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Anishinaabemowin and Technology:
A Qualitative Study of the Role of Learning Technologies
in a Community Anishinaabemowin Class

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the Masters of Arts in American Indian Studies

by

Sjana Kay Baker

2022

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Anishinaabemowin and Technology: A Qualitative Study of the Role of Learning Technologies in a Community Anishinaabemowin Class

by

Sjana Kay Baker

Masters of Arts in American Indian Studies

University of California, Los Angeles, 2022

Professor Teresa McCarty, Chair

This project examines the role of learning technologies in Anishinaabemowin (Anishinaabe language) community classes. With the societal push towards using more technology coupled with the shift to remote learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Indigenous language communities have had to decide how to incorporate technology into their classes in a way that honors the language and the learners. Through interviews with Anishinaabemowin language teachers and facilitators, this study examines the benefits and difficulties of using learning technologies. Six themes were identified through qualitative interviews: Accessibility, Pros and Cons of Language Learning Technologies, Community and Connection to Culture, Remote

Learning versus In-person Learning, Technological Difficulties, and Opportunity. Each theme answers the questions of benefits and difficulties as well as helping to understand the role of technology in these classes. Highlighting these themes can support this Anishinaabe community and other Indigenous language communities in using technology in positive ways for their self-determined linguistic goals.

The thesis of Sjana Kay Baker is approved.

Erin Debenport

Kyle Mays

Teresa McCarty, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2022

DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly I want to acknowledge the Tongva and Gabrieleño people and their land that I occupied while completing this research and obtaining my degree.

This project and research are dedicated to my wonderful participants for their continued support and for sharing their language journeys with me. I am forever grateful - Chi Miigwech. I could not have done this work without Dr. Teresa McCarty, my main advisor and committee chair. Miigwech for every single weekly meeting and every time you made me feel like I belonged and told me that I was doing important work. Dr. Kyle Mays and Dr. Erin Debenport have supported me since the very beginning of my time at UCLA. The encouragement, mentorship, and advice that I received from these three professors and all the faculty in the American Indian Studies Department means the world to me. Miigwech to the AIS IDP, AISC and AIGSA for creating a community that was so welcoming and affirming.

All the work I have done and will do is in honor of my mishoomis ba, my late grandfather Victor Kishigo, who dedicated his life to our language. If my work can continue his legacy in any shape or form, I will feel accomplished. This thesis is also in honor of my zigozis ba, my late Aunt Sjana, who gave me her name and all of the love in the world. I would like to say Chi Miigwech to all Anishinaabemowin speakers of the past, present and those yet to join us, who make language learning possible and keep the connection between language and culture at the forefront. I want to say Chi Miigwech to my parents, whose love and support I feel every second of my life, to my brother who shows me the good in the world, to my caring and wonderful grandparents, and the rest of my family and friends. I am not complete without them all and they helped me throughout this entire process in more ways than I can count.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

This thesis research was inspired by and in connection with previous research I have completed on how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted Anishinaabemowin community language classes. With the threat of the pandemic disproportionately hitting tribal communities and reservations, and the associated risks for cultural knowledge-holding elders, tribal communities halted in-person language classes in accordance with various social distancing guidelines. This problem and the global turn towards an increase in technology has influenced this project.

The goals of this thesis are to understand how language educators and learners have navigated the past introduction and current use of various technologies (described more fully below) within their community classes, now and before the COVID-19 pandemic that officially began in the U.S. in March 2020. I also sought to explore what kinds of technologies work and what kinds do not; and what it means to “work” and “not work” in this setting. Further, I sought to answer the question of what makes a particular technology usable and successful for Anishinaabemowin learners? This project could have immense significance for Anishinaabe and other Indigenous communities because language is central to cultural connection, sustainability, and identity (Kroskrity & Field, 2009). Due to this connection, language communities need to be prepared to engage with current trends and needs in language teaching and learning, which presently entail technology and virtual learning. In terms of virtual classes due to the pandemic, with more and more people getting vaccinated, and tribal communities being at the forefront of the vaccine rollout, the future looks bright for community gatherings. But, because the onset of COVID-19 happened so quickly and the threat of new variants remains large, we should be prepared for another pandemic to happen within our lifetime and know how to quickly implement and succeed with technologies. Knowing the parts that work and those that do not

work in the virtual environment is key in moving forward and looking to the future of technology's role in Indigenous language learning and education. But what does “technology” mean in these contexts?

“Technology” has diverse meanings and interpretations. Books, physical learning materials, and classroom supplies are forms of technology that aid in learning. Native Hawaiian language revitalization scholar, Candace K. Galla, in a 2009 book chapter titled *Indigenous Language Revitalization and Technology: From Traditional to Contemporary Domains*, states that “Technology encompasses a wide range of objects, methods, systems, tools and practices, which extends from low to high-end advancements” (p. 167). For this research and thesis, I define “technology” as digital/electronic resources that aid and enhance learning and education of Anishinaabemowin (and potentially other Indigenous languages). Technologies discussed in the chapters that follow are Zoom, Quizlet, PowerPoint, learning platforms such as Moodle or Brightspace, email, and various forms of social media for communication. Various technologies for language use and education can do different things. Further, some technologies are more appropriate in certain situations and cultural contexts than others, especially in Indigenous language learning. While navigating the appropriateness of technologies in Anishinaabemowin learning, we should also consider what adding them to a classroom will bring. For the University of Indiana, for example, anthropologist Ilana Gershon (2010) discussed media switching and language ideologies, stating that those who use communicative technologies, much like the ones I define as learning technologies, need to be “paying attention to the limitations and possibilities embedded in the very structure of a communicative technology” (p. 391). It is important to note what we gain and what we lose when using learning technologies, examples of which are shown throughout many of the interview excerpts in the Findings chapter of this thesis. The COVID-19

pandemic gave a particular context to this thesis that would not have existed otherwise. That context is the heightened use of Zoom and other platforms that seek to bring people together when they are physically apart, creating little choice in the necessity of using these technologies.

I come to this project from a vested cultural and linguistic standpoint. I am an enrolled citizen of the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, an Anishinaabe Nation located in what is now known as Northern Michigan. My family has been involved in Anishinaabemowin revitalization and education for generations and I am only a stepping stone in our story and connection to our language. Language is one of my greatest connections to my ancestors and my relatives not yet born. I feel an immense responsibility to contribute to Anishinaabemowin learning and continuation so those who have not yet joined us will have the opportunity to learn their language and connect to their culture and ancestors. My personal language learning experience has been very communal – a group activity. Teaching something as sacred as an Indigenous language is very special and creates a bond like no other. In doing this project, I wanted to know how that bond is being made or sustained with the addition or usage of the technologies described above. It is worth noting that most language teachers are elders who might not be well versed in technology. How are these technological issues or learning gaps impacting the language learning process? What problems arise here and how can they be remedied? Considering the cultural connection and due to my own tribal identity, I am closely tied to this topic and this project and I am honored to be able to work with the language learners and teachers who participated in this project with me.

Research Goals and Research Questions

I am interested in the technology used in Anishinaabemowin education and how educators and students have come to know and use it. The following are my research questions:

1. What are the benefits and difficulties of the use of technology in Anishinaabemowin language classes?
 - a. What are the affordances and challenges?
 - b. What do different technologies enable and what do they take away?
2. What is the role of technology in Anishinaabemowin language learning classes?
3. What are the perceptions of stakeholders (teachers and language learners) of technology in Anishinaabemowin education?
 - a. What technologies are being used? By whom? For what purposes?
 - b. What kind of technology works better? What are their expectations? How are they responding to it?

These three main research questions along with their sub questions are answered in this thesis through the coding process explained in the Methodology chapter and are further elaborated on in the Findings chapter.

Context for the Study

Before discussing specifics of the research project and the implications of technology for learning a sacred language, the context of the language must be established. Anishinaabemowin is the language of the Anishinaabe people (also known as the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi) and is an Algonquian language, belonging to one of the largest Indigenous language groups in North America. Today, Anishinaabemowin has an estimated 50,000 speakers across what is now known as the United States and Canada. The scope of the language includes several states and provinces on each side of the border, as shown in *Figure 1*. The language includes multiple dialects and spellings due to the vast landscape that it covers.



Figure 1. Map of Anishinaabemowin speaking communities (Hermes & King, 2013, p. 126).

Anishinaabe

The word “Anishinaabe” means “human being” or “person.” While spread across a vast amount of land, as shown in *Figure 1*, Anishinaabe people, made up of the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi, are connected and have a shared history. That history involves the migration towards the Great Lakes, contact, treaties, and wars with fur traders from France and later British colonizers, and the various detrimental Acts from the federal government. Most pertinent of those Acts to this research and to be discussed in this chapter, would be federally run boarding schools for children. There is variation between each Anishinaabe community, but our similarities link us. We have contemporary governments with three branches and law enforcement, all of which operate similarly to the federal government. Anishinaabe are close relatives with the land and the water, my people’s homelands being located on the shore of Lake Michigan. Much like other Indigenous nations, we have four sacred medicines that are connected to prayer and ceremony. We often traveled by jiimaan, or canoe. We have traditional foods that have sustained our people for generations, such as wild rice and maple syrup.

Anishinaabe scholar and author Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2014) speaks about the close relationship between Anishinaabe and the land through the story of Kwezens. Kwezens discovers maple syrup and exhibits a deep understanding of the land and our connection at a very young age. Simpson reflected on this child's knowledge in comparison to growing up in a Western education, "Things are different for this Kwezens. She has already spent seven years immersed in a nest of Nishnaabeg intelligence. She already understands the importance of observation and learning from our animal teachers, when she watches the squirrel so carefully and then mimics its actions." (p. 6). Anishinaabe knowledge and intelligence is learning through community and listening to the land, as Kwezens did. Understanding the connections between our people and the land are necessary for learning Anishinaabemowin, as that connection is most shown through our language. Anishinaabe are both traditional and contemporary people, moving forward in a world that is ever changing, while continuing to speak our language and engage in our culture.

My tribal nation, the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, is located in Northern Michigan. We were granted federal recognition in 1994 by President Clinton. Our federal recognition is important to note because it officially acknowledges our inherent right to self-determination, meaning making our own decisions on how we function. One factor of self-determination that relates to this project is the ability to determine how and when language education takes place; Teresa McCarty and Tiffany Lee (2014) refer to this as linguistic self-determination, a component of tribal sovereignty that includes "the right to linguistic and cultural expression according to local languages and norms" (p. 101). My tribal community numbers approximately 4,000 members, most of whom live on our homelands along the northwestern shores of the lower peninsula of Michigan. As seen in the map in *Figure 1*, Anishinaabemowin

speakers can be found across the continent in lands that are now known both as the United States and Canada. This was due to what is known as the migration of Anishinaabe people. As described by scholars at Bemidji State University, the “Migration West: Sacred Migis leads Ojibwe Nations migration westward from St. Lawrence River to the place of Wild rice” (Bemidji State University, n.d., para 5). The migration toward manoomin (wild rice) is why we see so many different communities spread across this vast landscape, who formed various dialects and spellings.

Holy Childhood and the Boarding School Legacy

Federally-run boarding schools are nothing new when discussing Indigenous language loss and Native people in particular are well aware of the repercussions that communities are still dealing with today. The goal of boarding schools was to separate Native children from their people, language, and culture. To do this would assimilate the children, or as Brenda J. Child and Brian Klopotek (2015) explained, “colonial education for indigenous people was initially designed to contain them, to make them into safe neighbors and subjects of the state, with the expectation that with enough effort on the part of pupils and their “superiors,” they might eventually become integrated citizens in some degree” (p. 4). The generations of trauma that these schools inflicted onto tribal communities continues to have a hold on Native people, so much so that we must work incredibly hard to keep our languages alive and thriving against the odds purposefully put against us. My community dealt with our own boarding school, called Holy Childhood, which opened in 1889 and closed in 1983 (Hemenway, n.d.), making it the last Indian boarding school in the country to close its doors. With that legacy following us, my community has gone above and beyond to ensure Anishinaabemowin is still present in our area.

Learning your Indigenous language is an act of resiliency, and I am so proud of each member of my community that ensures my generation and the next are able to participate in Anishinaabemowin learning. Even so, I want to note that we must be resilient due to the systems that were placed upon our ancestors in the not so distant past, in which the goal was to eradicate our language and people entirely. Part of language learning is honoring and acknowledging this. I look towards the future for a day when we do not need to be resilient any longer, and that existing within Anishinaabemowin is more than enough to sustain the language. The systems built to take away our languages have left traumatic lasting results today and that can impact how open one is to learning their language or having their loved ones learn it. This trauma and apprehension is important to note and was an important part of my project and how questions were phrased. This is a very complex issue with a dark history. I framed my study to be aware of this at all times. I am beyond grateful to do this work and to listen to and learn from the many different language journeys and histories of my participants.

The Role of Anishinaabemowin in My Community

While the community in which this study took place must remain anonymous (per my Institutional Review Board agreement), I offer this description of the role of Anishinaabemowin in my community as an example not dissimilar from that of other Anishinaabe communities, and to contextualize the present research. Anishinaabemowin is a large part of our community, due to the hard work and dedication of the elders and language educators. A considerable portion of the adult population is actively involved – or has been previously – in language education and knows the basics of Anishinaabemowin. We have a handful of first language speaking elders. The language can be found in our community buildings on signs and posters in the hallways, as well as the street signs on our community grounds. There are always prayers in Anishinaabemowin

prior to events like feasts or our annual pow wow. The language has an active role in our community and community members are aware of its place and the connection it gives us to our ancestors and culture.

Learning the language through various technologies brings about an interesting concept of needing to hear the language spoken to fully understand its pronunciation. Much of the phonemic system includes the usage of double vowels which do not make the same sounds as English. If a student was to begin their language journey using online resources without hearing the language spoken, the student might not be able to pronounce sounds correctly.

	aa	ii	oo	e	a	i	o
b	baa	bii	boo	be	ba	bi	bo
ch	chaa	chii	choo	che	cha	chi	cho
d	daa	dii	doo	de	da	di	do
g	gaa	gii	goo	ge	ga	gi	go
j	jaa	jii	joo	je	ja	ji	jo
k	kaa	kii	koo	ke	ka	ki	ko
m	maa	mii	moo	me	ma	mi	mo
n	naa	nii	noo	ne	na	ni	no
p	paa	pii	poo	pe	pa	pi	po
s	saa	sii	soo	se	sa	si	so
sh	shaa	shii	shoo	she	sha	shi	sho
t	taa	tii	too	te	ta	ti	to
w	waa	wii	woo	we	wa	wi	wo
y	yaa	yii	yoo	ye	ya	yi	yo
z	zaa	zii	zoo	ze	za	zi	zo
zh	zhaa	zhii	zhoo	zhe	zha	zhi	zho

Figure 2. Anishinaabemowin Vowel Chart. (Anishinaabemowin Gaa-Inweng & Ozhibi'iganensan, 2021).

In *Figure 2*, the vowels are shown in conjunction with common consonant pairings in Anishinaabemowin. A beginning learner could be confused by these vowel pairings, for example; “ii” is pronounced the same way as “ee” is pronounced in English. Without conversing with a teacher or hearing audio tapes, this would be unknown. This creates an opportunity for new learners, making technology a pathway to learning Anishinaabemowin that was not possible

prior to the use of learning technologies and online learning. Video and audio captures vowel sounds in the language in ways that writing cannot. This enhances accessibility to learn and understand Anishinaabemowin more fully.

