Ia Unspepi* Preservation of the Language Grant through ANA (see Appendix J) Strategy #1 was “Kunsi (Grandmother) Language Learning Program” (Rousey, 2000, p. 12). The proposed *Dakota Ia Unspepi*/Language Preservation Program Goals for Revitalization of Dakota Language (see Chapter I) had as Goal 4, “Placing *kunsi* (grandmothers) and *unkana* (grandfathers) as teachers in the Head Start Programs.” The outcome of these placements will be discussed in Chapter V. For such placements to continue and be effective, community support is needed, and 61.4% of the respondents favor grandparents speaking Dakota in Head Start classes.

#### *Classes at Cankdeska Cikana Community College*

As stated in Chapter I, Survey for Grant for Survival of Tribal Languages, this category was included on the Survey in order to assess community interest. It was not a goal either in the ANA grant or the proposed *Dakota Ia Unspepi*/Language Preservation Program Goals for Revitalization of Dakota Language because college classes were already being held.

Although 64.6% of the respondents support college classes at Cankdeska Cikana, making this the most popular option, very few students sign up for Dakota language class



each semester (perhaps seven) and fewer complete (perhaps three). (These surmises are based on the observations of the researcher during eleven years of teaching at the College and also as a student in the Dakota language courses). Expecting the school environment to address and even solve issues related to language shift is quite typical. According to Lucille Watahomigie, director of the Peach Springs [Arizona, Hualapai] program, parents often assume that 'the schools can solve that problem' rather than seeing the need for a 'partnership' between school and community" (Crawford, 1996, p. 11).

#### *Dakota Language CDs for Classroom Use*

ANA grant "Goal #2: To expand the available pool of Dakota speakers who can act as language instructors, Objective 2: To increase the frequency and diversity Dakota Language Resource Library" listed as one of its components, "CD-ROMs which include stories, music, and photographs" for the purpose of creating archives. As of the fall of 2002, no CDs had been developed for archiving although equipment had been purchased to convert from video to CD elders being interviewed and telling stories in Dakota. This Goal proved to be difficult to implement as none of the *Dakota Ia Unspepi*/Language Preservation Program staff had any familiarity with making CDs or with archiving.

Goal 10 of the *Dakota Ia Unspepi*/Dakota Language Program was: "Creating Dakota language CDs for use in the school (or home)." This goal was impractical in terms of computer availability. The Head Start classrooms do not have computers, and even if they did, the grandparents would not know how to use them. Even the Head Start staff might not know how to use computers effectively with young children.

Furthermore, at the Tate Topa Middle School, the Four Winds Community High School,

and Cankdeska Cikana Community College, computer availability is limited. As regards the Reservation community, very few people have home computers.

*Utilizing Public Media, the Tribal Radio Station,  
KABU, to Teach Dakota Language*

The ANA grant specified "Activity E. Offer weekly Dakota language radio program" under: "Objective 2: To increase the frequency and diversity of exposure to Dakota language from ceremonial use and 5% of tribal council business to 5-10% of all public correspondence on the Spirit Lake Reservation" (Rousey, 2000, p. 16). Objective 2 was delineated under "Goal #2: To expand the available pool of Dakota speakers who can act as language instructors" (p. 16).

Table 15. Question 10 - What do you think would encourage people on this Reservation to learn Dakota? (Put an 'X' by all that apply.) Lessons or stories on KABU.

Age Groups	YES	NO	Row Total Number/Percent
Under 12	16	7	23/7.4
13-18	54	77	131/42.1
19-25	17	22	39/12.5
26-35	13	9	22/7.1
36-45	17	12	29/9.3
46-55	12	11	23/7.4
Above 55	19	25	44/14.1
Column Total	163/52.4	148/48.6	311/100%

$\chi^2 = 9.95161$ ,  $p < .12670$

The researcher was the curriculum specialist for the Dakota *Ia Unspepi* Preservation of the Language Grant through ANA (see Appendix J). At times, because of the way the Grant was written, it was difficult to make the connections between goals, objectives, and activities. For example, Goal #2 has to do with increasing the number of language instructors. Objective 2 is not necessarily related to that goal. Furthermore, neither the *Dakota Ia Unspepi*/Language Preservation Program staff nor any other entity could influence the amount of Reservation business conducted in Dakota. While Mrs Grey Bear and the researcher were involved in the early stages of writing the grant, some changes were made after their input.

However, some progress has been made in implementing Activity E. While there has been no Dakota language programming on the tribal radio station, KABU, on a consistent basis, the Dakota Language Preservation Program has done some announcements, stories by elders, and student presentations in Dakota. The Dakota language presentations that have been done on KABU are in keeping with the *Dakota Ia Unspepi*/Language Preservation Program's proposed Goal 11: Stories and lessons in Dakota language on the tribal radio station, KABU, and as of the time of the Survey for Grant for Revitalization of Tribal Languages, over half of the Reservation community was interested in lessons or stories on KABU.

#### *Tribally Developed Dakota Language Cassettes for Sale*

The ANA grant called for "cassettes of traditional and contemporary songs in Dakota" as part of Strategy #4: Dakota Resource Library (Rousey, 2000, p. 14). The reference to traditional songs is unnecessary as probably most of the families on the Reservation have powwow tapes, often recorded at the event, of traditional music. A



Table 16. Question 10 - What do you think would encourage people on this Reservation to learn Dakota? (Put an 'X' by all that apply.) Tribally developed Dakota language cassettes for sale.

Age Groups	YES	NO	Row Total Number/Percent
Under 12	16	7	23/7.4
13-18	53	78	131/42.1
19-25	21	18	39/12.5
26-35	12	10	22/7.1
36-45	17	12	29/9.3
46-55	15	8	23/7.4
Above 55	22	22	44/14.1
Column Total	155/49.8	156/50.2	311/100%

$$\chi^2 = 11.69473, p < .06914$$

cassette of contemporary children's songs, such as the "Bear Went Over the Mountain", in Dakota was purchased from Sioux Valley, a reservation in Canada whose manner of speaking is similar to that of the Spirit Lake Nation. This cassette was reproduced and made available to Head Start classrooms; it is not, however, available to the general public on the Reservation.

Goal 9 of the proposed goals for the nascent *Lakota Ia Unspepi*/Language Preservation Program was: Creating Dakota language cassette tapes for home use. At this point, no cassettes have been developed although some elders have been videotaped telling stories in Dakota, and some students in Mrs. Grey Bear's Dakota language classes

at Cankdeska Cikana Community College have tape recorded speeches telling about themselves and their families in Dakota. The stories and speeches have been played on KABU, but have not as yet been made for purchase as cassettes.

All of the revitalization strategies from Question 9 of the Survey for Grant for Revitalization of Tribal Languages, discussed above, have been implemented in some way thus providing beginning steps toward further revitalization plans for the Spirit Lake Nation. In addition, all of those strategies have over 50% approval from the respondents to the Survey, indicating an interest in language preservation on the part of the Spirit Lake people.

#### Summary

Analysis of the data with either Fisher's exact test or a chi-square test shows that 75.5% of the respondents to the Survey for Grant for Survival of Tribal Languages answered that they could speak Dakota language to some degree. While this ability may range from a few words to fluency, at least a large majority of the Spirit Lake Oyate have some familiarity with their language. Impressively, with an almost complete lack of formal education in written Dakota, 38.9% of the respondents asserted that they could read Dakota hymns either "a lot" or "a little bit". Of the six environments provided on the Survey, Question 4, "I use Dakota in the following places:" the most chosen environment was "home". Language use in the home is fundamental to revitalization. Over 71% of the respondents were aware that "Dakota language is at risk for being lost forever." This realization is an important first step in combating language shift. A high number of respondents, 85.5%, were interested in learning, practicing, or improving their

use of Dakota language. Finally, all six of the revitalization strategies listed in Question 9 had a positive response from over 50% of those who answered the Survey.



## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

#### Status of Dakota Language on the Spirit Lake Nation

##### *Dakota Language Fluency*

Analysis of the results of the Survey for Grant for Revitalization of Tribal Languages (Survey) indicates that Dakota language on the Spirit Lake Nation is most likely in Stage 7 of Joshua Fishman's Graded Intergenerational Dislocation Scale (GIDS). (See Chapter II, Joshua Fishman: Reversing Language Shift.) In Stage 7 "Only adults beyond child bearing age speak the language" (Reyhner, 1996, p.1). Because of the brevity of the Survey, the status of Dakota language cannot be conclusively determined; however, the language does show signs of being spoken primarily by the older generation. Of the respondents age 55 and over, 63.6% claimed to know how to talk Dakota "a lot", and of the respondents 46-55, 26% claimed to know how to talk Dakota "a lot". For the other five age groups, the average of those maintaining that they talked Dakota "a lot" was 7.4% (see Table 1.)

A more telling self-assessment of fluency was asking whether the respondent could talk to elders in Dakota. Elders who are fluent in the indigenous tongue set the standard for speech in reservation communities. (See Chapter II, What to Revitalize and Some Impediments to Revitalization.) Within each age group, the number of people circling that they talked Dakota "a lot" and the number or people circling that they could

talk to elders in Dakota “easily” is consistent. One could surmise that those responding to the Survey for Grant for Revitalization of Tribal Language by claiming to talk Dakota “a lot” are not intimidated by the thought of conversing with elders. However, the data show that most likely these people are in fact elders as 26 of the 38 people claiming to be able to talk to elders “easily” were above 55, five were 46-55, and only seven people were represented in the other six age groups (see Table 1).

Below is an adaptation of Fishman’s Graded Intergenerational Dislocation Scale (GIDS) combined with “Suggested Interventions to Strengthen Language” (Reyhner, 1996, p. 2). It will be referred to in this and the following sections as “Suggested Interventions”.

*Jon Reyhner: Adapting Fishman's Reversing Language Shift (RLS) to Native American Language Revitalization*

<b>GIDS Current Status of Language</b>	<b>Suggested Interventions to Strengthen Language</b>
<b>Stage 8:</b> Only a few elders speak the language	Implement Hinton’s (1994) ‘Language Apprentice’ Model where fluent elders are teamed one-on-one with young adults who want to learn the language. Dispersed, isolated elders can be connected by phone to teach others the language (Taft, 1997).
<b>Stage 7:</b> Only adults beyond child bearing age speak the language.	Establish ‘Language Nests’ after the Maori and Hawaiian models where fluent older adults provide pre-school child-care where children are immersed in their indigenous language (Fishman, 1991).
<b>Stage 6:</b> Some inter-generational use of language.	Develop places in community where language is encouraged, protected, and used exclusively. Encourage more young parents to speak the indigenous language in home with and around their young children.



<b>Stage 5:</b> Language is still very much alive and used in the community.	Offer literacy in minority language. Promote voluntary programs in the schools and other community institutions to improve the prestige and use of the language. Use language in local government functions, especially social services. Give recognition to special local efforts through awards, etc.
<b>Stage 4:</b> Language is required in elementary schools	Improve instructional methods utilizing TPR-Storytelling and other immersion teaching techniques. Teach reading and writing and higher level language skills (Heredia & Francis, (1997). Develop two-way bilingual programs where appropriate where non-speaking elementary students learn the indigenous language and speakers learn a national or international language. Need to develop indigenous language textbooks to teach literacy and academic subject matter content.
<b>Stage 3:</b> Language is used places of business and by employees in less specialized work areas.	Promote language by making it the language of work used throughout the community (Palmer, 1997). Develop vocabulary so that workers in an office could do their day-to-day work using their indigenous language
<b>Stage 2:</b> Language is used by local government and in the mass media in the minority community.	Promote use of written form of language for government and business dealings/records. Promote indigenous language newsletters, newspapers, radio stations, and television stations.
<b>Stage 1:</b> Some language use by higher levels of government and in higher education. (Reyhner, 1996, p. 2)	Teach tribal college subject matter classes in the language. Develop an indigenous language oral and written literature through dramatic presentations and publications and other notable efforts to promote indigenous languages. education.

The percentage of respondents for all age groups under 55 who maintain that they talk Dakota "a little bit" is 56.9% (see Table 1). But the percentage of respondents for all age groups under 55 when asked if they can talk to elders "a little bit" is only 28.2% (see Table 3). Again, this points to a lack of intergenerational transmission, which means that the language is not passed down from generation to generation in the home environment.



Intergenerational transmission is the crucial component for language maintenance in Fishman's Stage 6 of the GIDS (see "Suggested Interventions"). This lack, in conjunction with the decline in self-assessed ability to talk Dakota "a lot" as age decreases, further reinforces the likelihood that the status of Dakota language on the Spirit Lake Nation is congruent with Fishman's Stage 7 in which only adults beyond child bearing age speak the language (Reyhner, 1996, p. 2).

Fishman's scale has eight stages; however, Stages 6 through 1 comprise aspects of healthy languages (see "Suggested Interventions"). Language health implies that the language is an integral component of a variety of environments; in other words, the language is typically used in certain domains for conversation in order to conduct such cultural exchanges as business transactions, school, or religious practices. Note that in Fishman's stages, progress towards language health (revitalization) is based on the addition of more domains in which the language is used.

Stage 8 is the final stage, where only a few elders speak a language and is the stage prior to language death. In Stage 6, some intergenerational transmission of a language is still taking place. Dakota language on the Spirit Lake Nation, at Stage 7, appears to be at a crucial point for either revitalization or language death. However, such statements must be considered with caution. "It is important to remember that one of Fishman's stages can only roughly approximate the real situation of a particular indigenous language" (Reyhner, 1996, p. 2).

The Spirit Lake Sioux Tribe does have a Resolution stating:

A COMMUNITY/RESERVATION WIDE effort should be directed toward revitalization, AND maintaining OUR Dakota language SO THAT OUR LANGUAGE SHOULD/WILL BE spoken by ALL SPIRIT LAKE tribal

members ... rather than mere preservation for the interest of anthropologists and historians. Given this recognition, the need is clear for a program which is administered by a tribal entity, led by and for Native Americans. (Appendix K)

This Résolution was written for the ANA Grant for the *Dakota Ia Unspepi/Dakota* Language Preservation Program. The Spirit Lake Tribal Council recognizes “the language is an integral part of the culture”, that the current status of the language provides “limited opportunities for exposure” due to the “small, aging population of fluent speakers”, and acknowledges “a demand in the community for action to maintain Dakota language as a living, spoken force for cultural and family support on the Spirit Lake Reservation” (Appendix K). This Resolution recognizes many of the components of language shift discussed in previous Chapters and is a vital first step in promoting language revitalization on the Spirit Lake Reservation.

*Ability to Understand Dakota When  
Others Are Speaking*

As many people on the Spirit Lake Nation say that they can understand Dakota but not speak it, this question was included on the Survey. Interestingly, a higher number of people claimed to understand Dakota “a lot” when spoken to than claimed to talk Dakota “a lot”, particularly in the above 55 age group. (Compare Tables 1 and 4.) Perhaps this is due to some self-consciousness even on the part of the speakers who can talk Dakota “a lot”. Most of these, possibly fluent, speakers were above 55 and were solicited to participate in the Survey at an “Elders Day Out” lunch. At the lunch, the researcher noticed that the elders spoke English rather than Dakota. Hinton (2001) observes that as a language falls into disuse and “as the length of time they have not



spoken it increases, they begin to lose their competency; they start feeling self-conscious and are afraid to make an error, especially in front of other speakers.”

Maybe the elders are concerned that others know more Dakota than they do and think that they themselves understand better than they speak. Hinton’s observation above may supply the answer as to why the very elders who set the standard for Dakota fluency answered that they could understand more than speak. However, each speech community is different and more study is warranted. In terms of developing revitalization strategies for the Spirit Lake Nation, in order to effectively incorporate the attitudes of the elders into participating in potential activities, knowledge of why the elders feel they can understand more than they speak would be vital.

As for those claiming to understand even though they do not speak a language, this inability is a typical lament on Indian reservations throughout the United States and is to be expected as intergenerational transmission broke down. Recall Governor Lewis (see Chapter III, Unstructured Interviews and Development of the Pilot Survey) who could understand but not speak his language after going to boarding school. However, this typical situation is not dramatically reflected in the data from the Spirit Lake Nation. For example, the responses for those in the 13-18 age group showed a reversal of the expected results. The 13-18 age group had 95 respondents claiming that they are able to talk Dakota “a little bit” and 34 claiming that they could not talk Dakota “at all” (see Table 1). These fell to 61 being able to understand “a little bit” and rose to 67 not being able to understand “at all” when asked if they could understand when others are speaking (see Table 4). According to the research, this is an anomaly. As was discussed in Chapter IV, Section I/Oral Fluency, it may be that the results are impacted by the 13-18



age-group respondents over-inflating their ability to talk Dakota “a little bit” because they learn a few words in school, but at the thought of an actual conversation, they realize they don’t understand.

