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Language and Identity in the Barbareño Chumash Language Community

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by

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To *kiynohnonočwaš*, my ancestors and all ancestors of the Barbareño Chumash people. With much gratitude for their perseverance and passing on to us the great gift of language, and all that is contained therein.

ABSTRACT

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by

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Language revitalization in indigenous communities has been examined from a variety of perspectives in recent decades. Many of the communities focused on in the literature have substantial populations and access to ample resources. Less numerous are studies of small and fractured communities with little access to resources. This study focuses on one such community, the Barbareño Chumash community in Santa Barbara County, California, which still experiences the effects of severe language shift brought about by colonization. This study examines one symptom of language shift in this community and potential causes, focusing on beliefs about identity and the ancestral language held by members of this community. Why do community members choose to engage with the ancestral language? How do deeply-held beliefs about identity and language inform their decisions to engage with the language? This study finds that the role of passing down lived narratives within families can act as a means for advancing engagement with the ancestral language, even as it enables connections to healing from historical trauma in the community.
Keywords: language revitalization, identity, historical trauma, language shift

1 Introduction

The Barbareño Chumash language is in great danger: the last first language speaker died decades ago, and only a few community members have knowledge of the language or even use it on a daily basis. If this situation continues, the language will be lost forever in our community. This study focuses on one symptom of language loss in our community and potential factors underlying this symptom.

Two research questions guide this study: How do Barbareño Chumash community member beliefs regarding their Chumash identity affect their engagement with the ancestral language? How do community member beliefs about the role of the ancestral language in their lives affect their engagement with the language? These questions presuppose the idea that beliefs about identity and the value of the ancestral language serve as motivators to action. In turn, this study is embedded within and motivated by a larger question: How can this research project reverse the ongoing and deeply-felt effects of language shift and benefit this community?

Based on casual observations of members of this community throughout my life, I propose that negative encounters with the dominant society experienced by community members are passed down to succeeding generations within families as shaped narratives. These narratives highlight negative lived experiences with European colonial structures, affecting community member beliefs about their Chumash identity and the ancestral language. These beliefs become reasons community members choose not to engage with the ancestral language; the language symbolizes their Chumash heritage and history and engaging with it reopens old wounds brought about by colonization. Engagement with

language marks the extent to which community members value the language even as it is a salient expression of their Chumash identity.

This report is organized as follows: In Section 2, I describe the Barbareño Chumash community, including relevant aspects of its history and the status of the contemporary community. In Section 3, I present the theoretical background against which the study is located, including references to identity within the context of language and culture, language revitalization, and language ideologies. In Section 4, I describe the methodology used. Section 5 contains a description of the analysis of collected interview data. In section 6, I present the results of my analysis. Section 7 contains the conclusion.

2 The Barbareño Chumash language community

The Barbareño Chumash language community in Santa Barbara County, California, forms the context for the study. This community faces multiple challenges as it seeks to revitalize the ancestral language. The study expands our knowledge of beliefs held by members of this community and members of other small and fragmented Native communities pushed to the brink of destruction by colonization.

2.1 Positioning myself

I am a member of this community. In 2017, I organized a Barbareño Chumash language class for community members. I still hesitate to consider myself a “teacher” of the

language, because I am still learning as much as any of the students in the class. The experience of organizing these classes led to this study, because I questioned why so few community members chose to join the class and study the language. I hope that what is learned will bring the magic of the ancestral language back to the community.

2.2 Setting the physical context

The areas surrounding the Santa Barbara Channel in present-day southern California, traditionally considered the "core of Chumash territory", have been occupied by humans for at least 11,000 years (Erlandson 1998: 477). The homelands of the Barbareño Chumash people lie in the center of this area (see map below).

MAP 39. Chumash languages and mission dialects.

(Golla 2011: 194)

2.3 The language

The ancestral language of the Barbareño Chumash community is known by various names; I will refer to it using the exonym, “Barbareño Chumash”. It is a member of the Chumashan language family, considered unrelated to any other known language family (Golla 2011). There are six distinct languages which the Chumash people themselves recognized (Klar 1977).

2.4 The California experience

The Barbareño Chumash community experienced harsh colonization under Spanish, Mexican, and American governance, and today has few tangible resources. In this way, it is similar to other Native communities in coastal areas of southern and central California. Secrest (2003) characterizes the experience of many Native communities in California: “…in California, the bloodiest drama in the settlement of the West took place, a brutal disruption and destruction so devastating that by the 1870s many Native groups were extinct” (xi). Community languages fared no better. Lowe & Walsh (2009) summarize this experience by stating that Native communities in California experienced early settlement and then went through a dramatic decline in use and awareness of their languages. This decline continues to this day in an ongoing process known as language shift.

2.5 Contact and loss

The Barbareño Chumash first encountered Europeans when Juan Cabrillo explored the California coast in 1542, and extended colonization by the Spanish began in 1769 (Johnson 1986). From then until 1834, the Barbareño Chumash people, like almost all Native populations of present-day central and southern California, entered the Spanish missions (Larson et. al. 1994). During this time, it is widely agreed that "over 90% of the Chumash perished from foreign diseases, violence, and neglect" (Erlandson 1998: 478). Loss of life was accompanied by loss of language, culture and way of life.

Secularization of the Mission system began in the early 1830s, whereupon some Barbareño Chumash residents at the Santa Barbara Mission chose to work in surrounding communities while others moved to distant areas of California (Johnson 1993). Others moved to *Kaswa'a* (also known as "*Cieneguitas*"), one of the few Native villages in the area and which became our reservation, complete with Indian agent (Schaaf 1981). By 1886, the land at Kaswa'a had been sold out from under the residents and the last were forced from their homes (Forsyth 1961 and Rogers 1929, cited in Johnson 1993). Today, our community is still landless and mostly unrecognized by government and surrounding communities. Loss of recognition deeply affects our community's access to resources and the influence of our voice in matters that directly affect our community.

2.6 New beginnings: Defining the community

In 2014, representatives of families who lived at Kaswa'a formed a tribal organization known as the Barbareño Band of Chumash Indians to protect our ancestral

lands, revitalize our culture, and be the voice of our people. Membership criteria is based on links to documented Chumash ancestors and villages (see Appendix A: Barbareño Band of Chumash Indians Membership Criteria). Our community recognizes that ancestors from these villages who entered the Mission, came to speak a variety of Chumash that came to be associated with Mission Santa Barbara. As language is often an indicator of group membership (Bekker 2019), this connection with what became known as Barbareño Chumash is a major feature of identification for this community. Categorization of Chumash languages constitutes a major distinction between the different Chumash tribal groups. This identifying aspect of language draws upon the idea of "social engagement", engendered by the idea that the community "is defined simultaneously by its membership and by the practice in which that membership engages" (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 1992: 490). This concept is summed up by the "community of practice", composed of people who learn together while engaged in a common task and which consists of three elements: "the domain", "the community" and "the practice" (Wenger 2011: 1-2). In our community, common tasks include cultural practices expressed through the language of basket-weaving and the study of traditional plants. It also includes the role of language in traditional stories.

Ahler (2017) refers to the blending of historical language use with cultural practices as "intertextual relationships to past uses of language and to the sociocultural knowledge which surrounds those past uses" (2017: 40). Language usage in our community combines shared history and cultural practices deeply intertwined with kinship relations. Today, language usage includes learning and speaking it with community members in a formal class, sharing it with family members in the home, and using it for greetings and basic communication with other community members.

The language can sometimes seem separate from the lives of community members due to the history of separation from it, but it also lies at the heart of community. This complex relationship indicating a fluid and changing nature is evoked by post-modern conceptions of community in which members can choose their level and direction of affiliation to a community which is constantly being reconfigured (Canagarajah 2012). Individual members are constantly repositioning themselves with respect to language and identity set against the moving backdrop of society and culture (Darquennes et. al. 2019). This theorizing of community is reflected in the degree to which members identify with our community even as they interact with other social groups in their lives. The defining characteristics of shared kinship ties, a common history, and engagement with the Barbareño Chumash language are enduring connections maintained to keep the community connected. However, these connections are not guaranteed to continue indefinitely; members must be aware of and consciously nourish them so that the dynamic relationship of member to community to language can endure. In this way, the language community is sustained by these individual choices.

3 Theoretical Foundations of this study

Community members today are still faced with individual decisions regarding language usage. How does the choice to continue using the ancestral language impact how cultural practices, knowledge of the people's history contained in stories, and identity as Chumash are maintained?