Brief Overview of Conceptual Framing and Methodology

The framing of this study centers on my interests in how technology fits into communal, sacred language teaching practices and how it can benefit Anishinaabemowin learners as we progress more and more into a society heavily influenced by technology. In keeping with the study's underlying motivation and rationale, the basis for my conceptual framework and for this research project include Bryan Brayboy's (2005) *Tribal Critical Race Theory*, in particular his emphasis on "story as theory", as well as Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (2012) *Decolonizing Methodologies*. These conceptual frames are discussed further in Chapter II. In terms of specific methods, the research was interview-based, in which I conducted three remote in-depth interviews with community members who are involved in Anishinaabemowin teaching in different capacities. For these interviews I adapted Irving Seidman's (2019) three-part framework, discussed more fully in Chapter III. I then undertook open coding and emotion coding (Saldaña, 2021) on those interview transcripts and derived six main themes. These are examined in the findings section, Chapter IV.

Language Journey

In addition to the conceptual and methodological frameworks described above, this thesis is guided by the notion of language journey(s), discussed below. This section is dedicated to lifelong learners of Anishinaabemowin and is a space to explain what it means when I use the term "language journey." One's language journey is uniquely their own and is dependent on how

and why they decided to learn their language. It begins with deciding why you are learning the language and how you find yourself within the language learning community. How have you found yourself in your current position in learning the language? Learning your language is a journey that you embark upon with your family and community. Deciding to learn your language then connects you to your ancestors, to your culture, to your land. The language journey is community building, and relationship building – relationships to other community members but also to our non-human community members. When you know how to speak about or relate to your relatives in your language, your relationship to them changes and becomes the same kind of relationship that your ancestors had with their relatives. In the case of the language department I spoke with for this project, having Anishinaabemowin classes readily available to the community during the COVID-19 pandemic was incredibly vital to community members who were isolated alone and needed that form of relationship building.

The journey that I speak of encapsulates all these themes and ideas, and differs for each person; one theme of the journey may be much more important to them than another. Alice (a pseudonym for one of my participants) speaks about how certain forms of remote or hybrid learning work best for those on certain learning journeys. For example, those who are in the class to be able to learn and engage with their community members, fully remote learning is projected to continue to work for them. Those who have a desire to teach the language or be involved in ways that go beyond learning for only themselves, they will eventually need more than only online learning. As she stated:

I think definitely if someone's trying wants to become a language teacher definitely would have to be more in-person and meeting with people to get that experience and to hear it, in-person with a fluent speaker. Other people might be okay with still being

virtual, be they're still hearing it, they're still seeing fluent speakers. (Alice, interview, 2-7-22, p. 18-19)

This interview excerpt from Alice highlights the beauty of language journeys, and that teachers themselves are cognizant of them and wish to honor their students language decisions during their journeys.

My language journey has been influenced by the work done here but has also been in motion my whole life. I have been learning my language my entire life, since I was born and given my name. I attended language classes with my mother as a child, learning my numbers, colors, and animal words as my mother and other community members were learning far more complex concepts. While not a language nest or immersion, I know that being around my language as a child through these classes and summer camps was incredibly influential in my connection to Anishinaabemowin and my passion for the education of my language today. My grandfather, Victor Kishigo, was heavily involved in the early stages of language education in my community and it was his life's mission to make sure my generation would have the opportunity to learn Anishinaabemowin. Due to his work and the influence the language had over me as a child, I feel a deep responsibility to continue language education and revitalization as well as contribute to my community through this research.

When I explain my position in the language community and my place within my language journey, I have always said that I am a “life-long learner of Anishinaabemowin.” My language journey began before I was born, as my family has always been involved in keeping our language a part of the culture and the community. My parents chose my Anishinaabemowin name, before my birth, and in turn aided in setting me on the journey that I presently find myself on. I will be learning Anishinaabemowin for the rest of my life, with no place I feel adequate

enough to stop learning. I will keep learning to connect with my ancestors, to build relationships with my community, and to bring me closer to my culture and the land. Nothing compares to the feeling of hearing your language spoken, which is why language is so important and why the journey shall continue.

One piece that I have found that resonates between my research for this project and prior research is that it takes an incredible amount of determination and dedication to Anishinaabemowin to learn it under such stressful and unpredictable circumstances. That is dedication to your own language journey, and if you are participating in the production of the classes – like the participants all are – this also requires immense dedication to the learning journeys of others. This then creates community building. Learning your language with your community enhances your abilities and connection to the language itself.

Finally, I speak about being a lifelong learner and that our language journeys are never ending because there is never a point one can reach where their journey ends. Even when one enters the spirit world, they are still connected to us here through our shared knowledge of the language and through hearing us speak it. Learners of other languages, those that are not in danger, may gauge fluency as the final destination on their learning journey. For learners of Anishinaabemowin, fluency is not how you gauge learning. We gauge learning by the journey you take with your community. Even when one was raised speaking Anishinaabemowin before English, we do not call them fluent speakers. These Anishinaabemowin speakers are often called “first language speakers,” which highlights that fluency is not relevant and that they originally thought and learned in Anishinaabemowin before English was made necessary by various acts of colonialism and assimilation. Learning is based on the reasons why you are learning, why Anishinaabemowin is important to your life, and where it fits in within your life. The

determination to keep learning and learn through hardships makes it clear that one's language journey is important to them. The question, "Why is language learning so important?" has come up many times throughout my work, and the answer can be found in thinking about language journeys.

Significance of the Study

As shown above, I am deeply connected to this research and the participants of this project. I am very much indebted to my language, all prior research and education done around it, and to the educators and learners of Anishinaabemowin. I know that my research is only a fraction of what can and will be done involving Anishinaabemowin and technology, but I hope to have it be a help to those learning and living within the realm of revitalization. Knowing the history of technology within Anishinaabemowin classes and how that implementation worked in a non-pandemic world, as well as how it is currently working in practice today are necessary for moving forward with each new technology that is born and for new classes to introduce and successfully use technology. This research answers some of those questions since I spoke with educators who have handled these things first hand. I am very humbled and excited to have been able to do this research, to have the opportunity to speak and listen to my participants and lifelong teachers, and learn about new learning technologies. I was inspired by the shift to Zoom learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which led me to be curious about how technology, in various capacities, has worked for or created problems for language classes and educators. If what I produced with this project can answer any questions that someone has about technology and their community's language, then I will have more than accomplished my research goals. If it can alleviate even one problem that a single community is facing when thinking about introducing technology, then I will be very proud of my work.

Overview of Thesis Chapters

In Chapter I, I introduced the project and the context for the research, including my own positionality and interest in this issue. I acknowledged that “technology” means something different to each person, and defined what technology means for this research. I briefly introduced the conceptual framework and methods used during research, and the notion of “language journey(s),” which I view as an undercurrent that not only motivates this work, but courses through the findings and the thesis as a whole. In this chapter I have also discussed the study’s significance. I then move on in Chapter II to discuss the key conceptual anchors for this study and work on language revitalization, community language programs, and the relationship between language and identity. In Chapter III, I explain the study’s methodology, and I present an analysis of findings in Chapter IV. I discuss conclusions and implications in Chapter V and conclude with an Epilogue that highlights the love and hope Anishinaabemowin teachers have for the relationship between language learning and learning technologies that they will have moving forward.

CHAPTER II: CONCEPTUAL FRAMING AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Framing

Two overarching conceptual frameworks from American Indian and Indigenous studies inform this study: Tribal Critical Race Theory (Brayboy, 2005) and decolonizing, Indigenous-centered approaches to research by and for Indigenous peoples, as articulated by Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) and Shawn Wilson (2008). Tribal Critical Race Theory, as explained by Lumbee researcher Bryan Brayboy (2005), shows that colonization and white supremacy are at the root of the U.S.'s relations with tribal nations. This has led to assimilation – including during the boarding school era – and subsequent language erasure. Tribal nations have the right and the desire to self-determination, which can include educational practices such as language learning. Understanding the colonial structures of education and society are needed to educate and revitalize correctly. Finally, Brayboy (2005) said, “Stories are not separate from theory; they make up theory and are, therefore, real and legitimate sources of data and ways of being” (p. 430). The inclusion of stories in theory is key to Anishinaabemowin language research and analysis. Anishinaabe learn through story and conversation, so I could not have completed this project without including and respecting this understanding.

In the introduction chapter of Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (2012), she shared valuable insight into how to go about research as an Indigenous person completing research with Indigenous people, particularly their own people. Smith said,

A growing number of these researchers define themselves as Indigenous, although their training has been primarily within the Western academy and specific disciplinary methodologies. Many Indigenous researchers have struggled individually to engage with

the disconnections that are apparent between the demands of research, on one side, and the realities they encounter amongst their own and other Indigenous communities, with whom they share lifelong relationships, on the other side. (p. 5).

I come from both worlds that Smith underlines; I am from an Indigenous community and at the same time I have a Western education. That struggle is important to my study and one that I worked hard to keep in mind during my interviews and observations. Especially so, because some of the participants I worked with are people I have known for years, which means I had to consider how our relationship and their views. In addition, my education may frame their responses and reactions to my questions.

Respect is vital in Indigenous communities; Opaskwayak Cree researcher Shawn Wilson's (2008) book *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods* explores how respect is woven into Indigenous methods and practices. Wilson stated that “Indigenous methodology must be a process that adheres to relational accountability. Respect, reciprocity, and responsibility are key features of any healthy relationship and must be included in an Indigenous methodology,” (p. 77). Building and sustaining respect between researcher and participant as well as remembering the responsibility that I have as a researcher was influential in how I asked questions and the direction that many of my conversations took. Respect for people, language, tradition, and the Earth are all so vital to Indigenous cultures, that Indigenous research would not work without them. I think this is especially true for language learning because most of the knowledge comes from our elders and learning from them is a gift and a privilege. We have these languages because of the resilience and determination of our ancestors to survive even within programs and systems designed for them to fail and to lose their language. The concept and theory of resilience and its relation to Indigenous studies and languages will undergird my

project. As ongoing discussions within the field of Indigenous Studies indicate, all researchers must understand that the data and information gathered in our fieldwork is not ours, but the real history and livelihoods of others. Even though I had prior relationships with the people I worked with, I tried my best to position myself outside of this immediate context during our conversations as to not influence or guide any answers. I had to work to understand that even though this data may have to do with me in one way or another, that it is coming from someone else and it is their intellectual and cultural property.

Literature Review: Technology and Indigenous Language Revitalization

The scholarly literature on Indigenous language revitalization and education is vast and growing (see, e.g., Hinton & Hale, 2001 for foundational work in the field, and Hinton, Huss, & Roche, 2018, for a more recent update on language revitalization for endangered languages worldwide). In this literature review I focus specifically on research and scholarship on learning technologies in Indigenous education and language revitalization, as well as how language communities have adapted to language learning in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. There is significant literature on the inclusion of various technologies in Indigenous language education, mainly surrounding the use of websites to gather information or to produce learning materials. While scholarship focused on remote language learning is rather new at the time of this writing, this also means that it is an exciting time to be entering into this research.

The use of technology in Indigenous language education has seemingly limitless possibilities and positive aspects. Linguist Tracey McHenry (2002) claimed that using technology has a great importance, “Native languages continue to be viewed as remnants from America's past and not as an active part of its future. A primary way of asserting utility and value and an orientation toward the future in today's world is the skillful use of technology” (pp. 107-

8). At the time of publication almost two decades ago, McHenry's article concretely addresses the possible positives and negatives that accompany technology in language education, which continue to be relevant today. McHenry sets a comprehensive foundation for contemporary research pertaining to technology uses in Indigenous language education and revitalization. The analysis of technology uses as a bridge into being accepted as a part of contemporary society suggests an opportunity for Indigenous people as a whole that I had not yet considered prior to conducting this study.

Hawaiian language revitalization scholar Candace Galla discusses the relationship between technologies and language in the (2009) book chapter "Indigenous Language Revitalization and Technology From Traditional to Contemporary Domains." She highlighted the "Hawaiian Renaissance," a period of time during the 1970s when revitalization of her language began taking off. It is critical to look towards Hawaiian language revitalization programs in this thesis because they have laid the groundwork that inspires many other Indigenous communities. Galla cataloged the progression of technologies, showing the high levels of interest in the language as well as including technology in language education, "Hawaiian television programs, radio, cassette tapes, audio books, CDs, DVDs, web-based products, on-line dictionaries, web radio stations, local news station, language websites, movies, distance learning classes (i.e., Kulāiwi and Niuolahiki), search engine, electronic bulletin board system (Leokī), electronic library (Ulukau), music sites (i.e., Huapala) and audio podcasts" (p. 169). Much like this thesis, Galla acknowledges the difficulties and apprehension surrounding the use of technology in Hawaiian language learning. She stated that, "within the last decade, the Hawaiian language has found its way and place on the Internet" (p. 172). Originally the inspiration for immersion classes, this research highlights the work that Hawaiian language

speakers are doing to ensure its continued success, which includes the many different technologies above. Their continued success shows other language communities that using technology will advance their language learning, even through the challenges and skepticism.

“Designing Indigenous Language Revitalization” by Indigenous education and learning sciences scholars Mary Hermes, Megan Bang, and Ananda Marin (2012), examines the use of technology for language revitalization in urban communities for the Ojibwe, or Anishinaabe, language. The authors research how technology opens the door to more academic and cultural inclusion, which is necessary for this study as learners live away from their home language communities. Several types of language revitalization methods are covered, most notably language immersion schools, which they defined as: “using the Indigenous language for all communication and all content taught, or 100 percent total immersion” (p. 386). Immersion is well known in the revitalization world, and its successes are hard to ignore (see, e.g., chapters on immersion in Hinton & Hale, 2001, and Hinton et al., 2018). (The participants in the present study are part of an immersion program, discussed in the Findings chapter.) The authors then go on to describe Ojibwe Movie Camps: “We developed original content through a participatory community process, creating short videos with audio and rerecorded audio, transcripts and translations, grammatical references, and additional information about the language” (p. 392). Their process of semi-scripting certain scenarios included working with first language speaking elders to create engaging and educational language using stories through film. The movies produced at these camps created more opportunities for use of the language at home, which relates to my finding that technology use brings about more opportunity for the language to have a place in the home life of Anishinaabe families.

Another foundational piece of scholarship that informs my research is “Ojibwe Language Revitalization, Multimedia Technology, and Family Language Learning” by Mary Hermes and Kendall A. King (2013). The authors discussed urban Indians and their needs surrounding language revitalization while they are displaced from their tribal homelands, “In part due to the Indian Affairs Relocation policy (1953–1960), many Ojibwe have grown up in urban areas” (p. 127). The Urban Relocation program was an allegedly “voluntary” initiative by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, ostensibly to assimilate Native peoples into mainstream culture and create a larger American work force. However, the program was part of the federal “termination” policy that sought to terminate treaty-protected federal trust responsibilities, including rights to education and other services, and to make land available to white settlers and corporate interests. Upon moving into the cities from their communities, Native people struggled and faced unemployment (Fixico, 1986). This program was a major cause of language loss and continues to impact people and communities today. Understanding why so many Anishinaabe people (and Indigenous people in the U.S. in general) live away from their communities and reservations is necessary to understand one of my main findings: that technology and remote learning allows those far from their homelands – and those on their homelands but unable to attend in-person classes – a new opportunity to begin their language studies.