The above observations also apply when the data are grouped according to Table 8: gender and Question 1, “I know how to talk Indian (Dakota)” and these data are compared to Table 9: gender and Question 2, “I can understand Dakota language when others are speaking.” (See Chapter III, Section IV/Gender and Dakota Language Use.) Again, comparing the data indicates that, in opposition to theories of language shift, no increase exists in the number of either the male or female respondents being able to understand “a lot” when others are speaking and being able to talk Dakota “a little bit”. Instead, once again, people claim to talk Dakota (“a little bit”) more than they understand it (“a lot”) when others are speaking.

However, standard theory about language shift does obtain when the data in for those who do not speak Dakota “at all” in Table 8 are compared to Table 9, “I can understand Dakota language when others are speaking.” Further study of a more in-depth nature, to determine the precise nature of the particulars on the Spirit Lake Nation, is warranted, especially in terms of the influence of the 13-18 age group.

One particularly significant factor in these data, and one necessary for revitalization plans on the Spirit Lake Nation, is that the data comparing males and females’ self-assessment of their ability to speak Dakota language were not statistically significant in terms of sex. As Dakota has a male and a female version, this balance is intrinsic for the continuing vitality of the language and its relationship to Dakota culture.

### *Literacy in Dakota*

The Survey for Grant for Revitalization of Tribal Languages, in Question 5, asked the respondents if they could “read the hymns in Dakota” (see Table 5). At the time of the unstructured interviews and the development of both the pilot survey and the final Survey, the researcher was only aware of hymns used in the Catholic Church as being the most common place the people of the Spirit Lake Nation would be exposed to literacy in their language. (See Chapter II, The History of Written Dakota and Dakota Literacy.) This opinion was further reinforced by the fact that no one interviewed, nor any member of the informal committee, contradicted the wording of Question 5. The issue of some degree of literacy being obtained by children who had some introduction to Dakota orthography in elementary and high school and adults who had taken Dakota language classes at Cankdeska Cikana Community College was not addressed. The high school classes teach only a few words and phrases and few students enroll in the Dakota language classes taught at the College.

By whatever means the people of the Spirit Lake Nation learned to read Dakota, 38.9% of them answered that they could read the hymns in Dakota either “easily” or “a little bit”. This relatively high degree of at least some degree of familiarity with written Dakota, considering the consistent lack of formal education, is quite remarkable. Literacy is an important component of language prestige in today’s world, “higher prestige” generally being associated with “the language being shifted to” (Fasold, 1987, p. 217). Reyhner’s (1996, p. 2) interpretation of Fishman’s Stage 5 of the Graded Intergenerational Dislocation Scale (GIDS) wherein the “language is very much alive and used in the community” lists offering “literacy in minority language” as a primary



component of interventions to strengthen the language, in this case Dakota, so that it will gain prestige in relation to the dominant language, in this case, English.

Reinforcing the already existing degrees of literacy on the Spirit Lake Nation is truly an opportunity to add prestige to the revitalization process. The "Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Language and Culture Code" (1995) recognizes the importance of literacy and further recognizes the differences of opinion that might result because of the variety of orthographies available for written Dakota (see Chapter II, The History of Written Dakota and Dakota Literacy). The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Language and Culture Code (1995) SEC 115 Orthography, (p. 8) is as follows:

No single system of orthography shall be presented as an official writing system until the Language and Culture Committee and the Education Department has reviewed and evaluated the proposed system and the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe has sanctioned it as official.

Prestige is stressed in the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Language and Culture Code (1995) SEC 111 Status of the Lakota/Dakota Languages, in such statements as:

The Lakota/Dakota languages are the *official* languages of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and may be used in the business of government, legislative, and judicial, although in deference to, and out of respect to speakers of English, that language may be used in official matters of government. (p. 6)

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe is manipulating a very sophisticated state of affairs for maintaining a healthy language situation, Fishman's Stage 2, where the language is "used by the local government ... in the minority community" (Reyhner, 1996, p. 3). (See "Suggested Interventions".) Such determined and sanctioned promulgation of the Lakota and Dakota languages could serve as a model for other Indian communities in the United States, especially of course, for those speaking Lakota and Dakota.



However, note that the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe is sanctioning trilingualism! Lakota and Dakota are separate languages. The Summer Institute of Linguistics (2003) in its *Ethnologue* lists them under the “Siouan” family as two languages of Dakota, with each having a three-letter code that identifies a language, Lakota (LKT) and Dakota (DHG).

### *Environments Where Dakota Language Is Used*

The most common place for Dakota language to be used, according to 43.7% of respondents, was the home (see Table 6). This bodes well for language revitalization. Even though the evidence does not show that intergenerational transmission is occurring, i.e. children starting school with Dakota as a first language, apparently some interaction in Dakota is taking place in the home. While most of the Dakota speakers appear to be beyond their child bearing years, Fishman’s Stage 7, strong potential for revitalization exists. “[T]hese older adults can teach their grandchildren the language as demonstrated by the highly successful “language nests” of New Zealand and Hawai’i ... These elders can care for young children in preschool settings and immerse them in their language” (Reyhner, 1996, p. 5). The Spirit Lake Nation, through the ANA grant, under the auspices of the *Dakota Ia Unspepi*/Language Revitalization Program, has introduced elders into the Head Start classrooms. This will be discussed below in *Teaching Dakota Language in the School Environment, Elders in Head Start*.

As regards Lakota/Dakota language use in the home, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Language and Culture Code (1995), Section 112 Parent Involvement, reads as follows:

It shall be the policy of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe to encourage parents to help their children become fluent in Lakota/Dakota and English. It shall further be the policy of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe to involve parents, grandparents, and the extended family to the greatest possible extent in the promotion, protection, maintenance, and instruction of the Lakota/Dakota languages. (p. 6)

Perhaps this Language and Culture Code could serve as a model for the Spirit Lake Tribe in order to build on the existing knowledge of Dakota language and to encourage its use in the home and other environments.

The next most likely places for use of Dakota language were friends' houses, 23.5% (Table 6) and powwows, 22.5% (Table 7). These fairly low figures reflect the lack of use Dakota in these domains. However, Dakota is still being used to some degree in both places. Further examination of situations stimulating use of Dakota in these environments might suggest some strategies for revitalization. Reyhner (1999) has adapted the following goals for revitalization from Fishman's Stage 6: "Develop places in community where language is encouraged, protected, and used exclusively. Encourage more young parents to speak the indigenous language in home with and around their young children" (p. 2). (See "Suggested Interventions".)

Naturally, strategies would have to be specific to the speech community. On the Spirit Lake Nation everyone loves feeds (public meals). Promoting use of Dakota at community feeds, playing Dakota games, and offering prizes for using the language in various ways at a feed might encourage interest in using Dakota language; however, to stimulate fluency, a variety of strategies in sundry environments would be necessary. At powwows perhaps some sort of cultural themes could be devised to promote Dakota language use. For example, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Language and Culture Code (1995), Section 107 Declaration of Policy, states: "Our ancient languages are the



foundation of our cultural and spiritual heritage without which we could not exist in the manner the Creator intended" (p. 2). Some of these ideas could form a basis for encouraging Dakota language use at powwows. Fishman (1995) observed that "small groups of totally dedicated individuals" can rearrange their lives "for the lifestyle that the language is related to" and do so "with little outside support" (p. 8).

Of course, the above ideas are merely suggestions on the part of the researcher to demonstrate that it would be possible to revitalize Dakota language use on the Spirit Lake Nation. As demonstrated by the "Standing Rock Sioux Language and Culture Code", the impetus must come from the people in conjunction with official tribal entities. The "Culture Code" lists "Special Thanks to" 21 educators of all types (such as cultural instructors, principals, parent coordinators, secretaries, and superintendents) apparently Indian and non-Indian; 9 parents; and the 5 members of the Tribal Education Department. As Crawford (1996) writing on language preservation states, "Outsiders cannot lead this movement, although they can serve as helpful allies (p. 12).

#### Awareness of Dakota Language Being at Risk

Question 9 on the Survey for Grant to Revitalize Tribal Languages was, "Are you aware that Dakota language is at risk of being lost forever?" Combining all age groups, 71.7% are aware that Dakota language is at risk. This understanding is a key to initiating revitalization strategies. However, understanding a language is at risk does not necessarily imply that the speech community wants to maintain the language. Sometimes a speech community may have a negative attitude towards its own indigenous tongue. This negativity is usually due to the attitude of the dominant speech community.



“When two languages are in contact, one is usually considered more prestigious than the other” (Grosjean, 1982, p. 120). The dominant language is “spoken by the group that holds the political, cultural, and economic power in the country” (Grosjean, 1982, p. 120). The power wielded by speakers of the dominant language often leads speakers of the minority language to consider their own native language to be “inferior” while the dominant language is considered “superior” and “more logical” (Fasold, 1987, p. 36). In the case of Native American languages, they are typically thought of as inferior in expressing concepts in areas such as math and science. The “Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Language and Culture Code” (1995) recognizes this state of affairs and attempts to remedy it. “Our languages are capable of lexical expansion into modern conceptual fields such as the fields of politics, economics, mathematics, and science” (p. 6).

At the present time, this enlightened attitude may not be part of how some Dakota on the Spirit Lake Nation perceive their language. Some of the Dakota people do not seem to see the language as relevant to today’s world. For example, the researcher has taught Spanish at the Four Winds Community High School. The students want to learn Spanish and see it as useful in their later lives. The majority of them do not want to learn Dakota and see it as irrelevant to today’s world. Of seventeen students in a required English course, 2003, only two are from homes where Dakota is probably spoken on a daily basis. One student corrected the researcher’s Dakota when she used it in class. The other student refused to acknowledge familiarity with Dakota.

Norman Denison (1977, p. 21) comments:

[T]here comes a point when multilingual parents no longer consider it necessary or worthwhile for the future of their children to communicate with them in a low-prestige variety, and when children are no longer motivated to acquire active

competence in a language which is lacking in positive connotations such as youth, modernity, technical skills, material success, education. The languages at the lower end of the prestige scale retreat from ever increasing areas of their earlier functional domains, displaced by higher prestige languages, until **there is nothing left for them to be appropriately used about.** (emphasis in original)

In addition, Dr. Michael Krauss (1996), Director of the Alaska Native Language Center at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, opines that speakers of indigenous languages were “educated with so much English and with none of their own language that it takes extra effort to speak it now” (p. 5).

This extra effort is precisely what must be made if the Dakota language on the Spirit Lake Nation is to be saved. However, people are oftentimes not comfortable speaking Dakota. The researcher has been told by enrolled members of the Spirit Lake Nation that when they speak Dakota to people in public, they are answered in English.

An early aim of intervention must be to create opportunities for the people to improve morale so that they come to think of their language with feelings of confidence, self-esteem, and pride. Only in this way will the community develop an ability from within to deal with the pressures of ongoing change. As one group of researchers put it: ‘The decision to abandon one’s own language always derives from a change in the self-esteem of the speech community.’ (Crystal, 2000, p. 112)

The example of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Language and Culture Code (1995, p. 2) SEC 107 Declaration of Policy could provide a model for the Spirit Lake Nation, not only in terms of making the indigenous languages official, and putting them on a par with English, but in terms of increasing self-esteem:

The Lakota and Dakota languages are a gift from Wakan Tanka the Creator of our people and therefore shall be treated with respect.

Our ancient languages are the foundation of our cultural and spiritual heritage without which we could not exist in the manner our Creator intended. Since education is in part the transmission of culture, we declare that all education, from Head Start through post secondary within the territorial



boundaries of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe shall include the systematic transmission of our Lakota/Dakota languages, culture, and values.

The “Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Language and Culture Code” combines self-esteem based on Lakota and Dakota languages being a “foundation” of “cultural and spiritual heritage” with the relevance of Lakota and Dakota to domains of power and prestige (mathematics, politics, science) usually reserved for the dominant language in the United States, English. Although the specifics of the culture are Native American, the combination above provides two intrinsic components of language maintenance and revitalization in a speech community. Because people can generally identify with the familiar, the fact that members of not only the same race but the same language family have developed such a profound Culture Code, the Spirit Lake Nation could be motivated to develop a comprehensive code of their own.

*Do You Want to Learn or Improve or Practice Dakota?*

Fortunately for revitalization, 85.5% of the respondents circled “yes” to Question 8, “Do you want to learn or improve or practice Dakota?” A positive attitude toward the language is essential to developing revitalization strategies. The consequences, both negative and positive, of the relationship of attitude to language revitalization have been discussed above. More study is warranted to discern the positive factors that people perceive in relation to wanting to “learn, improve, or practice Dakota” so that they can be utilized in the Spirit Lake Reservation community to encourage language use.

Comments on the Implementation of Revitalization Strategies From the  
Survey for Grant for Survival of Tribal Languages

As evaluating many of the goals, of both the nascent *Dakota Ia Unspepi*/Dakota Language Program and the Dakota Ia Unspepi Preservation of the Language



Administration for Native Americans (ANA) Grant, was out of the province of a brief, research project, only the following goals were investigated in this study. Addressed will be Goal 4, placing *kunsi* (grandmothers) *unkana* (grandfathers) in the Head Start Program; Goal 6, discussion groups in each district; Goal 9, developing Dakota language cassettes for sale; Goal 10 creating CDs for use in classrooms; and Goal 11, stories and lessons on KABU. Also evaluated will be “college classes at Cankdeska Cikana”. While this latter category was not part of the goals of the nascent *Dakota Ia Unspepi*/Language Preservation Program goals, nor part of the goals established in the Dakota Ia Unspepi Preservation of the Language, Administration for Native Americans (ANA) Grant, it was included in this study in order to assess community interest.

This section has been divided into four arbitrary subsections. These were not apparent on the Survey: The first subsection reviews public use of Dakota language in “small language discussion groups in each district”. The second section covers teaching Dakota language in the school environment and includes the following options from the Survey: “elders speaking Dakota in Head Start classes”, “college classes at Cankdeska Cikana”, and “Tribally developed CDs for use in classes (pre-school to college)”. The third section is “Tribally developed Dakota language cassettes for sale”. The final section discusses utilizing public media, in terms of the tribal radio station, KABU, to teach Dakota language.

*Public Use of Dakota Language in  
Small Language Discussion Groups in Each District*

In terms of language revitalization strategies, this is the most important question in the Survey because it may imply that people are not only willing to take some personal responsibility for language loss, they are willing to do so publicly by participating in small Dakota language discussion groups in their district (see Table 13). This was Goal 6, “monthly activities in each of the four districts” for the proposed Language Preservation Program and was included in the ANA Grant as developing a language immersion program. (For more detailed discussion, see Chapter IV.)

Unfortunately, this goal was beyond the capabilities of the staff of the *Dakota Ia Unspepi*/Language Preservation Program. The logistics of preparation for a monthly activity in each district would have meant that most of the work week was consumed in preparation. A meal is always a necessary component, and not enough funds were allocated for weekly meals or even monthly meals. Therefore, the staff ended up doing the cooking, often using foodstuffs from their own homes, so one discussion group per month was all that was able to be held. Of course, this is far from immersion and did little to promote fluency. However, the discussion group activity was a small step in an area of interest to the Reservation community and would warrant not only further study but further funding so that it could be expanded.

As regards the loss of Native American languages, James Crawford (1996) writes that even though “external forces ... are often blamed”, they “cannot alone be responsible .... Language is the ultimate consensual institution” (p. 2). By indicating such a high

rate of interest in discussion groups, the respondents to the Survey are showing that they perceive language as a consensual institution, a positive sign for revitalization.

### *Teaching Dakota Language in the School Environment*

#### *Elders in Head Start*

It is a positive sign for revitalization that almost two-thirds of the respondents felt that “Elders speaking Dakota in Head Start classes” could contribute to an increase of Dakota language use on the Spirit Lake Nation (see Table 14).

Although some small inroads have been made, such as the introduction of Dakota speaking elders into the Head Start Programs, some of the goals of the *Dakota Ia Unspepi*/Language Preservation Program through the ANA grant have only been implemented partially while others have not as yet been implemented. (Part of this may have been due to on-going administrative, faculty, and staff changes at Cankdeska Cikana Community College.) The grant will end in October of 2003.

As noted in Chapter IV, 61.4% of the respondents favored “Elders speaking Dakota in Head Start classes” as a strategy for revitalization of Dakota language. Personal interviews with Head Start and *Dakota Ia Unspepi* staff indicate that the hoped for activities written into the ANA grant have not been forthcoming. For example, the grant specifically mentions the use of TPR, Total Physical Response, as a teaching method by the *kunsi* and *unkana* in the *Kunsi/Unkana* Program. The researcher is aware of only one elder who used TPR effectively with the Head Start children. This individual, who is a credentialed teacher with an Eminence Certificate, is now teaching at the Tate Topa Tribal Middle School. She was credentialed prior to the ANA grant and was working for the *Kunsi/Unkana* Program on a temporary basis.



