K'AAW NATASH WA CHÍMYANASHMA SHAPÁTTAWAX̱SHA

KU SÁPSIKW'ASHA MYÁNASHMA

'WE ARE THE PARENTS

RAISING AND TEACHING CHILDREN':

RAISING YAKAMA BABIES AND LANGUAGE TOGETHER

by

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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      'We Are the Parents Raising and Teaching Children': Raising Yakama Babies and
      Language Together

This project listens to parents of Yakama children who provide insight into the ways families are driving efforts of Ichishkíin language revitalization and cultivating movement toward creating a new generation of first-language speakers of Ichishkíin. As a non-Native researcher, I worked collaboratively with my Yakama partner to gather data through a shared survey and community conversations drawing from relationships and connections established through the years. My work builds on research in the fields of Language Revitalization and Education Studies, engaging Indigenous methodologies and Yakama specific frameworks to guide my process and analysis.

The survey was open to all parents and caretakers of Yakama children and conversations focused on parents of Yakama babies and toddlers. These interactions shared insights around how Ichishkíin language is used daily in the lives of families as well as what types of supports are wanted to help to increase language use. Parents were generous in sharing their daily practices, challenges, and hopes for the future and this project illustrates the ways Yakama values and language continue to be shared intergenerationally. This project provides a snapshot of the work parents and families are doing on a daily basis to cultivate their language and culture with guidance for future

projects, programming, research, and policy.

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Dedicated to Tux̱ámshish, Tanínsh, ku natútas.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I am sitting here in our backyard on one of the first warm days this spring while my two-year-old *ísha* 'child' runs back and forth. He is laughing around saying, "*wayx̱-, wayx̱-*!" (his version of *wáyx̱tik, wáyx̱tik* 'run, run') and looking for glimpses of me with a big happy smile as he makes his rounds. I smile back, and say, "*ii, wáyx̱tishaam*!" 'Yes, you are running!'. Every once in a while, he calls out "*ayík*" 'sit' and plops down in our tall grass still looking at me and smiling. I ask, "*Mish nam ayíksha*?" 'Are you sitting?' He pulls up handfuls of grass and brings it over to show me; "*waskú*" 'grass', he says. I nod and he proceeds to make a pile of *waskú* on our little patio. He hears a noise, looks up, points, and says "*-pamá*" (his version of *waynatpamá* 'airplane'). As he is looking, he sees a bird go by, waves, and says, "hi *kákya*". We go in for a snack and, after he takes a bite, he looks at me seriously and reminds us both, "*shix̱ áchakw'ilk*" 'chew it good' and I agree, *"ii, shix̱ na áchakw'ilkta"* 'yes, we will chew it good'. We are both learners of Yakama Ichishkíin but there is one big difference between us: for me, Ichishkíin is a second language learned in adulthood that is not connected to my ancestral lineage whereas for my *ísha* it is one of his two first languages, one that holds his Yakama heritage, and his learning began in my womb or perhaps even earlier than that.

This project was born from many conversations with Yakama parents over the years. Through those years and in this project, many have mentioned a special kind of force, nearly indescribable; a heightened instinct to envelop our babies in their Indigenous language from the earliest possible point. Ichishkíin is not my language – I

am neither Yakama nor Native – so I no doubt feel this force to a significantly fractioned degree compared to parents for whom the language is coded in their being. It is not my language, but it is my *ísha*'s language from his *túta*'s 'father's' family and we have had the incredible fortune to learn enough to share with our son, though we are still (and will always be) learning. I am grateful to *my ísha,* my *iwínsh* 'partner', and to other *chímyanashma* 'parents' of Yakama babies and toddlers for opening their worlds to me and letting me share in this practice of language cultivation with a new generation.

The parents who lent their voices to this project were generous in sharing their experiences - daily practices, struggles, hopes and dreams for their language, children, and future generations. It is our collective hope that this is just the tip of the iceberg in the work yet to come. Though many of us are learners, the skills and resources we have – including one another – are a cause for incredible hope in creating, or at the very least contributing to, a new generation of Ichishkíin first-language speakers.

Ichishkíin, or Sahaptin, is a language spoken in parts of what is now known as Washington and Oregon states in the Columbia River Plateau. Three major dialects are Yakama, Warm Springs, and Umatilla[1]. The language is critically endangered with only a few Elder speakers carrying it as their first fluent language. There is an ever-growing number of people learning it as a second language, many of whom are committed to sharing it in their homes or in classrooms. It is currently taught in multiple Head Start locations at Yakama Nation as well as at an elementary after school program, and as classes at a middle school, four high schools, at Heritage University on the Yakama

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[1] For a more detailed background and description of Ichishkíin, see Jansen (2010).

reservation, and at the University of Oregon (UO) where I teach Ichishkíin classes with Yakama Elder, Tux̱ámshish (Dr. Virginia Beavert).

Collaborations between many of these institutions continue to grow especially with the increase in support for remote education implemented with the pandemic, as many of these schools are spread out geographically. For example, through project work, UO students create language materials and resources largely focused on daily and home language use to be shared with families, teachers, and learners of Ichishkíin and remote work has enabled students to meet and share their work more directly. Also, with the beginning of remote classes, we have met several times through the academic years with classes at Harrah Elementary to share remote performances with the children (who are always eager with questions and stories to share in our sessions, too). While incredible strides are (and have been) in motion to support heritage and second language learners of Ichishkíin, greater focus is warranted to support parents and caretakers who are working to raise their babies along with Ichishkíin in an effort to recultivate intergenerational language use.

This dissertation strives to be an extension of the work Tux̱ámshish has taught me to do. She believes strongly in the tools of education and the capacity for education research to serve Indigenous communities in many ways, including language revitalization. She reminds us often that, though many may benefit from her/our work in academia, the core purpose of that work is to benefit Yakama children and future generations. With that purpose in mind then, I use this space to explore literature concerning language cultivation (Chapter II), methodology that values relationship above all else (Chapter III), to learn parent and caretakers' thoughts about education for their

3

Yakama children (Chapter IV), hear how parents and caretakers of Yakama babies and toddlers are tending to Ichishkíin in their homes daily and what would aid their efforts in cultivating language shift (Chapter V), and to discuss future extensions of this work along with potential implications it has for the fields of language revitalization, education, and education research (Chapter VI). I turn now to close this chapter with a brief overview of Chapters II through VI to come.

With Chapter II, I present a literature review describing the academic lenses that inform this work, how this project is grounded within that previous work, and the theoretical framework as it is applied in the present study. These sections explore ideas of how we might approach efforts to create new generations of first-language Ichishkíin speakers and factors that contribute to such consideration, including what it means to be second-language learners taking on these efforts. I also look at how other Tribal communities are approaching this work of language cultivation and growth with young children. I end Chapter II by discussing how embedding my study in a Yakama specific theoretical framework guides me to honor that this project is first and foremost a Yakama project which also contributes to the fields of Education and Education Research.

I open Chapter III with a discussion of the methodology behind this work including the assumptions I work from, my research design, Internal Review Board processes followed at both Yakama Nation and University of Oregon. I describe the parents who participated, and detail the gift bundles we gave away as thanks to those who shared their voices and stories for this work. I describe the collaboration that went into this work and how such collaboration offered insight into two related but separate dissertation projects, and the collection and management of the stories shared. I also

provide an account of my role as researcher, briefly consider assumptions and limitations of this study, and end with a chapter summary.

In Chapter IV, I describe and discuss the results of the Yakama Education Parent and Caretaker Survey Twálatin and I designed, distributed, and collected together and present results with figures and charts followed by an analysis of the significance of these results for this project for each question. The analysis is organized by themes that surfaced under each question through parent and caretaker responses in the survey.

In the fifth chapter, I offer a presentation of stories and experiences shared by parents of Yakama children four years of age and younger through conversations we had around four themes: 1) how they use Ichishkíin in their homes now, 2) what challenges they face in doing so, 3) resources wanted, and 4) their hopes and dreams for future use. Parents were generous in sharing their experiences and my analysis infuses their stories with some of the ways they are enacting Yakama virtues as defined by Kussumwhy (Wilkins, 2008). As with the survey, sections are further organized by themes that arose from our conversations about daily Ichishkíin use, challenges, resources, and hopes.

In Chapter VI I take space to review my research questions and the purpose of this project and discuss this project on a larger scale, including how information shared through the survey and conversations interact together as well as with the literature presented in Chapter III. Here I also consider how this work contributes to research, education, and language revitalization on a larger scale and end with recommendations for future projects and extensions to this research.

Throughout this project, I speak about language work as an act of cultivation rather than revitalization or reclamation. This term to me is a more accurate reflection of

5

the work families, communities, and language practitioners engage in; work that is

constant, challenging, gratifying, purposeful, restorative, nurturing, and designed to

enable growth and sustainability through interaction. Relational in nature, language

cultivation encompasses the inherent collaboration between language, people, and place

and refers to a process that is consistently ongoing. It is highly adaptable to

environmental and social factors and accommodates the wide variety of Indigenous

language contexts and goals.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This second chapter is comprised of three main parts in which I look to literature and experiences to answer two main questions: 1) Why is it important for Yakama children to be first-language speakers of Ichishkíin? and 2) What are other Tribal communities doing to support their children in this way? In Section 2.1., I present research and scholarship to discuss the crucial actions of providing Yakama children with access to supports necessary to grow with their language and become first-language speakers of Ichishkíin. Such action is critical in terms of timing for both first-language acquisition and a context of language endangerment. This first section is further organized by three themes found within the literature: 1) Language Shift, Language Loss, and Reversing Language Shift (section 2.1.1.); 2) Identity (section 2.1.2.), and 3) Nation-Building (section 2.1.3).

I expand on these questions in Section 2.2, grounding my study within established academic knowledge to explore how we might learn from others to go about creating a new generation of speakers when we are second-language learners with limited knowledge and resources ourselves. This section draws insights from work happening across Indigenous communities to nurture infants and toddlers in their heritage languages. It is further organized into two sections: Section 2.2.1 Language Nests, and Section 2.2.2 Language in the Home, including Reclaiming Domains, a relatively new strategy for restoring language to home use.

Finally, in section 2.3., I describe how I apply a Yakama-specific theoretical framework in this project. I break this section further to discuss four areas: 1) ways Yakama knowledge is important in education and education research in terms of connections between land, language and people (section 2.3.1.), 2) intergenerational teaching practices (section 2.3.2.), 3) scholarly work that helps shape what a Yakama research framework consists of (section 2.3.3.), and 4) how Yakama, and Indigenous knowledge more generally, benefits education and education research (section 2.3.4.).

2.1 Support Towards Future Generations of First-Language Ichishkíin Speakers

2.1.1 Language Shift, Language Loss, and Reversing Language Shift

Scholars agree that intergenerational transmission is the ideal way to keep a language spoken and the largest indicator of wellness of a given language (Albury 2015; Fishman 1990; Fishman 1991; O'Grady & Hattori 2016; Todal 2018; Wilson & Kamanā 2009). Language shift, put most simply, occurs when multiple languages are spoken in a community, and one becomes dominant at the expense of the others. In other words, language shift occurs when the norm of using a particular language diminishes over time throughout certain social domains (Lewis and Simons, 2010). This often occurs in cases of language contact and, under a colonialist agenda, as evidenced in the United States for example, use of English is forced through policy and educational practices (Child, 1998; Jansen, etal, 2013; Kandler and Steele, 2017; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; McCarty, 2013; McCarty & Dick, 1996; White, 2015).

Many Indigenous languages of North America, Ichishkíin included, have been and continue to face erasure arising from language loss due to attempts of genocide, forced assimilation and other violations of human and linguistic rights (Baloy 2011;

Reyhner 2010; Skutnabb-Kangas 2018; White, 2015; Wilson & Kamanā 2009). Children were taken from their families, to boarding schools often far from their own communities, where they were forced to speak English and punished, often severely and violently, for speaking their languages. The trauma associated with boarding schools kept many parents from later sharing their language with their children (Jansen, etal, 2013; McCarty, 2013). According to Underriner (2020), "stories of boarding school trauma always surface in language revitalization work," (p.71). Tending to this trauma, she argues, is essential to understanding how language transmission has been broken, and how the healing work of language revitalization can move forward.

Many Indigenous communities are taking steps towards reversing language shift, but given the endangered state of their languages, this process requires large-scale strategy as well as smaller, more actionable steps (Anderson 2019; Lee 2009; Switzler 2012; Wilson & Kamanā 2009). Kandler and Steele (2017) identify three components as immediately impactful to the movement of language shift: frequency of language use, proficiency, and perceived value. Like Kandler and Steele's description of perceived value, White (2015) echoes that language attitudes within a community contribute to language health, vitality and status can be a powerful source for driving policy change which, in turn, impacts language use.

Language use in the home is a critical component of reversing language shift (Fishman 1990; Fishman, 1991; Hinton, 2013; Jansen, et al 2013). According to Fishman, obvious transmission between generations is the critical link in any true attempts to reverse language shift. He describes eight graded stages of RLS along a continuum of a language being 'weak' (stages 5-8) and 'strong' (stages 1-4). Yakama Ichishkíin is

situated between stages 7 and 8 as community members and allies are striving to learn the language and create more resources (stage 8) while there are still Elders, though not the vast population outlined in stage 7, for whom Ichishkíin is their first language. Fishman's stages are presented in the table below.

Table 1. Stages of Reversing Language Shift: Severity of Intergenerational Dislocation (Fishman, 1991)

Stage 8	Reconstructing Xish[2] and adult acquisition of [Xish as a Second Language].
Stage 7	Cultural interaction in Xish primarily involving the community-based older generation.
Stage 6	The intergenerational and demographically concentrated home-family-neighborhood: the basis of mother tongue transmission.
Stage 5	Schools for literacy acquisition, for the old and for the young, and not in lieu of compulsory education.
Stage 4a	Schools in lieu of compulsory education and substantially under Xish curricular and staffing control.
Stage 4b	Public schools for Xish children, offering some instruction via [language], but substantially under Yish[3] curricular and staffing control.
Stage 3	The local/regional (i.e., non-neighborhood) work sphere, both among Xmen and among Ymen[4].
Stage 2	Local/regional mass media and governmental services.
Stage 1	Education, work sphere, mass media and governmental operations at higher and nationwide levels.

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[2] Xish, in this case, would refer to Ichishkíin.
[3] Yish, in this case, would refer to English
[4] Xmen and Ymen, in this case, refer respectively to Ichishkíin speakers and English speakers.