These contemporary opportunities to engage in remote learning may have the COVID-19 pandemic to thank. “Virtual Learning Is Helping Indigenous Languages Fight off Extinction” is a web article for *One Zero* (2020) by Anishinaabe author Lindsay VanSomeren. The article discussed how the pandemic has created much more opportunities for those living off their ancestral lands to learn their language from first speakers, as she herself is taking classes from a teacher in Michigan while based in Washington State. VanSomeren's article is a personal and

informative report on the state of virtual learning due to COVID-19, explaining the immense opportunity it has provided but also notes the lack of internet that can be found on reservations, she explained that “just over half of Native Americans living on reservations had access to broadband internet, compared with 83% of non-Native people,” (VanSomeren, 2020). This creates both new chances for urban Indians and problems for those on the reservation, which is an unfortunate paradox. VanSomeren ends the article by addressing the loss in tribal communities due to the virus. We must continue our language learning journeys for those who have moved into the spirit world and continue to use our languages as a way to reach out to them.

In Leanne Hinton and Ken Hale’s *The Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice* (2001), Laura Buszard-Welcher’s chapter, “Can the Web Help Save My Language?” was written while the internet was still taking off. Now more than two decades old, the chapter is years out of date, yet still quite relevant. The chapter gives a sense of the development of the field, examining the functions and reasons for creating “endangered” language websites. This was a very interesting chapter that dissects multiple webpages of this sort, down to the percentages of how often specific things are successfully used, like audio, community information, and text (p. 334). Buszard-Welcher talked about “cool” websites and technology, equating “cool” with new and useful. Examples of what Buszard-Welcher described as “cool technology” are: imbedding audio or video of the language being spoken into a website, having a live chat to provide interaction between language learners, and having these things be free and accessible (p. 337). These online components are found often in present day online language learning, showing that these are the pillars of a functioning language website. Looking at Buszard-Welcher’s chapter laid out the historical context for revitalization online, highlighting

how far technology has come since 2001 but how we are still depend on the technology she was impressed by.

Linguistic anthropologist Paul Kroskrity explains the journey of creating a CD-ROM in collaboration with Western Mono speakers in his (2017) chapter, ““We” (+inclusive) or Not to “We” (-inclusive): the CD-ROM Taitaduhaan (Our Language) and Western Mono Future Publics.” The CD-ROM was produced after Kroskrity and his research associates worked on a dictionary from the notes and information of first language Mono speaker and elder Rosalie Bethel. The dictionary ended up being difficult for community members to use because they were not used to seeing Mono in written form. This led to the CD-ROM, which contained pronunciations of each vowel and consonant, some of which are not found in English and were not easy to learn just by looking at the symbols on paper, much like Anishinaabemowin. The CD-ROM also gave the opportunity to showcase verbal art, which included stories, song, and a prayer – learning technologies not covered in this thesis, but exciting prospects for Anishinaabemowin looking forward. Since the platform was interactive, the audience could choose how much detail and information they wanted (p. 90). After several years of work, the CD-ROM was released in 2002, and due to the nature of technology was only applicable to the current software until about 2007. This example from Kroskrity and Western Mono speakers showcases how technology grants language learners new opportunities to hear their language spoken and how learning technologies can be used to enhance their language journey.

Summary

This chapter reviewed two separate kinds of literatures, the more conceptually oriented literature by Indigenous scholars Brayboy, Smith, and Wilson, and research specific to my study on the past and present technological uses within Indigenous language and Indigenous

educations. The ideas shared by Brayboy, Smith, and Wilson center on the right to self-determination and sovereignty, the theory-laden qualities of Indigenous stories, and the centering of Indigenous research in relationality, respect, reciprocity, and responsibility. Those ideas can all find themselves in relation to using technology and the opportunities shared in the technology literature review. Firstly, using technology to a community's advantage and making the best decision possible for your community is using your Nation's sovereignty. Using technology in Anishinaabemowin classes is an assertion of self-determination and sovereignty and creating opportunities for future generations to be connected to their culture through their language. Using technology to achieve the community's language revitalization and reclamation goals is an act of self-determination. As McHenry states, Indigenous people are often forced to stay in the past, where technology does not exist. Using technologies to better our communities and work against the colonial forces of the board schools is an act of resistance and asserting ourselves into the present day, as sovereign nations.

The stories I heard from participants through the course of this research were inspiring, educational, and connected to our culture. Without the technologies used to connect us, I would not have been able to hear them at this moment. The stories told to me in our interviews inform my research project and are theory, as Brayboy states. Sharing stories through technology like Zoom classes or online learning portals is theory. Having respect for those using technology is key for its success. Respecting those teaching using technology under challenging conditions as well as respecting those who are new to technology usage makes learning more collaborative and potential for overall success. In the following chapter, I incorporate these literatures to contextualize the methods I used to carry out this study and analyze the results.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Overarching Methodological Framework

This is primarily an interview study that can also be conceived as a case study of technology uses in one Indigenous community seeking to revitalize and sustain its language. In doing this research, my goal is to prioritize the voices of my participants. Keeping their stories and experiences at the center of this work is very important to me. Here, I look towards “Critical Indigenous Research Methodologies” (CIRM) by Bryan Brayboy et al. (2012). CIRM is a methodology that keeps Indigenous ways of being and relating at its center. CIRM keeps the main concerns of Indigenous people at the forefront as well as understanding that those concerns may be different from what we are taught to be concerned about in Western education (p. 434). The Anishinaabe way of teaching is through stories, which differs from a Westernized form of learning. Using a CIRM framework in this study emphasizes that all forms of knowledge and education are effective and authentic. For example, Hermes and King (2013) place Anishinaabemowin into family homes, showing how using language technology together in the home can make the use of Anishinaabemowin more “familiar, family-based, and intimate” (p. 138). This led me to understand and plan interview questions around how beneficial Zoom classes and other learning technologies are for learning from home. Bringing the language back into the home is a full circle moment as intergenerational transmission in family homes is where language was originally taught.

I came to my research with an asset-based lens rather than a deficit-based one, meaning I intentionally searched for the positives rather than the negatives in participants accounts. Here I gather support from a wide range of scholarly literature. Z Nicolazzo, for example, a scholar of gender identities in postsecondary education, emphasized that we should focus on “individual

and community strengths rather than deficiencies” (2017, p. 41). In my own work I have come to understand that centering Indigenous voices and the voices of my participants go hand in hand with focusing on individual and community assets. Without focused and personal testimony, the necessary information from participants would not be as clear as I wanted it to be. I needed their stories to be central due to the cultural significance of stories in Anishinaabe culture and language, which is why I spoke to the participants' about their language journeys and their relationships with technology. Highlighting the strengths of the usage of technology helps us move forward in a positive direction.

Research Context and Researcher Positionality

This study took place over approximately six months, between late fall 2021, and late spring 2022. The physical site of the study was an Anishinaabe community of approximately 4,000 located in the Midwest of the United States. Two study participants (all described more fully below) were enrolled members of this tribal nation, while the third was enrolled in a neighboring community. The three participant all have varying roles in the language community. The virtual site of the study was a Zoom platform in which I conducted in-depth interviews with participants.

Also important to contextualizing this study is the language class in which each of my three participants was involved. This Anishinaabemowin class is for community members of this tribal nation, neighboring communities, and non-Indigenous allies who are interested in the language of the land they live on. Anyone from the community is welcomed and encouraged to begin their language journey. The class meets weekly over Zoom – prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, they met in-person. There are approximately fifteen to thirty students who attend on a given week, many adults joined by younger members of their family. The class is mostly for

beginners; the content covered ranges from colors, numbers, weather, self-introductions, and common phrases and gradually becomes more complicated with longer sentences. In the winter and spring of 2021, I conducted a pilot study concerning how COVID-19 was impacting Anishinaabemowin language classes (Baker, 2021). That study involved this same community class, and I completed observations of the class. These observations, as well as selected interview data from the prior study, are included in the presentation of findings and provide a source of triangulation for the three interviews conducted for this study.

My positionality within this study and future work is very complicated. As Frederick Erickson suggests in his (2008) chapter, “Inappropriate Closeness in Fieldwork?: A View from Anthropology of Education,” I have become well versed in “the fine art of switching hats” (p. 20) – in this case from language learner to language researcher, and from someone with a close relationship with each participant to one who is a listener and learner. While this can be both a blessing and a curse, the most important piece of advice I learned from Erickson is that closeness is necessary and our positionality is never fixed, but always changing. I plan to use my relationships with this language and with participants, and hope to reciprocate that relationship back with the completion of this thesis.

Appendix B contains the consent forms that I emailed to each participant prior to beginning our interviews. The consent form was sent to participants to look over after they showed interest in being a part of this project, and after looking over the form would agree to participate or not. I selected my participants based on their participation in Anishinaabemowin language classes and their roles in the language community. Based on my positionality and the fact that I have known my participants for several years, I knew they would be great interviewees

and reached out to them over email explaining my project. They were all interested and gave their consent to be interviewed and included in the project.

Interview Protocol and Analysis Strategies

As a qualitative study, I wanted this project to be about the participants and focus on their lived experiences and their language journeys. Qualitative research scholars Sharon M. Ravitch and Nicole Mittenfelner Carl (2021) defined qualitative studies as “research processes to interpret the ways that humans view, approach, and make meaning of their experiences, contexts, and the world” (p. 4). Learning from Ravitch and Carl’s definition, I knew that my participant’s stories and opinions had to be the core of this work. To hear those thoughts and feelings, I knew that I had to conduct personal interviews where I kept their voice at the center of the questions and comments.

This study consists of interviews conducted over Zoom. The interviews were based on Irving Seidman's (2019) “three-part interview series,” which includes: (1) a focused life history, (2) details of experience, and (3) reflection on meaning (pp. 21-24). Additionally, I included interview quotes and notes from virtual observations of the classes that my interview participants are involved in, which were conducted in 2021 for a prior project, and contributed to the main findings for this project. In the Zoom interviews, I asked all three participants the same series of interview questions, which can be found in Appendix A. Those questions were divided into the three sections as inspired by Seidman (2019), and all three sections were explained prior to beginning the interview. Participants were notified of the change in theme when we would begin a new section. Each interview was approximately forty-five minutes to an hour long.

To analyze my data, I started with open coding, looking at any patterns I saw in the interviews and what the main ideas that each participant had. Qualitative researcher Johnny

Saldaña (2021) described open coding as a process that “breaks down qualitative data into discrete parts, closely examines them, and compares them for similarities and differences... It is an opportunity for you as a researcher to reflect deeply on the contents and nuances of your data and to begin taking ownership of them” (p. 148). I feel that I had the most success with open coding and I found all six themes that are discussed in the Findings chapter with this process. I added depth to my open coding by also using emotion coding. Saldaña (2021) defines emotion coding as labeling “the feelings participants may have experienced” (p. 159). In doing this, I found that all the emotions I was coding fit within the themes found from open coding. That affirmed that the main themes I found were reflective of what my participants were telling me. Saldaña (2021) stated that, “Since emotions are a universal human experience, our acknowledgement of them in our research provides deep insight into the participants' perspectives, worldviews, and life conditions. Virtually everything we do has accompanying emotions” (p. 160). It was important to dive deeply into my data – participants’ stories and experiences – through emotion coding because language is so connected to our identities that it is often an emotional topic (Kroskrity & Field, 2009). I wanted to see how technology fits within emotional responses and connections in online language classes, into the processes and routines of the class, and what descriptions emerged when looking at these processes. Using open and emotion coding brought out the main ideas and highlighted the emotions that are found within each of them. The emotions exhibited from the participants are woven throughout the project and are shown within each theme.

Introduction of Participants

My three participants are all Anishinaabekwewok; Anishinaabe women. I had some form of a relationship with all of them prior to my study and that made the process very smooth. I

believe that my rapport with them and our mutual love for the language enhanced the study more than I could have hoped. They all have varying levels of Anishinaabemowin abilities, and find themselves in different parts of their learning journeys. While their levels of Anishinaabemowin proficiency may differ, they are deeply involved in their tribal community and have committed their lives to keeping our language alive and thriving for the future generations. They are each involved in teaching in some capacity, whether that be facilitating the class by running the remote sections and making sure it remains successful, or creating curriculum, or being the first language speaker teacher. All three participants are referred to by a pseudonym that they chose for themselves.

Alice is a community Anishinaabemowin teacher and I have had the opportunity to learn from her and to work with her as a language department intern. I have known Alice for many years and consider her one of my mentors. She is a mother, grandmother, teacher and friend to all those who know her. She is greatly involved in gatherings, traditional ceremonies, and helping out the community. She grew up in her tribal community and has been involved in pow wow and Miss Indian competitions, showcasing her dedication to her culture and her connection to her Anishinaabe identity. We do not gauge language journeys based on fluency or any Western idea of hierarchical knowledge, so Alice is not what outsiders would consider “fluent.” That being said, she has been on her language journey for the majority of her life and can translate most things and converse in Anishinaabemowin as much as she pleases. It is inspiring and shows the community what is possible when you are dedicated to the language. During our Zoom interview, Alice joined me virtually from her living room in her home, located on Anishinaabe homelands. Prior to starting our interview, we caught each other up on our lives since it had been some time since we spoke. We talked about the stresses occupying our minds as

well as the things we had been finding joy in at the moment. It was a lovely chat before discussing our language, which is something we have bonded over and means so much to both of us.

Tenes BlueSky works at the same language department as Alice and Maanyaan. Tenes BlueSky began working there in late 2019, and I have known her through other community members and being at the same gatherings. Tenes BlueSky is a mother and family member, friend and community member. She is a student as well, participating in the community classes that she also facilitates through her job. She is behind the scenes of most of the classes and programs discussed across this project and makes sure that there is communication between department and student. Tenes BlueSky makes sure that all involved are on the “same page” (literally and figuratively) with the technology being used. Her perspective of both being a student and staff is a unique voice on the introduction of technology, since she can speak from all sides and understands the hard effort by both parties – learners and teachers – to make language learning work online. Tenes BlueSky joined me over Zoom during her lunch break while at work. Since she was in the office, we talked about what it was like going back to in-person work after a very long work-from-home order for not only the language department, but most tribal offices. She was excited but slightly hesitant to look too far into the future of working in-person, since so much is still unknown.

Maanyaan is a first language Anishinaabemowin speaker from Canada, who was hired by this tribe to teach the language. Hiring first language speakers from outside the tribal community happens often, as the number of first language speakers is on the decline. The opportunity to learn from a first language speaker is not to be taken for granted, as many do not have that chance. Maanyaan is an elder, who carries a vast knowledge of Anishinaabe customs

and traditions. While she is a citizen of another tribal nation, she is a part of this community and participates in gatherings and events. Many language events are put on by the language department that she runs as the resident first language speaker. Having the opportunity to hear her stories and hear her speak our language is one of the greatest gifts and I am so lucky to have grown up knowing her. Maanyaan's Zoom interview took place in the morning, before she participated in a weekend-long virtual Anishinaabemowin immersion program. She joined me from a desk in her home office area, and we caught up. It felt like no time had passed since I spoke to her last.