3.1 Choosing language, or not

Re-examining language ideologies in their historical context can help to understand these choices members make. Kroskrity (2018) illuminates the issue by pointing out, "some of the most relevant, yet often neglected, contexts and practices are the community's language ideologies about and actual practices regarding multilingualism" (2018: 2). These ideologies exist in a complex blend overlaid with social and cultural factors. Riley (2011) describes this blend as the power of "specific codes" related to the social and economic class of speakers and how beliefs about the dominant language contribute both to "the demise of minority languages" and the marginalization of speakers (2011: 499). It is likely that these "codes" vis-à-vis the dominant language of Spanish began to materialize immediately after sustained contact with the Spanish in 1769 and accelerated in the following years. After secularization of the mission system in the 1830s, the "codes" formed a formidable barrier for community members to continue using and speaking the language; the barrier still exists today. Within the context of choosing to abandon intergenerational language transmission, Riley (2011) observes:

> Language ideologies frequently shape the socialization practices that forge the social contract between linguistic forms and meanings in ways that carry political load, one of the most obvious types being the social evaluation of the forms themselves as well as the sociocultural norms about who has the right to acquire and use them. (Riley 2011: 493).

Bucholtz & Hall (2004) state that language users who contest prevailing language norms are important to understanding the idea of "agency" in which speakers "creatively respond to and interrogate social constraints they cannot disregard or dismantle" (2004: 373). Examples

in this community which illustrate the "social evaluation" of these forms and resulting behavior are rare, yet exist in at least one instance. With the loss of our reservation land, one family managed to maintain ownership of their parcel of former mission lands through this tumultuous period and into the new century (Johnson 1993). This was the family of my third great grandmother, Maria Ygnacia. Later, this family contributed much to what we know about the Barbareño Chumash language. Although the choices which led to intergenerational language transmission for this family have never been studied in depth, their experiences and others highlight the fact that beliefs about and through language and identity shape and determine choices about language use in a multilingual context. This relates to the importance of examining a "speaker's own understandings of their identities, as revealed through the ethnographic analysis of their pragmatic and metapragmatic actions…and driven by agency and power" (Bucholtz & Hall 2005: 371). In the face of great societal pressures to abandon their language, this family made the rare decision to maintain their connections to the land, cultural practices, and the history of our people by using the ancestral language.

3.2 Language Shift

The current state of language use in this community has its roots in "language shift", a term variously defined in recent decades. Hickey (2020) defines it in terms of a community in contact speaking one language and over time coming to speak another language. Fishman (1991) defines the term referring to "intergenerational continuity" and the fact that the community begins to have "fewer uses" and "users every generation" (Fishman 1991: 1). Language shift among the diverse Native communities of California has been especially

prevalent. Hinton & Ahlers (1999) and Hinton & Hale (2001) observed that only fifty of the approximately 120 Native languages spoken in California at the time of European contact still have speakers, with most of these having ten or less. Most of the speakers are elderly, and many of them have not used their heritage languages for daily communication since their teens (Ahlers 2017).

Reasons for language shift are as varied as the communities in which it occurs. The shift is often due to various "pressures" (social, cultural, economic, and military) exerted on language communities (Nettle & Romaine 2000: 7). While the causes are not universal, the effects can be similar and severe for a community and its language. Anderson (1998) emphasizes the importance of keeping the focus on "local perspective" when studying causes for language shift (1998: 43). Abtahian (2020) goes a step further and cites changes occurring in society and language choices made by individuals. Bekker (2019) addresses language shift as a minority language encountering more powerful and dominant cultures:

> Powerful groups are able to disseminate their own ideologies and stereotypes, and entrench them as common sense, while minority groups are often under pressure to adopt these. Minority-group members thus often have a negative social identity, and are motivated to change their identity via strategies such as assimilation into the more powerful group. (Bekker 2019: 235).

Members of our community encountered great pressure to change all aspects of their lives, including language usage patterns, when they encountered colonizing societies. Rather than government policies and institutions such as boarding schools which led other Indigenous peoples across North America to lose their culture and language (Booth 2009),

losing our reservation in the 1880s was a crucial factor in language loss for our community. This resulted in the assimilation of most community members into the surrounding dominant society. Combined with the high mortality rate during and after the Spanish Mission Period (Johnson 1993), fewer community members identified as Barbareño Chumash, cultural practices were abandoned, and caregivers failed to transmit the ancestral language to younger members. The pressures of language shift still continue today, materializing in member attitudes toward the language, beliefs about identity, and engagement with the ancestral language.

3.3 Language Revitalization

The current project is grounded in efforts by members of our community to revitalize our language. Interest in language revitalization has grown exponentially in the last two decades in Indigenous communities around the world. In the literature, there is still much variation in definitions and approaches. Bell (2013) observes that attempts to encourage use in Australian aboriginal communities with no living speakers and a language not used for communication for two or more generations are known both as 'language revival' and 'language revitalization' (2013: 399). Hinton (2001) defines "language revitalization" in a broad sense as "…the development of programs that result in re-establishing a language which has ceased being the language of communication in the speech community and bringing it back into full use in all walks of life" (2001: 5). Spolsky (2003) refers to language communities' attempts to restore "natural intergenerational transmission" of the language (2003: 555). Leonard (2007) characterizes language revitalization as "…creating new speakers and expanding the

domains of use for the language" (2007: 3). Aware of the multiplicity of terms and definitions, in this report I use the term "language revitalization". I prefer this more general and less final term to suggest that our language has never been "extinct" and has always had some small measure of vitality, if only in the hearts of community members. I define it thus: Bringing the ancestral language back to a place of increased use, appreciation and respect in the community, family, and home, and passing on those values to younger generations.

Language revitalization is not realized in all communities in the same way. Factors such as size of the community and access to resources can play important roles in how it is attained. Hinton (2001) refers to this distinction when she writes of language revitalization in communities with "large populations and optimal resources" versus those which have "tiny populations and minimal resources" (Hinton 2001: 6). Examples of the former abound in the literature, such as the Hawaiian language programs discussed by Brenzinger & Heinrich (2013), and the language revitalization programs in Māori communities, the basis for the study of Participatory Action Research by Te Aika & Greenwood (2009). Examples of the latter are increasing but still far less plentiful. They include the two Aboriginal communities in Bell (2013), in which language attitudes play a part in reviving the ancestral language; a history of community and review of methods for Karuk language revitalization in northern California (Sims 1998); Morgounova (2007), who investigated how ethnic identity and language as an identity marker affected prospects for language revitalization in a Yupik community on the Bering Sea; Meek's (2012) portrayal of problems and opportunities in a Kaska language community in western Canada; and grassroots language revitalization among the Southern Ute tribe in Colorado in Oberly et al. (2015). The lessons learned from these studies may not be applicable to every community. However, they can impart lessons, which

can help my own community, regarding reoccurring themes in Indigenous communities, such as how members confront issues of identity, how identity intersects with the ancestral language, and how attitudes affect willingness to use language. These lessons lead to questions such as, "How does language shift manifest in smaller communities?" and "How do limitations on resources affect language revitalization?" These questions reflect limitations in the literature and yet, can illuminate our community's path to language revitalization.

Indigenous communities in central and southern California face similar problems in revitalizing their languages in the face of what Ahlers (2017) calls "extreme language endangerment" (52). These communities are often small, have few or no first language speakers, and are reviving their languages with limited resources. Several studies describe them. Green (2013) looked at language revitalization in the Kawaiisu language community in central California. Ahlers (2017) wrote of language revitalization and language agency in that same community and also the Elem Pomo community in Northern California. Three reports looked at language revitalization in the Mutsun language community in central California (Warner et. al. 2007, Warner et. al. 2009; Warner et. al. 2018). From these studies, important lessons emerge on how communities with limited resources strive to connect with the ancestral language as members use their ingenuity and create opportunities for community members to speak and engage with the language. These lessons can also be applied to my own community.

Closer to home, there are few studies that even indirectly address language revitalization in Chumash communities. Ranch (2012) presents contemporary use of the ancestral language within the context of how language is used to index Native indigeneity as one

aspect of ongoing cultural revitalization in a small Chumash community in Ventura County, California. Cooper (2015) explored the link between Chumash language revitalization, activist literature, and proposed university Native language classes in San Luis Obispo County, California. These studies demonstrate the importance of the ancestral language to members of the respective communities, although neither explores community beliefs and attitudes concerning identity and language in depth, and how these elements might affect language revitalization.

For the present study, I conducted research in my own community. Native peoples are increasingly researching various aspects of their respective languages, leading language revitalization efforts and changing the way the field of linguistics relates to Indigenous communities. In the last two decades, studies by Native researchers is increasing, but still constitute a small portion of the total. Studies of this type include the report by Oberly et. al. (2015), who reported on language revitalization in a Southern Ute community in Colorado; Davis (2018) who has carried out several studies on ILR (Indigenous Language Revitalization) in her Chickasaw language community; Leonard (2007) who writes on "language reclamation" in their Miami (Oklahoma) community (2007: 2-3); and Cruz (Cruz & Woodbury 2014) who writes of language documentation and revitalization in her Chatino community in Oaxaca, Mexico. The literature in related areas also includes Indigenous researchers such as Tsikewa (2021) and Pérez González (2021) whose work in their own communities informs their approach to research and is changing how linguists relate to Indigenous communities. Not only do Indigenous scholars conducting research in their own community have insights into their own communities often missed by "outsider" researchers; they also are more likely to highly value the interests of their own community when

conducting research. Research conducted with and for the community in question, also influences the way I conduct research in my own community, such as in how I formulated research questions and carried out investigation for this study, and also the central role of the community in how study results are used.