While Fishman's Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS) has been used by scholars and communities to measure the vitality of their language for decades, Lewis & Simons (2010) note they focus more on the disruption of a language rather than its maintenance or efforts toward revitalization. They evaluate Fishman's GIDS, along with two other prominent adaptations – The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO's) 6-level scale of endangerment (xx) and the five categories outlined by *Ethnologue (xx)* – and combine them to form an expanded scale, the E(xpanded)GIDS, to accommodate all known languages.

While Lewis & Simons (2010) agree that intergenerational transmission and language in the home are critical components of reversing language shift, they go on to highlight the need for more structural supports in a wider social sphere, including institutional and policy level supports. In this way, Lewis & Simons' adaptation incorporates a stronger focus on solutions and action that might aid in reversing language shift by including the (1) role of institutions in securing spaces and support for helping to normalize the use of a particular language, and (2) on the role of policies in supporting families to increase and stabilize language use in the home. Table 2 (on page 12) presents Lewis and Simons' EGIDS (p.8).

While Lewis & Simons' (2010) presentation of EGIDS *is* more detailed than Fishman's original GIDS, any system attempting to categorize the world's languages, it seems, will face challenges of overgeneralization. Ichishkíin, for example, takes bits from multiple categories, making it difficult to pin down to any one definitive level of endangerment. That said, following this guide, Ichishkíin falls under a few categories. As a spoken first language, it falls under level 8b, labeled 'nearly extinct' and aligning with

Table 2. Expanded Scale of Language Endangerment - Lewis & Simons (2010)

LEVEL	LABEL	DESCRIPTION	UNESCO
Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (adapted from Fishman 1991)[*]			
0	International	The language is used internationally for a broad range of functions.	Safe
1	National	The language is used in education, work, mass media, government at the nationwide level.	Safe
2	Regional	The language is used for local and regional mass media and governmental services.	Safe
3	Trade	The language is used for local and regional work by both insiders and outsiders.	Safe
4	Educational	Literacy in the language is being transmitted through a system of public education.	Safe
5	Written	The language is used orally by all generations and is effectively used in written form in parts of the community.	Safe
6a	Vigorous	The language is used orally by all generations and is being learned by children as their first language.	Safe
6b	Threatened	The language is used orally by all generations but only some of the child-bearing generation are transmitting it to their children.	Vulnerable
7	Shifting	The child-bearing generation knows the language well enough to use it among themselves but none are transmitting it to their children	Definitely Endangered
8a	Moribund	The only remaining active speakers of the language are members of the grandparent generation.	Severely Endangered
8b	Nearly Extinct	The only remaining speakers of the language are members of the grandparent generation or older who have little opportunity to use the language.	Critically Endangered
9	Dormant	The language serves as a reminder of heritage identity for an ethnic community. No one has more than symbolic proficiency.	Extinct
10	Extinct	No one retains a sense of ethnic identity associated with the language, even for symbolic purposes.	Extinct

UNESCO's categorization of 'critically endangered'. This category identifies the only

fluent speakers to be Elders with little opportunity to use their language. There is,

however, an established writing system and teachers, families, and activists are working to create more materials to be used in classrooms and other educational programs, advancing the literacy component of Ichishkíin use described under the safety of Level 5. While these efforts do not include the multigenerational speakers featured in Level 5, the expanded use of the written language should be noted when evaluating the vitality of this language in its context. Not only have there been relatively extensive documentation projects, but there are also new materials, programming, and projects generated regularly.

These levels do not easily specify how much of a community's efforts transition them to a different level, nor do they easily allow for a community to acknowledge the efforts taking place under varied categories. Restoring regular use across generations will, by definition, require generations still unborn – but all current efforts are meaningful. These types of categorizing are partially what compel me to think of language as an act of cultivation rather than revitalization or reclamation. There are basic components and activities that are similar across contexts but there are so many specifics that are unique to a given language in place, with its people.

Under a traditional model of Yakama education, discussed more thoroughly below, Elders provide children with guidance from the time they begin to comprehend direction. This guidance, along with the telling of *watít* 'legends', is the foundation of the Yakama education system (Beavert 1974). This educational framework is strongly rooted in a practice of intergenerational transmission that scholars describe as essential for a reversal of language shift. While few fluent Elders remain, there is a growing community of second-language learners, who have been taught, mentored, loved by Elders, and are dedicated to caring for and growing the use of Ichishkíin (Anderson 2019; Jansen 2010).

The Hawaiian language was in a similar stage (between 7-8) when Hawaiian people began to engage in a grassroots movement towards reversing language shift in the 1970s and 80s; Elders were still speaking but people didn't understand much and weren't speaking themselves (Wilson & Kamanā 2009). While the Hawaiian language spans a larger geographical area and speaker base than Ichishkíin (Anderson 2019), their success in driving language shift offers hope to other communities in similar situations that this work of language shift can be done. Their programs – now consisting of over 25 immersion schools ("Hawaii State", n.d.) – serve as inspirational models for many Indigenous communities and, at the time of this writing, they have formally hosted 250 Indigenous organizations seeking insights about establishing programs in their own communities ('Aha Pūnana Leo, n.d.). They work partially within the public school system to access resources and equalize their own ways of educating, including teaching in their own language.

2.1.2. Identity

Indigenous children and youth from many areas, including Yakama, crave connection with language and culture (Baloy 2011; Huaman, Martin & Chosa 2016; Lee 2009; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Nicholas 2009; Sutterlict & Anderson 2021; Wilson & Kamanā 2009). Wilson and Kamanā recommend embedding cultural practices within education so it can more accessibly foster children's Indigenous identity and support their own goals for cultural knowledge and practicing lifeways. Nicholas (2009) explores Hopi youth perceptions of the impact of language shift on identity and relationship to culture. Pueblo youth, too, understand the connection between language and identity and how it helps strengthen their being in the world (Huaman, et al, 2016).

14

Mary Hermes (2005) advises educators to use caution not to implement language instruction without contextualizing it within culture reflecting on a teacher's concern that "even fluent Ojibwe could be appropriated to reflect an English way of thinking," (p.53). Language provides us with instructions for a way of life; it directs our attention and guides us in particular ways. As Darrell Kipp (2000) writes, "[w]ho we are comes from the language," (p.6), and in 2002, Kipp notes, "The Pikuni language is my teacher now, and is in my view the truth keeper for future Pikuni generations." Seed-Pihama in Archibald, et al (2019) describes Māori stories as glasses through which ancestors' teachings maintain clarity and guidance.

Research also shows how Indigenous youth are leading the push for language and culture revitalization movements (Wilson & Kamanā 2009; Huaman, et al, 2016; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006) and that they view Elders as knowledge holders and understand that time with them is finite (Lee 2009). As researchers and educators, we can support their call to action by making it easier for youth to access language and culture and grow strong in their identities as Indigenous leaders (Reyhner 2010) including starting them off as early as possible with whatever resources we have at hand.

2.1.3. Nation-building with Language

As we saw in the last section, language is deeply tied to identity at both individual and community levels. Here I want to address the connection between nation building and language which has political ramifications (Carter & Sealey, 2007; Romero-Little, 2006). Viatori and Ushigua (2007) speak to the connections between language, identity and nation, writing that "indigenous languages can be a vital component of strengthening communities' and individuals' identification with an indigenous nation. Indigenous

language programs can be important for unifying individuals and communities as a coherent indigenous nation and for gaining recognition from nation-state governments for increased indigenous sovereignty," (pp. 7-8). Romero-Little brings attention to the ways literacy practices interact with power dynamics in various social and political realms. In Archibald, et al. (2019), regarding self-determination and ideologies, De Santolo writes, "talking in our own languages is a political act…" (p.245) and Seed-Pihama writes about Māori stories as "a deep pool of knowledge that has been used for centuries by the scholars of our society to philosophize and theorize our world," (p.112). This speaks to the equality of long-standing Indigenous systems of knowledge-sharing and research methods to any other systems of research and knowledge sharing. White (2015) echoes this, speaking to the importance of language in fully understanding and maintaining cultural practice. In her words, ""When ceremonial life is threatened by loss of language, there are significant consequences…without a deep cultural understanding of the language to continue ceremonial traditions, culture is merely preserved in "fossil form…"," (p.142). It is through preservation of language and cultural practices that Nation is also preserved.

McCarty (2013) takes a critical lens to Language Planning and Policy, noting "it can be a site of resistance and transformation," (p.40). Under this lens, grassroots efforts are privileged in shaping policies around language revitalization, which are inevitably tied to issues of politics, sovereignty, and human rights. "At its root," McCarty reminds us, "language revitalization is about personal and communal identity, wholeness and the strengthening of intergenerational ties," (p.39). Language policies in the United States have strategically sought to extinguish the relationship between Indigenous peoples and

their languages, regarding it a threat to the US nation state (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; McCarty, 2013). Lewis and Simons (2010) add to the argument for institutional supports, writing "…intergenerational transmission is an individual decision made by parents, but also…societal and institutional choices are crucial in influencing the parental decisions regarding their language behavior in regard to their children. These societal factors create social spaces in which languages are used," (p.5). Their words speak to the impacts policies can have on the daily choices of parents and families regarding language use.

Family choices and practices also have potential to impact policy. As we will read in Chapter V, parents share the ways that community spaces such as schools and workplace language use influence their language behaviors at home. Policies created and implemented at Tribal, State, and National levels have potential to influence, support, and enhance family efforts to cultivate and grow their language use at home. At a Tribal level, visibility of Ichishkíin within the community through things like signage and access to language in the workplace can be one step that increases local language use while also responding to direct requests from parents and caretakers heard through this project. Yakama Nation also has policies in place allowing Tribal employees time off to participate in language classes at Heritage University at no cost. They are also currently refining policies around certifying language teachers at a state level on their own terms, enacting their sovereign rights through policy.

At a state level, local school districts are developing curriculum including language components in compliance with Senate Bill 5433 which requires tribally developed curriculum to be taught in schools. Unfortunately, policy requirements do not

automatically result in action or follow through, but research can be designed to help strengthen parent and family voices in calling for follow through. Throughout this project we hear parents' and caretakers' clear calls to action for greater access to Ichishkíin language through educational programming for their children and communities. Future research could certainly take a deeper look at the way policies either serve or harm the outcomes these families are advocating for and make particular recommendations for strategic movement at the Tribal, State, and National levels. Once again, we heed the advice of Tux̱ámshish to remember that this work is for Yakama children; to help preserve and continue to strengthen their Nation and inherent rights to speak Ichishkíin and practice their Yakama way of life.

2.2. Other Tribal Community Actions Toward Language Shift

Some Tribal communities have been successful in creating new first-language speakers after facing language endangerment. While still few, these cases are generally the result of family and grassroots efforts (Linn & Oberly 2016; Wilson & Kamanā 2009) though some school-based programs, like the Nehiwi and Ka Haka 'Ula programs in Hawaii, and the Ichishkíin program at the University of Oregon, attempt to support home language use through classroom teaching (Anderson 2019; Wilson & Kamanā 2009). Wilson and Kamanā express hope that "[a]s the 'Aha Punana Leo enters its second quarter century, we expect that within a generation there will be several academically renowned schools in which the majority of children will be first-language speakers of Hawaiian," (Wilson & Kamanā 2009, p.374).

2.2.1. Language Nests

Language nests, which Chambers (2015) defines simply as, "early language learning programs where young children, from infancy to five years of age, are fully immersed in an Indigenous language," (p.26), have become somewhat of a buzzword in language revitalization. There is good reason for this, however, as they have shown success through the years in many communities. McIvor and Parker (2016) expand on a definition of language nests to include motives of language acquisition writing, "[a] language nest creates a space where young children can be "raised" in the language through meaningful interaction with proficient speakers, often Elders. The immersion environment of the nest supports natural language acquisition instead of conscious language instruction, with the goal of facilitating first language acquisition of Indigenous languages," (p.24).

Communities across the world have turned to language nests as a strategy for increasing language use among young speakers. *Te Kōhanga Reo* 'the language nest' originated in New Zealand in the 1980s in an effort to restore intergenerational transmission of the Māori language (King 2001). The program's success inspired action in Hawaii in the 1980s where their version, *Pūnana Leo,* became popular very quickly. Instruction/Learning has expanded from these nests into grades K-16 programming in private and public elementary and high schools and universities. These programs and others like it require tireless dedication on the part of families if language is to thrive within homes and community again.

Some communities, however, have smaller and more spread-out speaker bases than the Māori and Hawaiian contexts, posing different challenges in establishing

19

language nests for their youngest children. Chambers (2015) provides a review of different approaches and strategies used across communities and contexts while others write specifically about more local efforts. For example, Anderson (2019) and Switzler (2012) describe an Ichishkíin speaking context at Yakama Nation and Warm Springs respectively where language nests are a more long-term goal, and offer alternative strategies, including (re)claiming domains. McIvor (2005) writes about the language context in BC, Canada where the languages are also more diverse and spread out than in Hawaii and New Zealand. They recommend building networks of otherwise isolated communities to support local nests through which resources and materials may be shared between dedicated language activists. This collaborative effort extends across Indigenous communities on a global scale, too, as communities learn from and support one other to "prepare for inevitable challenges," (Chambers, 2015, p.34).

2.2.2. Language in the Home/Reclaiming Domains

In reflecting on writings and stories by families who have engaged in the work of bringing their languages home, Hinton (2013) writes that their motivation was "very personal…based on the desire to give an important gift to their children. The heritage language is a most precious gift of connection to family, community, history, and identity," (p.651). Hinton offers planning advice to those who wish to raise their children in their heritage language. It raises voices of those who have done and are doing this work and offers encouragement to those who don't know where to start.

I first learned about reclaiming domains as a strategy for home-based language revitalization from colleagues at the Northwest Indian Language Institute. Pyuwa and Ruby (formally, Bommelyn & Tuttle) had two young children at the time and were

20

working around the clock to learn the language necessary to speak to their children in Tolowa Dee-ni' in their daily lives. I remember Ruby writing down every single utterance she spoke in a day so she could later translate with her family. Their family has since grown, and they and their children use the language regularly. They describe their work as generational family work and consider deeply the responsibility in which they are involved. When I think about language in the home, I think about this family, and I am inspired. Bommelyn & Tuttle (2018) refer to this shift of strategy in language learning and use at home as a natural solution; one so simple, they had previously overlooked it. They talk about the home as a site of educational sovereignty and possibility.