The tribal language department in which the participants were involved was established to provide language opportunities for generations to come. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the department had regular in-person community and community college classes, taught in several high schools in the area, and provided learning materials for all kinds of camps and organizations for all ages. Since the world moved to a remote setting in the context of COVID-19, the community classes have moved to Zoom, where the participation has grown greatly. The department has been hard at work for several years to make an online curriculum to place in the area high schools so it can be taught at each one, rather than the teachers traveling across the region each day. Due to the high school online movement, the department was already involved in online learning. Moving the community classes online was a result of the pandemic but, as the interview data show, has been a great community builder and connected many people to each other, their shared heritage, and their language. I recognize my privilege in this research because I have many possible contacts for this work. I recognize that having prior relationships with my participants is rare and should not be taken for granted.

Summary

The methodological framework that grounds this project focuses on Critical Indigenous Research Methodologies that center Indigenous voices and knowledge. It is important to acknowledge that Anishinaabemowin originally was taught at home within the family, as Hermes and King (2013) explain. I discussed the lens through which I approach my research, looking at the positives and how language learning can benefit from the situations being discussed. My positionality is something that influences this project greatly and it is necessary to discuss this along with the other frameworks upon which this study is based. The interview protocol discussed in this chapter and included in Appendix A was used for all three interviews – adapting Seidman’s (2019) three-part series to learn about the participants’ language journeys and relationships to technology. The processes of open coding and emotion coding unlocked the six main themes of this study. Each of the three participant’s voices shine through in this project, and it was important to give each their own in-depth introduction. As Brayboy et al. (2012) explains, we need to keep Indigenous voices at the center. Here, I have tried to provide some biographical and sociolinguistic context for each of those voices.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS – “WE’RE SO RESILIENT AS ANISHINAABE PEOPLE”

It became very clear while doing open coding that several key themes resonate from this study. These six themes continued to show themselves throughout the open coding and emotion coding process. These themes – Accessibility, Pros and Cons of Language Learning Technologies, Community and Connection to Culture, Remote Learning versus In-person Learning, Technological Difficulties, and Opportunity – all are interconnected. Together, they show the importance of language learning and help explain the role of technology within contemporary Anishinaabemowin language education. Several smaller themes were woven throughout each of the six themes and the entire project as a whole; these are discussed at the end of this chapter. While all themes reflect different facets of language learning and technology, they share similarities and showcase the dedication of the participants and importance placed on Anishinaabemowin education in this community.

Accessibility

There is a necessary conversation about access that should accompany discussions of technology usage in any context, but especially when speaking about technology with Indigenous communities. How accessible are the commonly used technologies, in terms of physical availability to people and in terms of how easy are these technologies to use and learn with? Placing technology in the midst of one's language journey is a drastic change, especially when thinking about how Zoom classes were introduced due to social distancing protocols of the COVID-19 pandemic, which officially began in the United States in early 2020. As reported by NBC news, tribal internet rates are lacking:

According to an American Indian Policy Institute analysis of federal data, just 67 percent of tribal lands in the continental U.S. have access to broadband internet, with the majority

only having access to broadband speeds considered by the Federal Communications Commission to be less than 'minimally acceptable.' (Edelman, 2021)

This relates directly to what Alice spoke about when looking towards the future of technology in Anishinaabemowin education. She said matter-of-factly, “There has to be equal access to technology. Tribes need to really strive to make sure that all homes, all native homes have technology that you can rely on. I know that sounds kind of ridiculous because there are some homes that don't even have water and running water...” (Alice, interview, 2-7-22, p. 27).

Without stable internet access, those living in remote areas like reservations and tribal communities are a step behind the rest of the country in terms of access to programs and services in general, but most striking would be those services that aid in cultural connections and language education during times where we cannot be as together as we once were.

Alice spoke openly about various aspects of accessibility and how it manifests itself into the world of Anishinaabemowin education and the usage of technology by Indigenous people. The first instance was in speaking about accessibility in terms of how many learners there are, what kind of materials we have, how we are able to teach given the circumstances. Learning Anishinaabemowin is not like learning French or Spanish. Alice spoke about her time working at the legendary Waadookodaading Anishinaabemowin school, her first real instance as a teacher in a classroom setting:

It wasn't like a regular school where you had your full-time administrator and people who took care of that stuff, and then people who took care of your curriculum. It's not like you could order a book and order a whole curriculum set of math. That's not available. (Alice, interview, 2-7-22, p. 4)

This lack of available resources has always been a struggle with Indigenous languages, and is even more present as we enter the technological era and see so many different dictionaries, games, and websites for many other languages. Anishinaabe people have had to create their own online resources like dictionaries and games, which are rather successful, but was still something that we had to make accessible for ourselves.

Along those same lines, the process of making sure the technology used in Anishinaabemowin classes is accessible is an important aspect of entering the technological era. How do we go about doing this? Alice considered this question:

So anything that's out there, that's common, Facebook, you can link, a lot of our links are on Facebook. We have a Twitter, I think we have an Instagram, I'm not sure. So yeah. Basic social media and basic user-friendly programs out there already, we try to use. Anything else gets too complicated where you might have to get a certificate at a community college. You know what I mean? That's great to have, but not everyone has that, not everyone has that advantage or that... That's not part of their job or something. So we try to make it where it's online, free, basic programs. (Alice, interview, 2-7-22, p. 9)

This becomes accessibility not just in terms of access to the internet or computers, but accessibility in the programs used. Alice spoke of this to make it known that community classes cannot use just any program “out there,” but have to make sure that the ways in which they teach the language with technology are easy to understand and use for all community members. Many of those who were less educated in technology and other elders were unable to understand how certain classroom programs worked. If more advanced forms of technology were used, many class members would be unable to participate and would have to stop learning their language or

find an alternative form of education. The language department in which all participants in this project work uses very accessible learning handouts and materials. I observed some of their classes for a prior project on the use of Zoom due to COVID-19 and noted that “The documents used by this department make the learning process more accessible. They are not intimidating, but colorful and well organized.” (observation, 1-25-21, p. 10). By keeping the materials and education programs easy to understand, it keeps the learning journey and process focused solely on the language and not on any other distraction.

Parallel to having access to learning materials, one should have access to being able to learn at their own pace. Accessibility for following your own language journey, not anyone else's and having the opportunity to learn when it is convenient for you is following your own journey. Alice spoke on that opportunity, proudly discussing what her language department has been doing:

Our director, her purpose and goal for the department is getting as much language out in the community as possible, and having those resources where they can practice anytime, anywhere. You could be at home and you finally get dinner done and dishes, whatever, and it's 9:00 at night. Now you could sit there for 10 minutes and practice your colors or weather or something like that. It's real, accessible. It's free open to the public. (Alice, interview, 2-7-22, p. 9)

The goal of having “as much language in the community as possible,” is possible when the department and community members collaborate on understanding what does and does not work for each learner. Under those same ideals, Alice discussed the ways to make educational content relatable and accessible, from a cultural perspective. She said, “... Using something and making it our own, and so it relates to our language learners” (Alice, interview, 2-7-22, p. 10). Making

learning relatable is to make it accessible, especially when looking at the cultural components of Anishinaabemowin. Learners of the language understand the cultural connections, so making that part of the learning experience is key.

That collaboration relates to the sense of community that comes from learning the language and being on your language journey. This involves access to the particular sense of community gained through language classes, especially relevant during strictly online ones during the pandemic when everyone was in lockdown. Alice shared:

... Now one of our biggest needs is community, and I feel like these online language classes are going to really... I think they're going to meet the expectations of what the community wants. Because, the community wants a daily functioning language. Now they'll have that on their computers at home, on their phone. We're reaching inside and it's in their homes now. So they could sit there on the laptop and let's say, a father and a son want to go over colors together, or numbers, they want to do a lesson together or they can sit there and press play and hear Anishinaabemowin and then they can stop it. Then they can say those words to each other. They can say it back to the screen. (Alice, interview, 2-7-22, p. 12)

This is also another instance of learning at one's own pace, and we see here how that is tied in with an overall sense of community and relationship building with those who are also on their own language journey.

In my conversation with another participant, Tenes BlueSky, we talked about how the usage of some educational programs online were deterring certain language learners. She mentioned a potential idea when looking forward on how to make the more complicated

technological aspects more accessible. She said that they have lost some learners because the technological aspects were too hard for them:

Which is kind of sad. So I don't know. If there's something we can do in that aspect to help them along in that area or not, there'd almost have to be a total separate class to get them acclimated to that type of online learning. And I don't know if that's something that, well, we really haven't even talked about it as a department, or if that's something that can be done through the education department... To bring them up to par so that they can take these classes through our department online. (Tenes BlueSky, interview, 3-16-22, p. 12)

The collaboration with community members to see what is and is not working is an example of working in real time to make learning more accessible. As the language department moves forward into incorporating more and more technology, finding new ways to make sure everyone can be involved is important.

The opportunity to listen firsthand to a first language speaker in real time is one of the most important aspects of accessibility brought upon by the remote learning environment. It is access to relating with one another by being able to see each other's faces and hearing and seeing a first language speaker in Anishinaabemowin. Alice explained this by showing me important it is to be able to actually see each other's faces through the screen, "But using programs like Zoom or Microsoft Team or something like that, where we're able to see each other and hear each other. So you can still would be able to see a fluent speaker and hear them at the same time, and then try to mimic them and copy them." (Alice, interview, 2-7-22, p. 10) I cannot stress enough how much of an incredible opportunity it is for Anishinaabemowin learners to be able to hear and see multiple first language speakers in Anishinaabemowin. This is one of the greatest

gifts that the remote learning era has given us. I interviewed Alice for my previous project looking specifically at Anishinaabemowin education and how that continued during the earlier days of the COVID-19 pandemic (Baker, 2021). She stressed the importance of hearing the language from first language speakers then, as well:

So, this virtual learning is providing that opportunity for Anishinaabe people to hear the language in the natural state before it's gone. And live, too, you know. Live, doing this live and not a recording. I think it's really turned into a key factor in language now, giving that opportunity to students. (Alice, interview, 2-5-21, lines 428-431)

This is especially true for the learners who were able to begin their journey because of the change to remote learning, who otherwise would not have that opportunity to hear a first language speaker, let alone multiple.

Accessibility is of the utmost importance when it comes to including technology in the teaching process of an Indigenous language. Making it available to all those who wish to learn, using programs that are easy to use and enhance the learning experience, and making it relatable to Anishinaabe culture are all ways to make the usage of technology accessible for language journeys. Honoring the wish to include all those who are interested in learning makes us consider how to ensure internet and computer accessibility in all Indigenous households. This must be done as we move forward into a great technological age as we consider the role that technology has and will play in Anishinaabemowin education.

Pros and Cons of Language Learning Technologies

As with any situation, those involved are looking at the pros and cons, examining and trying to understand the benefits and disadvantages. When speaking about the introduction and usage of technology within Anishinaabemowin education and learning, communities involved

have to reflect and consider the pros and cons moving forward. The three participants have varying language proficiencies, and this range in language proficiencies and language journeys is necessary to evaluate different perspectives on community language practices and the inclusion and influence of technology on those practices. Asking the participants of this project what the benefits and difficulties were was one of the first questions I posed, as it was the main research question, and that came with a multitude of answers and anecdotes. I phrased this question in two parts. The first was asking what role technology played in the Anishinaabemowin class or classes that the participant is involved in. The answers were relatively the same there, that technology usage is unavoidable and completely necessary during the unknown times that still remain with the COVID-19 pandemic. The answers to the second question were based on the Pros and Cons of technology and Anishinaabemowin. There were many of each, which is why this theme and the code itself contains the two together. There was a lot of reflection and comparing present day class to the past, where technology may not have been as present, which brought up many different kinds of pros and cons. Due to there being so many of both positive situations and frustrating or negative ones, the participants often spoke of them together or at the same rate as the other. Neither pros or cons overpowered the other, and often one was brought up as a counterpoint or a buffer to a harsh one. The theme of Pros and Cons is an answer to the following research questions that were listed above and in appendix A: the role of technology, the benefits and difficulties, the perceptions of stakeholders, and finally, the importance of language. The following are examples of pros and cons that exemplify that the theme is essential to this project and to the research questions.

I offer first some examples of the pros of technology for Anishinaabemowin learning, as expressed by participants. Anything that bolsters the learning of our language is seen as a

positive in my eyes and the eyes of my participants. The largest pro, or benefit, as described by the participants, is the opportunities gained from the usage of technology in language classes. When I asked Tenes BlueSky when technology became a big part of the classes that the department offered, she said it became a focal point with the rise of COVID-19 and lockdowns. In a time where the world was feeling alone and removed from the things they were used to doing, Anishinaabemowin classes provided a space to connect with one's community and brought new participation from those who were previously unable to participate during in-person classes. She noted, "I think we actually get more participation because of it and able to reach a broader audience. And it's opened up boundaries that we had with having it only in-person" (Tenes BlueSky, interview, 3-16-22, p. 3). Technology brought the classroom into the homes of those that could not attend the in-person community classes, and as Alice said, "I feel like we're reaching more students" (Alice, interview, 2-7-22, p. 11). Along with the chance to learn your language, the introduction of remote learning brought the opportunity to make your learning journey your own. Having the ability to learn from far away from your homelands or during your busy schedule was revolutionary to many language learners. Especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, it continues to provide the opportunity to keep yourself, family, and community safe. Alice discussed this with a great sense of relief:

For instance, my mother and my sister have very vulnerable autoimmune diseases. So them going out in public was never going to happen. Even before the pandemic, my mom was not coming out anywhere because for one she didn't want to drive. Two, it exhausted her. Then three, it was just risky with her catching anything, even a common cold. That took all that stress away. (Alice, interview, 2-7-22, p. 11)

To remove any stress from one's language journey is a remarkable gift and opportunity that we must consider before placing all classes fully in-person, when available.

While every community is blessed to have the first language speakers that they have, learners become accustomed to learning from one person's voice and teaching style. The usage of technology and the move towards remote learning offered the opportunity to learn from others outside your community and expand the participation and learn from others' experiences. Alice remarked, "So when I look at the positive things that technology has done with language and improving our outreach, it's pretty amazing when you see elders speaking" (Alice, interview, 2-7-22, p. 11). Having technology has made it possible to keep learning the language throughout the tumultuous past two years, solidifying the fact that the language is able to be taught through challenging times. In other words, there is a sense that the language will remain constant because we have technology. Maanyaan recalled, "They always say, 'If this wasn't here, we wouldn't have anything. We can't come where you're teaching because we're not allowed... At least we can go on computer and learn something'" (Maanyaan, interview, 2-18-22, p. 9).

There are many pros, as shown above, but work with technology that changes so quickly and often inevitably leads to frustrations. This highlights the "cons." To learn remotely and learn on the internet, which houses endless chances for distraction and entertainment, students need to have the discipline to not be distracted. Tenes BlueSky, who is also a student, spoke about weekend-long learning programs, which when in-person in the past, were great community gatherings full of food and good times. At the time of the study this was still not quite possible, and an equivalent experience could not be captured online. She noted this difference:

During [local immersion class title] weekends, because it's an all day class and then of course you're in the environment that you choose to be in, whether you're sitting in an

office or at home or at the coffee shop and of course there's distractions. So you just have to tell yourself to keep focused on the class and not let your mind wander into other places or doing other things while you're in class. (Tenes BlueSky, interview, 3-16-22, p. 10)

While technology and remote learning are a great way to learn Anishinaabemowin and connect to one's culture and community, many Native people throughout the U.S. still have trouble with reliable internet – an issue that illuminates the overlap between this theme and the theme of Accessibility. Speaking of this problem, Alice said, “Yeah. I think that's definitely one of the... I don't know if con is the right word, but one of the hard parts when we're talking about all the great things that come with using technology that then it's like, ‘Oh well, but wait’” (Alice, interview, 2-7-22, p. 14). Along those same lines, there are many community members who are not very tech savvy, causing trouble when it comes to joining the class or being able to use different online learning materials. Technological troubles add to the stresses of being a student and a teacher trying to help from a far. Maanyaan said, “But there are students who have a difficult time with technology. We have to kind of guide them through when they're stuck. They'll say, ‘I don't even know where that button is.’ And then we'll say, ‘Oh, it's on the very bottom.’ It's this, this, this. Yeah. So that takes a few minutes” (Maanyaan, interview, 2-18-22, p. 4).