Lorraine Grey Bear, Director of the Language Preservation Program, is an accomplished community organizer. Six other elders have been taught TPR through for-credit training, in the summer of 2001, to help them get their Eminence Certificate. Of those six, three are still working for Head Start. One dropped out because of family concerns and two dropped out because of illness. It must be remembered that the rate of diabetes is very high on the Spirit Lake Nation. This affects the health of many elders, even those in their fifties, so many fluent speakers are unable to participate in the Kungsi/Unkana Program.

The grant called for “elder tribal members ... [in] the ten early childhood sites to ‘teach’ Dakota language through storytelling, reading books to children, and conversation. Project funds will also provide CD-ROMs and videos. The project will provide each of the ten early childhood program sites funding for one individual, two hours per day. (Rousey, 2000, p. 12).

Several unforeseen difficulties were involved in the attempt to implement this. As mentioned above, the health of the elders was a factor. Another problem was finding people for only two hours per day. People who were in good health and had vehicles usually were either employed or had other activities. The turnover was fairly high. This made it difficult to effectively integrate the elders into the classrooms. Reyhner (1996) notes that elders “seldom have the stamina to teach young children, especially in large groups” (p. 3). Oftentimes, people think that being a fluent speaker automatically means that one is a good teacher (Crawford, 1996, p.2). But many other factors come to bear when elders are placed in a classroom. Grace Lambert’s story illustrates the trauma to which the Dakota elders were subjected in school, and which could certainly put a

damper on their presence in the classroom. In addition, many of them had not been in a classroom for decades.

No provision was made for training the Head Start staff as to what to expect from the elders in the classroom, especially in regard to the use of Dakota language when even the Indian staff might not speak it. No provision was made for how to include the non-Indian staff and teachers. Consequently, the elders oftentimes ended up acting as aides in the classroom. Conversations between the researcher and Head Start staff (2003) indicated that the majority of the elders were not speaking Dakota in the Head Start classrooms. Coordination between the elders and the Indian and non-Indian Head Start staff is suggested.

Other activities anticipated in the ANA Grant were nature walks and field trips. Again, the health of the elders was a factor. In addition, the mention of CDs and videos in the ANA Grant was not relevant for the actual classroom situation. Most people on the reservation, it is safe to say, do not have computers at home, nor are there any in the Head Start classrooms at this time. Traditionally, the Dakota people do not put themselves in the forefront, and it is hard to envision the elderly showing videos or organizing children to use computers even if there were any in the classroom. A *Kunsi/Unkana Head Start Manual* (2001) was produced for use in the Head Start classrooms (Appendix L). It is a start at introducing educational materials specific the Dakota language on the Spirit Lake Nation; however, the extent of its actual use has not been determined. Possibly more coordination between the grandparents and the Head Start staff is called for.



However, the introduction of grandparents in the Head Start classroom is a beginning. The mistakes that were made can be corrected. Difficulties such as the high turnover can be addressed. The strong points of the efforts can be re-implemented. Goals can be clearly outlined and guidelines leading to their fulfillment can be established as exemplified by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Culture Code (1995) SEC

#### 114 Lakota/Dakota Languages an Integral Part of All School Curricula:

Pertinent to the laws cited in Sec 109 of this document, it shall be the policy of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe to vigorously advocate for the Lakota/Dakota languages to be utilized as a medium of instruction for Standing Rock Sioux tribal members ... and to require such instruction within our jurisdiction in all grade levels beginning in pre-school through college. In all grade levels beginning with Headstart [sic], a minimum of one hour or one class period per day of basic conversational use of the Lakota/Dakota language shall be provided. Video, radio programs etc. shall be utilized to implement this regulation. (p. 7)

The above addresses not only elders in Head Start but at all grade levels and specifies a time-frame! Again, this could serve as a model for the Spirit Lake Nation.

Another section provides for minimum competencies in Lakota/Dakota to be acquired by all educational personnel, both Indian and non-Indian (p. 9), and yet another section makes provisions for recognizing:

certain persons who possess knowledge above and beyond that attained by academics with degrees. These people of cultural and linguistic knowledge are recognized as eminent persons. It is the policy of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe to encourage the utilization of these elders or eminent persons to the greatest extent possible in providing language and cultural instruction to our children ("Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Language and Culture Code", 1995, p. 7).

Tony Mattina, a linguist at the University of Montana at Missoula, when asked what could be done to prevent oral languages from simply becoming words on a page, answered, 'What I'd really like to see is the elders paid for their knowledge so they'd be invited to the centers to talk to the kids. Until now they've been shy, partly because many don't have a formal education. I'd like to see the elders rewarded for knowing their language, just the opposite of the way it used to be, when they were punished for knowing it.' (Stark, 1996, p. 2)



Although compensation is not mentioned, The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe recognizes the irreplaceable value of their elders, as does Mrs. Lorraine Grey Bear, Director of the *Dakota Ia Unspepi*/Language Preservation Program, who made every effort to have the elders in the *Kunsi/Unkana* Program compensated at consultant fees. The endeavor of putting elders in the Head Start classroom with as high a wage as the ANA Grant would allow adds prestige to the status of the elders and the language and is a significant step in language revitalization on the Spirit Lake Nation

*Classes at Cankdeska Cikana Community College and the Role of the School in Language Revitalization*

As stated above, this category was included on the Survey in order to assess interest and was not a goal of either the *Dakota Ia Unspepi*/Language Preservation Program or the ANA Grant. This was the most popular option for encouraging people to “learn Dakota” with 64.6% of the respondents selecting it. Yet in reality, very few students, four or five a semester, take Dakota language classes at Cankdeska Cikana Community College. The researcher taught at the College for eleven years and has completed the Dakota language classes offered and was aware of the low enrollment.

Not only is there a discrepancy between the attitude towards college classes in Dakota language and those actually taking them, pedagogically speaking, the scholastic environment is probably the least effective in which to teach a language. Joshua Fishman (1995) states,

Vernaculars are acquired in infancy, in the family, which mean in intimacy. They are handed on in that way, in intimacy and in infancy. Schools teach, and children learn, even language sometimes, but schools are programmed and not generally inter-generational institutions. ... [M]other-tongues are inter-generational and not programmed. You see, they have almost completely opposite constellations of forces. (p. 6)

"It seems that even when good things happen in schools, there is not much impact on language loss" (Crawford, 1996, p. 2).

Perhaps the expectation that the *Mni Waukan Oyate* have that schools should be the focal point for language revitalization is due to the fact that schools were instrumental in the destruction of tribal languages. Schools took languages away. Schools should give them back. The attempted destruction, for generations, of the Dakota language and culture by school systems, which parents were incapable of preventing, may have contributed to feelings of powerlessness on the part of today's adults. Decades of linguistic repression dominated the scholastic environment.

Some of the Dakota people may see themselves as powerless in today's world. For example, few parents show up for parent-teacher conferences at either the Tate Topa Tribal Elementary and Middle Schools or the Four Winds Community High School, where the researcher is now a teacher. "People who do not participate in the educational process for their children may not see themselves as having the wherewithal to make significant inroads in language revitalization. "[T]ribal members outside the schools have yet to become mobilized to keep their languages alive" (Crawford, 1996, p. 11). A previous citation bears repetition, according to Lucille Watahomigie, director of the Peach Springs [Arizona, Hualapai] program, parents often assume that 'the schools can solve that problem' rather than seeing the need for a 'partnership' between school and community" (Crawford, 1996, p. 11).

Because learning a language as a mother-tongue is so natural, unconscious, and rapid, people readily assume that older children will find it no different if the same language has to be learned artificially in a school, immersion summer camp, or adult class. They will just 'pick it up'. (Crystal, 2000, p. 110)



This is not to say that schools should be discounted as a factor **IF** they are part of a community-wide commitment to language revitalization and preservation. When it comes to having expectations for schools to promote facility in a language, several cautions must be noted. While an in-depth discussion is beyond the scope of this paper, it must be kept in mind that, generally speaking, schools do not promote fluency.

First-hand experience with the curricula in Head Start and the Tate Topa Tribal Elementary and Middle Schools and the Four Winds Community High School makes it safe to say that the emphasis is on colors, numbers, animals, parts of the body, the months and days of the week, and the like. "There is a crucial difference between accumulating words and phrases and knowing how to use them in a real life situation. As some educators and linguists have pointed out, this is the difference between 'learning' a language and truly 'acquiring' that language for daily use" (Rubin, 1996, p. 2). Rubin adds that when language is taught as "discrete linguistic tasks" it becomes "disembodied" (p. 2). Language acquisition is further compounded when there are limited opportunities to use the language communicatively in school and little support for language use outside the school (p. 2).

The above discussion is to serve as a caution rather than to denigrate the role of the school in language revitalization. The school is an important component in establishing the prestige of a language and giving the language an important domain in which to function, as recognized by the "Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Language and Culture Code" and by Reyhner's "Suggested Interventions". However, as also recognized by the "Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Language and Culture Code", and in accordance with linguistic theory, the home must serve as the primary locus for language



transmission if a language is to truly thrive. Richard Littlebear (1977) in reference to his native language, Cheyenne, states, "To reverse this influence of English, families must retrieve their rightful position as the first teachers of our languages" (p. 1).

#### *Dakota Language CDs for Classroom Use*

Goal 10 of the *Dakota Ia Unspepi*/Dakota Language Program was creating CDs for use in classrooms. Of the Survey respondents, 57.6% favored "Tribally developed Dakota language CDs for use in classes (pre-school to college)". As of the date of this study, this goal has not been accomplished. Some CDs of simple words and phrases have been purchased from Dakota speaking reserves in Canada, but they have not been utilized in the classrooms. These CDs are for use in computers as they have accompanying video components. As for public distribution, they are expensive, most homes don't have the equipment to use them, and no means of dissemination was established through the grant.

#### *Tribally Developed Dakota Language Cassettes for Sale*

Goal 9, "Tribally developed Dakota language cassettes for sale" was favored by 49.8% of the respondents. This figure is considerably lower than that favoring CD use in the classroom, 57.6%. Probably all the homes on the Reservation have cassette players, and most of the young people seem to have CD players. Possibly the respondents saw the CDs as modernizing the school environment in the computer age.

As of this date, no tribally developed language cassettes are for sale. Some children's songs, in Dakota, such as "The Bear Went over the Mountain," were purchased from Canada. These Dakota songs were re-recorded on cassettes and translated into English, on paper, to be distributed with the cassettes. They were supposed to be placed in every classroom, but personal interviews by the researcher with current Head Start

staff do not indicate that they are being used on a regular basis, if at all. The researcher has not heard of the development of any Dakota language cassettes specific to the dialect of the Spirit Lake Nation.

*Utilizing Public Media, the Tribal Radio Station KABU  
to Teach Dakota Language*

More promising has been Goal 11, "Lessons or stories on KABU." While nothing has been done on a consistent basis, some of the elders have recorded stories in Dakota, under the auspices of the *Dakota la Unspepi*/Language Preservation Program, and these have been aired. In addition, as a final in her Dakota language conversation classes at Cankdeska Cikana Community College, Mrs. Lorraine Grey Bear has the students record a speech to be aired on KABU.

Hope for the Future: Some Tribes Take Initiative

With some people the very fact that they are bilingual is seen as a "real advantage" (Crystal, 2000, p. 112) in spite of prestige factors usually associated with the dominant language. One such speech community is the Tewa of what is now Arizona.

Such a language can also be extremely useful as a private channel of communication within the indigenous community—one which the dominant group does not share. Many of the positive arguments can come only from the members of the indigenous community themselves. Only they can point to the psychological or spiritual gains which begin to come from having links with the ancestral language-gains which are intangible, but nonetheless real.... (Crystal, 2000, p. 112)

Indigenous people in what is now the United States have taken a variety of initiatives to promote use of their native languages. In Montana, the Learning Lodge Institute is a collaboration of the seven tribal colleges in the state.

Each institution develops and directs projects that best serve the needs of their own reservation community. But they also gather periodically to share what they



have learned, support each other's efforts, and get inspiration from indigenous peoples as far away as Hawaii and New Zealand. (Boyer, 2000, p. 13)

Despite the fact that fluency is becoming rare as elders pass on, the tribal college educators involved in teaching are working "to build community support for language survival, devise promising teaching methods, and begin teaching a new generation of tribal members" (Boyer, 2000, p. 14). Their repertoire encompasses informal language learning associated with acquiring hands-on knowledge about culture, formal classroom instruction, and immersion camps (Boyer, 2000, p. 14).

#### Hope for the Future: The Spirit Lake Nation

As of this writing, the *Kunsi/Unkana* Program has already stimulated further Dakota language curriculum development in the Head Start classrooms. Ms. Vivian Lohnes, Head Start Parent Coordinator and Grants Writer submitted an Educational Development Funds (EDF) proposal to the Spirit Lake Tribal Council to bring into the Head Start classrooms a Dakota language curriculum that she had developed with Ms. Jeanne Cavanaugh. (Vivian Lohnes, personal interview, March 17, 2003). Ms. Cavanaugh speaks Dakota, although she is not an elder, and was to be the person to offer the curriculum.

The curriculum was significant in that, while it included the typical animals, numbers, and colors, it also focused on culture and manners. For example, the children were taught never to walk in front of an elder, and concepts such as 'helping', *okiya*, and 'waiting', *hiyanka*. The curriculum was incorporated into the regular Head Start curriculum which revolves around the months and various aspects of the day.



The Spirit Lake Tribal Council approved the curriculum and a salary for Ms. Cavanaugh, and she has been going into the Head Start classrooms since October of 2002. This Dakota language curriculum has had the most success with the Indian teachers. In the case of the non-Indian teachers, Ms. Cavanaugh has a more difficult time getting into the classrooms. However, Ms. Cavanaugh's teaching may continue as Ms. Lohnes has written an Otto Bremer grant for that purpose as well as another EDF proposal for matching funds.

Mrs. Lorraine Grey Bear's *Dakota Ia Unspepi*/Language Preservation Program has applied for another Administration for Native Americans (ANA) grant, this time with the Spirit Lake Sioux Tribe as the recipient organization. While a previous grant cannot be renewed, there are possibilities for future grants with a slightly different perspective. It is to be hoped that Mrs. Grey Bear's strong support for the Dakota fluency and her community-wide efforts to promote Dakota language can be continued.

Although currently uninvolved with any aspect of the *Dakota Ia Unspepi*/Language Preservation Program or the educational system on the Reservation, Ms. Amaris Makes Good is learning Dakota language by practicing with her family. Recall the young person in Chapter III, Unstructured Interviews and Development of the Pilot Survey who was spoken to by the cultural specialist for the Wounspe Program, "See that young lady. I always talk to her in Indian. She doesn't answer me, but she knows what I'm saying."

Today, Ms. Makes Good is 22, has an understanding of the Dakota language, and discussed with the researcher some of the challenges of learning to speak it (personal communication, May 5, 2003). Ms. Makes Good says "My grandma always talks to me

in Indian when she calls. If I don't know what she's saying, she gets mad and hangs up, but she always calls back and tells me what he said." Ms. Makes Good also related that she practices Indian with her aunts and uncles, "They laugh at me, but that's okay. I keep trying. I usually know what people are saying, but it's hard for me to put the words together." If more people like Ms. Makes Good would make an effort to learn Dakota, the language would have a good chance at being maintained. "All-important is the peoples' will to restore their native languages.... You cannot from the outside inculcate into people the will to revive or maintain their languages. That has to come from them, from themselves" (Crawford, 1994, p. 7).

### Conclusion

Yet, ultimately speakers themselves are responsible, through their attitudes and choices, for what happens to their native language. Families choose to speak it to their children, or they don't. Elders choose to speak the language on certain important occasions or to insist on its use in certain important domains, or they don't. Tribal leaders choose to promote the tribal language and accommodate its speakers in government functions, social services, and community schools, or they don't. (Crawford, 1996, p. 4)

At the discretion of the *Dakota Ia Unspepi*/Language Preservation Program and the Dakota Language Preservation Advisory Committee, the information learned from the results of this study could be disseminated to the *Mni Waukan Oyate* through the tribal newspaper and infomercials on the tribal radio station, KABU. Results could also be made available to the various educational entities on the Spirit Lake Nation, and to the Tribal Council. In addition, the information could be used to apply for further funds for language revitalization on the Spirit Lake Nation.

## Summary

The status of Dakota language on the Spirit Lake Nation would appear to be in Stage 7 of Fishman's Graded Intergenerational Dislocation Scale (GIDS) which implies that the language is not being transmitted intergenerationally in the home environment and that the majority of speakers are elderly. Of the respondents to the Survey for Grant for Revitalization of Tribal Languages (Survey), 38.9% had some degree of familiarity with Dakota orthography. Combining all age groups who answered the Survey, 71.7% are aware that the language is at risk and 85.5% want to "learn or improve or practice Dakota", which bodes well for possible revitalization. The introduction, by the *Dakota Ia Unspepi*/Language Preservation Program, of elders into Head Start has stimulated more Dakota language curriculum development, and a Dakota culture teacher is now teaching in the Head Start centers. Her work is currently being funded by the Spirit Lake Nation.



## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A  
SURVEY FOR GRANT FOR SURVIVAL  
OF TRIBAL LANGUAGES

# SURVEY FOR GRANT FOR SURVIVAL OF TRIBAL LANGUAGES

Cankdeska Cikana Community College is applying for a grant. Please help us to encourage Dakota language use on our reservation.

Please circle one answer for each question:

1. I know how to talk Indian (Dakota).  
a lot                      a little bit                      not at all
2. I can understand Dakota when others are speaking.  
a lot                      a little bit                      not at all
3. I can talk to elders in Dakota.  
easily                      a little bit                      not at all
4. I use Dakota language in the following places: (Circle the ones that apply.)  
at home                      at the Blue Building                      at pow-wows                      at ceremonies  
at friends' houses                      on the telephone
5. I can read the hymns in Dakota.  
easily                      a little bit                      not at all
6. Please circle your age group.  
under 12                      13-18                      19-25                      26-35                      36-45  
46-55                      above 55
7. I am male. I am female. (Circle one.)
8. Do you want to learn (to improve or practice) Dakota? (Check one.)  
\_\_\_ yes                      \_\_\_ no
9. Are you aware that the Dakota language is at risk of being lost forever?  
\_\_\_ yes                      \_\_\_ no
10. What do you think would encourage people on this Reservation to learn Dakota? (Put an 'X' by all that apply.)  
\_\_\_ small Dakota language discussion groups in each district  
\_\_\_ elders speaking Dakota in Head Start classes  
\_\_\_ Tribally developed CDs for use in classes (pre-school to college)  
\_\_\_ Tribally developed Dakota language cassettes for sale  
\_\_\_ college classes at Cankdeska Cikana  
\_\_\_ lessons or stories on KABU



APPENDIX B

SECTION MAP OF THE SPIRIT LAKE RESERVATION,

COURTESY OF VERNON LAMBERT,

EDUCATION DIRECTOR, SPIRIT LAKE TRIBE

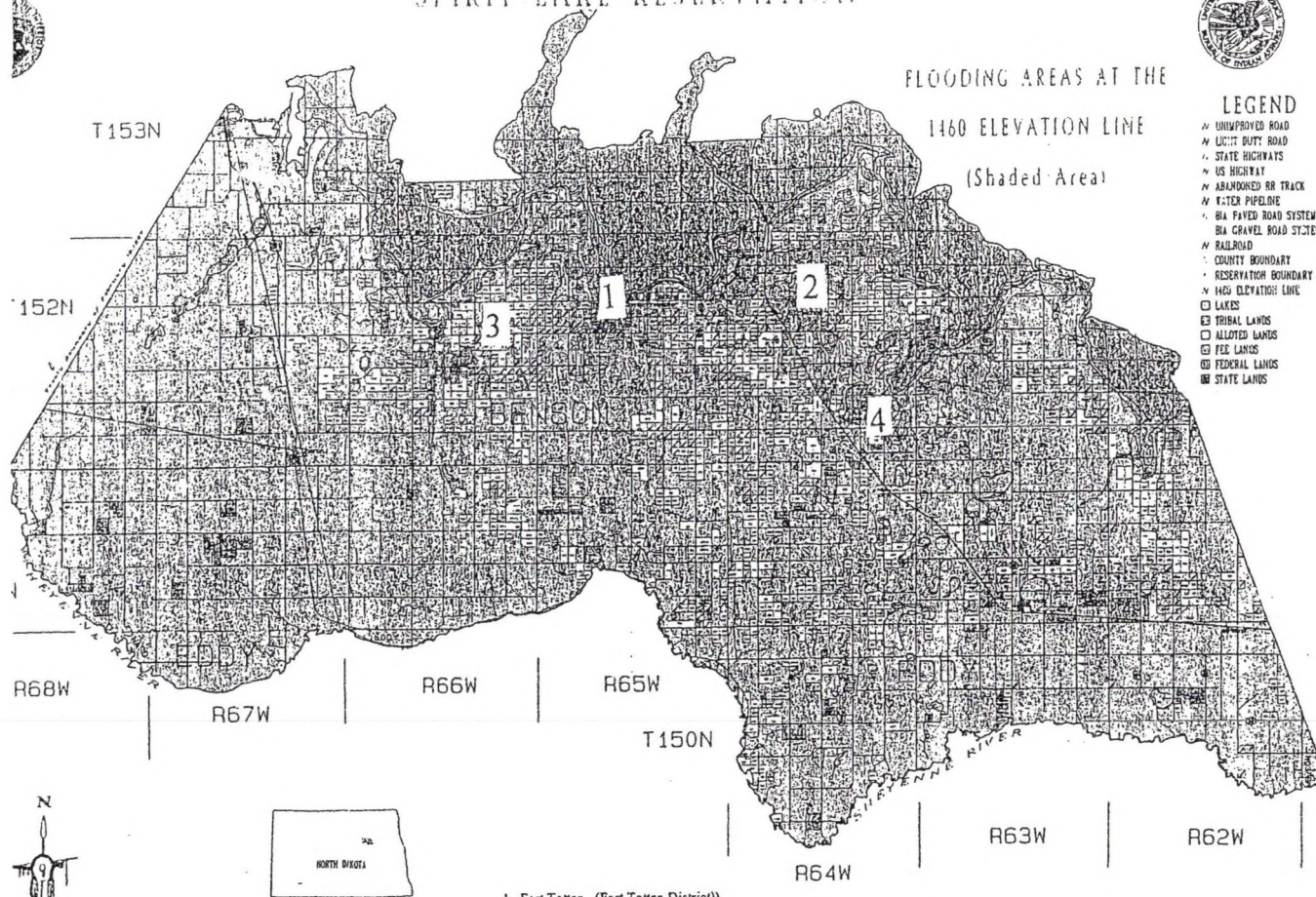
# SPRIT LAKE RESERVATION



FLOODING AREAS AT THE  
1460 ELEVATION LINE  
(Shaded Area)

## LEGEND

- UNIMPROVED ROAD
- LOCAL DUTY ROAD
- STATE HIGHWAYS
- US HIGHWAY
- ABANDONED RR TRACK
- WATER PIPELINE
- PAVED ROAD SYSTEM
- GRAVEL ROAD SYSTEM
- RAILROAD
- COUNTY BOUNDARY
- RESERVATION BOUNDARY
- 1460 ELEVATION LINE
- LAKES
- TRIBAL LANDS
- ALLOTED LANDS
- FEE LANDS
- FEDERAL LANDS
- STATE LANDS



1. Fort Totten (Fort Totten District)
2. St. Michael (Mission District)
3. No town (Crow Hill District)
4. Tokio (Woodlake District)

APPENDIX C

TITLE I-NATIVE AMERICAN LANGUAGES ACT,

PUBLIC LAW 101-47, OCTOBER 30, 1990



Policy Documents  
Native American Languages Act of 1990

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**PUBLIC LAW 101-477 - October, 30, 1990**  
**TITLE I -- NATIVE AMERICAN LANGUAGES ACT**

**SHORT TITLE**

SEC. 101. This title may be cited as the "Native American Languages Act".

**FINDINGS**

SEC. 102. The Congress finds that--

- (1) the status of the cultures and languages of native Americans is unique and the United States has the responsibility to act together with Native Americans to ensure the survival of these unique cultures and languages;
- (2) special status is accorded Native Americans in the United States, a status that recognizes distinct cultural and political rights, including the right to continue separate identities;
- (3) the traditional languages of native Americans are an integral part of their cultures and identities and form the basic medium for the transmission, and thus survival, of Native American cultures, literatures, histories, religions, political institutions, and values;
- (4) there is a widespread practice of treating Native Americans languages as if they were anachronisms;
- (5) there is a lack of clear, comprehensive, and consistent Federal policy on treatment of Native American languages which has often resulted in acts of suppression and extermination of Native American languages and cultures;
- (6) there is convincing evidence that student achievement and performance, community and school pride, and educational opportunity is clearly and directly tied to respect for, and support of, the first language of the child or student;
- (7) it is clearly in the interests of the United States, individual States, and territories to encourage the full academic and human potential achievements of all students and citizens and to take steps to realize these ends;
- (8) acts of suppression and extermination directed against Native American languages and cultures are in conflict with the United States policy of self-determination for Native Americans;
- (9) languages are the means of communication for the full range of human experiences and are critical to the survival of cultural and political integrity of any people; and

(10) language provides a direct and powerful means of promoting international communication by people who share languages.

#### DEFINITIONS

SEC. 103. For purposes of this title--

(1) The term "Native American" means an Indian, Native Hawaiian, or Native American Pacific Islander.

(2) The term "Indian" has the meaning given to such term under section 5351(4) of the Indian Education Act of 1988 (25 U.S.C. 2651(4)).

(3) The term "Native Hawaiian" has the meaning given to such term by section 4009 of Public Law 100-297 (20 U.S.C. 4909).

(4) The term "Native American Pacific Islander" means any descendent of the aboriginal people of any island in the Pacific Ocean that is a territory or possession of the United States.

(5) The terms "Indian tribe" and "tribal organization" have the respective meaning given to each of such terms under section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 450b).

(6) The term "Native American language" means the historical, traditional languages spoken by Native Americans.

(7) The term "traditional leaders" includes Native Americans who have special expertise in Native American culture and Native American languages.

(8) The term "Indian reservation" has the same meaning given to the term "reservation" under section 3 of the Indian Financing Act of 1974 (25 U.S.C. 1452).

#### DECLARATION OF POLICY

SEC. 104. It is the policy of the United States to--

(1) preserve, protect, and promote the rights and freedom of Native Americans to use, practice, and develop Native American languages;

(2) allow exceptions to teacher certification requirements for Federal programs, and programs funded in whole or in part by the Federal Government, for instruction in Native American languages when such teacher certification requirements hinder the employment of qualified teachers who teach in Native American languages, and to encourage State and territorial governments to make similar exceptions;

(3) encourage and support the use of Native American languages as a medium of instruction in order to encourage and support--

(A) Native American language survival,

(B) educational opportunity,

(C) increased student success and performance,



- (D) increased student awareness and knowledge of their culture and history, and
- (E) increased student and community pride;
- (4) encourage State and local education programs to work with Native American parents, educator, Indian tribes, and other Native American governing bodies in the implementation of programs to put this policy into effect;
- (5) recognize the right of Indian tribes and other Native American governing bodies to use the Native American languages as a medium of instruction in all schools funded by the Secretary of the Interior;
- (6) fully recognize the inherent right of Indian tribes and other Native American governing bodies, States, territories, and possessions of the United States to take action on, and give official status to, their Native American languages for the purpose of conducting their own business;
- (7) support the granting of comparable proficiency achieved through course work in a Native American language the same academic credit as comparable proficiency achieved through course work in a foreign language, with recognition of such Native American language proficiency by institutions of higher education as fulfilling foreign language entrance or degree requirements; and
- (8) encourage all institutions of elementary, secondary and higher education, where appropriate, to include Native American languages in the curriculum in the same manner as foreign languages and to grant proficiency in Native American languages the same full academic credit as proficiency in foreign languages.

#### NO RESTRICTIONS

SEC. 105. The right of Native Americans to express themselves through the use of Native American languages shall not be restricted in any public proceeding, including publicly supported education programs.

#### EVALUATIONS

Sec. 106. (a) The President shall direct the heads of the various Federal departments, agencies, and instrumentalities to--

- (1) Evaluate their policies and procedures in consultation with Indian tribes and other Native American governing bodies as well as traditional leaders and educators in order to determine and implement changes needed to bring the policies and procedures into compliance with the provisions of this title;
  - (2) give the greatest effect possible in making such evaluations, absent a clear specific Federal statutory requirement to the contrary, to the policies and procedures which will give the broadest effect to the provisions of this title; and
  - (3) evaluate the laws which they administer and make recommendations to the President on amendments needed to bring such laws into compliance with the provisions of this title.
- (b) By no later than the date that is 1 year after the date of enactment of this title, the President shall submit to the Congress a report containing recommendations for amendments to Federal laws that are needed to bring such laws into compliance with the provisions of this title.



## USE OF ENGLISH

Sec. 107. Nothing in this title shall be construed as precluding the use of Federal funds to teach English to Native Americans.

Approved October 30, 1990.

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NCELA Home Page  
[www.ncela.gwu.edu](http://www.ncela.gwu.edu)

APPENDIX D

“DAKOTA A LANGUAGE OF THE USA”

<http://www.ethnologue.com>

## DAKOTA: a language of USA

<i>Population</i>	15,355 speakers in USA including 31 monolinguals (1990 census). Population total both countries 20,355.
<i>Region</i>	Northern Nebraska, southern Minnesota, North and South Dakota, northeastern Montana. Also spoken in Canada.
<i>Alternate names</i>	SIOUX
<i>Dialects</i>	DAKOTA (DAKHOTA, SANTEE, SANTEE-SISSETON), NAKOTA (NAKODA, YANKTON, YANKTON-YANKTONAIS).
<i>Classification</i>	<u>Siouan, Siouan Proper, Central, Mississippi Valley, Dakota.</u>
<i>Comments</i>	Some children are being raised speaking the language in the northern Plains (1998). Many younger ones prefer English or do not speak the language. Bible 1879.

### Also spoken in:

<u>Canada</u>	<i>Language name</i>	DAKOTA
	<i>Population</i>	5,000 in Canada (1991 M. Dale Kinkade).
	<i>Alternate names</i>	SIOUX
	<i>Dialects</i>	DAKOTA (SANTEE), NAKOTA (YANKTON).
	<i>Comments</i>	83% to 86% lexical similarity with Stoney, 89% to 94% with Assiniboine, 90% to 95% among dialects. All ages in some communities. Vigorous in some communities. In some communities children and young adults may not speak Dakota or may prefer English. Literacy rate in first language: Below 1%. Literacy rate in second language: 50% to 75%. Bible 1879. See main entry under USA.



APPENDIX E

“LANGUAGE FAMILY TREES:  
SIOUAN, SIOUAN PROPER, CENTRAL,  
MISSISSIPPI VALLEY, DAKOTA”

<http://www.ethnologue.com>

# Language Family Trees

## Siouan, Siouan Proper, Central, Mississippi Valley, Dakota

Siouan (17)

Siouan Proper (16)

Central (11)

Mississippi Valley (10)

Dakota (4)

ASSINIBOINE [ASB] (Canada)

DAKOTA [DHG] (USA)

LAKOTA [LKT] (USA)

STONEY [STO] (Canada)

APPENDIX F

*MAKA-OYAKAPI. GUYOT'S ELEMENTARY  
GEOGRAPHY IN THE DAKOTA LANGUAGE*

TITLE PAGE, PP. 8 & 9



MAKA-OYAKAPI.  
GUYOT'S ELEMENTARY GEOGRAPHY  
IN THE  
DAKOTA LANGUAGE.

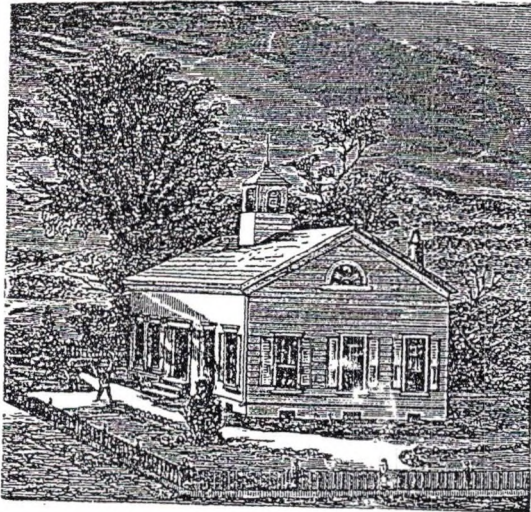
BY S. R. RIGGS LL.D., AND REV. A. L. RIGGS.



PUBLISHED FOR THE DAKOTA MISSION.

NEW YORK:  
SCRIBNER, ARMSTRONG, & CO., 743 BROADWAY.  
1876.

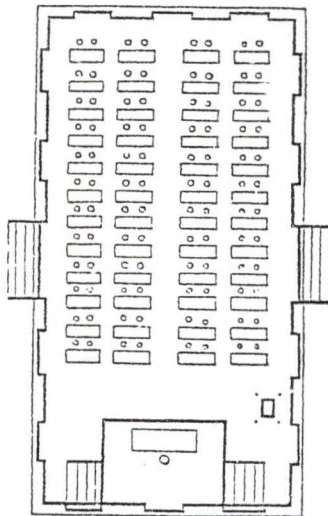
## MAKA-OYAKAPI.



WOYAWA TIPI QA IHUKSÁN WANKE CIN.

Owapi kin de taku he.

Owapi kin en tukte tipi waziyatanhan kin he ekta epazo wo: wiyohiyatanhan; wiyohpeyatanhan; itokatanhan.