Zahir (2018) writes about language nesting in the home in a new way. He makes a distinction between nests for young children, as previously discussed in the Māori and Hawaiian cases, and nests for the language itself. In the latter context, a physical space is designated for language to live without interference from another language like English; a no-English zone. This type of nest for the language, builds on the idea of reclaiming domains. Once enough domains of a particular area in the home have been reclaimed, it is ready to become a nested space for the language. In this way, space can be built upon as more domains are mastered, until the whole home becomes a nest.

2.3. Academic Relationships to Ground My Study

This section connects the literature reviewed in the previous section to the context of the current study. In it, I look to literature on language acquisition to inform my discussion of strategies to consider in developing programming or resources for Yakama parents and families of babies and toddlers. Lewis and Simons (2010) articulate that "[i]f

children do not learn a language from their parents, there is little possibility that they in turn will be able to pass the language on to their children," (p.5). It is difficult to pass on language to new generations when we are still learners ourselves and I explore here how we, as second language learners of Ichishkíin, can raise our babies as first language speakers. Though we might have limited capacity as second-language learners, there is still much we can do to help children become Ichishkíin speakers from a younger age.

It is hard work to try to use a second language more prominently in the home on top of everything else life brings on a daily basis. Messing (2009) writes of the struggles Indigenous language teachers face in this regard as parents in their own homes. The power of the mother tongue is so strong, despite deep commitments, it can sometimes feel like taking your work home. For example, White (2015) describes one teacher's reflections at the Akwesasne Freedom School who shares that, while they are fluent in Mohawk and teach kids at the school daily, they are not teaching their kids at home. Albury (2015) echoes this sentiment from a language learner perspective, articulating some of the affective impacts of parenting in a second language. While it is not without great challenge, and as Bommelyn and Tuttle (2018) share, it can be done. Any support can and should be built to make this road easier for parents aiming to reclaim, even partially, intergenerational transmission of Indigenous language.

O'Grady & Hattori (2016) offer hope in reminding us that "…language loss can be slowed even in the face of external pressures if measures are taken to enhance children's opportunities to learn and use it," (p.46). Based on studies of bilingual language acquisition, they recommend a 25 percent minimum overall exposure to a language if children are to use it. They point out as well that, even with early exposure,

language ability will break down if not supported through time. This supports a need for intensive continuing educative supports – whether in homes or schools – throughout time for Yakama children and youth.

The first year of life, O'Grady & Hattori (2016) emphasize, is crucial in children's acquisition of speech sounds. We are lucky to have recordings of Yakama Elders' speech that we can play for our babies while we continue to learn Ichishkíin sounds ourselves. While we continue to learn, simply exposing children to these recordings will go a long way in supporting their acquisition of Ichishkíin speech sounds. Ichishkíin has sounds not featured in – and even radically different from – the English language (Hunn, 1990; Jansen, 2010) which can add to difficulty in learning these sounds as adults. Providing exposure to them as early as possible eases, even negates, this challenge, depending on the level of continued exposure.

Thinking through sounds of Ichishkíin specifically, Table 3, from Jansen (2010, p.30) shows the sounds of Ichishkíin which includes 7 vowels and 32 consonants. Note there are eight different 'k' sounds! Though some sound symbols appear similar between Ichishkíin and English, pronunciation differences exist between many of them. For example, the letter *i* is pronounced in a very particular way in Ichishkíin (similar to the vowel sound in the English word 'ski' or 'bean') with only slight variations based on context whereas, in English, it may be pronounced in very different ways based on a number of factors (ex: line, in, ski, pencil). Letters like the barred l (ł), back x and k's (x̲, k̲), hard sounds (ch', p', t', etc.), and the contrast of long and short vowels (u vs. uu), among others, have been difficult for students to grasp. Even with my intensive study for

23

the past dozen years, I am still corrected on my pronunciation in ways that are difficult to even differentiate.

Table 3. Yakima/Yakama Ichishkíin Alphabet

a	aa	ch	ch'	h	i	ii	ɨ	k	k'	kw	kw'	ḵ
ḵ'	ḵw	ḵw'	l	ł	m	n	p	p'	s	sh	t	t'
tł	tł'	ts	ts'	u	uu	w	x	x̱	xw	x̱w	y	'

In terms of grammar, exposure prior to age four is essential in developing native proficiency and use of grammatical structures in a given language (O'Grady & Hattori, 2016). Again, as second-language learners we might not be able to attain native-like fluency, but we can still support more native/native-like language development for our children by exposing them to language with the resources we do have, and working to create more resources for our own, and subsequently, their learning. Given these insights, significant gain can be made "at the level of a neighborhood, a school, or even a family," (p.52). Language exposure, beginning at infancy and continued through adolescence with opportunities for use, is key to supporting children in becoming first-language speakers. Supports – be it programming, policies, social groups, etc. – that focus on areas like increasing resources, easing the burden of time and finances for families taking on this work, and connecting generations, would aid in reversing language shift and tending to the identity and well-being of Yakama children, families, community and, ultimately nation building.

2.4. Theoretical Framework: Application to the present study

In this section, I ground my work within a theoretical framework for this study through five main themes. In the first, section 2.4.1. I share why it is important to ground this educational research in a Yakama framework. In section 2.4.2., I write about the integral connection between land, language, and people. I follow with section 2.4.3. where I discuss Intergenerational Teaching Practices, including traditional education (section 2.4.3.1.), and tending to knowledge gaps that have resulted from colonization and assimilative policies (section 2.4.3.2.). I walk through the work of others who have shaped this Yakama research framework in section 2.4.4 including Elders who have paved the way through formal scholarship in education and research (sections 2.4.4.1. and 2.4.4.2), and scholars who have followed in their footsteps (section 2.4.4.3.). Finally, I discuss some of the benefits of including Indigenous knowledge in education and education research more widely in section 2.4.5. and end the chapter with a brief summary (section 2.5).

2.4.1. Why Yakama knowledge is important in Education and Education Research

Yakama Elder, Tux̱ámshish (Dr. Virginia Beavert) has shared a story many times through the years in conversation and at gatherings about (literally) gaining a seat at the table of the world's languages within the academic realm. At 80-some years old at the time, and after over six decades of dedication to the preservation of her people's language, she reflects on this moment as pivotal. In her book, she elaborates on this point in response to those asking what her language means to her (Beavert 2017, p.4):

> "My language means that I, my relatives, and tribal members are human. We speak, process, and comprehend the Ichishkíin language in the same way other humans process their languages. The traditions and cultural heritage passed down

by the Sahaptin people through generations identify our country and our inherent right to occupy our geographical place. It supports that we, the Native/Ichishkíin people of this land did not migrate to the United States of America from any other country. We are its original inhabitants."

In this quote alone, Tux̱ámshish touches on many ideas – the interconnected nature of language with human, Indigenous, and land rights, identity and place, and intergenerational practices of knowledge transmission. Wilson and Kamanā (2009) echo this notion, "…language is the vehicle that human groups use to maintain continuity of identity…" (Wilson and Kamanā, 2009, p. 370)

2.4.2. Land, language, and people

The intimate relationship between land, language, and people is one many others have explored (Ackerman 1996; Archibald, et.al, 2019; Baloy 2011; Gomashie, 2019; Huaman, et al, 2016; Hunn, et al 2015; Jacob 2013; Jansen, et.al 2013; Walsh 2018). Hunn, et al (2015) refer to this relationship as an "assemblage of memory and meaning that has all but disappeared from common knowledge," (p. inside cover). Luch'á Łamtáx̱, Bruce Rigsby, reminds us that Indigenous place names are most well-known by those who are in most intimate and regular contact with them and Hunn echoes such relationships are evident in the names people give to places (Hunn et al 2015, p.XIII-XV). Beavert (2017) further describes language in relationship with land, reminding us the land has known the language "since time immemorial," (p.4). While non-traditional measures are being taken to share knowledge in more formal settings such as classrooms and academic texts (Anderson 2019; Beavert 2017; Hunn et al 2015), it is important to make and hold space for traditional frameworks and methods including, or perhaps *especially*, in relationship with land. According to Wilson and Kamanā, "[s]uccessful

26

Indigenous-language maintenance is based on strong bonds between use of a language and a particular geographic location," (p. 371). Baloy (2011) articulates "Our bodies are made a certain way so you could speak your language...If you look at different languages, languages are what the land looks like. So, it's according to what your environment is," (p.537). This quote speaks to the very embodiment of this trio within one another.

2.4.3. Intergenerational Teaching Practices

2.4.3.1. Traditional Education

Yakama people have a tradition of sharing knowledge through intergenerational teaching practices (Beavert 1974; Beavert 2017). Elders hold a special position as knowledge holders in Plateau cultures (Ackerman 1996), so much of this knowledge was shared by Elders to children through skilled storytelling of *watít* 'legends' and other practices (Beavert 1974; Ackerman 1996)). The *watít* continues to provide a culturally sustaining curriculum full of lessons rooted in place and relationship and sharing knowledge in a manner that is naturally engaging. Topics include everything the day could bring, including history, geography and landmarks, flora and fauna, technology, art, music, adaptability, resilience, social interactions and conduct, dangers, and other countless areas and characteristics of life. Lessons took place throughout daily life, from early morning until night, sometimes in the *xwyach* 'sweathouse', sometimes the *káatnam* 'longhouse', sometimes even while sleeping, and children's questions were always met with answers. Family history continues to be another area of well-known shared knowledge (Ackerman 1996). Overall, a much more comprehensive education, some might argue, than many children receive today standing on the same lands.

2.4.3.2. Tending to Knowledge Gaps

In Anakú Iwacha (Beavert, 1974, p.iii), a contributor shares "[i]t is as if our bodies are the very end of this earth, still growing while our ancestors are all buried in the ground…All of the land where we live and where our ancestors lived was created for the (Indian) people. Now I see it diminishing gradually little by little until some of us have no place to live. The land changes as our children are changing, and it makes me sad." This quote ties back to the connections between land, language, and people, in the way changes may be observed across all of these beings. Such changes identify areas of generational disruptions to knowledge sharing and ways of life that impact community in a number of ways, and identify areas of resurgence, cultivation, and growth that help tend to gaps that arise through disruption.

A growing number of Yakama and other Columbia River scholars are documenting traditional ways of knowing and being to help ensure younger generations have access to this information and can carry on this work (Beavert 1974; Beavert 2017; Hunn et al 2015; Jacob 2013; Wilkins 2008). This work helps narrow the "knowledge gap" Jacob (2013) refers to as a prominent threat for Indigenous peoples as a result of colonial policies. In Plateau cultures, master artists "look within tribal boundaries for the sincere and capable people to whom they pass on their knowledge. Wisdom flows gradually in its own time…They are not looking for fame but for connections, to enable Plateau culture and heritage to live on," (Ackerman 1996, p.xvi).

Documenting Yakama knowledge within academic spaces also helps to increase visibility and representation of Yakama voice and perspectives and opens up spaces for other Indigenous scholars to contribute theirs (Kovach 2010). It lends to greater

understanding of culture and history (Beavert 1974). Such work also provides counternarratives to previous accounts, which Western education and academic literature continue to attempt to speak over (Hunn et al 2015).

2.4.4. A Yakama Research Framework

Kovach (2010) writes, "[a]n Indigenous research framework acts as a nest, encompassing the range of qualities influencing the process and content of the research journey," (p.42). In a project seeking to re-establish intergenerational knowledge and language transmission, embedding it in a framework rooted in Yakama ways of knowing and being will ensure it reflects Yakama values. We are fortunate, in this work, to have Elders to guide us – not only in life, but in scholarship as well. Tux̱ámshish and Kussumwhy, both introduced below, are fierce leaders in education with published work that helps pave the way for those of us following in their academic footsteps. The following sections share some of their work that guides my current efforts.

2.4.4.1. Tux̱ámshish – Guidance for Academic Researchers

Tux̱ámshish, Dr. Virginia Beavert, is a Yakama Elder who has dedicated her life to documenting and sharing her language and culture. She believes strongly in education and is one of the main reasons I continue this work in academia. Another strong Yakama woman, Elese Washines, states in an interview, "[i]n Western culture they talk about 'knowledge is power.' In our Yakama culture, knowledge is responsibility..." (Ayer 2021). Tux̱ámshish teaches this to her students and expects them to follow suit. She is generous in the knowledge she shares and those of us around her recognize what a gift it is that she chooses to share it with us.

29

In her book (Beavert 2017), Tux̱ámshish provides guidance for academic researchers who wish to work with Indigenous communities. She frames this guidance within three categories: 1) Knowledge of Culture and History, 2) Tribal Relations, and 3) Ethics and Respect. In terms of the first, Tux̱ámshish recommends researchers do their due diligence to learn background information about the community regardless of its directly perceived relevance to one's work. She cautions that some information will not be available until relationships have been established within the community, and to be wary of publications which might contain inaccurate information. She identifies background information to include getting to know enrollment populations, languages and dialects of the area, Tribal histories and traditions, and treaty and geographical information. This will show respect to a community in that a researcher isn't walking in expecting members to educate them completely. On page 31, Table 4 below provides a visual summary of the aforementioned topics and additional notes for researchers to consider either before, or early on, in their work.

Following these general considerations, Tux̱ámshish elaborates on two other subjects: building Tribal relationships, and ethics and respect. Regarding Tribal relationships, she encourages academics to engage in relationships; to find a respected member in the community open to working with you who can help you build relationships at the Tribal level as well (e.g.: culture committee, Tribal council) in support of your project, which should be of benefit to the tribe. Project details should be well thought out, including issues around access and ownership, and appropriate compensation and reciprocity when making requests of people. Tux̱ámshish emphasizes

Table 4. Guidance to Researchers – Knowledge of Culture and History
(Beavert, 2017)

Researcher Considerations		Notes
Background Information	Enrollment	Current population of enrolled members
	Language(s)	Languages and dialects of the community (even those you are not working with)
	History, mores, and traditions	
	Treaties	Was there a treaty? When was it signed and by whom? What were the circumstances of the treaty, its signing, and ratification? How many bands and tribes were included? *Read the treaty* – what rights were reserved?
	Geographical information	Statistics about reservation lands, traditional lands vs current reservation lands, closed areas

the importance of being transparent about project products and community access to them.