Pros and cons often contradict each other, as they do in the above excerpts, but the interviews with participants also highlighted how sometimes pros and cons go hand in hand and often are comparable. I asked Tenes BlueSky if it is possible to learn Anishinaabemowin without being together and learning as a community doing traditional customs. She said that, “If you're talking about language in itself with nothing else attached to it, I would say yes. But along with

our language is that cultural component. And I don't think you're going to get that 100% when you're doing a Zoom class” (Tenes BlueSky, interview, 3-16-22, p. 12). Tenes BlueSky said that you can learn just with the online portion, but to gain the culture, we do need to be together experiencing our ceremonies and traditions as a community. Alice has a very similar perspective, reflecting, “I see technology as a tool. It still can be a hindrance though, because you’re not in-person speaking” (Alice, interview, 2-7-22, p. 10). She continued later, “But I think a majority of the learning could happen online. Definitely the practice, definitely the actual learning, but as far as practicing it with fluent speakers or teachers, I mean, that’s what I would say off top of my head, at least meet once a semester” (Alice, interview, 2-7-22, p. 17). Here we see the two sides of the coin, that some parts of the learning process are possible and some are not completely possible remotely.

In terms of looking at it from the perspective of a teacher or facilitator, Tenes BlueSky discussed how teaching online is a more drawn out process than when it was strictly in-person, “It was, I don't want to say hard to maneuver. It was just more steps that we had to take in order to get those lessons across to the students” (Tenes BlueSky, interview, 3-16-22, p. 4). There are more components in teaching remotely and including technology in ways that have never been done before. Alice reflected, “I still understand how it’s still not the same as in-person, but I mean, to me, lately looking at and developing online classes, I’m really seeing a lot of the pros outweighing the cons a little now” (Alice, interview, 2-7-22, p. 11).

If there is a lesson to be learned from this theme, it is that this perspective, of focusing on the positive and the progression of Anishinaabemowin education, promises to keep our language alive. The determination of these teachers and their students will keep our language moving forward and thriving in the technological age. These stories and feelings of participants involved

in the implementation and success of technology in Anishinaabemowin community education also show that this issue is ever changing and incredibly complex. It is important to highlight that while technology brings about incredible opportunities that were not possible without it, we are still missing out on some aspects of community learning when language learning is heavily technology based or completely remote. To move forward into a space where technology will be more and more present, we need to be able to harness these pros and understand and work with these cons to fully integrate technology into Anishinaabemowin and Indigenous language education and community classes.

Community and Connection to Culture

One cannot discuss Anishinaabemowin education or classes without understanding the cultural connections to language or how important community is to the learning process. This section will look at community and culture, each as their own standalone idea, and together as a theme. I decided to include them together as one theme in this project because community and culture most often go hand in hand. The sense of community necessary to make remote language learning successful is discussed in the interview excerpts below. Anishinaabe are a people who are best when they are together enjoying each other's company. Language classes have always been in a communal style until the COVID-19 pandemic. There can be no language without the culture. They are deeply interconnected, especially when considering the cultural connections that each word has to our ancestors and to the community. When looking at the bigger picture in terms of the role that technology plays in Anishinaabemowin learning, technology enables us to connect with our community throughout great hardship – including a global pandemic – and allows those far and wide to engage with their culture through language learning online. In terms of community and culture, technology highlights the importance of Anishinaabemowin and how

it is a constant part of these two concepts within Anishinaabe norms. Technology also takes away certain communal aspects of the past learning process, as well as not being able to host some cultural parts of the language that must be done in a face to face setting without devices.

I began Alice's interview by discussing when and why she began her language journey. Her particular journey has been that of a language teacher. I asked her when exactly she started incorporating the language into her life on a regular basis, or when she began her teaching language journey. She said, "I started to just teach to my daughter and I wanted to have that connection of language and culture with her knowing it her whole life, so I wanted it to be a natural part. Then I just wanted that for all Anishinaabe children, and youth and people" (Alice, interview, 2-7-22, p. 1). The journey began for Alice when she made the commitment to making Anishinaabemowin a constant part of her children's lives. A part that struck a chord with me was when she said "I wanted it to be a natural part," of her life. That is the ultimate goal when beginning the language education journey of young people. To have language be a regular, natural part of the communities' lives is making culture a top priority. Connecting language to the Anishinaabe identity highlights the importance of language to one's self. "There was always that connection before with identity, but with language, it just made it stronger because language I started to learn and felt was such a huge and strong part of who we are as an Anishinaabe" (Alice, interview, 2-7-22, p. 2). The language becomes a part of someone when they realize its deep connection with our culture and people. Alice spoke of this idea when she said, "I knew it belonged to me. I felt this instant attraction to it, that sound belongs with me. I belong with that sound. There was that whole mutual calling, so I knew that it was always the base of what I wanted to learn and go to school for" (Alice, interview, 2-7-22, p. 1-2). When looking at the importance of language to the participants I interviewed and understanding the thoughts of the

greater Anishinaabe community in general, this testifies to the relationship to identity and a feeling of belonging when speaking and hearing the language.

In what follows, I consider how technology is supporting the cultural and community aspect of Anishinaabemowin and how technology it simultaneously lacks or takes away from those aspects of the language journey. It is important to note the dedication and patience it takes for language educators to “roll with the punches,” that have come in the recent years, and being able to teach under quickly changing circumstances. Adapting previous teaching methods and integrating new forms of technology takes a certain level of commitment to not only one's own language journey, but to the language journeys of your entire community. Alice touched on this kind of adaptation when she said, “We try to really put our Anishinaabe spin on things, so our community can relate to it” (Alice, interview, 2-7-22, p. 9). The way that the language department does this is by taking popular games, an example she uses is *Jeopardy!*, and changes it to Anishinaabemowin words and phrases. Taking something most people are familiar with and putting a Native spin on it makes language learners of every level feel comfortable and included, especially when learning on a new platform can be nerve wracking at first.

Part of the work of making sure our language thrives is to have active records, which is now easier than ever with the technology at hand. Alice spoke about using technology to keep records of memories and stories. She mentioned how Anishinaabe used to be able to do that in more traditional ways, but that is almost impossible due to how technologically advanced the world is today.

So we have to record and document and make sure that these things are in memory, but not in a sense where it's in human memory. It has to be on memory where humans can access it now, to access those times how they were and to strive to keep those memories

alive. But it's too hard and almost impossible for us to live that way because we just...

The world is what it is now. It's modern and now we're in a pandemic and I believe that we're so resilient as Anishinaabe people that we've been able to keep as much as we can and keep that going. But we also have to accept new ways, and technology is one of those avenues where if we use it in the right way, we can really preserve a lot of things. (Alice, interview, 2-7-22, p. 27)

One of the most important things that came from this interview with Alice was the appreciation of the fact that if we embrace technology and use it in multiple ways, we as a people can move forward like never before in terms of cultural preservation, connection to community near and far, and educating the most community members the department ever has.

While technology is a tool in education and connecting to community members, it can also create a rift between language and both culture and community. One instance where this is true, but also created a moment for connection between community members, was when Tenes BlueSky explained how it was at the very beginning of using Zoom and introducing more technology into the community classes where it had not previously been.

There was a lot of dialogue between us teachers and the students. I went through it myself with other people that were more versed in Zoom than I was. Trying to talk us through where the buttons were on the screen, which ones to push, you click this, you'll see a dropdown come up. And this is the chat box was a big one, and being able to see the participants. Letting them in the room and that type of thing... So those were some of the obstacles that we had to go through and it was other people in the class helped out with that transition, not just us teachers or us facilitators, which was nice. (Tenes BlueSky, interview, 3-16-22, p. 4-5)

Learning the ins and outs of certain kinds of technology used in education was a space for more relationship building and coming together as a language community. Maanyaan noted a similar collaborative feeling that Tenes BlueSky mentioned: “There was lots of positive input from students... You got to edit at the beginning if you're making mistakes throughout it, so that you come up with a good lesson to give out” (Maanyaan, interview, 2-18-22, p. 13). That collaboration nods to the determination of not only the teachers and facilitators, but of the students who deeply want to learn their language despite difficult circumstances.

When asked about how the classes are functioning completely online, while understanding that in the past the classes and weekend immersion sessions were lively, group activities that would bring in language learners and speakers from across Anishinaabe territory, Tenes BlueSky reflected, “Our people, our community based people, we love to laugh. We cry together, we share food together, and that's something that you can't do really through a computer” (Tenes BlueSky, interview, 3-16-22, p. 12). It has been an adjustment to have to do these things over a computer screen during social distancing protocols. One day in the future, the department hopes to be able to have community classes in-person again, while still incorporating technology, but being able to laugh, eat, and bond together in-person. I then asked Tenes BlueSky if she thought that you could truly learn Anishinaabemowin without being in-person with one another and not being able to do traditional practices or be out in the community together. I asked this question to all participants and the answers were very similar. Tenes BlueSky said, “If you're talking about language in itself with nothing else attached to it, I would say yes. But along with our language is that cultural component. And I don't think you're going to get that 100% when you're doing a Zoom class” (Tenes BlueSky, interview, 3-16-22, p. 12). Her response honors everyone's different language journey while at the same time

acknowledging that for most, there is no language without the cultural component. As we move forward into more and more technology, the language department and the world, we will have to learn as we go on how to incorporate certain aspects when we can and how to have harmony with online teaching and in-person teaching. It is everyone's hope that soon we can return to those beautiful days of learning and laughing together, but for now language communities everywhere will continue to collaborate and keep their languages alive through whichever advantages using technology can give them.

Along that same line of thinking, Alice talked about how at this point in time, we have to learn to accept technology and use it to the best of our advantage.

I think we need to learn to live in both of those worlds of our Anishinaabe identity and keeping that, but then we can use these technology tools as well, and learning all this, furthering our education, but at the same time expressing our identity and keeping that alive. So there has to be a balance, and I think that's always going to be a challenge, is keeping that balance there. But we can do it. We are doing it, there are people that are doing it. (Alice, interview, 2-7-22, p. 27)

Alice and the rest of the department's understanding of the necessity of technology and the understanding of keeping Anishinaabe identity alive at the same time promises to bring the language department continued success. Living in both worlds, as Alice put it, is resilience in action and working to keep the language living for our next generations.

Remote Learning versus In-person Learning

Much like the pros and cons section of this project, the following section is something of a compare and contrast. By asking the benefits and disadvantages of technology in Anishinaabemowin community classes and overall education, participants then make

comparisons and most often highlighted the contrasts between in-person learning and solely remote learning. The research questions for this project are focused on technology in general, not just remote versus in-person learning, but due to the present situations, this topic was discussed the most. My prior project (Baker, 2021) focused on using Zoom for Anishinaabemowin community classes, and it was important for me to see how Zoom was working for them one year into the pandemic and revisit that two years into the pandemic. The discussions around remote learning versus in-person learning cover everything from materials used, teaching styles, and how to incorporate the feeling of community. There are opportunities and challenges that accompany the strictly remote learning that is taking place at the moment. Many of the comments from my participants touch on what is not possible when participating in only remote or virtual teaching. The following section is different segments of interviews with each participant where they compared and contrasted the two learning environments and how they measure up to each other.

One of the main differences that participants found in remote learning is the added duty of finding ways to include the cultural components of learning the language that were almost seamlessly integrated with in-person learning. Maanyaan spoke on this concept in our discussion:

When I first came here, I did a lot of outdoor activity. I could take my students out and talk about the environment and stuff like that. But now you have to post a picture up on the computer to talk about it. And even the games, we had outdoor games that we did with our students. We went outside and did them. So those kinds of things that you have to figure out and be creative. And even when you're doing, let's say, teachings. There are

some things that you have to do in-person. So you got to leave those things out. You can't put them out there. (Maanyaan, interview, 2-18-22, p. 9)

The differences are clearly laid out here by Maanyaan, and I could tell how much she missed those times, there is a certain longing in the way she spoke. There was then hopefulness in her voice when speaking about needing to be creative and finding new ways to teach the language and include our culture. An important point that should be focused on is that there will always be aspects of culture that cannot be shared online, as Maanyaan explained, such as certain sacred teachings. That is an obstacle that cannot be worked around or changed with time. There are certain aspects of remote learning that we must accept as they are and not create solutions for. Something can only be taught and transferred through person to person and will never be a part of the online learning process.

Within this same idea, excluding learning sacred teachings and cultural factors, I asked Maanyaan if people learn Anishinaabemowin without being there in-person and doing the traditional things, and being able to walk outside and look at everything, like she mentioned previously. She said,

Yeah. You can, because you can talk about it online, back and forth and then they can go and experience it out there... I had a student who did that. She said, 'After you talked about...' We talked about the climate and climate change and the environment. And she said, I went outside after and I went and experienced all of what you taught us. Yeah. So that was really good to hear from that student, to share that in class, so others can hear what she did. And maybe they'll use it too. (Maanyaan, interview, 2-18-22, p. 11)

The way that the student used Maanyaan's language lesson to go out and experience things in real time is inspirational and an example of the dedication and love language learners have for

their language and culture. Maanyaan then mentioned that she hopes other students will do the same and follow their fellow language learners' lead and take their lessons into the land and other aspects of their lives past the screen they are learning from. These examples from Maanyaan show stark differences in how we have to teach language now due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Tenes BlueSky noted this as well, and how weekend immersion programs had to change their format due to being fully remote. The immersion programs were grand, weekend long community events where everyone would gather and camp out together and immerse themselves fully in Anishinaabemowin. Tenes BlueSky reflected on these times: "We used to do different games. It wasn't all just storytelling. We had some parts that were games and people participated. That's a little bit harder to do on Zoom" (Tenes BlueSky, interview, 3-16-22, p. 10). She said that now, the most they can do on Zoom is storytelling, which is a great immersion method, but is missing the fun and interactive-ness that came along with playing games and interacting in a group setting. Another aspect of the group setting that is not doable in the current health crisis, is eating together. Food is always shared and brings people together in relationship building.

We used to prepare food together and eat together as a group, that's gone away. So now during the meal time, we listen to videos relative to the language, whether it be a prior class, whatever videos that we can find online, like on YouTube, even from other areas, anything that's related to language where we listen to during our lunch breaks. (Tenes BlueSky, interview, 3-16-22, p. 10)

Tenes BlueSky looked back at a time during the immersion camps and previous community classes where learning together involved sharing a meal, too. Now mealtimes are not spent with your language community but open a space for including the language into more of your daily life, not just when you are in class. The loss of community connection and real time learning of

culture is a big difference between remote learning and in-person learning that my participants felt deeply.

A different kind of contrast between remote learning and in-person learning are the changes in materials and teaching styles used. Tenes BlueSky explained how they adapted to using online learning materials rather than in-person, physical ones.