WOYAWA TIPI OWAPI KIN.

Taku tipi kin ohna yanke cin hena token owapi he. Iagopi oisetonyan yanke cin hena wahna wowapi kin ee. Hmiyanan cikcistinna kin hena can akan iyotan-kapi. Oisetonyan tanka wanke cin he waonspekiya akan iyotanka. Oisetonyan cistinna wanke cin he ma-zaceti ee.

Tiunnaptanyan kin en obagopi kin hena owanyeye kin ee. Okakse hena tiyopa, qa hetanhan caniyadiipi kagapi.

3. WOYAWA TIPI IHUKSÁN makoce wanke cin he den owapi.

Tipi kin itokam taku taninyan yanka he.

Canku kin ohna takuku un he.

Canku kin akotanhan taku yanka he.

Conkaske qa can kin iakotanhan taku he.

Wakpa ekta epazo wo.

Wakpa wan tohinni wandaka he.

Wakpa mini kaduze cin on taku econpi he.

Woonspe tipi kin akotanhan tipi wan oceti hanske cin he taku he.

Tipi kin he ohna wicašta ota taku kagapi. He Wokage tipi (*Factory*) eciyapi.

Wokage tipi kin ikiyedan taku wandaka he. Can to-nana witaya han kin he token eciyapi he.

Tukten can ota witaya hiye cinhan he token eciyapi he. Contanka (*forest*) eciyapi.

Contanka kin en taku can icaga he.

Taku itaunpi ohna yakonpi hena takupi he.

Wakpa itakasanpata taku wandaka he.

Otonwe eyapi kin he taku he.

Otonwe tanka wan tohinni wandaka he.

Taku on wicašta ota witaya tipi he.

Wicašta otonwe kin ohna tipi kin hena taku tokonpi he.

Wakpa kin de akasam yapi cinpi eca token yapi he. Cankahonpapi kin wandaka he.

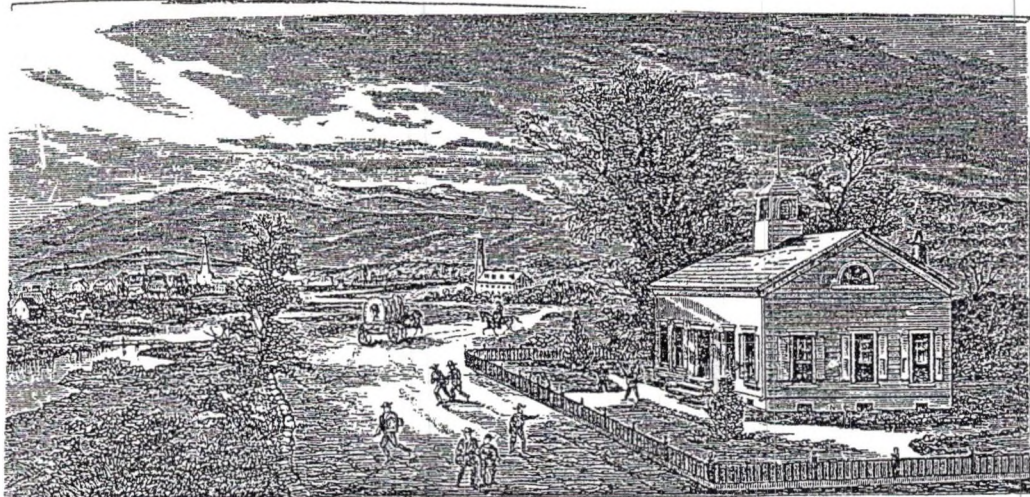
Nakun taku ohna akasanpa yepica he. Unma tukte ohna yapi waste he. Tokeca hecen idukcan he.

Otonwe akotanhan makoce toketu he. Woyawa tipi kin ikiyedan sunkawakan kin dus yapi. Otonwe akotanhan hecen yapi kta he. Tokeca behan iwastedan yapi kta he. Makoce itanwankannde yeye cin he token eciyapi he. Paha qa He.

Makoce woyawa tipi ihuksán wanke cin he tokeca he. Mdaya.

He kin tohini wandaka he. Tokeca he he eciyapi he.





WOJU TIPI WAN.  
WAKPA.  
OTONWE.

HE-PAHA.  
PAHA.

HE-PAHA.  
CANKU.

PAHA-HE.  
WOKAGE TIPI.  
CONTANKA.

WOYAWA TIPI,  
QA  
IHUKSAN.

Paha eyapi kin hena taku he.  
Omdaye eyapi kin he taku he.

4. MAKOWAPI KIN.—Makoce owapi kin de en taku wauusyakapi he.

Wowapi kin de makoce kin token wanke ça taku'u ohna un kin hena unkipazopi.

Woyawa tipi owapi kin he taku unkipazopi he.

Woyawa tipi ihduksan wanka owapi kin he taku unkipazopi he.

Hecen makoce owapi kin he taku unkipazopi kta iyececa he.

Makowapi wan taku makoce kin en un kin hena otioyohi tukten yanka he unkipazopi kta iyececa.

Makoce owapi kin tukte he waziyatanhan he. Tukte itokagatanhan he. Tukte wiyohiyatanhan he. Tukte wiyohpeyatanhan he.

Makowapi wan yakage cinhan token yakage kta he.

Makowapi kin ohna otouwakin token owapi he.

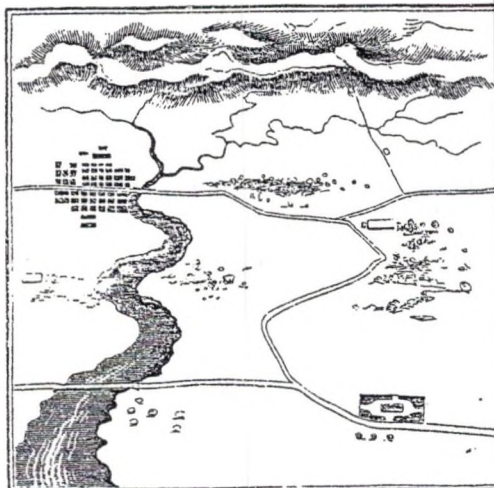
Wakpa wan token kagapi he. Can token owapi he.

Canku token kagapi he. Paha kin token kagapi he.

Otonwe kin ekta epazo wo. He kin en epazo wo.

Wakpa kin tukte e he. Canku kin hena ekta epazo wo. Canku kin hena tokiyotan yeya he.

Wokage tipi kin ekta epazo wo. Woonspe tipi kin tukte e he.



WOYAWA TIPI IHUKSAN MAKOCE OWAPI.



APPENDIX G

*MODEL FIRST READER. WAYAWA TOKAHEYA.*

TITLE PAGE, PREFACE, HINTS TO TEACHERS, PP. 1-8;

PART FIRST ONSPA TOKAHEYA, P. 9

LESSON 16, PP. 60-61.

MODEL  
**FIRST READER.**

WAYAWA TOKAHEYA.



PREPARED  
IN

ENGLISH-DAKOTA.

**By S. R. RIGGS, LL. D.**

CHICAGO:

**Geo. SHERWOOD & Co.**

PRINTED AT THE LAKESIDE PRESS, CHICAGO.

## PREFACE.

COMPLETE success in any department can be secured only by earnest and intelligent co-operation of individuals.

A machine may, humanly speaking, be perfect, and yet, for want of a skillful operator, it may fail to perform well.

Perfection is not claimed for this little book, yet, by its aid, results can be secured by the average teacher that will, I believe, justify both its existence and its name.

We begin with the object itself. For the first lessons, such objects have been selected as can, without difficulty, be brought before the class, and such as can be represented on the blackboard by teachers unskilled in drawing; and which can also be readily drawn by the child.

From the object, we develop language; from its representation (picture), the representation of language (written words or word pictures); from both, the power of grasping ideas from things and graphic (or typo-graphic) representations, and of expressing them with ease and naturalness. The eye and the ear are skilled to know — the tongue and the hand to do.

The system here pursued is a step in advance of the Word-Method (as generally understood), inasmuch as it begins, not with separate words, but with combinations of words — with *thought expressions*.

Words, as words, obscure thought; but, words as thought media, are transparent. Reading is grasping thought from language, and imparting thought (so grasped,) through language. Recognizing and pronouncing words, as words, is not reading.

The illustrations in this book are a marked feature, and one which the children, at least, will readily appreciate, and, with me, thank the publishers for that co-operation which has secured them in such perfection.

Grateful to a generous public for the favor it has shown to my former works, I now offer this book, believing it will be recognized as a still more successful effort to make the child's first days at school pleasant and profitable, and as a step in advance toward securing the education that is to be in the "Good time coming," when, following nature more closely, it will be "Sport to learn."

CHICAGO, Aug. 6, 1873.

J. R. W.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1873, by Geo. Swanwood & Co., in the office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

## HINTS TO TEACHERS.

There are three distinct systems of teaching Reading, viz: the Alphabetic, in which the letters, as parts of Written Words, are taught first; the Phonetic, in which the sounds, as parts of Spoken Words, are taught first; and the Word Method, in which the whole word, as the element of language, is taught first. These methods are, in practice, often more or less combined.

In this book I present another method, and one which experience has proved to be a still nearer approach to the real *Method of Nature* than either of the three systems mentioned above. By this method we begin, not with single words, but with combinations of words. From these combinations the separate words are learned as the letters are by the Word-Method. In the Word-Method, the attention is first called to the meaning of the word, and then to the printed word as the representation of that meaning. In this method, the attention is called to the *thought* first, and then to the *combination of words* as the representation of the thought. From this peculiarity, I call it *THE SENTENCE METHOD*.

That this method is entirely practical, and possesses decided advantages over the systems first named, I have no doubt; but from my experience in the introduction of the Word-Method (which I first published in 1846), I am advised that, however good a system may be, its general introduction will be sooner gained by not presenting it at first in its most radical form.

The real object of reading is to gain information. In oral reading, we wish, in addition, to impart information and also to give pleasure. In learning to talk, children first grasp ideas from objects and then *labor* to express them. The separate meaning of the words used is not so much noticed as their combined meaning, because it takes the *combination* to give birth to the *idea*. This truth applies also to written language. The aim of the teacher should, therefore, be, not so much to teach separate words as to teach *expressions of thought*. The Word-Method enables teachers to do this more nearly than the Alphabetic or Phonetic, because it requires less steps to *get-up-to* the *idea*, and each step diverts from the real object. If, therefore, the best results are to be sought after, the teacher must endeavor to train the eye to take in *at a glance* enough words to put the mind in possession of the *idea* (for the *idea* is the



unit, and as a unit it must be known and appreciated before its expression can be properly given; and the mind must be trained to fix itself on the idea as though derived from the original source and not from words, i. e., to look *through* the words recognized by the eye, to the thought only. And to use the words as simply servants to unload the mind of its ideas. Not till the eye and the mind are thus trained, can *good* reading be secured. Fixing the attention on the words is like looking at glass, which, when looked at, becomes opaque and hides the view beyond. If, by the Word-Method (as often taught), such blinding of the mental vision is possible, what shall we say for those systems which begin with the letters?

"But," you will say, "the words must be taught." I reply: They will necessarily become known with very little special teaching, by the system here pursued, and, therefore, the direct teaching of them should be of secondary importance. The child eats to satisfy hunger or to gratify taste, not to nourish and strengthen its body; yet, notwithstanding, the body is nourished and strengthened none the less by the eating. Indeed, eating simply for the nourishment, defeats very largely, at least, the object in view. So God in wisdom ordains.

The mind has taste—the mind hungers. Satisfy this taste, this hunger, by giving food that is palatable, that is nourishing, that is adapted to its development, that is properly prepared,—and see to it that the food is properly administered, too,—then, neither the taste nor the appetite will become cloyed, but both will be sharpened and made more sensitive and appreciative; meanwhile, growth and strength necessarily—naturally—follow.

#### HOW SHALL WE TEACH?

At first, teach by means of Objects and Pictures, and Oral Lessons.

1st. *By Objects.*—Let the objects be present, let them be seen, handled, talked about. Take, for example, a box—as a chalk box. The children see it, have seen it many a time, and know what it is; and most of them have boxes at home. Take the box in your hand, and, calling the children's attention to it, say to them, "I have a box," a fact they already know, because they see it in your hand. Let the children in turn take the box and repeat the statement. Using other objects, make similar statements with reference to them, and here let the first lesson end.

At the second lesson, hold up the box as at the first lesson, and ask, "What have I in my hand?" They will naturally answer, A box. This is the reply wanted, and which you should get. Now, let each child take the box and ask the same question, the class answering as before. Other objects should also be used, and may be such as belong in the school-room, or such as the children have brought in for this purpose.

2d. *By Pictures.*—After again calling attention to the box, make a picture of it on the blackboard (see page 9), and show the class how to make it. Let the children practice drawing it on the blackboard and on their slates. From the representing of *things* by *pictures*, the idea of representing words (spoken words) by marks (written words) is obtained.

At the next lesson, with the box in hand, repeat the question and get the answer as before, "A box." Pointing to the picture, ask, "What is this?" and get the same answer, "A box," (not "A picture of a box.") Write or print this answer near the picture, as shown on page 9. Repeat the question, pointing to the picture, and tell the class that the answer they gave is what you have written on the board. Again repeating the question, let the children reply with their eyes fixed on this written answer. Repeat the question many times by simply pointing to the box and to the picture, the children still looking at the written words as they answer, "A box." Now place the phrase (a box) on other parts of the board and test their ability to recognize it. If able to, let them look for it in the book, first on page 9, and then on page 11.

Develop other answers from other objects (see pages 9 and 10), in the same manner. Place them as you proceed, on the board, promiscuously, and test the ability to recognize and name them. Get the answers from the object, the picture, and the words, and see that the manner of the reply is alike from all, i. e., perfectly natural.

In the book, the pictures are placed on one side of the page with the question over them, and the answers on the other side. By this arrangement, either can be covered when desired; or one picture and its answer may be singled out. Let the child read the pictures, i. e., as you point to the box, let him say, "A box." As you point to the hat, let him say, "A hat," etc. Repeat the child looking now at the *words*. Repeat again, pointing alternately to the pictures and the phrases, the child replying as you do so. Repeat, pointing only to the phrases. Now cover the pictures, and repeat, pointing at the phrases. If the child hesitates, uncover the picture. When able to read them on the picture pages, turn to *Review Lessons* where there are no pictures to aid.

Continue lessons of this nature till complete familiarity with them is secured, and ability to recognize the written answer, is acquired.

By this time it will be found that the children have not only noticed the forms of the individual words, but that they have attached to these forms, names,—that they, in fact, *know the words*, and are able to point them out and name them wherever seen.

Some teachers may desire to make direct efforts to teach the separate words. In anticipation of such desire, I digress, somewhat, to show how to do it, and begin on page 15 with

\*The picture may be called a box with as much propriety as the character (written word) used to represent a word (spoken word) may be called a word.



*Names of Things.*—Everything has a name. This you can lead the children to discover. Begin by asking a child if he has a name, and what it is. Proceed to names of other children, to names of animals, and of things. Finally, ask for something that has no name. It will be perceived that the name is comprised in one word, as boy, ox, etc. Do not confound the answer developed in the first six lessons with the name—the answer now required. Proceed, orally, at first, as already shown. Let things seen in the school-room be named first; then things seen out doors, things seen at home, in the house, barn, shop, store; in the field, garden, woods; then let animals, plants, trees, fruits, etc., be named. A little skill will direct the children in gathering names to be given at an appointed time, which will not only interest and benefit them, but teachers and parents as well.

The printed word should be given (on the blackboard) as the name of the thing mentioned, and taught as already explained for teaching the phrase, "A box."

*Kinds of Things.*—On page 9 we have "a box"; on page 20 we have "a red box." The adjective word is introduced to tell the kind. To teach this phrase, have a red box, and then proceed precisely as explained for teaching "a box." When you make the picture, color it to agree with the adjective. (See pages 20 and 21.) If possible, have several boxes of various colors, sizes, and materials, and let the expression for each be taught; as, for example, a red box, a green box, a blue box, a white box, a black box, a large box, a small box, a wooden box, a tin box, etc. After which, teach expressions for different things having a common property; as, for instance, a red box, a red cap, a red ox, etc. Continue this multiplying of phrases till familiarity with them is secured and the eye is sufficiently trained to grasp the whole expression and recognize it at a glance. Test this ability by placing the phrases on the board, and as you point to the object or picture, let the children point out the corresponding phrase.

The danger, at this point, is in making too great haste. Let me caution you to make it slowly. Let THOROUGHNESS be your motto. Do not neglect the Oral Lessons. This class of expressions gives wide scope for observation and practice.