3.4 Language ideologies/beliefs

My research questions centrally address beliefs within the context of language. To examine this connection more closely, I begin from the perspective of language ideology, a large and complex field which has neither universal cohesiveness nor cohesiveness at the level of individual studies (Kroskrity 2004). That caveat notwithstanding, I turn to Silverstein (1979), who defines language ideology as: "sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use" (193). The social nature of these beliefs is observed by researchers such as Simpson (2003), who states that engagement of language and thoughts with society comes from assorted "assumptions, beliefs and value systems" which members of a social group share (5). Also pointing to the social nature of beliefs is Silverstein (1998), who states that "…through social action, people participate in semiotic processes that produce their identities, beliefs, and their particular senses of agentive subjectivity" (402). This observation reflects earlier studies by Ochs & Schieffelin (2011) and their influential idea of 'language socialization' in which a central tenet is this: "…novices' participation in communicative practices is promoted but not determined by a legacy of socially and culturally informed persons, artifacts, and features of the built environment" (40). Schieffelin et. al. (1998) provide a stronger link to language by

stating that language ideology connects and forms the foundation not only between group forms and forms of language but also views of the individual and the group to which they belong. Language ideology as a mediator between social systems and language manifesting in language and foundation for person and social group is also reflected in Morgounova (2007). In her study of a Yupik community she found that language ideology policies instituted by the Soviet Union government deeply affected language use in that community. Simpson (1993) makes a distinction between language and ideology and the interplay between them in the social context, emphasizing what he terms the "socio-political" nature of language: "Because language operates within this social dimension it must, of necessity *reflect*, and some would argue, *construct* ideology" (italics in the original) (Simpson 1993: 5). The distinction Simpson refers to indicates not only one of degree, but also essence. Strength of connection does not rule out the relationship between beliefs and language use for an individual being determined by mitigating individual and group factors or what Kroskrity (2004) refers to as pervasive and varied beliefs, "used by speakers of all types as models for constructing linguistic evaluations and engaging in communicative activity" (2004: 497). Rumsey (1990) investigated links between language structure (reported speech and anaphoric devices) and linguistic ideology, stating that linguistic ideology is collective ideas concerning the essence of language. This definition seems very broad but emphasizes community and beliefs circulating in the community. With a more focused link between beliefs, language, and behavior, Meek (2012) examined reasons community members choose to speak the Kaska languge. She noted it is not just a question of age nor language facility, but factors such as beliefs held about language, how individuals habitually interact with each

other, and individual's roles and relative status in their community. These are factors which also influence how members of our community engage with the ancestral language.

3.41 Language attitudes

Although a distinction can be made between language ideologies and language attitudes, it is not always possible to completely separate the two concepts. I situate language attitudes within the larger concept of language ideologies, recognizing similarities while acknowledging the differing origins and history of the concepts. This includes the cognitive element of language attitudes, discussed here.

The study of language attitudes often seeks to understand judgments placed on speakers of other varieties of languages, but language attitudes are also ways in which a person reacts to different variants of a language (Dragojevich 2017). This includes how a community member relates to their ancestral or heritage language. How do beliefs translate to attitudes about language? How do those attitudes translate to the choice of language engagement? The relationship between beliefs, attitudes and action/behavior has a long history of study across various academic disciplines and is expressed in a quote by Oppenheimer (1966), which Bekker (2019) notes is still relevant today: "[a]ttitudes are reinforced by beliefs (the cognitive component) and often attract strong feelings (the emotional component) that will lead to particular forms of behavior" (Oppenheim 1966: 106−111 in Bekker 2019: 235). A classic study in 1960 also expressed this idea in a proposed framework of language attitudes which incorporates a cognitive component (thoughts and beliefs), affective component (feelings toward the language), and conative component

(readiness or intention of action) (Rosenberg & Hovland (1960) in Lasagabaster 2017: 588). The relationships among these elements suggest a direct link between beliefs and action. They are not always linear, however; Ushioda (2009) notes the role of unknown and unpredictable variables when she refers to "…the idiosyncrasies of personal meaning-making in social context" (2009 :219). Garrett (2010) agrees by stating there are a large number of context-dependent factors that relate to how attitudes translate into behavior.

Many studies examine the relationship of language attitudes to language revitalization. For example, Grenoble & Whaley (2005) note that language revitalization will likely and inevitably involve changing attitudes held in a community concerning the ancestral language. Bell (2013) studied Indigenous language revival in Australia, observing that attitudes toward language can be positive or negative, and can affect language revival depending on how entrenched the attitudes are in the community member's mind. Some of these attitudes are related to shame in speaking the ancestral language, attitudes regarding language purism, and "a resigned acceptance" of the language situation (Bell 2013: 403). Language attitudes must also be considered with other variables that might affect speaker engagement with a language. Referencing their work with Kaqchikel-speaking communities in rural Guatemala, Henderson et. al. (2014) observe that in seeking language revitalization, successful efforts must consider "pragmatic values" of language speakers, and focusing solely on adjusting language attitudes may not be most effective (2014: 78). This is certainly true in the Barbareño Chumash language community, in which pragmatic concerns often take priority over engaging with the ancestral language.

3.5 Identity and Community

Related to decisions to continue using the ancestral language are issues of identity. Identity studies are increasingly construed with "stance-taking, and other forms of speaker agency", moving away from ideas of clearly delineated boundaries (Bucholtz & Hall 2005; Darquennes et. al. 2019: 7). In this framing, choices related to the use of language are acts of power that may be deliberately chosen by members of the community. This puts the language choices my grandmother and her family made in a different light, for they were not only reacting to the great changes around them, but also proactively managing the changes in their lives. Davis (2018) considers that as identity is conferred through language, it is the result of agency, both purposeful and formed through habit, and includes societal influences beyond individual control. This idea takes some agency out of one's individual control, but is important in considering forces acting on the individual of which they might not be aware. In the shift away from limiting boundaries to which Darquennes et. al. (2019) refers, identity is seen as resulting from language and other signs rather than vice versa, and is "social and cultural" rather than existing solely in the minds of speakers (Bucholtz & Hall 2005: 588). Identity is displayed against the social and cultural background of community, but also constitutes this background as members make choices about language situated within community, that in turn are small parts of the larger whole. Ochs & Schieffelin (2008) observe that "Language is a powerful semiotic tool for evoking social and moral sentiments, collective and personal identities tied to place and situation and bodies of knowledge and belief" (2008: 7). Choices about language use, including the choice to not engage with language, are tied to how community members align themselves in their beliefs with regard to a community and to their individual roles as members of that community, and others to

which they belong. Identity is directly related to how community members consider themselves part of the larger Barbareño Chumash community, how they consider themselves as Chumash individuals, and roles they assume in the larger non-Native community. If identity adheres in situations and not as characteristics of individuals or groups (Bucholtz & Hall 2005), then we would expect identity to be change in intensity and form across all contexts of an individual's daily life. When considering "beliefs about the value of identity" as in the research question, we must remember that as identity changes, the value of identity for an individual has the capacity and tendency to change as well. Fuller (2007) states that individuals may exhibit different features of identity depending on interlocutor and situation, and that language use choices play an important part in this "identity construction", but there is no complete and exact mapping between language use and identity (2007: 106). When individuals make choices about whether or not to engage with a language, they are making choices overlaid by and immersed in the context of situational and individual interactions in daily life. It is not an unchanging and one-size-fits-all approach and reflects the diverse and ever-changing nature of language itself. This idea can also be extended to the Barbareño Chumash community. The choices our ancestors made regarding language use are not the same choices community members of today make regarding language, however similar they may appear on the surface. The underlying cultural, societal, and individual contexts in which choices are made may vastly differ. To some extent, assimilation of community members in the last 200 years makes the choices easier for us today; however, the effects of our choices still carry the same weight in how they can impact the vitality of our language and cultural practices.

4 Methodology

This research project is based on qualitative interviews. I made the decision to use semi-guided interviews for two reasons: 1) I felt that semi-guided qualitative interviews were the most appropriate for gathering the data based on the research questions, and 2) Members of this community have had their voices stifled for many years. I wanted to give them a platform on which to voice their opinions on these topics.

4.1 Research Location

Due to Covid-19 concerns, all interviews were conducted remotely using the online meeting platform, Zoom.