Well, say in-person, we worked with the whiteboard. And that's something they still use in [local immersion class title], but we had to do, instead of handing out sheets of paper for handouts, we made presentations on PowerPoint. I would make them in Publisher then any images I had to turn over to a JPEG and then insert those in the PowerPoint. So it was a longer process in the beginning. It was, I don't want to say hard to maneuver. It was just more steps that we had to take in order to get those lessons across to the students. (Tenes BlueSky, interview, 3-16-22, p. 4)

This takes more time and commitment to the teaching process to make everything virtual. The difficulties found when creating a remote learning experiences are discussed at length in the Technological Difficulties section. This quote from Tenes BlueSky is meant to highlight the modifications made to teaching and learning by all parties to make remote learning successful, and compare and contrast both experiences. Another variation of the experiences made in-person versus remote would be the comfortability being in certain settings. Staying remote offers a safety that was not always possible with in-person teaching, even before the current pandemic.

Alice spoke on this safety:

I mean, honestly, if the COVID were to... If it was to go away tomorrow, my mom would still want to be on Zoom. She likes being in her home. She would be more able and

willing to come out for in-person things once in a while. But if she gave the option for Zoom for her, she definitely would want to stay home. (Alice, interview, 2-7-22, p. 18)

The opportunity to stay home and learn in the comfort of your choosing is discussed further in the Opportunity section. Hybrid options are an exciting possibility, but for now, many are pleased with staying virtual for whichever reason fits in with their language journey.

The future is rather uncertain, as the state of COVID-19 is so rapidly changing and tribal communities take many precautions. Tenes BlueSky said that she is not sure what will come next.

And we haven't really discussed with them anything beyond the Zoom classes. We haven't discussed whether things are going to go back to in-person or not. None of that dialogue has happened yet... So that just kind of tells me that people are comfortable with where they're at and this is the new norm. So I think they kind of expect it to continue to be on Zoom. (Tenes BlueSky, interview, 3-16-22, p. 9)

While most expect Zoom and are comfortable continuing learning remotely, some are still not comfortable with technology. When the topic of those who are not participating because of remote learning, Tenes BlueSky said that,

We've had some students that were in our community class when we were in-person that aren't in the Zoom class...And then I talked to them, and they said they're looking forward to the day when we can go back to being an in-person class. (Tenes BlueSky, interview, 3-16-22, p. 7)

This sentiment is reflective of everyone being on their own language journey and that we need to be able to honor everyone's choice and inspiration for participating in language learning. Community and relationship building is central to Anishinaabemowin, and to many language

journeys, so taking a step back while that is not entirely the same because of remote learning is more than understandable. The determination to learn their language remains when they say that they look forward to the return to in-person teaching.

Technological Difficulties

A theme that must be examined is the difficulties and troubles that are encountered when community language classes introduce technologies to their students and curricula. The hardships that come with using technology are the greatest barrier or cause of hesitation that Indigenous language classes may find themselves in. It is important to be able to openly discuss these things and learn from the challenging times that my participants have gone through while continuing to honor our language and each person's distinct language journey. Acknowledging challenges and difficulties helps us to move forward and be able to show other language communities the possibilities of technology and language learning. As shown in the Pros and Cons theme section of this research, there are several cons that come about and are openly discussed by my participants. They never shied away from speaking of the hard parts, only showing their dedication and perseverance. Many of the stories of technological trouble come from the fact that many in the language community are not well versed in using technology or understanding how to use school program sites. My participants discussed having to not only teach the language, but first teach themselves how to use certain programs and systems that are entirely new to them, and then show their students how to use them. It was a learning process for all involved, from the facilitators to the students. In some ways, that brought everyone closer together and was another layer of the relationship and community building process that is so integral to learning Anishinaabemowin. The following are examples from each of my

participants where they openly discuss the circumstances in which they found technology difficult to use with their classes.

Much like the future with the COVID-19 pandemic, the future of technology is unknown and always changing. Alice noted this uncertainty and how many students, especially elders who are new to technology, might be nervous to enter a virtual learning environment: “I think it was stressful for elders to go online, and it really is hard because technology is at a constant incline. It's always developing and it's always changing, and it's really hard to keep up with that” (Alice, interview, 2-7-22, p. 13). That uncertainty can bring about many difficulties and influences some to not participate in remote learning, as shown in the Remote Learning versus In-person Learning theme of this project. There are difficulties for both teachers and students, creating a position that makes each party consider their language journey and decide what is necessary for their learning. For my previous project on the impact of COVID-19 on community language classes, I observed Alice's class in January of 2021, about ten months into the pandemic at that point. In my observation notes, I noted each time Alice would have to remind students to stay on mute and she would say, “This is a good time to practice your camera and your mute” (Alice, observation, 1-25-21, p. 4). There was a shared sense of confusion over how to work Zoom, which created a sense of community. Having students not on mute or accidentally unmuting themselves was the biggest technological challenge that took place during my observation, but was treated with kindness and understanding by the teachers. The class was brought to a close with the teacher giving out several different ways that students could reach them, through email, Facebook, or text. Being able to reach out in multiple ways through technology brings about a new sense of community that would not have been possible before the introduction of technology into these classes.

The changing waves of technology are daunting, but these examples and stories show the incredible resiliency and bravery for the language educators to go full force into the unknown to ensure their language can continue to be taught. That resiliency comes with difficulty, as the title of this section suggests. When I asked Alice what the hardest technology was for the administrator and for the students, she said "...the most challenging would be probably any learning management system" (Alice, interview, 2-7-22, p. 15). This point was elaborating further on her comment that, "...going through something like Brightspace or Moodle, that is challenging for elders" (Alice, interview, 2-7-22, p. 14). This is a difficulty that I had not anticipated talking about, but it was discussed with Tenes BlueSky, as well. I related to this struggle, as learning a new learning management system as a Teaching Assistant this year was very challenging, and I consider myself rather versed in technology. I imagine that it was incredibly difficult and stress-inducing for those who are not familiar with technology or using any kind of learning system platform. That is only for those learning how to use these kinds of platforms; there are some members of language communities who are brand new to computers in general. In terms of this confusion, Alice said that many people struggled with the online adjustment at the beginning:

You have to find the class and click... It's busy and it's confusing, and it's distracting. Because, you have little icons everywhere. You have click here, click there. It's like, 'Where are they supposed to click?' It was challenging to elders, especially the online class. (Alice, interview, 2-7-22, p. 14)

The internet is a tricky and confusing place that can scare anyone, especially those putting their beautiful and traditional language onto those platforms.

This stress causes questions from those administering the teaching and being in charge of making sure all students are on the same page. Alice elaborated on the fears and questions:

I've heard from a few elders that at first, they were very resistant to this whole technology wave. There's always a fear there, especially when it comes to technology, I still fear technology at some point. It's stressful. I was like, 'I don't know how to use this. No one has ever taught me how to use this.' It's like, 'How am I supposed to figure this out?' Okay. I could try it on my own. What if I mess up the program? There's always these, what if. What if I accidentally delete it? What if I accidentally leave and can't get back in? There's always those questions. (Alice, interview, 2-7-22, p. 13)

This reflection from Alice shows that teachers and language facilitators feel the same uncertainty and frustration that students do when entering into these online learning environments. That level of relatability really shows that they are all on this journey together and figuring out how to make this new online world work, collaboratively.

One part of a collaboration that is missed with online learning is group gathering and playing games together, which is a very popular form of education within Anishinaabemowin. Tenes BlueSky reflected on that sense of being together, and how they have adapted. “We used to do different games. It wasn't all just storytelling. We had some parts that were games and people participated. That's a little bit harder to do on Zoom” (Tenes BlueSky, interview, 3-16-22, p. 10). She mentioned storytelling because that is the main form of immersion teaching that can be done successfully over Zoom or other online platforms. Not being able to play learning games or participate in ceremony and gatherings together is a great difficulty that has come about because of the present pandemic. It is not possible to do these things with technology currently, making it a great difficulty to those who learned the most during games and group settings.

There are technological difficulties and then there are technological hardships. Maanyaan spoke about a time where technology was not in their favor when it came to preserving work that they had completed:

And we have to find a way to make sure it is preserved. Our stuff has to be in somewhere where it's not going to get lost. Because when we had that... What do you call those?

There was computer glitches. And we lost a lot of stories. We didn't have them. While the person that was supposed to take care of our stories and put them somewhere didn't file them wherever. And they were lost. So you got to be careful with your technology and make sure it's secure sites, and yeah. (Maanyaan, interview, 2-18-22, p. 15)

Whether this was at the hands of technology or an archivist making a mistake, what was lost was lost. The way Maanyaan spoke about this carried sadness about this loss, but acknowledged that these things happen. She said that we must be careful with technology. While it may seem like an obvious statement, I think that necessary sense of caution can be forgotten with so much of the contemporary world online.

No matter how confusing or difficult it has gotten to place, there are always solutions and things that can be explained to those who are lost. When those who are learning take their time and keep the focus on the language, it is incredibly possible to make the transition to online learning fruitful. An example of this came up in my conversation with Maanyaan, who spoke of those who are having these troubles.

But there are students who have a difficult time with technology. We have to kind of guide them through when they're stuck. They'll say, 'I don't even know where that button is.' And then we'll say, 'Oh, it's on the very bottom.' It's this, this, this. Yeah. So that takes a few minutes. (Maanyaan, interview, 2-18-22, p. 4)

It takes “a few minutes,” but eventually they will get the hang of it. Maanyaan's casual tone and quick to the point answer showed that even though this is a difficult learning experience for many, it is something that has and will continue to be done by those who are on their language journeys and see learning Anishinaabemowin in this current climate. That climate being during a pandemic that greatly limits in-person gatherings and the rise of technology incorporated learning, they will fit this into their new routine. It is inspiring and beautiful to see the perseverance through the unknown and stresses associated with technology.

Opportunity

The most important finding that has come from my prior study (Baker, 2021) and this project has been the immense opportunities granted to those involved in language learning when introducing technology to their Indigenous language classes. There are countless ways that transitioning to an online platform and introducing new kinds of technology into Anishinaabemowin classes brought about new opportunities for teachers, facilitators, and students alike and highlights of those opportunities will be discussed at length below. The world continues to move forward with using more and more technology while simultaneously living through a worldwide pandemic, creating an interesting time to be teaching a large group of learners, often with many elders included in both the teaching and learning process. Due to these many uncertainties, staying remote has been in the best interest of those involved. Using different online learning platforms and introducing different forms of communication and learning created new learning environments for students and potential for new teaching methods for teachers. I began my interview with Tenes BlueSky asking when technology was introduced into the Anishinaabemowin classes in which she was involved, and she said:

When we started experiencing COVID and our building was shut down and we had to move to online community classes and then online... classes, we didn't have a choice. But in the end, in retrospect, I think it's worked out fabulously... I think we actually get more participation because of it and able to reach a broader audience. And it's opened up boundaries that we had with having it only in-person. (Tenes BlueSky, interview, 3-16-22, p. 3)

She reflected and said the language department had no choice and had to move forward into the unknown, but it worked out for the best. The point that Tenes BlueSky makes at the end of this statement, saying that doing strictly remote learning has “opened up boundaries that we had with having it only in-person,” highlights the many opportunities for learners across Turtle Island to participate in ways they never could before. The boundaries she alludes to could be those who do not live close to their homelands where the language classes take place in-person, those who work and cannot fit the classes into their schedules, or the boundary of only having the learning materials of their department - with remote learning, there is the chance to incorporate a plethora of other Anishinaabemowin teacher's learning materials and teaching ideas into the class that they have found online, like videos and learning programs. Tenes BlueSky touched more on the biggest boundary that online learning has overcome, according to almost all that I have spoken with, that of those who live far away. Tenes BlueSky said, “Now, we have students that are on Zoom that weren't able to be in-person because they live outside the community here and they look forward to our weekly Zoom classes” (Tenes BlueSky, interview, 3-16-22, p. 7). These students now have the opportunity to have Anishinaabemowin be a part of their everyday lives in a way that was never possible for them before the move to remote learning. That opportunity alone is one of the most beautiful results of staying strictly online that makes each of the

participants of this project and myself beam with pride. Having access to move forward in your language journey is an opportunity that should be available to all, and remote learning and technology makes that possible.

Looking at all of these opportunities, Tenes BlueSky looked forward to what the future of remote learning and technology will be within Anishinaabe learning communities, as we find ourselves still at the beginning of this technological journey. She reflected:

I think we're at the beginning stages of new ways of doing things. And what COVID has proven is that it's totally possible to achieve these things via technology. And while right now we're at the beginning stages of it, we may not be a hundred percent of where we want to be, we're on a learning curve. We're at the beginning of that curve. We're going to be at a point, and I don't know if it'll be in five year or less, where we're going to peak... Where it's going to be like, we're going to have a lot of people doing online stuff. They're going to be good at it. They're going to be retaining all the information. (Tenes BlueSky, interview, 3-16-22, p. 17)

Tenes BlueSky stated that were at the beginning of the curve, much like the beginning of the journey that I have been referring to. She then said that we, as a language and cultural community, will have “a lot of people doing online stuff,” which acknowledges that technology will become more and more ingrained in the community and society as a whole. Noting that these technology users will be “retaining all the information” is important because as we incorporate more technology into Anishinaabemowin, we will need to find new ways to record and maintain knowledge with those new technologies. Alice spoke on this idea of using technology to maintain our language in ways that have never been done before. She said,

So we have to record and document and make sure that these things are in memory, but not in a sense where it's in human memory. It has to be on memory where humans can access it now, to access those times how they were and to strive to keep those memories alive. But it's too hard and almost impossible for us to live that way because we just...

The world is what it is now. It's modern and now we're in a pandemic and I believe that we're so resilient as Anishinaabe people that we've been able to keep as much as we can and keep that going. But we also have to accept new ways, and technology is one of those avenues where if we use it in the right way, we can really preserve a lot of things. (Alice, interview, 2-7-22, p. 27)

If we learn how to accept these learning technologies as normalized, everyday parts of our lives, we can use them to the utmost of our advantages. In terms of language documentation, learning, and revitalization, this is exciting. To record and maintain our traditional ways of life using technology is in some ways a confusing idea, as Alice notes, but, she suggests, we must use it in this way if we want to move forward with the times. Anishinaabe are resilient, as Alice confirmed, and using technology in this way is a brave way to ensure we have so many memories available for the next generations of Anishinaabemowin speakers and learners.

Maanyaan made a point that aligns with both Alice and Tenes BlueSky's reflections and thoughts towards the future, "I would say, we can still preserve our language and our ways through technology, because we've already experienced how to use it. Yeah. I think technology is going to be the main way they're going to deliver after a while" (Maanyaan, interview, 2-18-22, p. 14).

The three women, all from the same language department, are on the same page when it comes to how they can use technology to their advantage and for the betterment of the language community and the language journeys of all their students and themselves.

I asked Maanyaan if she thought the classes in which she is involved will continue to use this much technology whenever the pandemic ends and we (presumably) go back to “normal.” She said, “I think we will. It sounds like that's the way they're going to go. Because especially night classes, like evening classes, when they can't attend a class in-person during the day. So they can go on Zoom and take a class” (Maanyaan, interview, 2-18-22, p. 11). This goes back to different kinds of boundaries that Tenes BlueSky alluded to. Many community members cannot make it to certain in-person classes and now a whole world of possibilities has opened up because of technology. A unique opportunity was shown in my interview with Maanyaan, one that I had not previously considered. That would be the opportunity for shy learners to be able to watch the class on their computer, hear their language being spoken by teachers and fellow community members, but remain a listener. Maanyaan said, “They ask if they can listen, and that's fine with us... at least they're in the classroom” (Maanyaan, interview, 2-18-22, p. 3). Being in a remote learning environment gives students the opportunity to participate as much as they please, which might not have been possible in-person where everyone in the classroom could be watching you and waiting for you to speak.