 Concerning ethics and respect, Tux̱ámshish emphasizes the inextricable link between culture and language and encourages incoming scholars to learn both. Researchers should contribute to the community, getting involved with activities and gatherings and following protocols, conducting themselves appropriately when invited to social or ceremonial activities, the acceptance of which are important in establishing relationships. She stresses the need to be transparent about one's intentions and purpose in these spaces, and to be sincere. One of the most impactful lessons from this section of Tux̱ámshish's book is the importance of tending to a variety of relationships and

prioritizing them as part of research. This is another example of how Tux̱ámshish seeks to build relationships through education and research and offer her knowledge to help people from different backgrounds understand each other.

2.4.4.2. Kussumwhy – Nine Virtues of the Yakama Nation (Wilkins 2008)

      Kussumwhy, Levina Wilkins, is another Yakama Elder who has dedicated her life to teaching her language and culture. She has also gifted academia by sharing her knowledge, co-created with students, through scholarly publication. In 2008, she wrote about a project she worked on with students to articulate nine virtues of the Yakama Nation and how they relate to education. While she notes there are so many more than nine, she and her students chose this set in response to a particular project to guide their own and future educational practices in their community. Like Tuxámshish's (2017) advice discussed above, relationality is again a common theme linking these virtues together. The nine virtues follow in list form:

1. K̲'wyáamtɨmt   *'honesty, being truthful'*
2. Tɨmnák'nik   *'extending from the heart, compassion'*
3. Itmá'áakshá   *'cautious and careful of all things and others; restrained, peaceful, and responsible'*
4. Yáych'unal   *'Not afraid of any type of challenge; courage; heroic perseverance'*
5. Pina'tma'áakt   *'taking care and being aware of one's total being; balance and harmony; integrity; honor; nobility in crisis'*
6. Tma'áakni   *'respect'*
7. Átaw px̲wíni   *'deep thought and feeling; meditation and mindfulness'*
8. Piná'iwaat kw'ałáni   *'self-denial and gratitude, humility'*
9. Wapítat Ttáwax̲t   *'help family growth; service to others'*

Yakama people have shared teachings like these through countless generations and have a long history of interrupting the colonial agenda and fighting for culturally appropriate education and resources at the grassroots level. The nine virtues Wilkins (2008) and her students lay out are grassroots in that they are reclaiming traditional values and practice within education from the bottom up, rather than waiting for permission for example, incorporating them from Western administrators or policies. They are a way of educating, of knowing and being, passed through relationships rather than rules created by committees in distant conference rooms. By standing our ground in these virtues through our work, we are moving with the strength and resilience from generations of teachings passed down by generations of teachers all held in place by the land that has cared for them all - *Nch'iwána*, *Pátu*[5], and the mountains and valleys between. The following section shares how other Yakama researchers and affiliates continue to follow the teachings of Yakama Elders in their work, and how we can look to these teachings as a framework to inform our process.

2.4.4.3. Following in the Footsteps of Elders

In her book, Yakama Rising, Dr. Jacob (2013) describes the principles underlying the work of language activists at Yakama Nation and the Northwest Indian Language Institute (NILI). She presents these principles together as a working model for the research and revitalization work done through this partnership. This model, which she presents in relational terms, is comprised of the following ten principles (p.76):

1. Support intergenerational teaching and learning
2. Collaborate to create critical mass

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[5] Intentionally omitting English colonized place names here, especially as their original names are preferable in representing the relationships refered to in this context.

3. Develop practical, applied focus
4. View work in spiritual terms
5. Listen
6. Practice sincere outreach
7. Encourage long-term commitment
8. Support solution-oriented Do-ing
9. Support grassroots efforts
10. Aim all efforts at supporting Tribal peoples' self-determination

Dr. Jacob provides her own conceptual framework to represent the principles of this model (see Figure 1 on page 35) and describes her process of choosing and developing a culturally relevant representation. As we learned from Tux̱ámshish, culture and language are inextricably intertwined. Jacob's depiction of language work with the image of a horse reflects that sentiment as well. In her words:

> "I choose to represent the visual model as a culturally relevant image. K'úsi (horse) has great meaning to Yakama peoples. Yakama elders often share stories of the importance of horses to our people's survival. In this book's introduction, I shared tribal histories that explain horses are a gift from the Creator. Today, large herds of wild horses still remain on the reservation foothills, and careful management of them as a precious resource is one of the most important issues facing our natural resources personnel (Yakama Nation 2012). Most of all, however, Virginia Beavert inspired the use of the horse as the basis of the model because of her extensive knowledge of horses and the many stories she tells about this beloved animal," (p.76).

Jacob goes on to add the notion of movement as another factor in her design – one that is inherent equally to k'úsi as well as to the work of language revitalization. In this quote and throughout her work, Jacob emphasizes how teachings from Elders continue to guide her work in education and education research.

Figure 1. Model of the Yakama-NILI partnership - Dr. Jacob (2013)

Figure 3. Yakama-Northwest Indian Language Institute partnership model. (Drawing by Michelle M. Jacob and Christopher J. Andersen)
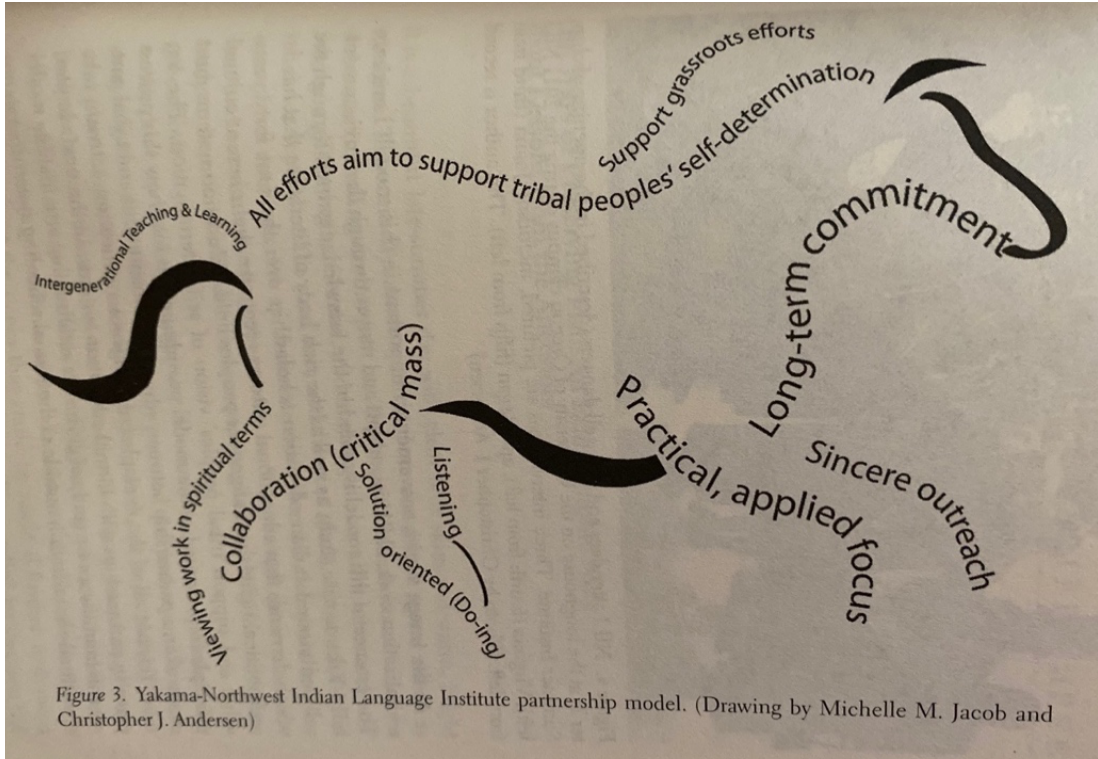
Following Jacob's example of developing culturally relevant visual representations, Sutterlict and Anderson (2021) have extended Wilkins' work to serve a Yakama framework in education research and curriculum development. Figure 2 shows a representation they developed to guide their research which embeds Wilkins' teachings in a *k'ixlí* 'tule mat'. They describe how the *k'ixlí* has been and continues to be an important technology for Yakama people, also remarked on by Hunn (2007). In Sutterlict & Anderson's visual, the virtues, each a strand of *tk'u* 'tule', are bound together with Ichishkíin language. This design, they write, "honor[s] the process of working with tk'u, and [collaborates] with that process in the way we approach research," (p.13). It further

represents how this work is carried out in relation with *wyanch'íma* 'Elders', *tḵu ku ḵ'íxlí* 'tule and tule mat', and *Ichishkíin Sínwit* 'Ichishkíin language'.

Figure 2. Nine Virtues of the Yakama Language embedded in a *ḵ'íxlí*
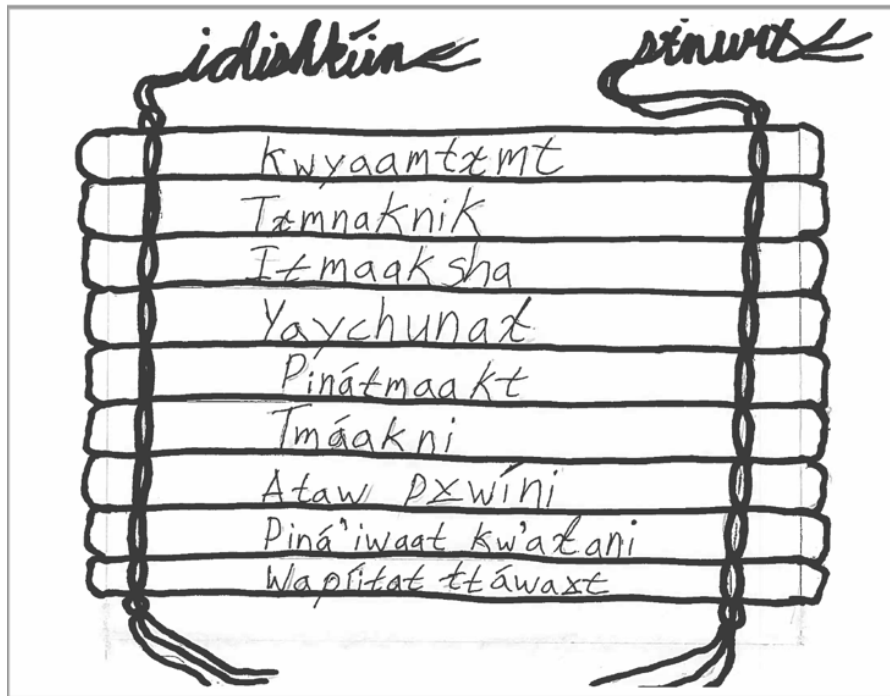
In this work, Sutterlict and Anderson (2021) align each step of their research process – from preparation to presentation – with steps for harvesting and processing *tk'u* and creating *ḵ'íxlí*. For example, they highlight the preparatory work involved in both research and gathering which requires you to "ground yourself in purpose and intention," (p.5). They compare situating research in the wider literature to scouting your spot in a tule patch, and the methodology in their research aligns with harvesting and the profound care allotted to every decision embedded within the frameworks of deeply established tradition. Processing the *tk'u* and creating materials like *ḵ'íxlí* is done with care under

36

advisement from elder mentors and in collaboration with peers, much like the process of analyzing data. The creation and use of the *k'ix̱li*, then, corresponds to research joining the academic conversation and becoming a participant in future practice. This is similar to the way Tachine (2018) relates her work to the Navajo practice of weaving rugs.

2.4.5. Benefits to Education and Education Research

Indigenous frameworks in education benefit non-Indigenous scholarship and advocacy as well. (Huaman, et al, 2016; Ruef, et al 2020). As stated in Beavert (1974), "[i]t is only by communicating that we can hope to understand each other," (p.xii). With a seat at the academic table, Yakama and other Indigenous peoples contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of our world. Likewise, by inclusion in education more generally and in following this advice from our Elders, we set an example and vision of understanding for our children. Leading by example is yet another tenet valued and practiced by Yakama people and leadership (Hunn 2007) that offers benefits to education and education research by holding us accountable to our words.

In addition to honoring Elder and community knowledge in research (Jacob 2013; Simpson 2017), a theoretical framework rooted in Yakama ways of knowing and being also tends to issues of Indigenous rights (Hinton & Meek 2018; Reyhner 2010; Skutnabb-Kangas 2018; Smith 2013), representation and accessibility within spaces of knowledge production (Kovach 2010) and acknowledges that ideology impacts learning (King & Hermes 2014; Peltier 2017, Rosborough, et al, 2017), and teaches students about multiple ways of knowing (Ruef, et al, 2020). As we see here, supports within literature are abundant in showing how Yakama ways of knowing and being are important for education and education research.

2.5. Summary

In this chapter I reviewed literature on language revitalization as it applies to a Yakama research context. Literature speaks to this in terms of language shift and reversing language shift or, in other words, caring for the wellness of a language, fueling a sense of identity for Indigenous children through language and culture education, and how language interacts with Indigenous nationhood. I looked to Indigenous scholars and their colleagues to gain a sense of how other Tribal communities are nurturing their languages and children together in this way as well, particularly in the home though also through more formal programs. Language acquisition studies informed strategies to consider in taking this work when the majority of parents/caretakers are language learners themselves. All of this work is necessarily grounded in a Yakama framework based of the teachings of Yakama Elders, scholars, and activists. It is done in context and in relation and aims to benefit the community, its language, and its children. I argue, along with other scholarship, that this framing benefits education and education research more widely.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter shares the ways I have approached and carried out my research. I first provide brief insight into the epistemological and ontological assumptions underlying this work then follow with a description of my research design including my main research questions and an introduction to my methods for data collection from particular groups. I provide a brief overview of the Yakama and UO IRB processes I adhered to next, then turn to a more extensive look at who participated in this study and what I anticipated learning from them. A more practical discussion of my process for data collection and management follows organized by collection type (conversations vs. survey, for example). Next, I share my approach for analyzing the data then consider my own role within the research. I end with respective discussions of assumptions and limitations of this work and conclude with a brief chapter summary.

3.1. Epistemological and Ontological Assumptions

My work is rooted in Yakama ways of knowing and being. It draws specifically from the published works of the two Yakama Elder scholars introduced above, Tuх̱ámshish (Dr. Virginia Beavert) (1974, 2017), and Kussumwhy, (Levina Wilkins) (2008). It is also guided by the work of Yakama scholar, Dr. Michelle Jacob, and previous work by Sutterlict and Anderson (2021). It is further supported by scholars of Indigenous methodologies like Kovach (2010), Simpson (2017), and Smith (2013) for the way it prioritizes relationship, reciprocity, and resurgence through research. This work assumes equality between Indigenous and Western systems of knowledge in scholarship.