4.2 Ethics protocol

I followed official university ethical procedures, while simultaneously considering my roles as an Indigenous researcher and member of the community in which I am conducting research. Brayboy & Deyhle (2000) explored this "…tension between being an Indian and a researcher" (2000: 165). They concluded that researchers must be more aware of their positionality towards issues such as research participants, the data and how it is collected, cultural sensitivity, and safeguarding those who are studied. Also negotiating the insider/outsider dilemma, Hesse-Biber & Leavy (2013) studied how researchers can be pushed to apply new methods to fit new theories, leaving them feeling like outsiders within their discipline. These authors note that by "reflexivity…actively locating oneself within the

research process", researchers can negotiate the insider/outsider contradiction to develop innovative methods and transform an uncomfortable position to their advantage (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2013: 4). Working with my community as a researcher has not always been comfortable. At times I have felt the unease to which Brayboy & Deyhle (2000) refer. I have not yet been able to leverage the "reflexivity" to which Hesse-Biber & Leavy (2013: 4) discuss. These issues relate to ethics protocols because they are intimately related to the question at the heart of this study: What is in the best interests of the Barbareño Chumash community? I have tried to consistently ask myself this question even as I model my efforts on researchers who prioritize the community's interests in language revitalization. Reid (2010) and her description of *Wergaia* language revival in Australia is an excellent example of this focus, which resulted in increased knowledge and pride by community members in their culture and language, and increased use of their language. McIvor (2005; 2013) exemplifies an Indigenous person fiercely dedicated to language revitalization in their own community and working at the intersection of ILR (Indigenous Language Revitalization), applied linguistics, and education to promote the welfare of other Indigenous communities. I can only hope this present study is conducted with the same dedication to the needs of my community.

4.3 IRB Process

This research study followed the ethical research guidelines set forth by the Human Subjects Committee (HSC) at the University of California at Santa Barbara (UCSB). It was

designated exempt from review by both the Human Subjects Committee and the National Institutional Review Board (NIRB).

4.4 Tribal approval

The UCSB HSC requested that I obtain permission from the tribal organization, the Barbareño Band of Chumash Indians (BBCI), which represents the tribal community of all project participants, including myself. A Tribal Council representative signed a letter of approval for the purpose, intent, and method of the study (see Appendix B: Barbareño Band of Chumash Indians Letter of Approval for Research Project).

4.5 Participants

Data collection was based on interviews with six adult community members. When selecting interviewees, I utilized what Salmons (2015) defines as "purposive or purposeful sampling " (2015: 14). The first criterion for participation was eligibility to join the BBCI tribal organization. Membership criteria are based in large part on kinship relations and records in the historical Barbareño Chumash community beginning in 1769 (see Appendix A: Barbareño Band of Chumash Indians Membership Criteria).

The second criterion was receipt of email notifications for Barbareño Chumash language classes. These classes, which I organized, were held twice a month on the online meeting platform Zoom from July 1, 2020, to March 13, 2021. I categorized level of

engagement with the language according to attendance at these classes. I focus on this limited definition, recognizing there are other ways of engaging with language, inside and outside the classroom. I categorized class attendance according to three levels: “None” (no classes attended during the relevant time period), “Some” (attended classes between one and three times during the time period), and “Much" (attended classes four times or more during the relevant time period).

In April 2021 invitations to join the research project were emailed with an attached recruitment flyer (See Appendix C: Flyer for Study) to tribal members receiving the class notifications. Six community members who responded to the flyer and met the criteria were selected. They received a $50 Amazon gift card donated by Old Mission Santa Barbara, a non-profit organization with ties to our community.

4.6 Informed Consent

This Research Project adhered to the UCSB HSC guidelines for Informed Consent. Study participants filled out and returned the Informed Consent form before their interview (see Appendix D: Informed Consent form).

4.7 Data Collection

The sole data collection method was semi-structured recorded interviews with community members held via Zoom.

4.8 Interviews

Based on the research question, I decided on qualitative interviews as the most appropriate method for eliciting the desired data. I followed ORAH guidelines on interview protocol and employed semi-structured interviews with a list of twenty topics/questions (see Appendix E: Sample Interview Questions). I also asked follow-up questions according to responses (Bernard 2013). The interviews lasted between forty-five and sixty-five minutes. Approximately five and a half hours of interviews were recorded.

4.9 Transcription

To transcribe interviews, I used a modified version of "verbatim transcription in which every word the speaker said is written down", and what can be called a "lightly edited verbatim transcript", changing the words as little as possible (Powers 2005: 39-40). The transcriptions totaled seventy-five pages.

4.10 Data analysis

Due to the nature of the research questions, I used qualitative content analysis to analyze the interview data. 'Qualitative' refers to the ways in which environment and social relations construct a person's ideas and actions (Roller & Lavrakas 2015). "Content analysis" refers to methods which enable categorizing data to make sense of the data (Elo & Kyngäs 2008).

Qualitative research is "often criticized for lacking generalizability" (Vaus 2013: 6). This issue of representation is addressed by Moser & Korstjens (2018) who state that "…the sample is determined by conceptual requirements and not primarily by representativeness" (2018: 10). Beliefs and opinions of all community members at all times are not represented in this study; the data collected is indicative of individual beliefs and opinions of *some* members of this community at *one* moment in time.

I utilized inductive content analysis to identify themes emerging from data and based on this community's unique character. Steps for this type of analysis are typically grouped into three main phases: "preparation, organizing and reporting" (Elo & Kyngäs 2007: 109). In this report, I focus on the 'preparation' and 'organizing' phases of the content analysis. Below are steps I followed in this process:

1. Select the unit of analysis
2. Develop unique codes
3. Code
4. Identify categories
5. Identify themes or patterns
6. Draw interpretations and implications (Roller & Lavrakas 2009-2022)

4.11 Coding

Following Roller & Lavrakas (2015), my goal was to identify and describe trends and themes in the data and then organize them into content or concept-related categories. I

developed seventeen codes reflecting themes emerging from the data and categorized these into five larger groupings (see section 4 for list of these themes).

5 Results

5.1 Study Participants

Table 1 lists community member participants in the research project, identified by pseudonyms.

Table 1

Summary of Community Member Participant Information

Community Member (pseudonym)	Approximate age range	Gender	Place of birth	Level of engagement with language (measured by class attendance)
Jonas	60s	Male	Santa Barbara County	None
Barry	70s	Male	Santa Barbara County	None
Lana	40s	Female	Santa Barbara County	Some
Mira	Confidential	Female	Ventura County	Much
Paula	30s	Female	West Coast	Some
Betty	70s	Female	Santa Barbara County	Much

None of the participants have sole lineage from Barbareño Chumash parents. All are of mixed ethnic origins and most have ancestors from Mexico. Regarding their ages, two are in their seventies, one in their sixties, one in their forties, and one in their thirties. One

community member declined to give their age. All reside in either Santa Barbara or Ventura Counties. Five of the six were born within these areas.

5.2 The Interviews

5.21 Jonas

Jonas is male, in his early sixties, and was born, raised, and currently resides in Santa Barbara County. He is married and has adult children. His parents focused on assimilating him and his siblings into the dominant society (including with language) in order to 'succeed'. He reports neither past nor present engagement with the language and does not consider learning it a priority in his life. He sees the language as separate from our lives and culture, but wants to learn more about the language and culture. Jonas has pride in his Chumash heritage and shares it when it is well-received outside of the community. Although he does not appear to have a strong sense of Chumash identity, at times it does surface. For example, when speaking of the treatment of Chumash people after initial colonization, he uses the phrase, "we were as a people somewhat slighted", identifying himself with the Chumash community.

5.22 Barry

Barry is male, in his early 70s, and was born, raised, and currently resides in Santa Barbara County. He came to know of his Chumash ancestry later in life. He has very limited current engagement with the Barbareño Chumash language. Connections to fellow tribal

members and a strong connection to the land are important to him. He would like to learn the language although he believes it has no practical value; more important are the personal connections it gives him to the community. He believes that restoring the language is one part of restoring cultural identity. His sense of Chumash identity is enhanced and activated by engaging in community activities. He sees identity as based on a shared sense of ethics and values rather than identification with a group defined by color or race.

5.23 Lana

Lana is female, in her late 40s, and was born, raised, and resides in Santa Barbara County. She thinks it is very important to be a part of this community because it, "…helps us identify who we are." Her engagement with the language in the language class is sporadic but, she often studies it on her own. She stresses the importance of language by stating that it is not only how we use our words, but how we use the language, for example in cultural activities. Her great-grandmother was taken to an orphanage at a young age, and that event contributed to the disconnecting of her family from their Chumash heritage for many years. She wants to teach her young son the language because it will help him to self-identity more deeply as a Chumash person. She believes language holds much power to mold our beliefs and identity, but that, "…it's not like instant coffee. You know, (it's more) like a long brew."

5.24 Mira

Mira is female, does not wish to reveal her age, and was born, raised, and resides in Ventura County. She often engages with the language, both in classes and on her own. The language is very important to her as it connects the Chumash as a people; it connects an individual person to their community, even as it illustrates differences between communities. She believes that learning and speaking it can help overcome the sadness engendered by knowledge of the Chumash experience in colonization. She believes that language is related to identity because it reflects who a person is and where they come from. She stresses the importance of bringing language back to our community, because language connects us as a people. Reinforcing her sense of Chumash identity was time spent on the Santa Ynez Chumash Reservation learning and engaging with "many old traditions" while she was growing up. Positive influences reinforcing her Chumash identity were present for her at home and in school programs, and those experiences have kept her very grounded.