I then asked Maanyaan if she truly thought technology was helping learners. Coming from her perspective of going from having Anishinaabemowin being her first language, to watching technology develop, to now watching technology be the main source of education she has an incredible knowledge on how it really fits in. She said, “Oh yeah. Big time. They always say, 'If this wasn't here, we wouldn't have anything. We can't come where you're teaching because we're not allowed... At least we can go on computer and learn something” (Maanyaan, interview, 2-18-22, p. 9). This has also brought Anishinaabemowin back into the homes of the

learners. Home was where language originally lived and was taught as their first language, just like how Maanyaan was raised. Alice spoke about this opportunity:

We're reaching inside and it's in their homes now. So they could sit there on the laptop and let's say, a father and a son want to go over colors together, or numbers, they want to do a lesson together or they can sit there and press play and hear Anishinaabemowin and then they can stop it. Then they can say those words to each other. They can say it back to the screen. (Alice, interview, 2-7-22, p. 12)

Having the opportunity to have class at your dinner table along with your entire community on the screen and your family sitting next to you is something that has never been able to be done in such a manner before. It makes me so proud and ecstatic to see so many new language journeys beginning or continuing on in new ways with their community at their side, virtually. To make the classes as “regular” as possible, it is important to be able to see and hear each other during each remote class. Alice noted this importance:

... Using programs like Zoom or Microsoft Team or something like that, where we're able to see each other and hear each other. So you can still would be able to see a fluent speaker and hear them at the same time, and then try to mimic them and copy them. (Alice, interview, 2-7-22, p. 10)

This is a new opportunity for many who were unable to be physically present in in-person classes, and having the opportunity to hear the voices of many different Anishinaabemowin speakers is important to learning.

Finally, the ability to remain safe and keep your community safe was at the top of my participant's lists when reflecting on the new forms of opportunities. COVID-19 has disproportionately harmed Indigenous communities far greater than non-Indigenous

communities, so it is always at the forefront of our minds. The pandemic showed us that online learning was possible, and effective. Having multiple Anishinaabe communities putting on their own remote classes, not just the one I am in and spoke with, gives Anishinaabemowin learners the opportunity to hear a multitude of speakers and learn from each other. Alice reflected on her mother's language journey and how she did not participate often with in-person classes, even before the pandemic, due to outstanding health issues. Having online classes offered from her own community as well as neighboring ones gave her language journey a new breath of life.

That took all that stress away. When she learned how to use Zoom, I mean her language is probably tripled, definitely. She's taken immersion classes, she's taking classes at community colleges. She's taking just community classes on Zoom or prerecorded classes... It's helped her in so many ways. So when I look at the positive things that technology has done with language and improving our outreach, it's pretty amazing when you see elders speaking. (Alice, interview, 2-7-22, p. 11)

Giving community members a second chance at language learning or having multiple avenues to take in the language from across Anishinaabe country could not have been done without the push towards remote learning or introduction of more technology. Having technology in Anishinaabemowin education does not come without its challenges or questions, but the opportunity to learn more from each other and move forward in our personal and collective language journeys is something that is irreplaceable. My participants all noted that the opportunities gained from the move to remote learning and using different technologies opened so many doors for them and our language community members. It is daunting and exciting to see what will come next as we move forward into an uncertain future.

Theme Synthesis

The previous six themes all highlight various perspectives and discussions surrounding the introduction and usage of technology in community Anishinaabemowin classes in which the participants of this research project are involved. The themes discussed here were found through the coding process, where I used open coding and emotion coding to find the six most powerful themes found within my conversations with the participants. Some of the larger threads that tie each of these themes together are collaboration, persistence, how people are dealing with the changing times, and challenges. Collaboration rippled through each of the six themes in very similar ways – most notably in the Community and Connection to Culture theme, in which participants spoke of working together with students to understand what did and did not work, as well as collaborating on learning how to use new technologies, like Zoom, and making sure everyone was up to date on technological changes. This collaborative spirit links back to the relationality and relationship building that is so present in community gatherings and language classes. Collaborating and teaching each other what a certain button on the computer does or how to use various types of technology is a call back to the relationality between community members before westernization. Teaching each other what medicines were good for different things or where the best place to set up ceremony was. Helping each other learn Zoom and Moodle links those kinds of communications and teachings, set in today's technological standards.

Keeping Anishinaabe identity alive was also woven through each of the main six themes found in this research. The dedication of learning the language goes hand in hand with that same dedication of keeping one's connection to identity and culture thriving. A main way to do that is to keep learning and participating in language education, as shown by all the participants of this project and their hard work. We see connection to identity through the various opportunities

found through remote learning and technology use, through the accessibility of connecting to your identity at your own pace and for your own language journey, and even through the technical difficulties, where each problem overcome by the participants was a testament to the interconnectedness of identity and language. Culture and community are the basis for where we see ideas of identity and working towards keeping Anishinaabe identity alive, which we see through Alice feeling closer to her identity when she first started on her language journey or when students in their classes thank them for giving them the opportunity to connect through online learning, and noting that without it they would not have any way to use the language to connect to their identity and community.

There are many challenges associated with remote learning, especially for something as sacred as learning our Indigenous language. The smaller theme or idea of challenges found its way through many of the larger, foundational themes of the project. Challenges showed themselves most often through the theme of Technical Difficulties but were also part of Remote Learning versus In-person Learning and Accessibility. Through the many ups and downs of online learning and introducing new technologies to Anishinaabemowin, many technological difficulties arouse, creating sometimes challenging teaching and learning environments. Those challenges would be acclimating to being fully online, not having the opportunities to gather and share space, and the hardships of those who were not experts on certain learning platforms. There were many instances throughout my prior observations in 2021 and within my recent interviews with participants where students and teachers alike had a challenging time with figuring out the workings of all the different learning platforms used, such as Zoom or Moodle or Brightspace. The variations in each created confusion and delayed the learning process for all. Challenges with the differences in the learning process between remote learning and in person

learning created frustration and nostalgia for times past. The lack of equal access for all when learning online or lack of accessibility to knowledge of learning platforms or the internet created challenges that I had not foreseen.

In sum, the six themes discussed in this project are Accessibility, Pros and Cons of Language Learning Technologies, Community and Connection to Culture, Remote Learning versus In-person Learning, Technological Difficulties, and Opportunity. They are all interconnected, and that is exemplified here through the smaller, deeply woven themes. Anishinaabemowin connects every part of Anishinaabe culture and lifeways, making the connections made here not surprising, but nonetheless a sign about the language that we are on the right path.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

After going into depth of each of the themes found during the coding process, it is necessary to summarize the findings and reach a conclusion. To do so, this chapter will be divided into three parts, beginning with the research question that will be discussed and answered. I explain how each theme was found in the answer for these research questions, and why those answers are important. Each of the sections will be connected, as we have seen that the themes and interwoven ideas can be found throughout the whole project. Then I discuss the implications for research and practice. I want to acknowledge the implications found during my own project and hypothesize what others may come up with for similar projects. I acknowledge the ways in which my study was framed and undertaken that may have shaped the outcomes, as well as my own positionality's part in that. I then look towards the future, how I would like to continue this project, and what that could look like. Anishinaabemowin connects those in the present to our ancestors and to our future speakers, so it is only right to hypothesize what the future of this work may look like.

Benefits and Difficulties of Language Learning Technologies

The guiding research question of this entire project was: What are the benefits and difficulties of the use of technology in Anishinaabemowin language classes? The results for this research question examine how technology is working within Anishinaabemowin community classes for the particular community that my participants are a part of and work within. To understand how technology is working, I asked the participants what the benefits and difficulties were, what was given and taken away, what challenges came about and what stresses were alleviated because of the usage and introduction of technology. The most fruitful conversations came from this question, in which my participants were very open and candidly shared their

honest experiences with me for the sake of understanding and for the furtherance of this project. This question had the most feedback and content to discuss. Giving the participants the space to critically examine what they believe to be the pros and cons of technology gave them the opportunity to be critical and understand more of what does and does not work. Being the most fruitful research question, each of the six themes that make up this project – Accessibility, Pros and Cons, Community and Connection to Culture, Remote Learning versus In-person learning, Technological Difficulties, and Opportunity – all answer the question and elaborate on what exactly we gain and lose when we enter into technologically filled learning spaces.

The most widely noted point in all three interviews and the underlying positive aspect through all the findings and analysis was that Anishinaabemowin learning with the usage of technology, in all and any capacity, brings about more learning opportunities than without. Throughout my interviews, those forms of technology are online learning platforms, virtual learning platforms, creative platforms to make learning handouts, music and video software, and social media messaging and posts. The opportunity to participate in language learning during the global COVID-19 pandemic was the most touched upon opportunity, which relates back to my previous research on how language learning was impacted by the virus and shutdowns. Participants and their students and fellow community members were granted the opportunity to practice, learn, and engage with their language during an incredibly uncertain time. That brought about new feelings of community and togetherness that some had never experienced, and that all needed through the tough times of late. Creating the possibility of home learning bridged home life and Anishinaabemowin in a way that had not been done since language was originally taught at home from family as a first language. This opportunity is a beautiful reflection of the past and how we can move forward with learning and creates new ideas for immersion practices.

Technology, specifically Zoom and video conferencing services, afford Anishinaabemowin learners the decision to learn from a place they feel comfortable. It affords each community member the choice to continue on their language journey and make the decision on what their language journey will look like.

The themes of Remote Learning versus In-person Learning and Pros and Cons both encapsulate the idea of this research question, in that there will always be things that are comparable and contrastable between the two methods of learning and teaching, as well as the presence of many pros and cons to each side. The findings that went into these two themes show that incorporating technology is not a simple task, and that in doing so, the class itself becomes something new. Technology benefited Anishinaabemowin learning in creating a new learning platform and giving teachers and students the chance to learn new things while being in the language community. At the same time, technology placed language learners at a disadvantage by creating a new set of rules and methods to learn to successfully participate while using new technologies, which was not always easy for various participants. This relates to the theme of Technological Difficulties, which presented themselves throughout each new technology used and within each remote class session for the participants. The difficulties found within online learning and the use of technology within Anishinaabemowin range from having to repeatedly tell students to mute while on Zoom to losing recordings of lessons and cultural teachings due to a computer malfunction. This shows that not only is technology becoming an important part of language learning, but that access to reliable technology is essential. This leads to another theme discussed in this project and another way to answer the main research question.

Looking at technology in terms of accessibility highlights the difference in knowledge of technology and access to learning materials between Anishinaabemowin and other languages one

could learn. There are disadvantages to those who are not well versed in technology, who do not have access to that kind of knowledge, or access to computers or stable internet. Those who do not have that access are left to learn their language in a different way, especially now when classes are strictly remote due to the ongoing health pandemic. Conversely, accessibility is one of the things that technology affords those who are participating in online Anishinaabemowin learning. It affords the access to being a part of the language learning community and deciding how your language journey will continue. Technology gives language learners access to time together with community members even when we are separated, which has been incredible for the wellbeing of those who live alone or are used to regular communal meetings. Technology affords the accessibility to participate in cultural connections that are gained through Anishinaabemowin education, strengthening one's connection to identity and sense of belonging in their tribe and community. Having that ability and access to cultural connection makes way for acknowledging the ways in which technology provides space for culture and community. My participants and their students alike both acknowledge that technology and online learning have strengthened cultural connections, having brought them into a more regular schedule with online classes or provided a space to create a cultural connection for those who did not have the opportunity or access to that connection before. Anishinaabemowin education is an incredible way to become connected to one's Anishinaabemowin identity; having that knowledge and feeling of belonging with your identity is monumental to feeling like part of the language community and tribe. The connection to culture and identity that Anishinaabemowin holds highlights the importance of the language and the determination of the participants of this project to ensure that all community members have that access, which is more widespread than ever with online learning and more usage of technology. That determination and love for the language and

our people make each pro and con, each benefit and disadvantage, worth it all in the end, because if one more person can have that connection, that is one more opportunity for our language to thrive.

The Role of Technology in Anishinaabemowin Language Learning Classes

My second research question asked: What is the role of technology in Anishinaabemowin language learning classes? This question was more of a sub research question to the main one, which brought up the roles that technology plays for teachers and students. The role that technology plays for Anishinaabemowin education is moving it forward and keeping the language in a working state. Other roles, in general, are keeping our language in our homes, providing a space to learn, and housing written records and recordings like never before. The roles of technology are highlighted in the themes of this research, most particularly opportunity and accessibility, which show the ways in which technology plays a role supporting and providing new spaces for Anishinaabemowin learning. We can also see the role of technology in examining the technological difficulties, which shows the negative roles that technology plays but also participants and students overcomes the harder parts that it plays. In looking at the role of technology, I asked participants how they would describe the role of technology. All three participants said that technology played a very big role in Anishinaabemowin learning. When I asked Maanyaan if technology played a large role in Anishinaabemowin learning, she confidently told me: “Oh yeah. They are. Because it's all technology” (Maanyaan, interview, 2-18-22, p. 4). The role technology plays, according to Maanyaan, is everything - technology finds itself everywhere.

When I asked Tenes BlueSky this same question, she said, “I think that's going to be [the] future for our language learning” (Tenes BlueSky, interview, 3-16-22, p. 16). When we consider

the future of the world, the greater society in general, technology's role can and will grow more each day. In my previous research on this topic, I interviewed Alice, and asked her about adjusting to a more technology driven world. Her eloquent response to this applies here, as well. She said, “You know, we are, Anishinaabe people are evolving. And, if technology is helping our people still keep their identity and language, then I don't see anything wrong with it” (Alice, interview, 2-5-21, lines 602-604). When thinking about the role of technology, we may question can we go on without technology? Do we want to? As shown in the various theme sections prior, there are simply some things that we cannot accomplish through a screen or with only technology, like sacred teachings and ceremonies. For language education at a base level, we will push forward and use the technology available to us, which going into the future will only be more and more. The love and determination that the participants and their students of this project have for the language means accepting and integrating technology into everyday language education, making the role of technology adaptable and based upon each department. For this department, technology is at the forefront of their learning techniques and they accept the large role that technology needs to play in order to have the opportunities and accessibility that it provides them, their students, and the language.

Perceptions of Stakeholders about Technology in Anishinaabemowin Education

This section discusses the findings for the third research question: What are the perceptions of stakeholders (teachers and language learners) of technology in Anishinaabemowin education? Sub questions include: What technologies are being used? By whom? For what purposes? What kind of technology works better? What are their expectations? How are they responding to it?

To understand the role that technology plays in Anishinaabemowin education, it was important to understand the opinions and perceptions of those who were impacted by technology usage in these classes. To do this, I asked the participants what they thought the perceptions of stakeholders were in regard to technology and Anishinaabemowin education. Further, we discussed what kinds of technologies worked the best, according to feedback from students, and understanding what they expected from the technology. Firstly, all three participants report positive feedback from students. When I asked Maanyaan if she believed that technology was helping her students, she quoted a student in their positive report: “If this wasn't here, we wouldn't have anything” (Maanyaan, interview, 2-18-22, p. 9). This is a rather glowing report and also highlights the accessibility that technology provides Anishinaabemowin language community members. The expectation of this student is to have class and be provided with language teachings, which is presently possible because of the technology used, like Zoom.