39

3.2. Research Design

I start here by sharing the questions I seek to serve through this work. There is so much language being used in a variety of ways among so many in the Yakama community. This project seeks to capture a glimpse into some of the inner workings of how Ichishkíin language is cultivated in the homes of families with Yakama babies and toddlers. Kovach (2010) recommends framing an inquiry to support open exploration of a topic through conversational story formats of data collection. I do exactly that in talking with families with two main questions in mind: 1) How are parents and caretakers of Yakama babies and toddlers interacting with Ichishkíin language in their homes? and 2) What kinds of strategies would help increase their language use? This second question is included as one of my main inquiries as countless conversations through the years have identified a call for support. I followed this inquiry up further by exploring:

- What challenges and opportunities do parents face in using language in their homes on a daily basis? (e.g., daily schedules (work/school), language knowledge/capacity, etc.)

- How do relational components impact daily language use? (e.g., having/not having other adult speakers/learners in the home or community, caring for family members, relationships to land, language/language wounds, community, etc.)

- What types of resources or materials might help increase daily language use in the home? (e.g.: books, audio, programs –support network, language nest, etc.)

- How can narratives from Elders, and surveyed information from a larger parent base help inform strategies for increasing daily language use in the home? (e.g., cultural protocols, community resources, etc.)

Prioritizing community goals is an imperative for research, according to Kovach as well as Yakama scholars and affiliates (Anderson, 2019; Beavert, 2017; Jacob 2013). These questions keep community goals of language growth, particularly through supporting families and home language, at the center of the project. The main questions try to understand how families are currently in relationship with language within their home spaces and practical visions for increasing language use. Follow up questions focused on challenges and opportunities seek to understand practical, contextual factors for language use; considering relational components adheres to Yakama knowledge-sharing practices and honors that language is inherently relational; inquiries around resources and materials provide guidance for practical steps forward; and seeking insights from a larger number of families also tend to a community vision for knowledge sharing, language growth, and caretaking of both the language and future generations.

My research options were more limited than would have been ideal given the timing of the COVID-19 pandemic with this work and the impact of social restrictions in place due to the pandemic. As this is community work that extends beyond the individuals involved, the health of Yakama Elders, families, and community members was prioritized above all else. Consequently, larger gatherings such as open meals and research sharing circles were not held out of care for individuals and the community at large. These events were put aside for a later time when it is safe again to gather together. Instead, the research design relied more heavily on already established relationships and smaller-scale networking. Community members' time was precious as well so, for this reason, and to maximize the time asked from people, I collaborated with Twálatin (Gregory Sutterlict), a member of the Yakama Nation, my partner and fellow scholar, to

engage in conversations with parents in the community, and to conduct a survey which informs both of our work simultaneously.

We engaged in conversations with parents and caretakers of Yakama babies and toddlers to hear about their current use of language in the home, challenges faced in this regard, and hopes for future support. As language is relational, I expected themes to emerge in this light, such as how language came to be lost in their family leading to their current state of speaking and learning; who in their daily life they are able to use language with; what interactions they have – or most want to have – in the language; what family components help or hinder regular use of language (e.g. daily routines/complex schedules, different learning patterns between family members, having/not having fluent speakers in the home, etc.); and how their current relationship with language aligns or contrasts with their goals and visions for future use in their lifetime and in generations to come. This data provided a critical lens into language relationships within the home, potentially offering healing and insight into strategies that will help meet family goals. It also interacts with data from Elder conversations and the parent survey to inform strategies to meet communal goals.

Our shared survey was written for parents and caretakers of Yakama children and asked questions about Ichishkíin use and visions for their children's education, including Yakama knowledge and lifeways, visions for language use in their homes and community, supports to help them reach their goals, and community resources. I expected to hear:

- that language use centers around relations but that it is not used conversationally in the home;

- ideals for children having consistent outlets for learning their Yakama ways as well as general enthusiasm and motivation for learning and strengthening Yakama knowledge and practices currently and for future generations in community;

- specific ideas about practical supports (e.g., books, audio, classes, programs, childcare, food assistance, etc.) that will help families learn and use language on a daily basis; and

- existing supports within the community that might contribute to nurturing these things (e.g., individuals who are skilled in certain areas (basket making, fishing, language, storytelling), community centers offering meals or large gathering spaces for community use, businesses who would participate in making language more visible or prominent in their establishments, etc.).

Responses and conversations confirmed my expectations and expanded on them, as shared in Chapters IV and V. This data helps to inform strategies and programming by Ichishkíin language professionals and Yakama Nation to support community-level visions for education and language use. It also has potential to inform policy-level action by state and federal officials in support of community-led Indigenous language cultivation initiatives.

3.3. IRB Processes at Yakama Nation and UO

Since Yakama is a sovereign nation, it was imperative to follow additional IRB protocol to conduct this work within the Yakama community. Since our projects are related, Twálatin and I worked together with a representative of Yakama Nation Higher Education to submit our materials for review at the same time. We were each asked to submit two items, the first being a one-page letter to the Loan, Extension, Education &

Housing Committee who would be overseeing this approval. This letter included an introduction to each of us and our projects. The other item was a brief overview of the project and its components along with a general proposed timeline for completion. Twálatin and I each submitted our materials in July 2021 and received formal documentation of approval in November 2021 (Included in Appendix A).

Once Yakama Nation's IRB documentation was in place, I moved forward to follow University of Oregon's standard procedure for obtaining approval from their Internal Review Board (IRB). I submitted the initial application for review in December 2021 and it was approved in January of 2022. Since this work sought only to gather information through voluntary surveys and interviews with adults, it was eligible for exempt status. The following sections describe those participants in more detail.

3.4. Participants

3.4.1. Parents and Caretakers of Yakama children

Parents and caretakers are often the first and most enduring teachers of children. This project seeks to honor that position and responsibility within the home and help to develop supports for those who wish to increase Ichishkíin language use with their young children and families by extension. To do this, Twálatin and I collaborated to engage eight parents in conversation and sent a survey to a wider group. The following sections provide more information about the process followed for each of these approaches.

3.4.1.1. Conversations

Conversations offer respect and equality for the relationship between researcher and participants, allowing individuals more choice over the information they would like to share (Kovach, 2010) and opportunities to relate together on the topic. Through

conversations, Twálatin and I asked generally that parents and caretakers share their story about relationship or experiences with Ichishkíin language, asking follow-up questions as they emerged. Sample questions are included in Appendix B. We contacted eight parents/caretakers of Yakama children with whom we have established relationships. Beginning with established relationships honors the connections we have already been invited into and more generally, according to Kovach, helps to counteract the mistrust Indigenous people often have with research and researchers.

There were more parents and caretakers who expressed interest in the work but, due to time constraints and COVID restrictions, we were unable to meet with them all. However, given the interest, Twálatin and I are hopeful to connect with as many parents as possible after our dissertation projects are finished, to continue developing resources and programming to support our goals as parents, educators, and language activists. Both Twálatin's and my contact information is openly available to anybody interested in this work moving forward. For those we were able to speak with, we encouraged them to reach out on an ongoing basis if any additional comments, questions, ideas, stories, etc. came up. We also asked permission to follow up ourselves if needed. We returned completed transcripts to the parents/caretakers we spoke with to give them room to add to, omit, or edit any parts of our conversation before sharing it in this work.

Incorporating multiple formats for inquiry (in-person, zoom, email, phone call, etc.) tends to the continuum of accessing information Kovach (2010) discusses though at a smaller scale due to the current pandemic. Though offering an open door to future connection may seem like a small gesture, it provides an additional outlet for people to share their thoughts around this topic. This is meant to offer participants different levels

45

of engagement based on their comfort levels. Some might prefer, for example, to talk in person (conversations), or to represent their thoughts physically (email) rather than share them in conversation with me or others. This choice of methods, too, is an effort to equalize power dynamics, as much as possible, as an outside researcher engaging in community-based work during a pandemic.

Since I am not Yakama, having Twálatin who is a member of Yakama Nation involved in this work was meant to potentially help people feel more comfortable and supported with Yakama representation. He has a long history of language work and advocacy in the community and has built trust with many people over the span of multiple decades. This also follows Tux̱ámshish's (Beavert, 2017) guidance for non-Yakama researchers to work with a Yakama guide willing to vouch for them and the integrity of the project. This work is fundamentally family work and has inspired Twálatin and I both in our work and our home as parents, learners, teachers, and friends. Following Yakama custom, we also offered a gift bundle (discussed later in more detail) to the parents or caretakers who took time to talk with us for our projects. All the choices described are relational in nature and ideally meant to serve the healing aims of research in Indigenous inquiry (Kovach, 2010), in this project specifically, language relations for parents and caretakers of Yakama children. Relational approaches to research are also emphasized in work by Yakama scholars and affiliates (Beavert, 2017; Jacob, 2013; Sutterlict & Anderson, 2021; Wilkins, 2008).

3.4.1.2. Survey

Since Twálatin is also working on a project focused on Yakama Ichishkíin education, we worked together to design and disseminate a survey for parents and

caretakers of Yakama children and youth. This collaboration served to ease the burden of time and energy for parents and caretakers who wished to share their input while also honoring the collaborative values and vision of Yakama Nation. Generally, the survey asked about Ichishkíin knowledge and use, and visions for their children's education including Yakama knowledge and lifeways, visions for language use in their homes and community, supports to help them reach their goals, and community resources. The print version of our survey is included in Appendix C. We designed the survey in Qualtrics, an electronic survey tool, and sent it out widely across the Yakama community through email, social media, and word of mouth. We were hoping for a minimum of fifty complete responses but received 97 in less than two weeks' time. Participants had the option to enter a drawing to win one of two gift bundles (described in more detail below).

Specifically, the survey asks a total of 11 questions under seven categories, or blocks as they are called in Qualtrics, and appear in the following order with number of questions in parentheses: 1) General information (2 questions), 2) Ichishkíin language experience, use and goals (3 questions), 3) Educating with Yakama knowledge and lifeways (1 questions), 4) Seasonal activities (1 question), 5) Daily activities (1 question), 6) Community resources (2 questions), 7) Final thoughts (1 question). The first five questions are multiple choice and ranking style with optional text boxes added so people can share as much (or as little) information as they like. The final six questions are open-ended questions with extended text boxes for people to share additional thoughts. We wanted to be considerate of people's time in writing answers so we kept questions to a minimum of 1-2 under each category.

3.5. Gift Bundles

Giving back to community is an essential part of this work. As a thank you for taking time and energy to talk with us, Twálatin and I created gift bundles for each of the parents and Elder we spoke with. Two additional bundles went towards a drawing for parents and caretakers who completed the survey. Bundles included a collection of language materials, traditional canned food, dried apples, and a blanket. Together, Twálatin and I assembled the language materials (described in more detail below). For anything purchased, as much as possible, we made a point to support local artists and businesses in the Yakama community. The canned foods were donated by a Yakama community member and the apples were dried and donated by a fellow language learner and advocate, both of whom were moved to support our projects' topics. Blankets for the parent and caretaker bundles, including those for the survey, came from a local family run business who offered a discount in support of the cause of our projects.

Ichishkíin language materials included six different items that contribute to learning and teaching the language, all created through collaborations of some form. Language materials will be included in a Resource Guide and made accessible through the Heritage University Language Center's (HULC's) *Niichtpamá* Resource Center currently in development (a project that will receive high priority after the completion of this dissertation. One was the newly published second edition of *Anakú Iwachá, Yakama Legends and Stories* (2021), created through a partnership between Yakama Nation and the University of Washington Press after the first edition became too rare and expensive to be widely accessible. The rest of the materials were assembled by Twálatin and I who did all the recording, editing, printing, cutting, laminating, and binding. The Northwest

Indian Language Institute (NILI) donated the printing for these materials, many of which were designed in collaboration with NILI through student projects and other supports. Since so many of us are still learning the language and writing system, we wanted to be sure to include audio so people can match the written language to the way it is spoken or have the option just to listen if they prefer. These materials existed before the start of these dissertation projects, but the projects have provided added inspiration and motivation for adaptations that provide, for example, more audio and other updates. Figure 3 shares an image of both the first and second edition respective covers of Anakú Iwachá.

Figure 3. Covers of the First and Second Editions of Anakú Iwachá
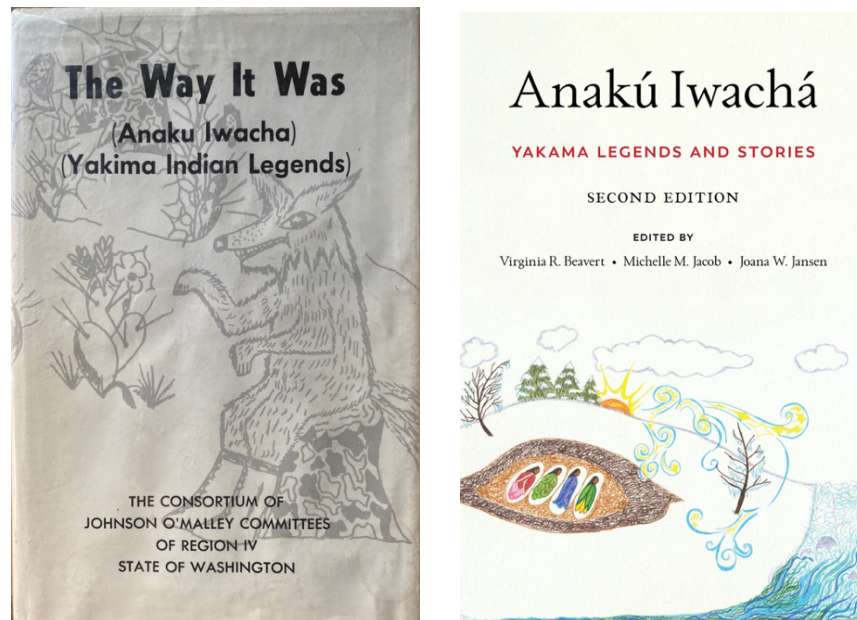
A second item included was a small book we bound depicting the *Łkw'i ku Sts'at* 'Day & Night' legend which was documented by Tux̱ámshish (Virginia Beavert) and

Joana Jansen in part to be used as a basis for curriculum in the Ichishkíin language class at University of Oregon (UO), and to be shared more widely with other teachers and community at Yakama Nation. One of the students from the language class at UO illustrated the story through a student worker position at NILI and pages include both Ichishkíin and English languages. A QR code linked to Twálatin telling the story was added before assembling so people could scan it to listen along as they read. This was assembled in a storybook style so that pictures and text are visible together. Figure 4 shows one of the illustrations by artist Aubrey Jacobus.