5.25 Paula

Paula is female, in her early thirties, and presently resides in Ventura County. She grew up outside of California. She has some engagement with the language through language classes, but also studies on her own. Trying to learn the language when she was young was difficult without the support of other people and the community, but also because the ancestral homeland was far away. She has always known of her Chumash ancestry, but trying to "fit in with the crowd" prevented her from expressing and valuing her Native identity early in life. A family member who lived in another state had a large influence in reminding her of

her Native ancestry, but Paula was often resistant to acknowledging it. Her Chumash identity took on a different meaning in her late teens and early twenties because of her growing interest in the language. This was when she began to embrace her Chumash identity. She states that identity is not only about culture and language; values of community also constitute an important part of her identity.

5.26 Betty

Betty is female, in her early seventies, and was born, raised, and resides in Santa Barbara County. She has much engagement with the language, both in Zoom classes and on her own. She discovered her Chumash ancestry later in life, and language helps her to understand this part of her identity. In expressing why she would like to learn the ancestral language she says "…I'll always be on a journey to try to find my identity…an insight or a picture of the past through the lens of our people." She says her identity does not really capture who she is as a person, but through language, it helps to identify her as a Chumash person. She believes that overcoming historical trauma is very important due to factors that caused the language and Chumash heritage to be lost in her family for many years.

6 Analysis

The table below shows themes and subthemes revealed in the coding.

Table 2

List of Subthemes and Main Themes

Subthemes	Main Theme
Bonds that define community; Defining community	The bonding power of community
Subduing the ties that connect; Living in the reality of historical trauma; Disconnecting from identity; Disconnecting from language; Disconnecting from culture and history	The negative power of separation
Connections to the Outside; Conforming to an outside identity	The reality of outside connections
Connecting is healing; Reclaiming is healing	The healing power of connecting
Learning to engage with language, Connections to identity through language; Connections to the people through language; The filtering power of language; Establishing connections to identity; Foundations of identity	Enabling connections with language

6.1 The Bonding Power of Community

This theme relates to how community members define and relate to community. Viewpoints on this theme appear to correlate with the extent individual community members are emotionally invested with and connected to the community. The common thread that connects differing ideas of community is that the language community brings people together, although this thread can be weak or strong depending on each person's opinion.

Jonas is somewhat curious about his Chumash heritage, but also appears emotionally distant from the community and does not participate in language classes. He believes that language expresses community, but he emphasizes loss of connections of language with culture in defining community. The views of Jonas can be contrasted with those of Lana, who is actively involved with community. She does not always attend language classes, but she studies the language by herself and has a long history of activities in the community. She sees the language community for individuals as "tough" and "challenging" because of the emotional investment and hard work that goes with being a part of the community and bringing the language back. She also views the community as people on a "journey", gauging their commitment with the language in the face of pressures that force one to stray off of that path. In her view, this community of "seekers" is united on the path of language, a journey that might well take a lifetime to complete. Mira also has a great commitment to language. She engages with the language by attending language classes and studying on her own. She stresses differences when defining the language community: each Chumash community is different from other communities; in turn, the wider Chumash community is different from the non-Native community. She makes these distinctions in a positive light by highlighting the qualities that make each community unique and tie the communities together as Chumash: "I love our differences. I'm so glad that we have those." Barry does not participate now in language classes, but he emphasizes the connection of language, culture, and especially land when defining the language community. He sees these elements as important for constituting the spirit of the land and defining the character of the Barbareño Chumash people. He expands on this thought here.

1)

1 Barry This land,

2 Santa Barbara,

3 this place…

4 it creates the character of the people.

5 The people who are from this place,

6 are special.

7 They have a desire for a quality of life

8 that other people are somewhat impervious to,

9 perhaps,

10 or don't have the opportunity to come to a place like this.

11 So the land and the character of the people

12 are inexorably kind of connected.

13 These are intangible bonds that connect the people

14 who have lived on this land for thousands of years,

15 and who in turn,

16 leave their imprint on this land.

Betty is deeply engaged in language classes and emphasizes the wholeness of community even as she sees division within the community in the ways language is taught and learned. She states that the way a person relates to language and community can let others know whether that person is drawing from a positive source in learning and teaching language; the ultimate and correct source is Creator. She says that being a part of a community that holds different perspectives while being united brings her spirituality. Both

Barry and Paula refer to the values that members of a community share as being the most important aspects of considering community. For Barry, values such as courage and ethics are more important to the identity of the people that he chooses to identify himself with. For Paula, these values are an intangible essence of community that are difficult to define but go beyond culture and language as she explains here.

2)

PAULA Personally, I've always had these values of community
and just there's this part of me…
I'm a fighter for what's right.
I love helping people.
I love community.
That's just who I am as an individual, like where my values lie.
And I think that my values are…
part of my identity….
Absolutely, it is.
Like you can't,
you can't separate the two…

Each member of the community is at a different level of awareness of the bonds and sense of community. Awareness is reflected in the differing ways they define and value community and can extend to the prominence of language engagement in their lives. Even in these differing ways, community members carry out what Bucholtz and Hall (2004) refer to as producing and reproducing "particular identities through their language use" (369). The

consensus seems to be that despite the many differences that can define us, the bonds of community, whether tangible or intangible and set against the backdrop of language, transcend differences and unite the members of this community.

6.2 The Negative Power of Separation

This theme is related to the idea of historical and contemporary Barbareño Chumash community members disconnecting from their Chumash heritage. Disconnecting can occur as a process over time, or abruptly with the death of a family member.

With the colonization of Alta California by the Spanish in 1769 beginning with the Portolá Expedition (Treutlein 1968), the Barbareño Chumash people began a process of disconnecting from their land, culture, history, ancestors, language, and finally, from their Chumash identity. Disconnecting and the effects it manifests in the present, are evident in stories told during interviews. It is also evident in low language class participation as many community members do not see value in studying the language. When the topic turned to the history of the Chumash after contact with Europeans, expressions of emotion quickly became apparent in the interviews, like a raw wound that has never healed. In the following passage, Paula conveys the intensity of emotion related to engaging with the language.

3)

1 PAULA I mean you hear a story about our great grandmother,
2 or you learn about a word that is..
3 means something,
4 and it's just..
5 it's emotional.

Okay, that's what it is.
It's both emotionally exhausting and like,
there's that spiritual piece to it.
And after a long day of work in school,
the last thing I wanna do is,
put on this intense thinking brain when I just wanna zone out…

One of the recurrent themes made salient in exploring "The Negative Power of Separation" is the great divide between contemporary community members and structural aspects of the language. From the arrival of the Portolá Expedition in 1769, it took almost 200 years for the Barbareño Chumash language to go from healthy and vibrant to having no first language speakers. In this span of time, the pronunciation, grammar, and lexicon of the dominant languages, Spanish and English, became the norm for community members, and they became disconnected from the ancestral language. This disconnect presents a formidable barrier for members when they consider Barbareño Chumash language study and prevents them from forming a closer relationship with the language. Community members such as Barry, who does not currently engage in study of the language, expresses this when he views the language as "obscure" and "alien". Betty is very active in positively engaging with the language while still acknowledging unfamiliarity with pronunciation when she says, "And my relationship is a wonderful learning experience, that is not going to be a deterrent just because there's x's in there and I can't pronounce it. And the y's that drive me crazy!' This frustration with fundamental differences in their ancestral language (when compared to dominant languages such as English and Spanish) is also expressed by Paula, who has studied the language in the past but states that the level of knowledge necessary to engage with the language can be "discouraging". Lana explores possible causes of this disconnect

with elements of language. She wonders whether the inherited trauma of the Barbareño Chumash experience prevents community members from delving deeper into study of the language.

The disconnect from language became more pronounced about the same time community members began to be disconnected from their culture and history. Ahlers (2017) refers to the loss of language and an accompanying "oppression of culture" as experiences that forge stronger links between community members (2017: 42). This may be true for relatively stable communities that have an existing land base. Our community lost our land base relatively early in colonization, with members assimilating into the dominant societies. For communities like ours, the loss of language, cultural practices, and knowledge of community history, might not lead to stronger ties between members. Interviews showed that when knowledge of these things was retained, it was often concentrated in one family member. When that individual died, this knowledge might become lost to other members of that family. This is seen in the experience of Betty who says, "They died, and traditions and knowledge of the…Chumash community died with them…it wasn't passed on…we were deprived of the culture and the language because of illness." Another major reason given by community members for the lack of transmission of cultural and historical knowledge between generations was the shame of expressing Native identity. This theme was prevalent in interviews and expressed in different ways. For example, Mira states that Barbareño Chumash people assimilated and conformed to surrounding communities so they would not be identified as Native. Lana explores this theme as well: " I don't think they wanted to identify themselves as being Chumash. It was too hurtful, for them." Betty also refers to the

suppression of Native identity that was necessary for survival and passed on to succeeding family members.