I asked Alice what the community and other stakeholders thought about the usage of more and more technology. She went into the expectations that various people in the community may have for the language. “I think they're going to meet the expectations of what the community wants. Because, the community wants a daily functioning language. Now they'll have that on their computers at home, on their phone. We're reaching inside and it's in their homes now” (Alice, interview, 2-7-22, p. 12). Mentioning the community's desire for a daily functioning language and how technology has aided in making that a reality shows the positive image technology has made in a concrete and impactful example. The purposes of technology are close to the roles of technology. I want to mention that one of the purposes of using technology in Anishinaabemowin learning today is to provide the space, time, and platform to make your language learning fit within how you see your language journey unfolding in the

present and future. Not everyone learns the same or for the same reasons, so using technology provides the opportunity to take things at one's own pace and integrate it into their lives however they see fit.

The technologies that are being used and discussed with my participants range from making PowerPoints to creating an entire online curriculum for students. Some technologies work better for the community than others, such as Zoom being the go to and most loved technology, because it gives students a chance to see each other and watch the language leave the lips of a first language speaker. The harder, more frustrating technologies are online learning platforms, which change between each site to the next. When asked about the perception of a large stakeholder, community elders, Alice spoke on how learning management systems were a particular struggle for them, “I couldn't say from an elder perspective, but I think any learning management system is hard” (Alice, interview, 2-7-22, p. 15). One of the more intricately threaded themes of this project was the idea of collaboration, which was present throughout each of the six main themes of the project and connected them all. There was a lot of collaboration mentioned within the interviews for this project. Working together with the language community to ensure that those involved are educated on how to use and succeed at certain programs needed for the online classes. Collaboration shows that learning is a priority and that while some technologies may work better than others, the determination to learn is still present. The overall positive reviews to the introduction and usage of technology highlight that it is possible to produce effective and culturally sustaining curriculum and language lessons using a variety of technologies. Maanyaan, an elder and fluent speaker, who has watched the introduction of technology into society and Anishinaabemowin learning from the beginning, says that Anishinaabemowin education is very doable online and with technology. She said, “we can still

preserve our language and our ways through technology, because we've already experienced how to use it. Yeah. I think technology is going to be the main way they're going to deliver after a while” (Maanyaan, interview, 2-18-22, p. 14). The response to technology in Anishinaabemowin learning was all around positive, from the teachers, as exhibited here with the words from Maanyaan, to the students who give positive feedback and continue to show up each class session. While not without its learning challenges, the usage of technology in Anishinaabemowin community classes brought more people into their language journeys and, as Alice said, brought the language back into the homes and provided the community with a functioning language, as they wished for, and asserting their sovereignty as a Nation.

Limitations and Benefits of a Technology-mediated Study

Being a member of an Anishinaabe language community, and having long-term relationships with participants afforded me the opportunity to work with the inspiring language educators featured here and to be in communication with others who might be interested in the project. I worked with participants from a single community that has a relatively positive and forward-moving relationship with technology. A study with a community that is not as open to technology or has had deeply negative experiences with it would look very different. The study is also limited by the small number of participants. The trade-off to this lack of breadth is greater depth of experience and the insights the study holds.

Conducting the study over Zoom, as perfect as it seems for this project, was a limitation as well as a benefit. The benefit was that I could interview and be in conversation with my participants from across the country. If not for the ease of the video conferencing platform, I am not sure that this project would have been possible. Using Zoom technology meant that I was not there in person, seeing firsthand how participants and language learners are using technology or

watching them go through an online class or Zoom class in real time. While I conducted a class observation, I would have loved to be on the same side of the computer as one of the teachers during a Zoom class. These comments touch on the same idea that all my participants related, that we cannot get every aspect of Anishinaabemowin from online learning alone; much of the communal aspects the cultural components, and the ability to gather is missing. Conducting the interviews all over Zoom also helped me see exactly what the students are presently seeing, giving me a firsthand understanding of how it is possible to feel close and feel a sense of belonging and togetherness over the video platform.

Looking Towards the Future

Looking towards the future of this project and its possibilities, I would like to expand the interviews and participants to other language communities and departments. Hearing a plethora of opinions, advice, and thoughts for moving forward with technology from various levels of interest and usage would be monumental for answering the research questions. Bridging out first to more Anishinaabemowin communities would be a more identify driven project for myself. I would love to go beyond my own language and collaborate with other Indigenous scholars to see what role technology can play in their language communities and what each of the languages can learn from each other. Each Indigenous Nation and language is distinct, but the relationship that each language has to needing to be reclaimed and taught to future generations, and connects each person so deeply with their identity runs through all of Indian Country. That collaboration between diverse Indigenous scholars would open up the door to new scholarly relationships and learning new forms of learning and integrating languages into daily life. The possibilities of technology are endless and some of those possibilities may not exist yet, which is one of the many opportunities that accompanies looking at this topic early on in its development. It is

exciting to imagine all that is to come and look back on what has already been accomplished. These possibilities are only possible because of the work put in by the language department to make sure the language community stays together during these uncertain times.

I of course relate all that I have learned during this project back to my own language journey, in which Anishinaabemowin has guided me through my life and connected me to my ancestors. I would love to know what they think about speaking Anishinaabemowin on Zoom. I am honored to be able to carry on this language, in whatever format necessary for its survival and ability to thrive. I am honored to be able to learn from my three incredible participants, speak about their language journeys and hear their thoughts and stories about technology. I know that technology is still towards the beginning of its life within all different realms of learning and education, in general and in terms of Indigenous knowledge and understanding. Being able to enter into this space and complete this project while technology has made a place for itself in Indigenous language learning, and at the beginning of its life of technology being prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic, brings a unique voice to this research, one that I hope others can grow upon and understand its changes as time goes on. To be able to learn about technology in Anishinaabemowin learning and community classes in real time as it ebbs and flows is a special gift that I will hold close to my heart for years to come. I highly valued being able to clearly see the deep connection that Anishinaabemowin has to its people, culture, and how language is a connection to one's Anishinaabe identity. The determination to learn and teach exhibited by the participants and their students is the backbone of this project and why technology is making a successful coupling with Anishinaabemowin community classes. Looking forward, the future of technology and Anishinaabemowin classes is infinite and if understood and deliberately worked upon like exhibited in the examples from interviews above, the inclusion of technology can be a

positive and opportunity bringing to all those involved. This future is exciting and nerve wracking at the same time, but I know that those involved will keep community members' Anishinaabemowin journeys at the core of the matter and place learning at the forefront of each technology journey.

EPILOGUE

I ended my interviews with the participants for this project by asking them how we move forward with using technology, what the future holds in that regard, and if they had any final words on technology as a whole in Anishinaabemowin learning. How do we ensure that we keep our Anishinaabe identities and mindset at the center of our learning, while many distractions are possible and technological difficulties present themselves. Alice beautifully discussed how she sees this playing out:

I think we need to learn to live in both of those worlds of our Anishinaabe identity and keeping that, but then we can use these technology tools as well, and learning all this, furthering our education, but at the same time expressing our identity and keeping that alive. So there has to be a balance, and I think that's always going to be a challenge, is keeping that balance there. But we can do it. We are doing it, there are people that are doing it. (Alice, interview, 2-7-22, p. 27)

That balance will not be hard to find no matter the language learner, and I believe that this language department has already found it. Embracing the technological push from society can only improve the outreach and education of community members. I am so privileged to witness this language department accomplish these things and maintain that balance of moving towards the future while never letting go of the past, and centering their Anishinaabe true selves. I asked Tenes BlueSky where she sees technology usage for Anishinaabemowin learning in the next five years. She said:

I think we're at the beginning stages of new ways of doing things. And what COVID has proven is that it's totally possible to achieve these things via technology. And while right now we're at the beginning stages of it, we may not be a hundred percent of where we

want to be, we're on a learning curve. We're at the beginning of that curve. We're going to be at a point, and I don't know if it'll be in five year or less, where we're going to peak.

Where it's going to be like, we're going to have a lot of people doing online stuff. They're going to be good at it. They're going to be retaining all the information. (Tenes BlueSky, interview, 3-16-22, p. 15)

I love that she said, “and they're going to be good at it,” knowing full well that when we set our minds to something, Anishinaabe can accomplish anything. She also mentioned that we are at the beginning of the curve of technology that is only going up. I mentioned many times throughout this project that each person's language journey is different and special to them alone. The language journey of using technology is a group one, encapsulating the whole community's love and pride they have in their language. The journey of technology, in terms of learning and teaching during a pandemic, is just at the beginning, as Tenes BlueSky mentions, and someday that curve will peak and combine with the trajectory of technology in all forms, pandemic or not. She believes that we will be able to retain so much information and be able to teach so much to our future generations. It is inspiring and exciting to look forward to. A people's love for their language can get them through anything, and it not only pushed this community through introducing large amounts of technology, but made them very successful in doing so.

Appendix A: Interview Questions

Part 1: Focused Life History

1. Tell me about where you're from and how you grew up. Have you always been around your language? When did you begin your language journey? When did you begin being involved in Anishinaabemowin education and learning? Why is that when you began? What led to you beginning to be involved in the education of Anishinaabemowin?
2. When do you first remember technology being a part of your language journey?
3. Tell me about the beginnings of the classes involving technology that you are a part of at present the moment?

Part 2: Details of Lived Experience

1. Walk me through the technologies used in your classes and department – what technologies are being used?
 - a. By whom?
 - b. For what purposes?
2. What is the role of technology in Anishinaabemowin language learning classes? Is it a big part of language learning now?
3. What are the perceptions of stakeholders (elders/teachers/students) of technology in Anishinaabemowin education?
 - a. What kind of technology works the best? What are teachers' expectations? How are students/people responding to it?
4. What kinds of technologies are people asking for?
5. What technologies work the best for your class? Which work the least?
6. How is the [local immersion class title] being done virtually? Is it working well?

Part 3: Reflection on Meaning

1. Benefits and difficulties of technology? What is gained and what are the challenges? What does technology enable and what does it take away?

2. Learning online versus doing things and learning in real life / doing it the “real way” (meaning: the traditional way of life, or that “you have to do Anishinaabe things to learn Anishinaabemowin”)

a. (More about Zoom classes rather than technology in general, but can be applied to usages of technology that take away from person to person contact) Can we truly learn Anishinaabemowin without physically being a part of a larger community and doing traditional practices together in-person?

3. How has technology impacted language retention and overall learning?

a. How can we measure progress over Zoom in an easy and effective way?

b. Is there technology better for looking at retention or overall understanding than others?

4. Is there a form of technology that you have not used yet but have been wanting to incorporate into your teaching?

5. What is one last thing you would say about technology in Anishinaabemowin and Indigenous language education? Last words/what you want people to know?

Appendix B: Consent Form

University of California, Los Angeles

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Anishinaabemowin and Technology: A Qualitative Study of the Role of Learning Technologies in a Community Anishinaabemowin Class

INTRODUCTION

Sjana Baker, Principal Investigator, who is obtaining a Master's Degree in American Indian Studies, along with faculty sponsor Dr. Teresa McCarty, from the American Indian Studies Program at the University of California, Los Angeles are conducting a research study. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are Anishinaabe and currently involved in an Anishinaabemowin class. Your participation in this research study is voluntary.

WHAT SHOULD I KNOW ABOUT A RESEARCH STUDY?

- Someone will explain this research study to you.
- Whether or not you take part is up to you.
- You can choose not to take part.
- You can agree to take part and later change your mind.
- Your decision will not be held against you.
- You can ask all the questions you want before you decide.

WHY IS THIS RESEARCH BEING DONE?

The goals of this research project are to understand how language educators and learners of the Indigenous language, Anishinaabemowin, have navigated the past introduction and current usage of various technologies within their community classes. I plan on researching what kinds of technologies work and what kinds do not; what does it mean to work and not work in these community classes? This project has significance to Anishinaabe communities and Indigenous communities as a whole because language is central to cultural connection and identity. Due to this connection, language communities need to be prepared to engage with the current trends, which presently are technology and virtual learning.

HOW LONG WILL THE RESEARCH LAST AND WHAT WILL I NEED TO DO?

Participation will take a total of about one 60 to 90-minute interview, with the possibility of a follow up 30-minute interview at the investigator's discretion.

If you volunteer to participate in this study, the researcher will ask you to do the following:

- Participate in the interview(s) over Zoom.

- Answer questions on your language journey, speak on the introduction and usage of technology within your Anishinaabemowin class experience.
- Allow me to observe one class session (if applicable - only to teachers/educators).

ARE THERE ANY RISKS IF I PARTICIPATE?

The potential risk of feeling emotional when talking about Anishinaabemowin history and personal history towards being Anishinaabe and participating in language education is possible, since language is so closely connected with culture it is an emotional topic at times. The probability of harm resulting from this risk is very low. The severity of this risk is minimal and can easily be reversed by understanding the emotions connected to Anishinaabemowin classes. The investigator is aware of this risk and will include it in how the interview questions are written and asked.

ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS IF I PARTICIPATE?

The potential benefits to participants would be the positive emotions that come from being involved in language revitalization and participating in research about their language.

The potential benefits to society would be the information gained on how technology can be beneficial in Indigenous language classes and how to go about including them in classes.

What other choices do I have if I choose not to participate?

Your alternative to participating in this research study is to not participate.

HOW WILL INFORMATION ABOUT ME AND MY PARTICIPATION BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

The researchers will do their best to make sure that your private information is kept confidential. Information about you will be handled as confidentially as possible, but participating in research may involve a loss of privacy and the potential for a breach in confidentiality. Study data will be physically and electronically secured. As with any use of electronic means to store data, there is a risk of breach of data security.

Use of personal information that can identify you:

You may wish to include your name and tribal enrollment, but can keep this anonymous. The Principal Investigator will assign pseudonyms to each participant that wishes to remain anonymous and keep the list of the pseudonyms in a place where it is only accessible by the Principal Investigator.

How information about you will be stored:

Information and data will be stored in the document section of the Principal Investigator's computer, only accessible to the Principal Investigator.

People and agencies that will have access to your information:

Only the Principal Investigator will have access to the identifiable information provided by each participant.

The research team, authorized UCLA personnel, and the study sponsor Teresa McCarty, may have access to study data and records to monitor the study. Research records provided to authorized, non-UCLA personnel will not contain identifiable information about you. Publications and/or presentations that result from this study will not identify you by name.

How long information from the study will be kept:

The data records from this project will be used for the Principal Investigator's Master's Thesis, which is due in June 2022.

USE OF DATA FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Your data, including de-identified data may be kept for use in future research.

WHO CAN I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS STUDY?

The research team:

If you have any questions, comments or concerns about the research, you can talk to the researcher. Please contact the Principal Investigator, Sjana Baker, through email: bakersja@g.ucla.edu.

UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program (OHRPP):

If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, or you have concerns or suggestions and you want to talk to someone other than the researcher, you may contact the UCLA OHRPP by phone: (310) 206-2040; by email: participants@research.ucla.edu or by mail: Box 951406, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1406.

WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS IF I TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?

- You can choose whether or not you want to be in this study, and you may withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time.
- Whatever decision you make, there will be no penalty to you, and no loss of benefits to which you were otherwise entitled.
- You may refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

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