*Acts of Things.*—On page 23, complete sentences are formed. In teaching them, let the action or fact occur before the class, and let a statement of it be made, orally, from information thus obtained. Afterwards place the sentence on the board for the class to look at as it is repeated. For instance, to teach the sentence, "the girl reads," let the children see a girl reading, and then ask them what the girl does; they will answer, "the girl reads." Write the statement and proceed as heretofore directed. Many repetitions will be necessary, and several sentences may be given before either is distinctly recognized. Keep the attention on the idea rather than on the graphic expression of it.

Multiply the sentences and give variety in form; for example,—I hear a clock, I see a knife, I smell a rose, I taste an apple, I feel a book, etc. Teach each sense to take cognizance of facts, i. e., to gather information,—and the children to express properly, in words, the facts so gathered.

*Review Lesson.*—These should be used as "hunting grounds" for the lessons as learned, and expeditions for phrases, sentences, and words, should often be made to them. It will be hardly possible to proceed thus through Part I without the words becoming known. Before commencing Part II, review carefully from the beginning of the book, calling the attention more directly to the words.

Part II contains twenty-six lessons, named Lesson A, Lesson B, etc., in alphabetic order. Refer to these lessons by their names as you would refer to things. It will not be long before the children will know these names, and recognize the letters also. By the side of the pictures, the "lower case" letters, in Roman and Script, are found. They are placed there, not to be taught, but to be learned by the children, almost, if not quite, unconsciously. The name of the lesson carries the name of the letter, and the pastime of drawing them will fix their forms in the mind. To test as well as to aid their observation, let them occasionally look for the letter in the words. It will not materially interrupt our method of learning the words and sentences, as the attention is not to be fixed on them as tasks.

In this Part, all the words are placed at the bottom of the pages for separate recognition. Before commencing Part III, review again from the beginning of the book, teaching the children to spell the words.

*Part III.*—The first lessons of this part are designed to introduce a variety of new, yet familiar, words. The simplicity of the reading matter compensates for the number given. All the new words are placed at the beginning of the lessons for pronunciation and spelling. The children should be taught to make these words on their slates. Spelling should be done mainly by writing, as this is the only use we make of it in practical life.

The Grading has been carefully guarded throughout the entire book. By short and easy steps the child passes from one lesson to another. Sometimes, indeed, they are so short and easy that no apparent effort is required; while at other times, they are, at most, but pleasant tasks to be performed. Gently undulating roads are less wearisome than those constantly, though gradually, ascending—than those, even, on a level plane.

For sounds of the letters and their use, see MODEL SECOND READER.

The object of this book in English and Dakota is especially to aid the Dakotas in learning to read and understand the English Language. To them our language is very difficult of acquisition. Many have undertaken to learn it and failed, or succeeded only to a limited extent. While, in our efforts to civilize and evangelize the Dakota people, we have rightly placed education in their own tongue *first*, as most needed and most fruitful in results, we are also fully aware of the great advantages to them of a knowledge of English. And this book is prepared to help them overcome the difficulties in their way.

It will be noted by English readers, that our substantive verb is variously rendered. With prepositions it is *un*, plural *unpi*; as *en un*, *akan un*, etc. Sometimes it is found in *ee*, *dee*, *hee*, and *heca*. But more commonly it is not expressed at all in Dakota; as *De taspantanka tanka*, *this apple large*. The articles also in English do not always correspond with *wan* and *kin* of the Dakota. Sometimes, in this book, they are used to represent *a* or *an* and *the*, when they would be omitted in Dakota composition.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1873, by S. R. Riggs, in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

# PART FIRST.

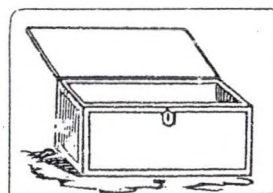
## ONSPA TOKAHEYA.

### LESSON I.

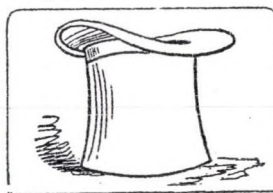
### WOONSPE I.

(What is it?)  
Taku he.

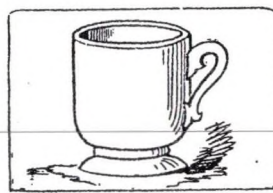
(Answer.)  
Woayupte.



a box  
can-wohnaka



a hat  
wapoštaz  
wapaha



a cup  
wiyatke



## LESSON 16.

I see a white house.  
Tipi ska wan wanmdaka.



This house is made of wood.  
Tipi kin de can on kagapi.

I see a large tree.  
Can tanka wan wanmdaka.

This tree stands by the house.  
Can kin de tipi icalda han.

I see a gray cat.

Inmu śunka hin Hota wan wanmdaka.

The cat is on the house.

Inmu śunka kin tipi kin akan yanka.

I see a black bird.

Zitkadan sapa wan wanmdaka.

The bird is on the tree.

Zitkadan kin he can kin akan yanka.

Do you see the cat, the  
bird, the house and the tree

Inmuśunka, zitkadan, tipi qa can kin hena  
wandaka he.

Do you see the boy and  
the girl?

Hokśidan qa wicinyanna kin hena wandaka he.

They are looking at the  
cat and the bird.

Hena inmu śunka qa zitkadan opawicalita  
yakonpi.

APPENDIX H

IGNATIUS COURT

*ST. MICHAEL'S MISSION 1874-1974. (1974).*

MARVIN, SD: BLUE CLOUD ABBEY PRESS

Ignatius Court



Ignatius Court was the translator of Bishop Gilmore's *Bible History* into Dakota, 1894 "and 2,000 copies were printed at St. Michael by the end of 1897. Court operated the printing press at St. Michael, and: "Two thousand prayer books and 1,000 catechisms were also printed later."

*St. Michael's Indian Mission 1874-1974.* (1974). Marvin, SD, Blue Cloud Abbey Press.



APPENDIX I  
PILOT SURVEY

## SURVEY FOR GRANT FOR SURVIVAL OF TRIBAL LANGUAGES

Cankdeska Cikana Community College will be sponsoring this grant. In order to see what the reservation community needs and wants, the College requests that you please answer this survey.

Please circle one answer for each question:

1. I know how to talk Indian (Sioux).  
     a lot                      a little bit                      not at all
2. I can understand Sioux/Dakota when others are speaking.  
     a lot                      a little bit                      not at all
3. I can talk to elders in Sioux/Dakota.  
     easily                      a little bit                      not at all
4. I use Sioux/Dakota language in the following places: (Circle the ones that apply.)  
     at home                      at the Blue Building                      at pow-wows                      at ceremonies  
     at friends' houses                      on the telephone
5. I can read the hymns in Sioux/Dakota.  
     easily                      a little bit                      not at all
6. Please circle your age group.  
     under 12                      13-18                      19-25                      26-35                      36-45  
     46-55                      above 55
7. I am male. I am female. (Circle one.)
10. What do you think would encourage people on this Reservation to learn Sioux/Dakota? (Put an 'X' by all that apply.)  
     \_\_\_ small Dakota language discussion groups in each district  
     \_\_\_ elders speaking Dakota in Head Start classes  
     \_\_\_ Tribally developed CDs for use in classes (pre-school to college)  
     \_\_\_ Tribally developed Dakota language cassettes for sale  
     \_\_\_ college classes at Cankdeska Cikana  
     \_\_\_ lessons or stories on KABU

APPENDIX J

“DAKOTA UNSPEER PRESERVATION OF THE  
LANGUAGE ADMINISTRATION FOR  
NATIVE AMERICANS GRANT”,  
TITLE PAGE, ABSTRACT, PP. 1-17.



# APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

OMB Approval No. 0348-00

1. TYPE OF APPLICATION Application <input type="checkbox"/> Construction <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Construction Preapplication <input type="checkbox"/> Construction <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Construction		2. DATE SUBMITTED 3/16/00	Applicant Identifier
3. DATE RECEIVED BY STATE		State Identifier	
4. DATE RECEIVED BY FEDERAL AGENCY		Federal Identifier	
5. APPLICANT INFORMATION			
Legal Name: CANKDESKA CIKANA COMMUNITY COLLEGE Address (give city, county, state and zip code): PO BOX 269 FORT TOTTEN ND 58335		Organizational Unit: OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT Name and telephone number of person to be contacted on matters involving this application (give area code): PRESIDENT ERICH LONGIE (701) 766-4415	
6. EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN): A 5 0 3 5 0 7 5 6		7. TYPE OF APPLICANT: (enter appropriate letter in box) A. State B. County C. Municipal D. Township E. Interstate F. Intermunicipal G. Special District H. Independent School District I. State Controlled Institution of Higher Learning J. Private Industry K. Indian Tribe L. Individual M. Ripped Organization N. Other (Specify) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N	
8. TYPE OF APPLICATION: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Continuation <input type="checkbox"/> Revision If Revision, enter appropriate letter(s) in box(es): A. Increase Award B. Decrease Award C. Increase Duration D. Decrease Duration Other (Specify)		9. NAME OF FEDERAL AGENCY: DHHS-ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ANA	
10. CATALOGUE OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE NUMBER: TITLE: ANA 9 3 6 1 2		11. DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF APPLICANT'S PROJECT: DAKOTA IA UNSPEPI PRESERVATION OF THE LANGUAGE	
12. AREAS AFFECTED BY PROJECT (cities, counties, states, etc.): SPIRIT LAKE TRIBE N.D.			
13. PROPOSED PROJECT Start Date: 9-30-2003 Ending Date:		14. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS OF: a. Applicant: NORTH DAKOTA b. Project: NORTRH DAKOTA	
15. ESTIMATED FUNDING: a. Federal: \$ 363,407 00 b. Applicant: \$ 111,238 00 c. State: \$ 00 00 d. Local: \$ 00 00 e. Other: \$ 00 00 f. Program Income: \$ 00 00 g. TOTAL: \$ 474,645 00		16. IS APPLICATION SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS? a. YES. THIS PREAPPLICATION/APPLICATION WAS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS FOR REVIEW ON DATE _____ b. NO. <input type="checkbox"/> PROGRAM IS NOT COVERED BY E.O. 12372 <input type="checkbox"/> OR PROGRAM HAS NOT BEEN SELECTED BY THE STATE FOR REVIEW	
		17. IS THE APPLICANT DELINQUENT ON ANY FEDERAL DEBT? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes If "Yes," attach an explanation. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
18. TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF, ALL DATA IN THIS APPLICATION/PREAPPLICATION ARE TRUE AND CORRECT. THE DOCUMENT HAS BEEN DULY AUTHORIZED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE APPLICANT AND THE APPLICANT WILL COMPLY WITH THE ATTACHED ASSURANCES IF THE ASSISTANCE IS AWARDED.			
a. Typed Name of Authorized Representative ERICH LONGIE		b. Title PRESIDENT	c. Telephone number (701) 766-4415
d. Signature of Authorized Representative <i>Erich Longie</i>		e. Date Signed 3-16-00	

Previous Editions Not Usable

Standard Form 424 (REV 4-88)  
Prescribed by OMB Circular A-102

## ADMINISTRATION FOR NATIVE AMERICANS (ANA)

### PROJECT ABSTRACT

Program Announcement: 93-612-003      Closing Date: March 17, 2000

ANA Control No: \_\_\_\_\_ (to be completed by ANA)

Applicant Name: Cankdeska Cikana Community College

Federal Amount Requested:	1st Year	\$124,121
	2nd Year	\$117,288
	3rd Year	\$121,997
Total Non Federal Share		\$110,239

Length of Proposed Project: 36 months.

#### Project Title:

Dakota Ia Unspepi (Learning the Language)

#### Project Summary

The Spirit Lake Nation, located in each central North Dakota, is committed to preservation of the Dakota language. Due to rural isolation, no other tribe speaks the identical dialect of the Spirit Lake people, and our needs assessment data have shown a disconcerting decline in Dakota fluency, which our current language programs have only been able to slow down, but not been able to reverse. This language preservation program has three goals:

To develop a language immersion program for the families of the Spirit Lake Nation.

To expand the available pool of Dakota speakers who can act as language instructors.

To develop print and electronic media resources in support of efforts to promote Dakota language usage.

To accomplish these goals, we will use four strategies, a Kungsi(grandmother) program in which elders teach children naturalistically in early childhood programs, through storytelling and conversation, college classes in Dakota, especially for early childhood and elementary teachers, a Dakota Language Society which will produce newspapers columns, public service announcements and a radio program, and establishment of a Dakota Resource Library.

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Indirect cost letter	
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2000 Resolution	
<b>Letters of Commitment</b>	<b>Appendix C</b>
Cankdeska Cikana Community College	
Early Head Start Program	
Head Start Program	
KABU Reservation radio	
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Tate Topa Tribal School	
Valerie Merrick Memorial Library	
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Lorraine Greybear	
Ruth deLarios	
AnnMaria Rousey	



## DAKOTA 1A UNSPEPI (LEARNING TO SPEAK THE LANGUAGE)

**Current Status of Native American language**

The assessment of the current status of the Dakota language has been conducted over a two-year period, using a combination of formal and informal methods and quantitative and qualitative analysis. This effort has been spearheaded by Lorraine Greybear, who teaches Dakota language at both the Tate Topa Tribal School and Cankdeska Cikana Community College (CCCC), and Ruth DeLarios, a linguist who teaches at the tribal college. In fall, 1999, Ms. DeLarios conducted interviews with 30 tribal members, including elders, parents of school children and tribal administrators, regarding their perception of the state of Dakota language and avenues they would recommend for its preservation. A draft version of a survey was piloted on 19 tribal members across age groups to identify potential problems in wording and insure the most common terms (e.g., Dakota, Sioux or Indian) were used. Based on these interviews, pilot study survey and data from previous language assessment efforts (described below) a short survey was developed and distributed to the community in the tribal administration building, CCCC, Four Winds High School, Tate Topa Tribal School, early childhood programs and at the Elders Day Out luncheon. Survey responses were received from 321 tribal members, representing 20% of the adolescent and adult population of the reservation. A copy of the survey is included in Appendix A. The return rate for the survey was over 90%, an amazing result which reflects the degree of support for language preservation on the reservation. Demographics for survey respondents are shown below. It can be seen that all age groups were represented..

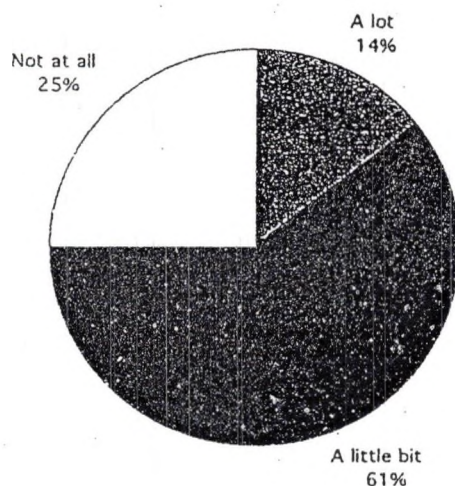
Table 1  
Demographics of Language Survey Sample

<b>AGE Group</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
<i>Under 12</i>	9	14	23	0.07
<i>13-18</i>	69	71	141	0.44
<i>19-25</i>	15	23	38	0.12
<i>26-35</i>	9	14	23	0.07
<i>36-45</i>	10	17	27	0.08
<i>46-55</i>	9	14	23	0.07
<i>Above 55</i>	12	31	43	0.13
<i>Did not respond</i>	0	3	3	0.01
<i>Grand Total</i>	133	187	321	1.00

The sample was 59% female, with the over 45 population particularly having a higher proportion of women. This is, in fact, a representative sample of the reservation population, where women have a significantly greater life expectancy<sup>1</sup>. The survey is also representative in age; 51% of the Spirit Lake population is 18 years of age or younger, as are 51.4%. Figure 1 shows respondents' ability to speak Dakota. It can be seen that the language is still alive on the reservation, but, given that 25% of those surveyed cannot speak the language at all, and only 14% report a lot of knowledge, there

<sup>1</sup> Conway, M.E., Hooper, E.Y., Morgan, W. & Sauri, J.F. (1996). American Indian and Alaska native health: Current bibliographies in medicine. Bethesda, MD: National Library of Medicine.

## Survey Respondents Knowledge of Dakota (N=321)



is definitely cause for concern. A second indication of fluency is how well individuals report they can speak in Dakota to tribal elders, who are the most fluent members of the tribe. Response to this item, by age group are shown in Table 2 below. Of those who reported that they

Table 2  
Ability to Speak Dakota with Elders  
Percentage of Respondents, by Age Group

Age Group	Easily	A little	Not at all
Under 12	5	12	5
13-18	8	41	54
19-25	0	9	16
26-35	5	8	7
36-45	3	9	10
46-55	13	11	4
Above 55	64	10	3

could speak Dakota easily, 64% were over 55., and 13% were age 46-55. The Dakota language on the Spirit Lake Reservation is at a precarious juncture. There still remains the opportunity to preserve the language if action is take now while a critical mass of fluent speakers still live on the reservation. This situation is best expressed in the words of one tribal member interviewed who said,

*Every time I attend a wake or a funeral, I see a little more of our language die before me. What I am really afraid of is that, when I am old, there will be no one left to talk to, because there will be no one left who speaks my language.*



Based on these survey results, the estimated numbers of speakers, by fluency and age group are shown in Table 3.