Loss of Native identity even extends to community members who were not aware of their Chumash ancestry while growing up. Whether this occurred through being given up for adoption or extreme assimilation into the dominant society, discovering one's Chumash ancestry often involves hearing hints of stories about one's ancestry from family members or distant relatives. In this common scenario, a community member hears these stories, takes a DNA test to confirm Indigenous ancestry, has their genealogy checked, and finds out they have Chumash ancestry. At least one study participant has experienced this. The path from having little to no Native identity to identifying as Chumash and securing a place in the community can be a difficult journey. In my own life, this has been a deeply personal and difficult process, not made easier by community members who have questioned my Chumash ancestry because of my skin color. For some new members, this type of observation might push them away from joining the community. In my case, my family's strong historical association with the community is usually enough to quell this criticism, although it still occurs occasionally and unexpectedly.

Assimilation and self-suppression within families seems to be reflected in the amount of language engagement by community members. Community members who have/had a family member with a strong sense of Chumash identity and who shared their experiences seem to engage more with the language. For example, Mira had a family member who "…always told us everything that she went through which is kind of heartbreaking because she was born in the early 1900s, but she did experience abuse and other things." Mira is very engaged with the language, and though the experiences she heard from this family member

were difficult to hear, hearing these stories seems to have enabled her to engage more deeply with her Chumash identity, and in some respects, come to terms with the painful Chumash history. The same is true for Lana and Paula. All had a strong influence in their lives during their formative years and now choose to engage with the language.

Awareness can also drive a person to escape dealing with the sadness and pain. This is evidenced in the narratives of community members who express a turning away from their Chumash identity, and choose not to engage with the language, especially if a person with strong Chumash identity is not present in their lives. Jonas and Barry have a general awareness of Chumash history but did not have the strong influence of a family member who could help them navigate to the deeper meaning of the Chumash experience, and this may be reflected in their current non-engagement with the language. Jonas reinforces the ideas of assimilation and speaks of what his father passed on concerning Chumash language, culture and history: "…he didn't pass on anything, so I think it was more focused on assimilation." Jonas does not engage with the language and often mentions economic realities as a reason. This role of providing the main economic support for a family also seems to be important for these community members; those in this role seem to prioritize economic issues over engagement with language. This is strongly evident in the narratives of Jonas and Barry and, coupled with their general awareness of the Chumash historical experience, seems to justify turning away from engagement with the language, culture and community. Compare their stance with community members such as Mira, who must provide for her family but still places engaging with language as a high priority in her life and therefore makes time for these activities. The level and depth of awareness appears to provide the crucial difference which prompts action to engage, or not.

Disconnecting from language, culture, and history brought about by the collective experience of this community after contact with dominant societies engendered a corresponding "Disconnecting from Identity". Davis (2016) refers to identity as, "…being in part a result of individual agency, including both deliberate performances and less conscious habitual practices, as well as the product of social structures that the individual does not directly control" (102). This is a process that still occurs in this community, disconnecting and maintaining a distance from one's Chumash identity either consciously or not, the end result but also an ongoing process of eroding social and cultural structures. Betty personalizes this loss of identity and refers to how this loss is conveyed to succeeding generations in the form of "trauma" and the effects it leaves: "…there's a hole in your, my heart." Lana refers to the difficulty of existing in the binary nature of Chumash identity and her mainstream identity. For some community members, loss of Chumash identity is severe. Barry, who has in the past but now does not engage in language activities, emphasizes loss of language and compares it to erasure of Chumash people: "And the language did not survive into modern times. It was extinguished. You know, like Chumash people." This thought seems related to the emphasis he places on his tenuous links to his Chumash ancestry and heritage, although he values the personal connections in community. Jonas still retains some pride and awareness of his Chumash heritage, but he de-emphasizes his Chumash ancestry as "one of the minor backgrounds I have". Does assimilation into the dominant society preclude the possibility of expressing his Chumash heritage? Or does downplaying his Chumash ancestry somehow negate the influence of the Chumash experience which was largely negative, and it can be argued, led to extreme financial hardship and exclusion from affluent

mainstream society for his family? For these community members, the process of disconnecting from their Chumash identity seems to continue.

I will end this section with a few words about concrete reasons community members give for not engaging with the language via language classes. Jonas states that raising children, managing a career, and now thinking about retirement have prevented him from engaging more with language (and community activities). Barry has attended community language classes in the past. Now it is economic issues, caring for his aging mother, and other concerns that keep him mentally and emotionally occupied with little time or energy left to learn the language. Lana states that caring for her elementary school-age child sometimes prevents her from attending language class. For Mira, missing language class is not really an issue. She often attends language class or studies on her own and is very connected to her Chumash identity. Paula engages with the language and has done so for the past several years although usually she does not come to language class. She says that it is hard to balance commitments in life such as school and work, and engaging with the language is difficult and emotionally taxing. Betty is very engaged with the language and on those rare occasions when she does not come to class it is because of transportation issues or family celebrations.

6.3 The Reality of Outside Connections

For many community members interviewed, the dominant society provides a reference point for their Chumash identity. This is combined with a great awareness of how the dominant society presses in upon and attempts to define their identity. This outside

pressure is so great that some community members begin to define their identity by referencing outside community metrics. In response to the question, “Have you ever felt confused about your identity?”, Paula makes immediate reference to filling out institutional forms that ask for an applicant’s ethnicity and remarks how she has always indicated Native American ethnicity on the form as a marker of her identity. Betty also makes reference to her identity through these forms but asserts that despite the confusion they engender, she knows who she is: “I do get confused when it asks me on paper. But when I'm in the community, I am Chumash.” Mira speaks of the necessity for Native people to always have to prove their Native identity through institutional paperwork. In response to the question, “Which ethnicity do you most identify with?”, Barry relates how the non-Native community shapes his Native identity: “White…Because most of my friends are white, because of where I live.” In commenting on bringing back knowledge of the Chumash culture and language in the Santa Barbara County area, Jonas stresses the importance of raising interest among non-Native communities. The focus on the non-Native community by community members is indicative of the great degree of assimilation of these members into these communities. This assimilation is indicative of the great disconnect experienced by these community members with their Chumash culture, language and history. When the great pressure to affiliate with outside communities becomes more important than one’s Chumash identity, this external affiliation seems to affect the desirability and importance for community members to engage with the ancestral language.

6.4 The Healing Power of Connecting

Most community members interviewed expressed a great need to reconnect with their Chumash heritage, culture, and ancestors. This need seems connected to a desire for healing, as if reconnecting can lead to healing of historical trauma brought about by knowledge of what their ancestors experienced after contact. Community members who seek a reconnection seem to be already mentally and emotionally tied to their Chumash heritage, and that provides an impetus to reconnect on a deeper emotional and spiritual level. This is expressed by Lana who states that when she first reconnected with the Chumash community, she could almost "hear our ancestors talk!" Mira reaffirms both the importance of the relationship of knowledge to healing, and reconnecting and helping others to connect through the practices one engages in, on an intellectual and deeper emotional level. Betty refers to the idea of separation from her Chumash culture, history, language and identity and the realization that the rift is being closed, now that she is connecting again. For her, connecting is a process which includes her role as a teacher to her children and grandchildren. Paula states that in reconnecting there is a shift that makes a person want to know more about their Chumash heritage. Even Jonas, who is aware of but does not embrace his Chumash heritage, expresses the desire to reconnect in the form of wanting to know about the land and what existed before, and how his ancestors moved over the land. As community members discover the healing that comes with exploring their Chumash culture, history and the experiences of their ancestors, they discover that reconnecting with language is an important part of that healing journey. In the next section I explore the role of reconnections with language.

6.5 Enabling Connections with Language

Jacob (2013) observes that Indigenous communities have the ability to heal themselves, and that this power is inherent within the people and within their traditions. In the Barbareño Chumash community, the potential power for healing begins with and lies in language. After the long period of separation from Chumash culture, history, and ancestors, connecting again to the ancestral language serves two purposes: 1) It is a source of healing, and 2) There is a corresponding strengthening of one's sense of Chumash identity. The healing properties of language that come with revitalizing the ancestral language are not unknown. Bell (2013), who investigated language attitudes in two Australian Indigenous communities, observed that establishing a language program might heal mental and physical pain related to past attempts to discourage use of the traditional language. As the healing process continues, members seek out more opportunities to learn the ancestral language. To some extent, the desire for connecting with language translates into participation at language classes, but there is not a direct correlation because some members choose to engage with language on their own.

The potential for healing through language is reflected in the thoughts of community members regarding the place of language in their lives. Betty is deeply engaged with learning the language in language classes. She is motivated to learn the language because reconnecting with it brings a spiritual connection to nature and to her Native identity. She believes that language can bring healing by helping to mend division in our community. Language is a reference point, anchoring her Chumash identity, and she refers to it in this way: "It's finding something that was lost. And the language puts pieces of our history together." She brings home what she has learned at class to her family. She teaches words in

the language to her daughters and young grandson, a rare and concrete example of "intergenerational language transmission" in this community (UNESCO 2003: 7). In this way, Betty is becoming the strong influence in her children's and grandchildren's lives. In the following passage, she speaks of the effect language learning is having on her family.