Figure 4. Sample Page from *Łkw'i ku Sts'at* Legend Book

The placemat project was a collaboration between the Wapato Ichishkíin After School Program, the UO Ichishkíin language class, and NILI. The after-school program provided kids with snacks, so the UO class designed placemats for them to use featuring drawings with Ichishkíin language and phrases. NILI supported a student worker, also a student in the UO class, to scan all of the placemats, type up the phrases and check them for errors with Tux̱ámshish, and format them to print on the backside of the placemats. We chose one design to include in all the bundles because it featured traditional foods and was created by student, Jessica Douglas, who happened to be a talented artist. Figure 5 (on page 52) shows the placemat front. As with the *Łkw'i ku Sts'at* book, we included a QR code so people have access to the pronunciation of the phrases as well. This time, it links to a [YouTube video](#) featuring audio of children from Yakama Nation's 2019 Ichishkíin Summer Language Bootcamp saying the phrases while memes and gifs that go along with the phrases run through.

The material affectionately known by some teachers as the *X̱átx̱at* 'Duck' book is formally titled, *Mish X̱átx̱at imíx̱a maysx̱máysx̱?* 'What does Duck do every day?'. This was an original student project created in the Ichishkíin language class at UO geared towards kids around helping to care for themselves and their home. It helps contribute to larger language goals of the Yakama Nation for restoring Ichishkíin language to home use through strategies of Reclaiming Domains discussed in the literature review. The student came up with the language and created illustrations to match the sentences working on them through the class. Since this material has been one of the more popular resources, we recently checked it again with Tux̱ámshish for final corrections, added audio linked to QR codes, and a [YouTube video](#) (also linked to a QR code in the book)

Figure 5. Front Side of Placemat
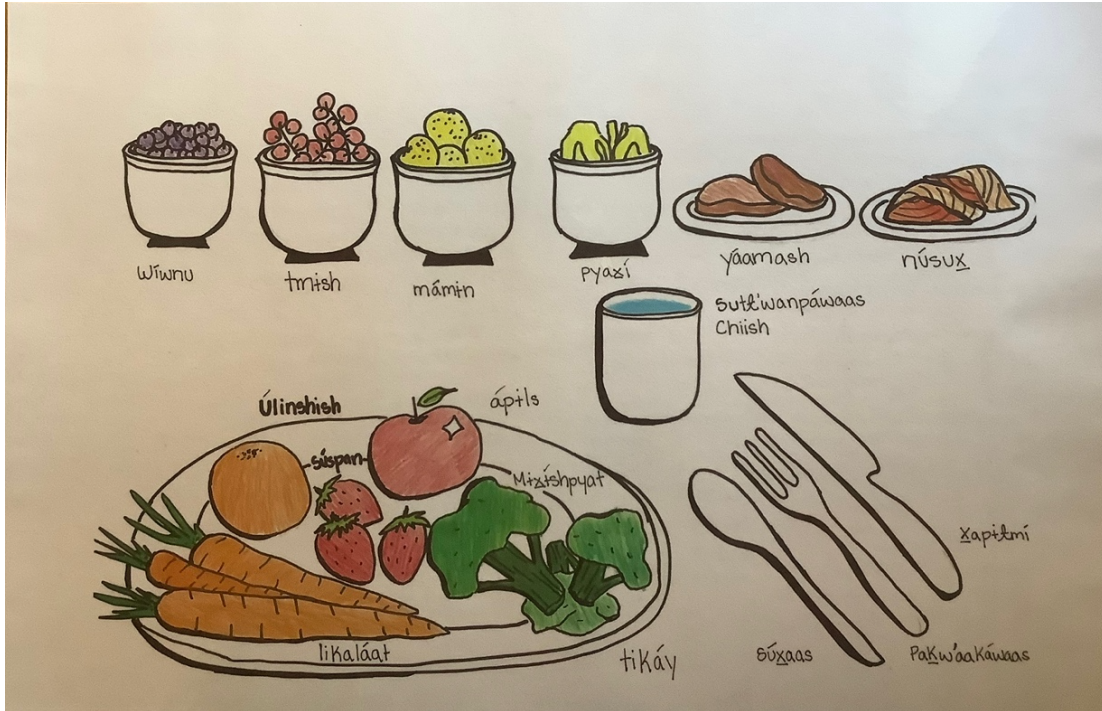
that goes through the pictures with the audio playing through in story like fashion.

Sentences are repeated twice to encourage learners to say the sentences aloud, too. The

version included in the bundle was assembled with the sentences on the backside of the

corresponding pictures to encourage learners to try and remember the language when

they see the picture. The book goes through different actions of a daily routine, so we

bound it with just a ring to make it easy for people to customize the actions to fit their

days or to keep different cards in different areas of their home where these actions occur.

Figure 6 shows a sample of the illustrations of the *Xátxat* book created by Armen

Kazarian.

Figure 6. Sample Pages from *X̱átx̱at* book
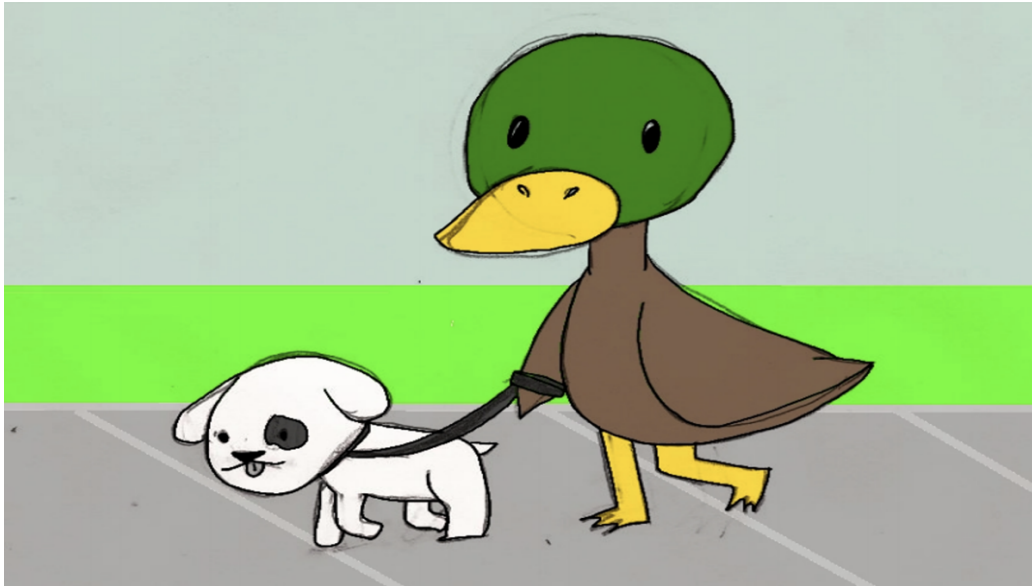
Alphabet cards were adapted from previously designed alphabet posters developed by

the original team of Ichishkíin language teachers at UO in 2008. Minor edits were made

to update some of the images and spelling of example words. We reformatted the posters

to be printed and laminated into 3x5 cards and added a title page and the chart of letters,

the latter of which was also developed as a handout for the language class. We added

three QR codes as well – one following the title card that allows people to hear audio of

Tux̱ámshish sharing the pronunciation of each example word, a second that leads to a

YouTube video created by Shayleen EagleSpeaker as a student project at UO sharing

some different example words along with images, and a third that connects to a Quizlet

card set which includes all example words and pictures along with audio and adds the

'names' of each of the letters (e.g. *aa* 'long a', *ḵw'* 'hard back k-w', *ł* 'barred L'). We

bound the cards together with a ring to allow people to work with them in different ways,

such as taking them apart to spell different words or mix them up and see if they can put

them back together in the correct order again. Figure 7 shows a sample card with one of the updated images (photo credit to Taysíki (Allyson Alvarado)).

Figure 7. Alphabet Cards Sample

The Kakyamamí Walptáykt Coloring Book was another collaboration based on a lullaby taught to Twálatin by Yakama Elder, átway Ruth Howard, who had a longtime presence as an Elder teacher at Yakama Nation Head Start. Twálatin incorporated the song through his afterschool programs and shared it with other teachers for their classrooms at Yakama Nation's 2019 Summer Language Bootcamp where it was very popular with the kids. One of his students at Heritage University provided illustrations to go along with the lyrics of the song – describing the actions of different *kákyama*

'creatures' (e.g., *Aw myálas inch'úsha* 'Now the baby is sleeping', *X̱wáyama iwáynasha* 'The golden eagle is flying') and left them black and white so we could create a coloring book with them, pairing the illustrations with the lyrics. We also added a title page, and included a page of the written lyrics accompanied by two QR codes. The QR codes link to two videos created by Taysíki (Allyson Alvarado), one of which flows through the coloring book while a mother sings the lullaby to her child, and another that links to a video of Yakama children singing the song with hand motions. The book is bound with three rings so it is easy to take single pages out to make additional copies or to color more easily. We also attached a set of crayons to each of the coloring books for the bundles. Figure 8 shows three sample pages from the coloring book.

Figure 8. Walptáykt Kakyamamí Coloring Book Sample Pages

The final language item in the gift bundles, since we are still in a pandemic, was a set of eight highly rated, disposable, 3-ply masks, four mixed designs for adults and four for kids. Each mask had a label with three 'Stay Healthy Sentences' in Ichishkíin and,

again, we created QR codes so people would have easy access to the pronunciation of the language included. This part of the gift was inspired by the masks supplied for students at the Many Nations Longhouse at UO for which the sentences were originally gathered.

Through survey recruitment, we shared images of some of these gift bundle items and many people in the community showed incredible interest. The placemats were particularly popular so we got in touch with the library at Yakama Nation who offered to print and laminate an additional 100 copies at a significant discount so we could offer one to all parents and caretakers who completed our survey. We are working with Yakama Nation Higher Education as a pickup point for those additional thank you gifts. Due also to community enthusiasm for access to these materials, we have taken beginning steps at the Heritage University Language Center (HULC), a university located at Yakama Nation, to ensure all language items included in the bundle are made available to the wider community through the HULC website. This has led to a larger, long-term project to build a *Niichtpamá* 'resource center' catered to the needs of families and community, Ichishkíin teachers, and linguists. There are so many resources out there but limited access to them for our teachers and community and this needs to change. Some materials created in partnership with the Northwest Indian Language Institute (NILI) are accessible online through their website.

3.6. Data Collection and Management

This section focuses on practical aspects of data collection, including documentation, storage, and backups, and sharing sections of the work with Twálatin. Sections are organized here by the varied methods of data collection.

3.6.1. Conversation Data

All parents and caretakers granted permission for our conversations to be recorded with audio, which I backed up in three places – on my computer, on an external hard drive reserved only for this project, and on a secure server. Twálatin and I worked together to fully transcribe each conversation to have in digital, written form which was also backed up in the same three places. Each session is housed in its own folder, organized by person and date(s) containing both the recorded and transcribed files. Kovach (2010) advocates for the recording of sessions as a way to stay true to participant voices and writes about the powerful nature and benefits of transcribing all recordings herself, noting other researchers who have echoed this sentiment. It adds a level of intimacy with and knowledge of the content discussed.

3.6.2. Survey Data

Twálatin and I collected survey responses electronically through Qualtrics, and received no hard copies to manually input. We backed up these responses on our computers and external hard drives and saved them on a secure server. After collecting and inputting all responses, we ran reports through Qualtrics to gather results for analysis under each of our projects.

3.7. Data Analysis

Survey results and analysis are presented in Chapter IV which offers a comprehensive presentation of results for each question followed by a discussion by themes. Since Twálatin and I shared the survey, we also share the results section between our projects though analyze them separately in alignment with our individual projects. In Chapter V, I present and analyze stories from parent and caretaker, Elder, and program

representative conversations, sharing their voices while also looking for themes across the stories shared, considering in part how they align with the Nine Virtues of the Yakama Nation (Wilkins 2008). While isolating themes can be problematic under Indigenous frameworks, this choice is a means to accommodate both Indigenous story methods, and contributions to Western research (Kovach, 2010). Yakama scholar, Jacob (2013), follows this format honoring both her cultural and academic affiliations. Kovach notes that mixing approaches in this way is a common accommodation while Indigenous methods of data analysis gain further recognition in academia.

In writing my analysis, I follow the examples of Tux̱ámshish (Beavert, 2017), Kussumwhy (Wilkins, 2008), and Kovach (2010) to use language like "I believe it to be true" (Kovach, 2010, p.111) and remind readers that what I present is my understanding of what I have been taught. This language also serves to help locate my place in the research throughout the analysis.

3.8. Role of the Researcher

Ink nash waníksha Regan Anderson kush pamíshpamish pinásapsikw'asha Chíshkin Sínwit. Natutasmí ttáwax̱t pawachá Norway*knik ku* Germany*knik ku panisháykshana tiichámpa* Mdewekanton*mípa,* Anishinabewaki*mípa* (ᐊᓂᔑᓈᐯᐧᐊᑭ), Sisseton*mípa,* Michif Piyii*mípa* (Métis), Yanktonai*mípa,* Assiniboine*mípa,* ku Očhéthi Šakówiŋ*mípa anakwnák páshtinma aw pawaníksha Shuyaputɨmtki* Minnesota *ku* North Dakota. *Na'iłasmí ttáwax̱t pawachá* Italy*knik ku* England*knik ku panisháykshana* Me-Wuk*mípa tiichámpa anakwnák iwaníksha* California *Shuyaputɨmtki. Wash nash skuuliłá x̱wíimitx̱aw skuulitpamápa Úlikanpa kúshx̱iish kwnak asapsikw'atwíix̱a Tux̱ámshishnan*

58

Ichishkíin Sínwit anashín iwá inmí átawtxaw sapsikw'ałá. Pinásapsikw'ashanaash

2008knik kush aw ásapsikw'ashaash inmísht.