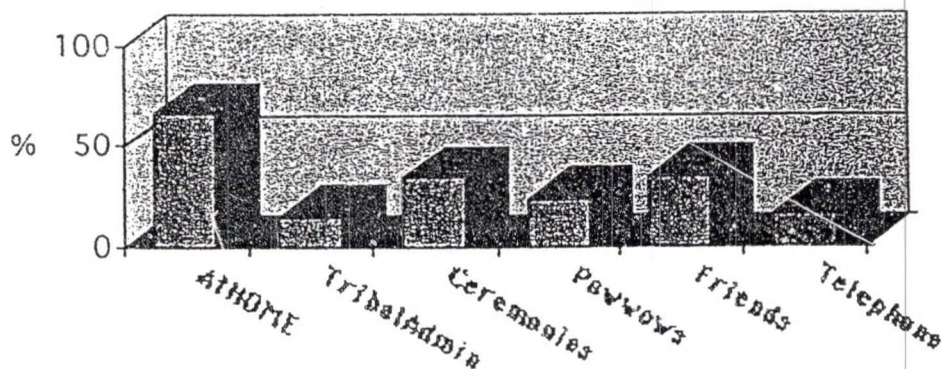
Table 3  
Dakota Speakers by Age Group and Fluency

AGE Group	Fluent	Basic	None
Under 12	110	657	493
13-18	22	301	705
19-25	0	180	580
26-35	43	174	261
36-45	13	117	220
46-55	65	143	91
Above 55	175	70	42
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>1642</b>	<b>2392</b>

This lack of fluency is not due to disinterest on the part of tribal members; 88% of tribal members surveyed who could not speak Dakota fluently responded that they wanted to learn. Yet, it is clear that the language is slowly fading, in part because it is not institutionalized. The places where survey respondents reported using Dakota language are shown in Figure 2. It can be seen that informal settings, primarily the home (70%) and friends' homes predominate, followed by ceremonies and pow-wows. Among the interviews and surveys, no usage of Dakota to conduct commercial transactions was noted.

The use of Dakota language in all of these venues has declined over the past thirty years. In tribal administration, for example, minutes of tribal council meetings show that almost 95% of business was conducted in Dakota in the 1960s, compared to less than 5% currently.

### Place: Dakota Language is Used





### NEED AND COMMITMENT FOR LANGUAGE PRESERVATION

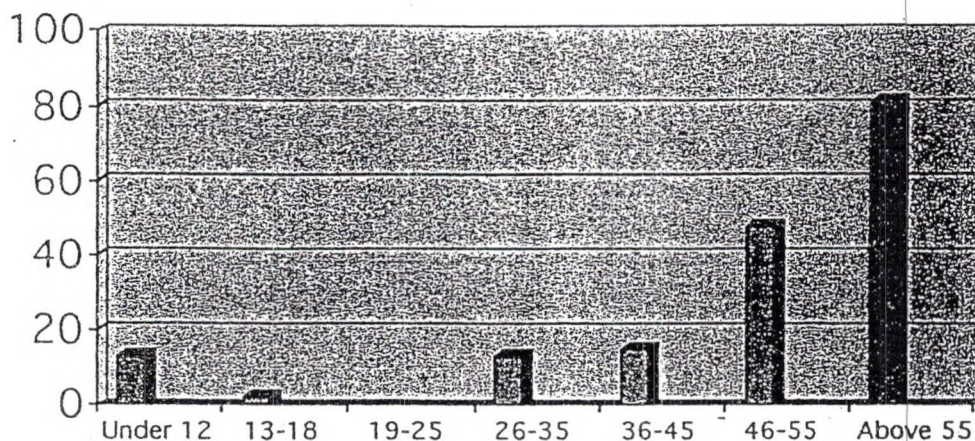
There are other speakers of Sioux languages outside of the Spirit Lake Tribe. Due to isolation imposed by both geographic and political constraints; however, the languages have developed somewhat differently on the various reservation; with the Dakota dialect as it is spoken on our reservation not exactly replicated anywhere else in the world.

The reservation language survey, interviews and review of archival data (e.g., council minutes) are the most recent in an on-going community effort to strengthen the Dakota language. In January, 1998, a community forum on language preservation was held, coordinated by an outside facilitator from the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks. This meeting revealed strong support for the pursuit of a language preservation program and encouraged the team to bring this issue to the tribal council. In March, 1998 the Spirit Lake Tribal Council discussed the issue of language preservation as a priority for maintenance of our tribal culture and identity, and passed a resolution directing the tribal college to pursue funding for a language preservation program. As a result of the efforts of the past year, the Tribal Council passed a second resolution (See Appendix B) directing all agencies under its authority to engage in and report on efforts in support of language preservation. This cooperation is to include, but not limited to, released time of personnel for volunteer and consulting to the Dakota Ia Unspepi program, accessibility for reproduction of historical documents, and air time on the reservation radio station.

#### Previous language programs

The language preservation efforts of the community are still in an early stage. Dakota Wounspe made the first efforts to electronically record the language in a rudimentary preservation effort. Cassette tapes were made of tribal elders speaking the language, and lesson plans developed for cultural activities. For four years, the Dakota Wounspe program, funded by the Casey Foundation provided Cultural Specialists to the tribal school. These native speakers of Dakota served as resource specialists to the classroom teachers, using lesson plans developed by the Wounspe staff to teach cultural activities in the classroom. When the funding for the original Wounspe program ended, in 1998, the efforts to preserve the language on print and electronic media were halted. As a result of these initial efforts, and community support for Dakota instruction, Dakota language was introduced in the tribal school, using some of the resources developed by this first program. These efforts have proven fruitful as can be seen in Figure 3

% Who Speak Dakota "A Lot" By Age Group



Dakota speakers clearly decline by age group until the middle school years, where a resurgence of language usage can be seen. This is a direct result of the Tate Topa School program, in which daily classes in Dakota are provided by two bilingual teachers. Selection of teachers was made based on interviews conducted in Dakota by a committee of tribal elders, all of whom were fluent Dakota speakers.

There is not a significant drop in language speakers in the 26-35 year age group; the population which comprises the majority of Cankdeska Cikana Community College students. The college offers a two-year curriculum; one year of Dakota language and one year of Conversational Dakota. A special topics course in Dakota language is also available. These are very popular courses, as evidenced by both annual enrollment and teaching evaluations, and it appears from the figure above that they may be playing a role in at least slowing the decline of Dakota usage.

While both programs offer good quality instruction in Dakota, the level is similar to that taught in other school and college language programs. That is, students learn some vocabulary and grammar, but their opportunities to speak the language outside of the classroom is limited, and thus so is its general use. Over the summer, without the opportunity to use the language, much of the gains students make in school are lost. Further, relying as they do on a few good teachers, the existing programs reach only a small percentage of those who are interested in learning the language.



## 2. GOALS & AVAILABLE RESOURCES

### A. LONG-RANGE GOALS & STRATEGIES

**Goal #1:** To develop a Language Immersion Program for the families of the Spirit Lake Nation.

**Goal #2:** To expand the available pool of Dakota speakers who can act as language instructors.

**Goal #3:** To develop print and electronic media resources in support of efforts to promote Dakota language usage.

#### Relation of Spirit Lake Tribal community goals to the proposed project

Support for the project goals in the community is evident from three sources.

First, the survey described in detail above, revealed a desire of the overwhelming majority (85%) of tribal members to gain or improve knowledge of the Dakota language. When asked what methods would be most promising in increasing the usage of Dakota language on the reservation (summarized in Table 4), the two areas most favored by participants were Early Head Start and college classes. (Dakota language classes in the schools were not included as an option, because the reservation already has these classes, which are discussed in the section on previous language programs). Respondents were favorably impressed with the concept of transmission of the language in the traditional manner, i.e., from elders to children through storytelling and conversation.

Table 4

What do you think would encourage people on this Reservation to learn the Dakota language? (Could choose more than one)

<i>Method</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Small DL discussion groups in each district</i>	175	55
<i>Elders speaking Dakota in Head Start classes</i>	189	59
<i>Tribally developed Dakota CD's for use in classes</i>	179	56
<i>Tribally developed Dakota language cassettes for sale</i>	153	48
<i>College classes at CCCC</i>	199	62
<i>Lessons or stories on KABU</i>	138	43

Second, support from formal agencies is evident, especially the tribal college Board of Regents and Tribal Council. The Council has passed two resolutions in support of the language preservation project. In 1998, the college was directed to pursue funding for



language preservation with the council going on record recognizing the importance of maintaining our Dakota language. The March 2000 resolution states,

*Based on the needs assessment conducted by Cankdeska Cikana Community College, a tribally-chartered institution operating under the authority of the Tribal Council, it is apparent that there is a demand in the community for action to maintain Dakota language as a living, spoken force for cultural and family support on the Spirit Lake Reservation.*

Further, this resolution directed all agencies under tribal authority to cooperate in language preservation efforts. This cooperation was to include, but not be limited to, release time for employees to act as volunteers or consultants, dissemination of publicity information, and usage of facilities. Tangible support has been received to date in the form of assistance in distribution of surveys by the council's administrative assistant, and review of the proposal by the tribal chair. (Copies of resolutions are in Appendix B.)

The mission statement below was voted on by the Board of Regents of Cankdeska Cikana Community College in 1993 and endorsed by the tribal council. (The Board is appointed by the tribal council, with one representative from each of the four districts).

"The mission of Cankdeska Cikana Community College is to provide comprehensive post-secondary education which addresses both traditional and contemporary aspects of learning... In support of its mission, the college strives for the following :

1. To develop the human resources of the Spirit Lake Nation to meet its overall manpower needs.
2. To preserve Sioux language and Dakota heritage through the academic curriculum.
- 3 To provide the first two years of academic education for those students who wish to pursue a four-year degree, and
- 4,. To provide quality vocational education appropriate to student needs and goals."

As a tribally-chartered educational institution, Cankdeska Cikana is the logical entity to pursue efforts to teach and preserve the language, as part of a mission it has been charged by the tribe and community.

Third, in an analysis of the transcripts of the 30 intensive interviews with Spirit Lake Tribal members (conducted between November, 1999 and March, 2000) there was a striking degree of consensus in both depth of support for the language and preferred strategies. The following excerpts from these transcripts allow our tribal members to speak for themselves. Although these individuals represent a twenty-year age span, both genders and education ranging from less than high school to college graduates, they express very similar sentiments.

We need to encourage the people to use the language in real daily situations. Need to see the language alive, see people using it. Around here, children only see the language when someone dies, a prayer at a funeral, a prayer at a public meeting. (Ms A, mid-fifties, college graduate, moderately fluent in Dakota.)

Language preservation implies that elders are going to be speaking into tapes for someone to come back and listen to years from now after we are all dead. What we are interested in is promoting is language for our own people, language that is alive! (Ms. B., mid-fifties, high school graduate, fluent Dakota speaker.)

Focus on education which combines elders with at-risk children and youth. Educate students in the traditional part of it, songs, prayers, storytelling. (Ms. C, age 35)

(Mr. D., is in his mid-forties, and works closely with the tribal bison program.) One way of teaching the language would be to include elders and young people involved in a traditional buffalo kill. Educating students about killing the animals in a spiritual way. Have to have language and songs present to do a kill. That's part of teaching the language. High school kids brought in the kills, learn some values, behavior, language, songs. Include the elders as a central part. These are usually the ones who have the language, too.

Nothing would make me happier right now than to be able to converse in Dakota with the elders and other Indians. And I believe that most Indians who are really proud of who they are feel the same way. Secondly, I believe it what make us unique as a race. How can we say we're Dakota and not be able to speak the language? I remember when I was a kid and other people came to visit my mom. When they started visiting they would revert back to who they really were, Dakotas, not some people they had to be to get by in the white man's world, and all they spoke was Dakota. (Male, 49, college graduate).

How the goal(s) fit within the context of the current language status

To address the rapid decline in Dakota fluency, a multi-pronged approach is necessary, which initially relies heavily on the elder tribal members, development of a cadre of individuals capable of teaching Dakota, and preservation of Dakota resources on electronic media. As one tribal expert commented in the needs assessment interview, "Every time I attend a wake for one of our elders, I see our language dying a little more."

At all age levels from early childhood through middle age, the tribal membership expressed a desire for greater fluency, thus the goals address issues across diverse age ranges. Particularly important to the tribe is the revitalization of the language as a living entity within the community. We have limited interest in the preservation of our language in archives for usage by scholars and anthropologists. The major tribal priority is the vitality of Dakota language in the lives of our people. Toward this end, our goals are directed at increasing exposure to children and adults in a variety of formats in their daily lives. These formats range from story hour for the very young to radio programs aimed at the general community and college classes attended by adults.

In the current status, exposure to the language is primarily through a small pool of fluent speakers, predominantly elders, who are called upon repeatedly to offer prayers, perform opening ceremonies and other traditional activities. As we progress through this three-year program and beyond, an increase in fluency among early childhood educators and other interested adults will expand the available pool of speakers and instructors. It will also enlarge the number of situations in which the language is used.



Resources available to support the project

A wealth of resources are arrayed to assist in the language preservation project, given the tribal and community endorsement of its significance. The organizations that will provide support and types of tangible resources to be provided are described below.

VALERIE MERRICK MEMORIAL LIBRARY will provide facilities within the library, including facilities for story hour, and storage space, to house the resource collection. The librarian, Myrna Demarce, is an enrolled member with a degree in library science and twenty years of experience as a librarian. She is currently administering a major grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Sciences. Ms. Demarce will assist the project director in selection of materials in Dakota, cataloguing and archiving; 10% of her time is provided as an in-kind contribution from the college and Spirit Lake Nation.

CANKDESKA CIKANA COMMUNITY COLLEGE The Dakota Language project will be housed in the main campus building at Fort Totten, North Dakota. Facilities will include space designated for sole use of the project, a total of 600 square feet for the Project Director's office and a reception area, with standard office furniture and Internet connections. Other space at the college, including classrooms, workshop space, mentor areas and computer labs will be made available to the project as necessary. Most significantly, the college has recently completed the acquisition of a private museum of Sioux books, documents and artifacts. This collection will be housed in a new building (construction to be completed July, 2000) and made available for primary use by the Dakota Ia Unspepi Project. Equipment available for project use, as needed, will include the computers in the two computer labs (twenty, networked personal computers and printers in each lab, all with ethernet connections to the Internet), copy machine and fax machine. Transportation by college- owned vehicles will be provided for elders to the program sites and for cultural activity field trips. Personnel assistance will include supervision by the Academic Dean (.10 FTE), a Computer Specialist (.10 FTE) for maintenance and installation of project hardware and software and technical assistance with multimedia usage, and review of quarterly evaluation reports by the President and Administrative Council (.03 FTE \*3). As further support for the project, any staff member who wishes will receive paid educational leave to attend project classes

SCHOOLS Tate Topa Tribal School, Four Winds High School and Warwick High School will provide meeting space and time during regularly scheduled staff meetings will be provided to solicit input from teachers and administrators regarding the Dakota immersion curriculum. The school will also distribute to students notices for project publicity of activities and give staff paid educational leave to attend project classes.

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS Head Start, Early Head Start and Little Hoop Day Care will make available to the project classroom space for language activities, provide transportation for students to cultural activities and give staff paid educational leave to attend project classes.



OTHER COMMUNITY AGENCIES The Tribal Chairman has committed the assistance from the Tribal programs as is necessary for the success of the project. Relevant tribal programs include; Tribal Elderly Programs, Youth Drug and Alcohol Programs, and three tribal businesses, Dakota Tribal Industries, Sioux Manufacturing Corporation and Spirit Lake Casino, which are the largest employers on the reservation. The project anticipates these services to include activities primarily in the dissemination of information to the community, referrals of potential participants, provision of paid leave from employment for Dakota speakers to act as language facilitators at project events. Dissemination includes space to display posters, booths at the Tribal headquarters, using Tribal agencies to distribute flyers and publication of information in agency newsletters in both Dakota and English. The provision of language facilitators is a crucial benefit to the project from these programs, as it will increase the number and diversity of individuals speaking Dakota in the public arena. Speakers provided by the tribal elderly program for our Dakota Culture enrichment courses offer unique insights into tribal history, dating back to the days when youth were sent off to boarding schools to become “civilized”.

#### MISSION STATEMENT

*Akiktana wicoie unkdakinipi kte kin wana ahakehci unhinajinpi. Ecuunkunpi sni kinhan, Dakota wicoie kin tokihpeunkiyapi kta. Dakota iapi wica conanapi, ka tuwena wayapi tipi ed u ka wakan heza kin Dakota iapi kin unspe wicakiya kta oecun tehika. Matawenasni tka, kan iwahuni kinhan iknuhan tuwena kici Dakota iwaye kte sni, he icantesdiya waun kta. Dakota wicoie kin unkdusnapi kinhan, Dakota oyate wana unsotap kta ye.*

We are now making our last stand to save our Dakota language, should we fail, our language will be lost forever. There are not many language speakers left, let alone those that will come into the classroom and teach Dakota to the children.