4)

1	BETTY	It's somehow seeping into their consciousness.
2		Wow,
3		we do have pride,
4		we do...
5		We should be proud,
6		prideful,
7		that we are,
8		Chumash.
9		We have a language that we can preserve and learn.
10		That's,
11		it's important.

For Mira, who often participates in language classes, the language is vitally important to her life. She believes it benefits her to learn the language because it is a process of healing the soul. The language does not give her a feeling of pride, but rather a comforting feeling of being connected to her "group of people". She already has a very strong sense of Chumash identity, and the language learning reinforces this sense of identity. In her own words, "It lets you know who you are, where you come from and your history."

Although healing through language is not reflected in attendance at language classes for Lana, at a deeper level it reflects a personal and ongoing journey of engagement with the language. Utilizing the language empowers her when she engages in cultural practices such

as working with traditional plants including dogbane. She speaks of breaking away from traditions and ways of thinking that she learned while growing up, and a corresponding return to trying to understand what the Chumash people are and what it means to be Chumash. Important in this understanding is the bonding power of language to her ancestors. In this space, healing occurs. Paula does not often attend language classes. However, in her journey to learn more about her Chumash heritage, she has great awareness of her Chumash identity. She firmly believes that the language is a large part of her identity as Chumash. She speaks of this community reclaiming their identity and feels that language is "part of that process and part of language is healing". Language is healing, and can form the "foundation" for teaching young community members about their culture as it helps to form and validate identity and pride in being Chumash. Culture is conveyed by language and contained within language; culture is the answer to historical trauma. Paula says, "It gives people energy and fuel and they start investigating more about themselves and us." When that happens, they willingly become more active members of the community.

For community members who have much less or even no engagement with the language and a corresponding weaker sense of Chumash identity, weaker engagement with the language can contain healing framed in other ways. For example, although Barry says that learning the language has no practical value for him, coming to language classes enables him to establish connections with the community, something that has deep meaning for his life. Jonas emphasizes the lack of the ancestral language in his life, especially for constructing his identity. Yet, he still has a sense of wanting to learn *about* the language (in contrast to learning the language). In this way, he seems to have a lingering sense of affiliation with his Chumash heritage, a longing to connect with his heritage.

6.6 Summary

Two key themes emerge from the foregoing discussion representing forces acting upon this community from first sustained contact in 1769 until the present. The first is the negative power of separation, and the second is the healing power of connection. Members of this community are caught between these two forces acting upon them and their community. However, the picture of community members caught between the two opposing forces does not account for the personal agency that they possess. Agency today cannot prevent events of the past that have affected this community. However, the power of personal choice with regards to language and the construction of identity can have major repercussions on this community.

Apparent from the interviews is that beliefs about language and the role it can play in a person's life affect engagement with the language more than beliefs about identity. Beliefs about their Chumash identity may be backgrounded or take lower priority for community members due to outside pressures such as how their identity is defined within the dominant society and the responsibility of providing for their families. Beliefs about language, however, appear to form a stronger link to engagement with the language. Community members can receive instant feedback and positive affective effects from engaging with the language. It is also strongly connected with culture, land and ancestors, and thus, to healing from historic trauma.

Beliefs about identity and language form the motivation for community members to engage with the language. Until now the effect has not been as strong as was hoped and the vast majority of community members do not engage with the language. However, these

findings tell us that strengthening Chumash identity is a long-term process which can be helped by shorter range efforts to encourage community members to engage with the language through its connection to land, culture and history. Whether accomplished in a language class or through increased access to community educational materials, it is important to remember that language revitalization in this community is carried out amongst factors in the dominant society that exert a separating influence between community members and their Chumash heritage. There may be community members who never have and never will engage with the language. This makes it all the more important to reach as many members as possible while there is still hope for the language.

7 Conclusion

In this paper, I investigated the role that beliefs about identity and language have in affecting community member engagement with the ancestral language. Two main discoveries were made in the course of this study. First, there is a great need for healing in this community from "historical trauma", defined by Brave Heart (2000) as, "cumulative wounding across generations" (246). Addressing this need is an overdue, long-term, and necessary objective. The second is this: At the outset, I posited that the negative experiences within families and passed down through generations caused community members to turn away from historical trauma and engagement with the language. It is true that these negative and painful experiences are passed down in the families of those whom I interviewed. However, these narratives do not appear to manifest as the main barrier to engagement with the ancestral language. More important seems to be having a family member who passes

down these negative experiences – not as a barrier but as a catalyst. A relationship with such a family member enables a community member to establish knowledge of and a stronger emotional connection to negative aspects of this community's history. These appear to lead to a stronger awareness and need for healing from historical trauma. As many of the interviewees stated, culture and language are medicine for historical trauma, and so community members turn to them for healing. Rather than forming the reason to turn away from the language and from Chumash identity, the negative experiences associated with historical trauma form the basis for turning to engagement with the language, whether that is in language class or studying by oneself, and embracing one's Chumash identity.

These discoveries have implications for how community members might be nurtured to encourage wider community engagement with the ancestral language over the long term. First is the need to encourage community members to be mentors and positive influences in younger members' lives and to pass on personal knowledge of the Barbareño Chumash experience to younger generations. The second is the need for more involvement with culture and engagement with language in order to bring healing to this community. This should include a framework that combines culture and language with creating opportunities for community members to talk about how they personally relate to historical trauma. Perhaps this can incorporate the ideas of the "healing ritual" with its elements of "group sharing, testimony, opportunities for expression of culture and language" discussed in Duran et. al. (1998: 72). In this way, language and culture can bring the people of the community together again in healing, reversing the way in which connections to language and culture were severed leading to the disorientation and weakening of the people under colonization.

In 2022, language revitalization in our community is still a distant dream. With this research study, I hope to leverage the knowledge gained to develop a structured plan towards a comprehensive strategy of language revitalization. I hope to conduct more research on and with our community, for the benefit of our community. I look forward to discovering the power of linguistics as a Native academic researcher in this field. It is a great undertaking whose results I cannot foresee, but I am glad to continue on this journey.

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Appendix A

Barbareño Band of Chumash Indians Membership Criteria

Membership with the Barbareño Band of Chumash Indians is established by the By-Laws of the Barbareño Band of Chumash Indians, Amended, and Approved on May 3, 2018

(From the By-Laws, Section 1): *The membership of the Barbareño Band of Chumash Indians (BBCI) shall consist of the following:*

(A) All persons on BBCI Membership Rolls within six (6) months of adoption of the amended By-Laws and as certified by the Council.

(B) Persons directly descended from an individual listed on the California Census Roll of Indians, 1928-1933, said census pursuant to the Indians of California Census Rolls authorized under the Act of May 18, 1928 and as amended, approved May 16-17, 1933, particularly only of those individuals identified as being of the Santa Barbara tribal band. Said descent must be from a specific individual identified in the Census Roll or descended from a person who is not listed in the Census Roll but can be otherwise documented as a sibling, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, or cousin who shares a Santa Barbara Chumash ancestor in common to someone in the Census Roll.

(C) Descended from an individual, or descended from a documented sibling, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, or cousin who shares a Santa Barbara Chumash ancestor in common with an individual, as identified to be a part of the Santa Barbara Chumash community according to the ethnographic papers of John Peabody Harrington, the collection of said records held by the National Anthropological Archives of the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History and/or records held by the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History.

(D) Descended from a resident of the La Cieneguita Chumash Indians or other 19th century Santa Barbara Native Chumash settlement as documented by way of:

1. California Mission/Parish records referencing a Chumash ancestor in residence or otherwise as related, e.g. sibling, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, or cousin who shares a Santa Barbara Chumash ancestor in common to a baptized resident.

2. California State Census of 1852, in particular reference to three groups of Santa Barbara Chumash Indians known as the Ygnacio family residing on Maria Ygnacia Creek on the land known as the Alikon, the Qwa Community at More Mesa, and/or La Cieneguita group.

3. La Cieneguita/Santa Barbara area Chumash Indians holding record title in real property in what is now Santa Barbara County, State of California, but as was transferred to Thomas Hope, Indian agent, in or about the mid to late 1800's as documented in 19th century deed records.

4. John Peabody Harrington documentation of Las Cieneguita residents based on recorded interviews with Maria Solares, Luisa Ygnacio, Lucrecia Garcia, Juan Justo and other Chumash consultants, John Peabody Harrington Collection, National Anthropological Archives of the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History.

5. Identified Chumash resident as noted on the map of La Cieneguita by David Banks Rogers, Curator of Anthropology, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. This map was based on Rogers's interview with the daughter of Thomas Hope.

6. California Mission/Parish records referencing a Chumash individual who served as a godparent to Santa Barbara Chumash children at the time they were baptized.