My name is Regan Anderson and I am trying to learn Ichishkíin. My father's family was from Norway and Germany, and they settled in the homelands of Mdewekanton, Anishinabewaki (ᐊᓂ ᔑ ᓈ ᐯ ᐧ ᐊ ᑭ), Sisseton, Michif Piyii (Métis), Yanktonai, Assiniboine, ku Očhéthi Šakówiŋ peoples at the place White people now call Minnesota and North Dakota in English. My mother's family came from Italy and England, and they settled in the Me-Wuk (Northern and Central Miwok) homelands in the place now called California in the English language. I am a student at the University of Oregon where I also teach Ichishkíin language with Tuxámshish, my most valued teacher. I have been learning since 2008 and now I am teaching my child.

Reflecting back to Darrell Kipp's (2000) words, "[w]ho we are comes from the language," (p.6). I come from the English language, but Ichishkíin has influenced me to grow in new ways. Though my background stays the same, I am not the same person I was before starting on this path. Growing up I identified as a 'native Oregonian'. The closest connection I felt to any land was what my father had instilled in me, hiking around the hills of Oregon, and camping in the mountains. I thought I knew what a deep connection felt like but, as Hunn & Selam (1990) articulate it, "We immigrants, who call ourselves "natives" after one paltry generation on the land, can scarcely fathom what it means to the [Indigenous person] to walk on a land in which a hundred generations of ancestors have been buried," (p.230). This quote helps me to understand I am still a stranger to this land, and I have a responsibility to gain trust through generations to come. I hope this work contributes to that effort in some small way.

Tux̱ámshish (Beavert, 2017) guides us to be transparent about our intentions in this work, advice echoed by many scholars, including Kovach (2010). I want to recognize, too, an awareness that I am reflecting on this as an outsider. I have been trained by Tux̱ámshish as a teacher and have done my best to take in all she has shared with me during my years of apprenticeship with her. She has instilled in me the value of *Wapítat Ttáwax̱t* to help share all I have learned in any way I can but also asks me to remain open to practice *piná'iwaat kw'aɫáni* 'self-denial and gratitude, humility' when I am corrected. As an educator, I want to help when people are struggling but also know I am a stranger to many cultural rules and that I am limited in this way.

My role spans multiple categories: outsider/settler, learner, apprentice, researcher, linguist, mother, teacher, and speaker. In 2019, I was blessed to become a mother. My partner is Yakama, and we speak as much as possible to our child and his children in Ichishkíin. This experience has certainly motivated the inquiry I engage with here. While I am still very much a learner of the language, I am privileged to be able to share it with my family at home. I am acutely aware of this privilege when I speak to my child and want to do anything I can to assist other families in using language with their babies, too. Washines (Ayer, 2021) reminds us that knowledge is responsibility and I take the responsibility Tux̱ámshish has entrusted to me to heart. She has taught me all along that her work, and by extension, my work, is for the Yakama children so that future generations may speak fluently again.

3.9. Assumptions of the Study

This study assumes there are families with babies and toddlers who wish to speak Ichishkíin more often and intensively in their homes, and that there are very limited

resources to support them in doing so. It also assumes that other parents/caretakers believe that our babies are one of the most precious and valuable gifts we can receive. One widely shared Yakama teaching, similar to many across the world, instructs that you always shower your child with love. One of the greatest compliments I've ever received was when Tuxámshish told me she could tell my *isha* knows he is loved. Even as my child was in the womb, I was taught to talk to him, sing to him and tell him stories as he is already listening and aware. This study assumes that one of the most powerful lessons you can share with a child is that they are loved, the assessment or measurement for which lies in their joy and self-expression.

When a child is growing in the mother's womb, the connection they have with each other is innate, physical, instinctive, inseparable, and life sustaining. This connection remains even after the child is born and grows into the family. It is evident even in the Ichishkíin language – the language itself frames our assumptions – as the words for growth and family are the same, *ttáwaxt* 'family, growth'; to raise a child, you *shapáttawaxt* 'cause growth'. Old family structures are referred to as *míts'ay* 'an aged plant' especially one whose roots are "too far along in its life cycle to be edible," (Beavert & Hargus, 2010, p.114). This study assumes the language holds a role of teacher for us, providing insights into Yakama knowledge and lifeways that are connected through roots, like the old family structures of *míts'ay,* through countless generations.

There are many old Yakama teachings I have been grateful to learn and follow during pregnancy and on, continuing some of the old ways of raising a child. These practices begin from the moment you first realize you are pregnant and never really stop, even as your child becomes an adult. I have been chosen to be the mother to my *isha*

61

'child' and I am very grateful that my family and I have followed these Yakama protocols to the best of our ability. It is not my place to share any of these teachings in this format, but this work assumes other parents wish also to follow these teachings along with the many others. Yakama mothers long ago had already learned the traditional ways to raise a child to be a respectful and strong Yakama person. Through colonization, those teachings have been clouded, temporarily disconnected or strained. This study assumes an intention and desire to reverse that disruption. My hope is that this study will help my own *ɨsha* and others to shift back to some of those old traditional ways of raising and speaking to our babies to be the healthiest they possibly can be.

3.10 Limitations of the Study

One limitation lies in not being able to do this work in a more robust collaboration. While Twálatin and I have collaborated rigorously throughout the project, and consulted with others, we were not able to hold larger gatherings or reach out to as many as we had hoped due to pandemic restrictions. Kovach (2010) writes, "[locating ourselves culturally] is about being congruent with a knowledge system that tells us that we can only interpret the world from the place of our experience," (p.110). While I'll do what I can to seek advisement, this work will ultimately be situated and presented from my position.

Perhaps the greatest limitation of this study is that we are not able to learn from more Elders. COVID-19 has not only prevented gatherings but brought significant loss. My *ɨsha* was five months old when they began to recommend isolation, just as I was beginning to formulate this work. Now, over two years later, restrictions are just beginning to lift again, and we are holding our breath to see if another 'wave' or new

variant hits. While the pandemic has helped us learn to navigate a digital world to connect from a distance in more ways, it is not the same as being together in person, and the loss of physical contact has indeed impacted this work. However, this project is only one small act in this larger process of language cultivation, and opportunities to gather safely will come again. We will speak together, with our babies, and our voices with theirs will become the waves once again.

3.11. Summary

My work and research methodology are rooted in Yakama ways of knowing and being, including as much collaboration as possible. I have also described in this chapter how my research design aligns with those Yakama ways along with the wider scholarship of Indigenous research methodologies. My research questions are shaped to support community language growth and parents/caretakers as crucial educators in this respect. I sought to honor their voices both authentically and extensively through a mix of survey responses and intimate conversations.

Thoughtful documentation, organization, storage, and sharing of these stories helps to care for them and provide future access. Collaboration through collection and analysis also helps to hold me accountable to the relations I engage with, and to the Yakama community more widely. Articulating my role as researcher also serves to hold me accountable to the larger purpose of this work, cultivating Ichishkíin in its current context, and my place within it. Perhaps this work will grow beyond my limited capacity through efforts of families and other Yakama scholars. That this - supporting families and babies with language - is even a viable research project is a sign that there is still so much

work to do as language is a human right that should be present without need for

advocacy.

CHAPTER IV

YAKAMA EDUCATION PARENT AND CARETAKER SURVEY

Twálatin and I collaborated to design and distribute a survey for parents and caretakers of Yakama children to share their thoughts about Ichishkíin language use and important components of a Yakama education that would inform both of our dissertation projects. The printable version of the survey is provided in Appendix C for reference. This survey is meant to provide a preliminary look and understanding of descriptive data around each of our topics rather than undertaking a heavy statistical analysis. More details and discussion are provided here in the sections below. Results are presented in the order questions were asked, providing information about number of total responses per question and the breakdown of those responses. Six of the eleven questions were open ended though all questions offered parents and caretakers space to add any additional information they wanted to their responses. Presentation and discussion of any additional information provided is included with each question following a brief overview of results.

Though our survey was intended for parents and caretakers of Yakama children, there was much larger interest at a community level. Grandparents in particular were interested which speaks to the intimate relationship present in Yakama culture between grandparents and grandchildren and the parameters around what it means to be a caretaker. The large interest also speaks to the community caretaking as a whole and the responsibility of all to care for and educate Yakama children and youth. We were pleased

in the end not to have imposed a restricted definition of what it means to be a caretaker and might even solicit community descriptions of such roles in future inquiries.

In total, we received 107 survey responses. Out of these, ten completed less than 20% of the survey questions, with six people filling out only the first two of the 11 questions (18% of the survey questions) and four completing only the preliminary consent form. Because of this missing information, we will not be using the 10 incomplete responses in our report or analyses and instead will focus on the remaining 97 responses (91% of the original total). It is difficult to determine the total number of potential survey responses (in other words, 107 people out of how many responded). There are approximately 12,000 enrolled members of the Yakama Nation including babies, children, and Elders. If we calculate the percentage of responses according to enrolled members, there was less than 1% response rate. Twálatin and I do not know of any reported numbers outside of enrolled members to include as a total potential count for this project. However, counts based on enrollment are problematic since Yakama membership is complicated by the implementation of blood quantum measurements imposed by the U.S. Government. A potential extension of this work might refine parameters to ask parents and caretakers of current Yakama students at schools in and around Yakama Nation to share thoughts about their children's education. This would allow us to begin assessing what needs are and are not being met through local education for Yakama families in a more statistically focused way.

Our survey did not require participants to be enrolled members or even descendants but self-identified parents and caretakers of Yakama children (such as myself). Our outreach was also limited due to pandemic restrictions so most of it

occurred through electronic means, such as social media platforms and email, and word of mouth. This may have excluded some parents and caretakers who do not use or have access to these mediums or who are not in our networks or extended networks. We did our best to reach as many parents and caretakers of Yakama children as possible and encouraged the survey be shared widely through their networks as well.

The survey consisted of nine sections. The first section is the consent form to participate in both Twálatin's and my projects. Here, participants chose whether or not they would like to be acknowledged by name in the projects, and whether or not their words may be quoted directly. This is also where they opted into the drawing for one of two gift bundles and signed and dated their consent. The second section is a welcome page, thanking parents and caretakers for lending their voices to our projects. The third through ninth sections make up the bulk of the survey, asking parents and caretakers to share information about their daily life and views about Yakama education. Specifically, the third section, General Information, includes survey questions 1 and 2 asking parents about the number and ages of kids they have, and how satisfied they are with their schooling. Three questions, questions 3, 4, and 5, were included under the fourth section, Language Experience, Use, and Goals, and asked about daily Ichishkíin language practice, supports to help use Ichishkíin language in the home, and which kinds of supports they consider more and less helpful. Section five, Educating with Yakama Knowledge and Lifeways, moves into an open question format for all of the remaining questions (questions 6-11). This section has only one question, question 6, which asks parents to share what Yakama teachings they believe are most important for their children to learn. The next two sections also have just one question each, around what

67

seasonal activities and daily practices they would like to see incorporated into their children's learning, respectively. The eighth section, Community Resources, includes question 9, asking parents and caretakers to share which Yakama Nation entities they would like to see involved in Yakama children's education, and question 10 which asks what knowledge or skills they themselves would be willing to share. The ninth and final section, Final Thoughts, includes just one question offering space to parents and caretakers to share anything else they would like to with us. A discussion of each question's results in turn follows. The full survey is included in Appendix C.

4.1. Question 1 – How many children do you have and how old are they?

4.1.1. Summary of Results

All 97 parents and caretakers who responded to this survey provided an answer to this question. This was an open question and provided space for parents and caretakers to write their responses in. The number of children parents and caretakers reported having spanned from one to ten in the following order of most to least responses: 25 parents and caretakers (about 26%) reported having two children, 16 (16%) have three, 15 (15%) have one child, 13 (13%) have four children, 12 (12%) have five, 9 (9%) have six, three sets of two parents and caretakers (2% each) reported having seven, nine, and ten children, and 1 (1%) shared that they have eight children. Table 5 shares this same information in table form.

Table 5. Number of Children

Number of Children	Response Number and Percentage
Two	25 parents/caretakers, 26%
Three	16 parents/caretakers, 16%
One	15 parents/caretakers, 15%
Four	13 parents/caretakers, 13%
Five	12 parents/caretakers, 12%
Six	9 parents/caretakers, 9%
Seven	2 parents/caretakers, 2%
Nine	2 parents/caretakers, 2%
Ten	2 parents/caretakers, 2%
Eight	1 parent/caretaker, 1%

Ages of kids ranged between those still in the womb up through adulthood. Since my project is focused on children under 4, and Twálatin's is focused on school age children, we present age ranges here in three groups: 1) children 0-3 years of age, 2) children and youth 4-17 years old, and 3) adults 18 and over. Four parents and caretakers (4% of respondents) reported caring for grandchildren without specifying their ages as did one great-grandparent (1%). Most parents and caretakers (69, or 71%) have children and youth between the ages of 4-17 years. Fifty-one parents and caretakers (53%) have adult children, and 29 (30%) have children under four years old. This information is presented in Table 6 below in order of highest to lowest response number and percentages.

Table 6. Age Ranges of Children

Age Range	Response Number and Percentage
4-17 years old	69 parents/caretakers, 71%
Adult children	51 parents/caretakers, 53%
0-3 years old	29 parents/caretakers, 30%
unspecified ages	5 great/grandparents, 5%

4.1.2. Discussion

Considerations around how many children are in a family and how old they are matters for cultivating language use in that it gives us an idea of the relationships within a home or family. How old children are helps us understand how resources might be created to accommodate different developmental stages in terms of language learning and use. As discussed in Chapter II, children under 4 years of age absorb language differently than older children and, according to O'Grady (2016) the age of a child has a significant effect on the ability to learn a new language with some decline already beginning even after the first year. While this survey is meant to provide a larger glimpse into parents' and caretakers' thoughts about language and education for their Yakama children, a further project might come back to this data to separate the 30% of parents with children in the youngest age-range to see what this subset of parents identifies as important, or perhaps identify follow-up questions that focus on only on children under four years of age, as the conversations presented in Chapter V do.

4.2. Question 2 – How satisfied are you with your child/children's school?

4.2.1. Summary of Results

Question 2 asked parents and caretakers to share how satisfied they are with their children's school. The question was multiple choice with options ranging between 'Extremely satisfied' to 'Extremely dissatisfied'. Of our 97 respondents, the majority, 39% (37 respondents), reported being somewhat satisfied with their children's school. The second largest group at 21% with 20 respondents, were parents and caretakers who are 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' with their children's school. A close third at 20% (19 respondents) reported being extremely satisfied with their children's school, 13% (12 respondents) are somewhat dissatisfied, and 8% (eight respondents) reported that they are extremely dissatisfied with their children's school. Figure 9 (on page 72) provides a visual representation of this breakdown.