Do not consider who I am, for I am nobody. I am only a person who will be very lonely in my old age, with no one to speak to in my Dakota language. If our language is allowed to die, so will our Dakota people as I have known them.

### 3. Project Objectives, Approach and Activities

#### Language preservation strategies

Each strategy is described in detail below. Following this narrative section, objective worksopes are presented, showing how the activities of each of these strategies fits within the project goals and objectives. This section concludes with a timeline of the tasks, identified by each of the three goals. Strategies used by the project focus on the natural development of language, and thus emphasize conversation, storytelling and adult-child interaction at the younger age levels, particularly using tribal elders in the classroom. The project also aims to provide sufficient curriculum materials, historical archives and print and electronic media for usage by the community to support the revitalization of Dakota as a language for use in study, research, commerce, government and daily life.

The project will coordinate four, related strategies for language preservation, all of which will receive significant support from other agencies, including the public library, tribal college, and reservation radio station (KABU).

#### STRATEGY # 1: Kumsi (Grandmother) Language Learning Program.

Based on the natural process of language learning, this strategy brings elder tribal members to the ten early childhood program sites to 'teach' Dakota language through storytelling, reading books to children and conversation. The project will provide each of the ten sites funding for one individual, two hours per day. Project funds will also provide books, CD-ROMs and videos. In consideration of the young age of the children, the Total Physical Response method will be used heavily. For example, the elder will say, "Sit down", then she/he will sit down and so will the children. Extensive use will be made of songs, stories and activities which combine language and movement.

Three types of activities will be emphasized throughout the program. First, activities which involve parents, as either aides, audience or partners will be incorporated throughout the curriculum. Children will put on a short play or talent show in Dakota at the end of the session. (The exact format will be decided by the elder, children and teachers at each center.) Parents will be asked to assist their children in learning lines for the performance, and, of course, to attend as an appreciative audience. Simple homework assignments will be sent home with the children, e.g.

*Nicinca kin okiya.*

*Taku sa wanji iyeya, wowapi kin ed askabya. Taku sa wanji iyeya ya oyakihisni kinhan, wowapi kin sa ya.*

(Parents,

PLEASE HELP YOUR CHILD WITH THIS Find something that is RED and tape it on this page. If you cannot find anything RED, paint or color the page RED. Thank you.)

Second, activities which allow children to learn language naturally will be emphasized, natural both in the sense as in the normal course of language development, and in the natural environment which is so much a part of Dakota history and culture.



Elders, assisted by classroom teachers, will take children on walks in the surrounding woods, around the lake, and in the prairie. During these walks they will engage in 'labeling' the children's experiences and observations, e.g., "*Wayanka nato! Zizica watokda wan. Wayanka nato! Wahca gitka e ya.*" (Look! That is a wild turkey. Look! There are pink flowers.)

Third, activities will teach knowledge of the children's culture. They will visit the Valerie Merrick Library Native American collection, and other repositories of cultural artifacts on the reservation (to be chosen by the individual elder, teachers, children, and their families).

The program will provide a coordinated approach of classroom and outside activities, both at home and on field trips. The three types of activities are not mutually exclusive, but rather, intended to complement and frequently overlap one another. A further important aspect of the program is that while the project staff will be available for assistance with materials, program design and general guidelines for the program, there is substantial allowance for individual freedom and creativity of the elders, teachers, children and parents.

#### STRATEGY # 2: Tanyan Dakota (Teach the speakers)

*Tanyan Dakota iapi kin hena Dakota iapi yawapi ka, owapi unspe wicakiyapi kta*. (Teach the fluent speakers to read and write Dakota so there will be more Dakota language teachers.) The Project Director will teach a class in Dakota for Teaching each of the three semesters (Fall, Spring and Summer). The course will include activities, lesson plans and resources for teaching Dakota in classrooms at all levels from early childhood through high school. Fluent speakers of Dakota will be actively recruited for this program, through personal invitation, and provision of transportation to and from the classes. All early childhood instructors will be able to use paid educational leave time to attend these classes. The college has agreed to fund an instructor for three years after the end of grant funding.

As one of their course assignments, students will be required to write a column for the Spirit Lake Reservation newspaper, notes home to parents, the Cankdeska Cikana Community College newspaper or other community publication in both Dakota and English. Each student will also be required to record a Public Service Announcement in both Dakota and English for a local non-profit, to be broadcast over the reservation radio station. A Dakota website will be designed by the college Technology Specialist, and hosted on the CCCC server to share materials developed in the course. (See letters of commitment from college president and program directors.)

#### STRATEGY # 3: Dakota iapi Okodakiciye (Dakota language society)

Based on the substantial evidence from teachers of foreign languages, that classroom learning alone is not sufficient to develop fluency, the project will sponsor activities in which Dakota language is spoken, read and written. The project director and curriculum specialist will recruit members and serve as advisors to these programs, providing assistance with scheduling facilities, selecting materials and activities and loaning equipment, e.g., TV, VCRs. These activities will include publication of a weekly



column in the reservation newspaper, an hourly radio show, a Dakota website and other activities decided by members of the society. (See letter of commitment from KABU, reservation radio station to provide technical assistance, facilities and air time.)

#### STRATEGY #4: Dakota Language Resource Library

The only current, written and electronic materials in the dialect of Dakota as used on the Spirit Lake Reservation were developed under a previous grant (the Dakota Wounspe project). Historic documents do exist, some of which are preserved in the Valerie Merrick Library archives, and others are housed at collections in the reservation communities of Fort Totten and St. Michael. Also, other tribes have produced some textbooks, children's books and other resources in Dakota that can be used as is or adapted for local use. The Dakota Advisory Council, comprised of elders, other fluent Dakota speakers and educators, in collaboration with the project staff, will review existing resources and make purchases based on priority needs. Where resources are not available, the project will support local artists and writers in producing:

- children's storybooks in Dakota, using the folktales and oral history dictated by tribal elders,
- a children's dictionary,
- children's books of nursery rhymes and original stories in Dakota,
- videotapes and cassettes of traditional and contemporary songs in Dakota,
- teachers' guides to accompany materials,
- reproductions of historic documents, for community use, and
- CD-ROMs which include stories, music and photographs.

(See letters of commitment from the Valerie Merrick Library agreeing to allow the project access to their archives and technical assistance.)

To maintain and extend this resource library, additional funds will be sought from organizations which have previously supported similar projects on the reservation, including the Institute of Museum and Library Sciences, Phillip Morris and Kellogg Foundations. Funding will also be sought from new sources, e.g., the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The objective worksopes on the following pages show how these strategies support the goals and objectives of the Dakota Ia Unspepi project.

**Goal 1: To develop a Language Immersion Program for the families of the Spirit Lake Nation.**

Objective I: Within three months CCCC will establish a Dakota Language Advisory Committee to obtain program input. This will be accomplished through community meetings.

Activity: Schedule Dakota Language Advisory Committee meetings to select potential members and to determine primary functions.

Objective II: By the end of the sixth month, the Dakota Language Advisory Committee will design an immersion program by utilizing fluent speakers in the planning process.

Activities:

1. The Dakota Language Advisory Committee will identify and recruit resource people (fluent speakers) and determine availability.
2. The Dakota Language Advisory Committee will review successful language immersion programs from other tribes.
1. The Dakota Language Advisory Committee will involve fluent speakers in designing language immersion activities specific to Spirit Lake families.

Objective # III: To offer language experiential learning ten hours per week for a total of 300 children in the early childhood programs by the end of the three-year grant period.

Activities:

- A. The Project Director, Lorraine Greybear, will assist the elders with selection of materials and activities, and contract for local production of materials needed, e.g., coloring books, illustrated children's stories
- B. Ms. Greybear will provide hands-on training in the use of language teaching methods.
- C. The Dakota Advisory Council, in collaboration with the Project Director and curriculum specialist, will develop a teaching manual for early childhood activities.
- D. A ten-week pilot will be conducted the first year.
- E. In year two, elders and project administrative staff will conduct two weeks of program revisions and an eighteen-week program.
- F. In year three, a twenty-week program will be offered.

**Goal #2: To expand the available pool of Dakota speakers who can act as language instructors.**

**Objective 1: To increase the available pool of individuals who are both fluent in Dakota language and capable of teaching in early childhood or elementary classrooms from the current four to twenty by the end of the grant period.**

Activities:

- A. Recruit students from early childhood programs and by direct invitation to speakers with conversational Dakota skills.
- B. Offer Dakota for Teachers class three semesters per year, including summer.
- C. Submit at least one student article or public service announcement per week to reservation media (e.g., newspaper or radio).
- D. Establish and maintain website for sharing course materials.

**Objective 2: To increase the frequency and diversity of exposure to Dakota language from ceremonial use and 5% of tribal council business to 5-10% of all public correspondence on the Spirit Lake Reservation.**

Activities:

- A. Recruit *Dakota iapi Okodakiciye* (Dakota Language Society) members.
- B. Write society by-laws, elect board.
- ←C. Hold weekly discussion groups in Dakota language —
- D. Publish weekly newspaper column, with assistance from students in Dakota language classes at CCCC.
- E. Offer weekly Dakota language radio program.
- F. Establish and maintain website in Dakota, linked to course web page.



**Goal # 3: To develop print and electronic media resources in support of efforts to promote Dakota language usage.**

**Objective # 1: To establish a library of Dakota language resources, to be maintained by and supplemented by funding from philanthropic organizations and the tribal administration.**

Activities:

- A. Consult with elders and local teachers to prioritize needs for materials.
- B. Review, select and order existing Dakota resources.
2. Contract with local artists and authors to produce new children's materials in Dakota, to meet needs identified by the Advisory Council.
3. Catalog and archive materials.
4. Establish and maintain Resource Library website
5. Apply for funding to supplement holdings and continue maintenance after the end of the grant period.

APPENDIX K  
“SPIRIT LAKE TRIBE RESOLUTION  
NO. A05-00-078”

**SPIRIT LAKE TRIBE  
RESOLUTION NO. A05-00-078**

**WHEREAS,** the Spirit Lake Tribe of Indians is a federally recognized Indian Tribe acting under a revised Constitution date May 5, 1960, approved by the Acting Commissioner, Bureau of Indian Affairs, July 14, 1961, and as subsequently amended which amendments were approved by the Commissioner, Bureau of Indian Affairs; and August 19, 1996; and

**WHEREAS,** the Constitution of the Spirit Lake Tribes generally authorizes and empowers the Spirit Lake Tribal Council to engage in activities on behalf of and in the interest of the welfare and benefit of the Tribe and of the enrolled members thereof, and

**WHEREAS,** it is recognized that language is an integral part of our culture, our traditions and our tribal identity.

**WHEREAS,** it is evident that the current status, with limited opportunities for exposure to the language, and a small, aging population of fluent speakers presents a threat to the continuing vitality of the Dakota language.

**WHEREAS,** based on the needs assessment conducted by Cankdeska Cikana Community College, a tribally-chartered institution operating under the authority of the Tribal Council, it is apparent that there is a demand in the community for action to maintain Dakota language as a living, spoken force for cultural and family support on the Spirit Lake Reservation.

**WHEREAS,** it is further recognized that A COMMUNITY/RESERVATION WIDE effort should be directed toward revitalization, AND maintaining OUR Dakota language SO THAT OUR LANGUAGE SHOULD/WILL BE spoken by ALL SPIRIT LAKE tribal members... rather than mere preservation for the interest of anthropologists and historians. Given this recognition, the need is clear for a program which is administered by a tribal entity, led by and for Native Americans.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,** that the Spirit Lake Tribal Council therefore directs Cankdeska Cikana Community College to submit to the Administration on Native Americans the grant proposal for the Dakota language program.

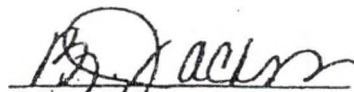


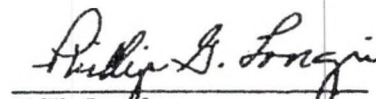
PAGE 2  
SPIRIT LAKE TRIBE  
RESOLUTION NO. A05-00-078.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, in the interest of preserving the Dakota language, the Tribal Council further directs those agencies within its jurisdiction, including but not limited to the Valerie Merrick Memorial Library, Tate Topa Tribal School and all early childhood programs to cooperate to the full extent possible in the success of the activities specified in this proposal for preservation of the Dakota language. This cooperation should include, but is not limited to, shared use of facilities and equipment, educational leave for employee to attend activities, release time for employees to participate in activities as speakers, technical or cultural advisors, and publication of announcements and articles in agencies.

CERTIFICATION

I, the undersigned as Secretary-Treasurer of the Tribal Council, do hereby certify that the Tribal Council is composed of six (6) members of whom six (4) were present, constituting a quorum for a Special Meeting duly called and convened on this 18<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2000, and approved this resolution by an affirmative vote of three (3) in favor, none (0) opposed, none (0) abstaining, and two (2) absent. (The Secretary-Treasurer does not vote and the Chairman votes only in case of a tie.)

  
Barbara Jackson,  
Recording Secretary

  
Phillip Longie,  
Tribal Chairman

APPENDIX L

*KUNSI/UNKANA TEACHER MANUALS. DAKOTA IA USPEPIKTA  
FOR MNI WAKAN OYATE SPIRIT LAKE NATION HEAD START 2001.*

TITLE PAGE, WELCOME, SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THE

KUNSI/UNKANA TEACHER MANUALS,

WABKUSKAKA DAKOTA IA SKANPI 1-4, TWO PAGES.

# **KUNSI/UNKANA TEACHER MANUALS**

**Dakota la Unspepikta  
For  
MNI WAKAN OYATE  
Spirit Lake Nation  
HEAD START  
2001**



## **WELCOME**

THANK YOU FOR COMING TO TEACH THE CHILDREN OF THE MNI WAKAN OYATE. THANK YOU FOR PASSING ON OUR LANGUAGE TO THE FUTURE GENERATIONS.

**These Kungsi/Unkana Teacher Manuals are designed to encourage language immersion through the Dakota la Skanpi lesson plans. These fourteen Manuals are designed to comply with the Head Start curriculum and contain the following subjects:**

**Animals**

**Classroom Furnishings**

**Clothes**

**Colors**

**Food**

**Greetings**

**Numbers**

**Parts of the Body**

**Shapes**

**Songs**

**Stories**

**Table Place Setting**

**Weather**

**Wamakaskan**

**Wayawa Tipi Ikicanye**

**Heyake**

**Owapi**

**Woyute**

**Hinhana waste**

**Woyawa**

**Wicatacan**

**Okage**

**Odowan**

**Ohunkakan, Wo oyake**

**Waksica Egdepi**

**Anpetu Tokeca**

## **Suggestions for Using the Kungsi/Unkani Teacher Manuals**

**You may use any Dakota la Skanpi that you like. If you would like some materials for your la Skanpi, you may ask the Head Start Teachers to help with providing pictures or items that the children have colored or made.**

**You do not have to use any of the Dakota la Skanpi contained in the Kungsi/Unkani Teacher Manuals. You may use your own ideas and make up your own Dakota la Skanpi. You are grandparents. The best way for children to learn the Dakota Language is the same way you learned the language, by speaking and using it. The way you learned your Dakota Language at home now has a fancy name, language immersion.**

**If you make up your own Dakota la Skanpi, please share them with us at the Language Preservation Program.**

## **Wabduskada**

**Insects are animals too! The children may see one in the classroom or outside when they are playing or looking out the window.**

### **Dakota Ia Skanpi 1**

**When the children see an insect, say the name in Dakota. Make sure the children know what you are naming. Have the children repeat the name until they get it right or are pretty close. You may have the children all say the name. You may call on individual children.**

### **Dakota Ia Skanpi 2**

**The children can learn to make the sound of an insect or imitate the movements of the insect.**

### **Dakota Ia Skanpi 3**

**You can ask the teachers to have the children draw a picture of the insect. If they think of their own insect, that's okay too! If you are not sure what the insect is or what the child is saying, ask the Teacher.**



# **Wabduskada**

## **Dakota la Skanpi 4**

**Following are some pictures of insects that the children might see. Say the name of the insect in Dakota. Have the children name the insect. Have the children repeat the name until they get it right or are pretty close. You may have the children all say the name. You may call on individual children.**

**Capunka**

**Mosquito**

**Honagina**

**Housefly**

**Unktomi**

**Spider**

**Kimimina**

**Butterfly**

**Tahmuga**

**Bee**

**Taskakpa**

**Wood tick**

**Tajuska**

**Ant**

**Wabduska**

**Worm**

**Wabduska hinsmsma**

**Caterpillar**

**Add your own bugs!**

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