(E) Persons who meet the requirements of Section 1 (a), (b), (c) or (d) of this Article, but who have been allotted land on a Federally recognized reservation or are officially enrolled with or are recognized members of some other Federally recognized tribe or band shall not be eligible for membership in BBCI. A person may receive benefits from an unrelated tribe, through inheritance, without jeopardizing membership status in BBCI.

(F) Upon gaining federal recognition, BBCI members must relinquish membership in any other tribe or band.

(G) BBCI members not meeting above criteria, members engaged in criminal behavior, members giving false information on their enrollment application, members using forged documents on their enrollment application, and/or members deemed by the tribal council as a threat to the organization will be disenrolled.

From the Enrollment Ordinance of the Barbareño Band of Chumash Indians, Section 1:

(H) A person's eligibility for enrollment is determined through one or both of the biological parents. A candidate for membership in the tribe who has been adopted by parents who are not his/her biological parents, must submit documentary evidence to support their application for enrollment. The documentary evidence must show relationship to the biological parent through whom eligibility for enrollment is claimed. The information concerning adopted persons shall be recorded as confidential and shall not be made public to any other person. This information shall be contained in locked file cabinets, and adequate safeguards shall be installed to ensure that the confidentiality of these records shall not be violated. Upon attaining the age of majority, 18, should an adopted individual request to have a copy of any portion of their adopted information or file a court order must be obtained.

Appendix B

Barbareño Band of Chumash Indians Letter of Approval for Research Project

Barbareño Band of Chumash Indians
Post Office Box 60141
Santa Barbara, CA 93160

March 17, 2021

Human Subjects Committee
Office of Research, 3227 Cheadle Hall
University of California, Santa Barbara
Santa Barbara, CA 93106-2050

Dear Human Subjects Committee:

This letter is to inform you that the Tribal Council of the Barbareño Band of Chumash Indians (BBCI) has been informed of the research study that James Yee will carry out as part of the requirements for his master's degree. The Tribal Council understands that as part of his research study, members of the BBCI may be interviewed and recorded via Zoom, regarding their attitudes and beliefs on language and identity.

The Tribal Council wishes to inform the Human Study Resources Committee that the Council gives permission for this research study to take place within the BBCI community. The Tribal Council wholeheartedly supports this research study as an important step toward revitalizing the Barbareño Chumash language.

If you have any questions, please contact Tribal Council Secretary/Treasurer Barbara Lopez at (805) 689-9528, or by email at chumashangels@aol.com.

Sincerely,

BBCI Secretary

Barbara Lopez (Tribal Council representative)
Secretary/Treasurer, Barbareño Band of Chumash Indians

www.bbcindians.com
bbcindians@gmail.com

Appendix C

Flyer for Study

Study Participants Wanted!!

Help bring back the Barbareño Chumash language!

Help save the language for future generations!!

You are invited to take part in a research study! If you are selected for this study, you will be interviewed on your computer via Zoom and asked questions about your attitude and beliefs regarding language and identity. This study is related to bringing back the Barbareño Chumash language to our community. The interview will take place via the online platform Zoom and it will be recorded for audio and video. The interview will take between 30-60 minutes. Information collected will be used in a report but you can choose to remain anonymous and not have your name appear in the report.

Volunteers chosen to participate in this study will receive a $50 Amazon gift card!!

For more information or to express interest in participating in this study, please contact:

James Yee at jiminyokohama@hotmail.com or by telephone at 805-722-5857.

This study is being conducted under the supervision of the UCSB Department of Linguistics; faculty advisor Marianne Mithun (mithun@linguistics.ucsb.edu). This study has been approved by the University of California at Santa Barbara, Human Subjects Committee - Approval Number: 36-21-0182.

Appendix D

Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form: **Identity and Language in the Barbareño Chumash Language Community** **Form updated:**

Principal Researcher: James Yee 3/17/2021

PURPOSE: You are invited to participate in a research study designed to investigate beliefs and attitudes regarding identity and language in the Barbareño Chumash (language) community. This study will interview study participants to determine their beliefs and attitudes in the above subject areas.

PROCEDURES: With your decision to participate in this study, you will participate in an interview conducted via the audio and web conferencing platform, Zoom. The interview will be recorded for both audio and video. In the interview, you will be asked questions related to beliefs regarding your identity as a Chumash person, attitudes toward the Barbareño Chumash language, and attitudes and beliefs regarding the personal experiences and the Barbareño Chumash people. The interview is expected to take between thirty (30) to forty-five (45) minutes.

RISKS & BENEFITS: Please be aware that the content of the interview questions has the potential to elicit various emotions and memories, some of which may be unsettling. Participants may end the interview at any time. Participants reserve the right to not answer any interview question. Participant's personal information and interview recording will not be released to the general public. Measures are taken to ensure security of private information, but there is a small risk that information stored on the researcher's personal computer may be compromised in the event of a security breach. Study participants will receive a small remuneration for their participation.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Your personal information and recorded interview will be held with the utmost confidentiality by the researcher. Please be aware that under the terms and conditions of using the Zoom recording feature, Zoom may have access to any audio or video recordings.

PAYMENT: Participants in this study will be paid $50 to participate in this study. If a participant chooses to withdraw from the study, their participation in the study will be pro-rated according to time engaged in the interview.

RIGHT TO REFUSE OR WITHDRAW: Participants reserve the right to refuse to participate in the study. Participants also reserve the right to withdraw at any stage of the study, up until the time study results are released to the researcher's MA thesis committee. Participants choosing to withdraw will have interview recordings and all personal information deleted from all records of the study.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: If you have questions or comments regarding participation in this study, please contact Associate Researcher, James Yee, by email at jameseyee@ucsb.edu, or by phone at (805) 722-5857. For questions about your rights and participation as a research subject, contact the Human Subjects Committee by email at hsc@research.ucsb.edu, by phone at (805) 893-3807, or by USPS mail at University of California, Human Subjects Committee, Office of Research, Santa Barbara, CA, 93106-2050.

PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY IS STRICTLY VOLUNTARY. BY ENTERING YOUR SIGNATURE AND DATE BELOW, YOU ACKNOWLEDGE THAT YOU HAVE READ THE FOREGOING DESCRIPTION AND VOLUNTARILY DECIDE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY. YOU WILL RECEIVE A SIGNED AND DATED COPY OF THIS FORM FOR YOUR RECORDS.

Print Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

(check all boxes below that apply regarding your participation in this study)

☐ I agree to be audio-recorded for this study.

☐ I agree to be video-recorded for this study.

1

(check all boxes below that apply giving your permission for how **audio** recordings may be used for this study)

☐ Anonymized audio recording(s) of my voice and anonymized written transcripts of my voice may be shared with all members of researcher's MA thesis committee.

☐ I agree to be audio recorded for this study but I want only the researcher, James Yee, to listen to the recordings. Only anonymized written transcripts of my voice will be shared with researcher's MA thesis committee.

(check all boxes below that apply giving your permission for how **video** recordings may be used for this study)

☐ Anonymized video recording(s) of my voice and image and anonymized written transcripts of my voice may be shared with all members of researcher's MA thesis committee.

☐ I agree to be video and audio recorded for this study but I want only the researcher, James Yee, to view my images and listen to my voice recordings. Only anonymized written transcripts of my voice will be shared with researcher's MA thesis committee.

(For study participants who do **not** wish to remain anonymous, check all boxes below that apply)

☐ I do **not** wish to have my voice recordings remain anonymous. Please use my real name and retain details that identify me on audio recordings.

☐ I do **not** wish to have my video recordings remain anonymous. Please use my real name and retain details that identify me on video recordings.

☐ I do **not** wish to have written transcripts from my voice recordings to remain anonymous. Please use my real name and retain details that identify me on written transcripts.

Note regarding audio and video recordings:

Recordings of interviews with study participants will be held until the master's thesis report which utilizes the interviews has been approved by the researcher's master's thesis committee. Upon this approval, the recordings will immediately be deleted from the researcher's computer files. Transcripts of recorded interviews will be held for a period of five years from the date of the interview. Immediately following the passing of the five-year period, the transcripts, whether in paper or electronic form, will be destroyed/deleted. Quotes from study participants used in the master's thesis report will be retained in the report. The identity of study participants in the report will be withheld unless researcher is specifically given permission by individual participants to identify participants and their quotes in the report.

Appendix E

Sample Interview Questions

The Barbareño Chumash language community:

- Can you describe your present involvement with the Barbareño Chumash language?
- Does it benefit your life in some way to learn the language/Is the language relevant or important in today's world? Why or why not?
- Would you want your children/grandchildren to learn the language? Why or why not?

History and Family Experiences:

- When growing up, how much importance did your parents/older family members place on your shared Chumash ancestry? Why?
- In your own life, how has your Chumash ancestry affected how you feel/felt about yourself? How do you react/respond to these feelings? Have these feelings changed throughout your life?

Identity:

- What is your ethnic makeup? Which ethnicity do you most identify with? Has this identity been constant in your life? Why or why not?
- Is it easier for you to identity as Chumash or as some other ethnic identity? Why or why not?