Answers also provided space for parents and caretakers to write in more information about their choice if they wanted to. Responses to each category are discussed briefly next with a larger analysis and presentation of themes across each category following.

4.2.1.1. Extremely Satisfied

Of the 19 parents and caretakers (20% of all respondents) who reported being extremely satisfied with their children's school, seven added additional comments elaborating on their choice. Two of these seven mentioned part of their satisfaction coming from Yakama language being taught or supported at the school. One parent spoke about the language support that is offered even though it is not formally part of the school's curriculum. Another noted close involvement with their children's learning

71

Figure 9. School Satisfaction Breakdown Pie Chart
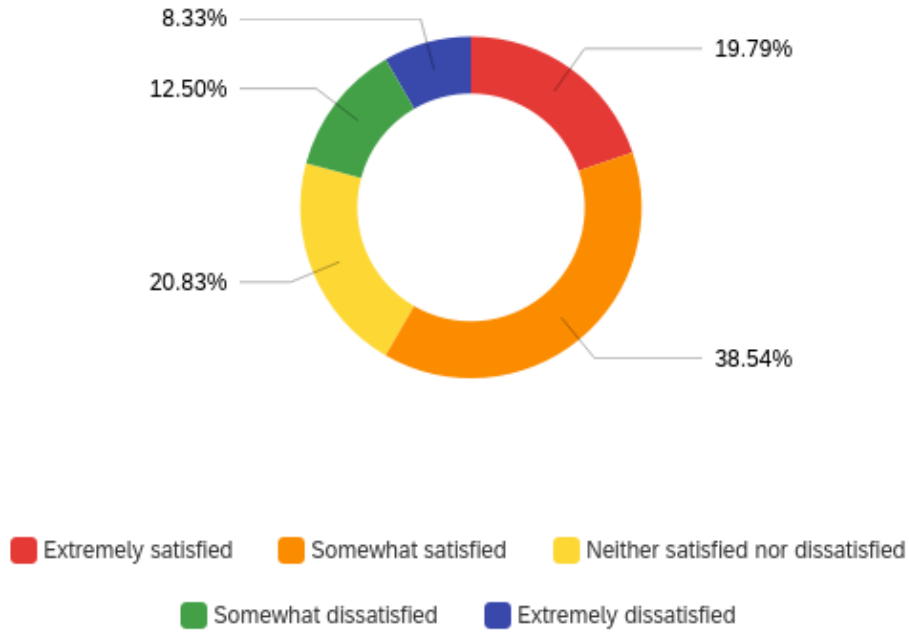
through their own work at the district as a source of extreme satisfaction. Two remarked on the quality of academics, one sharing that their children all attended college directly after completing high school. One attributed their 'extreme satisfaction' with their grandchildren's education to them not yet being in school.

4.2.1.2. Somewhat Satisfied

Of the 37 parents and caretakers (39% of all respondents) who marked being somewhat satisfied with their children's school, 16 added additional information to their responses. One parent/caretaker attributed their moderate satisfaction to their children having access to Yakama language in school. Two cited teachers' support as an influencing factor to their choice of response on this question. One wished for more

Yakama language for their five-year-old at school or through summer programs while another mentioned a desire for more Yakama language and Native representation working within the district, and a third calls for "more true native culture inclusion". Similarly, a parent wrote about a lack of trust in the school's "infrastructure and staff" and another shares that "[t]hey don't have much curriculum around Tribes." Another writes, "It is upsetting to know they overlook Native American applicants to fill vacant positions...despite having a predominantly Native American student population." One wrote about the unprecedented times and expectations "during a worldwide pandemic" while another shares that their child's school had great online study and support in place since before Covid. Another wished for smaller class sizes. Finally, one respondent wrote, "we're tired of the Western Education system in general".

4.2.1.3. Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied

Out of the 20 parents and caretakers (21% of total respondents) who selected that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with their children's school, 11 offered additional comments around their choice. Four of them chose this response because their children are not in school at this time. One highlights the need to improve district wide support for Native American students and shares there is current advocacy for this. Another echoes this, pointing out a lack of culture in schools with a "majority of Native American students". Another parent cites satisfaction that her child enjoys school but notes frustration around setbacks due to Covid. Another draws attention to the need for Yakama language to be taught at all grade levels, beginning in preschool. And another has a young one who does have access to Yakama language but shares that there is an imbalance of Native students at their older child's school.

73

4.2.1.4. Somewhat Dissatisfied

Twelve parents and caretakers (13% of total respondents) selected being somewhat dissatisfied with their children's school. Of these, eight shared additional comments, seven of whom shared a lack of cultural representation to varying degrees – from racial biases and differences in values to a lack of diversity in leadership and curriculum, along with no access to language, traditional programming, or appropriate context and history.

4.2.1.5. Extremely Dissatisfied

Eight parents and caretakers (8% of total respondents) reported being extremely dissatisfied with their children's school and all eight provided additional comments about this choice. One parent wrote about a lack of access to Yakama language in schools as their source of extreme dissatisfaction, writing, "[t]hey need to add the Yakama language in all the schools on the reservation. I believe the loss of the Sahaptin language is a great loss and it needs to be brought back starting with our younger generation." Another wrote about a language teacher being let go and a need to retain good teachers. Another reports that Native students are treated badly by other students and staff while others write of a lack of trust in administration including a "lack of follow through, communication, and transparency...".

4.2.2. Discussion

Hearing from parents about their level of satisfaction with their children's schools matters in terms of cultivating language use because it helps us better understand what families want for Yakama children's education. While a comprehensive analysis of the particulars of school satisfaction and how schools meet (or do not meet) the educational

goals of Yakama children and their families is outside the scope of this project, this question serves to provide a general peek into parents' feelings about current schooling for their Yakama children. Another future study should include a comprehensive analysis is warranted of the impacts of Indigenous language education in schools on children's educational wellness and success ("success" being a term that requires significant analysis on its own).

Several themes surfaced from parents' responses about satisfaction levels with their children's schools including how inclusion – or a lack of inclusion – of Ichishkíin language or language programming impacted their selection; how trust played a role; how relationships with teachers and staff impacted them positively or negatively; and issues of lacking Native representation among staff and within curriculum content. The following sections explore parents' comments through each of these themes and tying their words to relevant literature and ending with a summary of findings.

4.2.2.1. Ichishkíin Inclusion in Schools

Some parents identified Ichishkíin language inclusion in education as one of the factors contributing to their level of satisfaction in their children's school. For example, Mariana Harvey, mother to two, expressed extreme satisfaction with her son's school for the way their Ichishkíin language is respected and incorporated even though it is not a part of the formal design. She described part of their experience sharing,

> He goes to an outdoor Montessori farm school, it's quite unique and it's a pilot program. The teacher is open to using Ichishkíin words that we use a lot, respects that we are *ila* [mom] and *tuta* [dad] and even learned the Ichishkíin happy bday song to sing together for him at school.

And Túulhinch, an Ichishkíin teacher and father of three, also expressed extreme satisfaction for his children's education since, "All three attended Wapato Public Schools K-12 and went to college upon graduation from HS." Wapato middle and high schools offer regular Ichishkíin language classes.

Parents who marked being 'somewhat satisfied' also mentioned Ichishkíin inclusion as a factor for this choice – either being somewhat satisfied *because* of access to language, like Jeanette Watlamet, a mother of four, who wrote, "They are teaching the language in the school system," or *only* being somewhat satisfied due to a lack of Yakama language or cultural representation, like another parent who wrote, "SPED ppl are very attentive. But would like more language and Natives working within school district." Another 'somewhat satisfied' parent called for more language to be formally offered sharing that Ichishkíin is included in one of their children's schoolings but that there is then a gap in offerings until higher grade levels. In their words,

> My 2 year old, they teach some Yakama language. My 5 year old is a kindergarten and there's no language for her to learn there. I believe just middle school or high school. More language at her school or language camp in summer.

Melissa Kishwalk, a parent to four, also expressed interest in seeing more language in schools elaborating on a neutral response saying, "The Yakama Langauge is only taught in the high school. It would be better to have it from pre school, elementary and middle school," pointing out the importance of instilling language knowledge from a young age in line with the scholars like O'Grady (2016) who discusses language learning in regards to the age of children and recommends "[f]irst and most obviously, the prospects for full transmission of the language are best with very young learners (ideally infants and toddlers) whose skills as language learners have not yet been compromised by age-related

76

decline," (p. 52). Another parent with a neutral response wrote, too, about differing contexts and language access between their children's schools saying, "The 6yr old goes to school where I feel that the proportion of natives to others is unbalanced," but adds, "The 3yr old goes to the Head Start and right now with the reduce class size gets more one on one attention. They practice the Yakama Language."

Other parents who shared dissatisfied responses cited a lack of language offerings as part of their reasoning. For example, Julie Sohappy, a grandparent to two children, expressed being 'somewhat dissatisfied' explaining that, "…there is no Yakama Language taught just spanish." Andrea French, a parent to two young children, shared being 'extremely dissatisfied' and elaborated on this response writing, "My daughter attends a daycare/preschool in wapato that has Spanish/English speaking teachers." And an 'extremely dissatisfied' parent calls on schools to incorporate language in all local schools, speaking to the importance of language access for youth which research supports in strengthening their identity and wellness as Henne-Ochoa, etal. (2020) writes "Indigenous notions of self, then, are also deeply intertwined with Indigenous understandings of language, thought, identity, and relationship to land," (p. 484). In this parent's words, "They need to add the Yakama language in all the schools on the reservation. I believe the loss of the Sahaptin language is a great loss and it needs to be brought back starting with our younger generation." Throughout this project, and within language revitalization more generally, we hear parents and communities regarding their children and younger generations as leaders of language growth and shift. Given that personal accounts and research (CITE) show direct links between educational initiatives and language loss, schools have a lot of ground to make up in honoring relationships with

Indigenous peoples and the land on which they are situated. Prioritizing local Indigenous communities' goals for language growth and cultivation is one place they can start.

4.2.2.2. Trust and School Relationships

Some parents expressed a lack of trust in schools and their staff, pointing to relational strain between parents of Yakama children and schools. For example, Carina Miller, a mother to two who lives in Warm Springs, commented in this light reported being 'somewhat satisfied' saying, "I trust one of his teachers but keep him home as often as we can due to knowledge of poor infrastructure and staff." Kamushni, parent to six children, marked being 'extremely dissatisfied', and shared simply, "I don't trust Mount Adams Administration." Another parent who shared extreme dissatisfaction wrote that there is a, "Lack of follow through, communication, transparency, and overall dissatisfied with the school districts lack of handling recent events in the news (Toppenish School District)." This ties back to the need for schools to invest seriously in relationships with Indigenous children, parents, and communities.

Several parents also remarked on their satisfaction level being connected to teachers and staff, showing the importance of relationship in education. One example comes from a parent who reported being 'extremely satisfied' and shared a lasting factor of satisfaction through their connection in education to both the teacher and language saying, "My last child graduated in 2017. At that time I was satisfied with Wapato High School. Roger Jacob was my son Ichishkíin instructor and he did an awesome job with the students." Damien Dick shared being 'somewhat satisfied', elaborating that, "The teachers show they're concern when needed." Alternatively, Troy Watlamet, father to seven, shared his own and his children's connection to Ichishkíin language teachers,

speaking to the connection teachers make with students and a lack of support for these positions in schools as a reason behind being 'extremely dissatisfied'. In his words, "Atwi Lena Owens was my language teacher in school, they kids had [an Ichishkíin instructor who recently passed] and the school let him go, here they would be excited telling me what they did in his class, my point is I hope they get good teachers like these ones and keep them long term, not when they don't like them and just get rid of them, the teachers need a good contract."

4.2.2.3. Representation in Schools

Another issue that surfaced along these lines is a lack of Native representation among staff in schools. One parent spoke to this issue saying, "It is upsetting to know they overlook Native American applicants to fill vacant positions. It seems they only hire Hispanica despite having a predominantly Native American student population." One 'somewhat dissatisfied' parent additionally called out, "Racial biases. Cultural and values differences. Lack of Native American teachers, counselors or support staff if not in a tribal or federal boarding school." Similarly, Chestina Smith, who cares for six grandchildren and marked being 'extremely dissatisfied' wrote, "Native American children are treated badly by Mexican students and teachers and even office personnel". Kwasa, another parent who reported being 'somewhat dissatisfied' shared similar thoughts writing that there is a "lack of diversity in leadership and in curriculum". Calderon (2016) discusses ways to help undo colonialism and help Indigenous students in the United States writing, "Indianness refers to the centering, or privileging, of indigenous ways of knowing; histories; maintaining relationships with lands, resources, and peoples; and making claims regarding nature," (p. 12).

A lack of representation also extends to educational content and curriculum. For example, one 'somewhat dissatisfied' parent shared a lack of contextually appropriate education given the location of the school writing, "We live just off reservation and the school struggles to provide appropriate context for the history of the area." Tashina Nunez, parent to three who also cares for grandchildren and others, also expressed being 'somewhat dissatisfied' and elaborating on the curriculum in which, "History is warped and full of lies. Her science class doesn't study much about nature. No ichishkin or traditional programs in her school." Mikal Gadley spoke along these lines as well, marking a response of being 'somewhat dissatisfied' and sharing that, "They don't embrace or encourage our culture, customs, or heritage." Mary Lee Jones added to this under a ranking of 'somewhat dissatisfied', writing,

> The school is on the reservation and is less than 15 miles away from extreme boarding school history. There is not much of any cultural identity in curriculum nor is it supported or requested of community members. There was a request to reach out on songs recently but not much follow up.

Mary Lee Jones highlights how schools are falling short in reaching out to community members willing to help incorporate greater representation of Yakama knowledge in curriculum or programming. This points to another area schools could tend to improve relationships, collaboration, and curriculum simultaneously.

Comments on this topic were plentiful, some tagging more neutral responses to the question. For example, Samantha Eyle, a parent to six who shared being 'somewhat satisfied', expressed compassion for the school's efforts saying, "They help my kids as much as they can." Sia Aronica, who marked a neutral response of 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied', shared a belief that, "the school is as good as it can be academically. I think

that they could do better when it comes to our Native American students across the district. This is what we are working on." Larena Van Pelt, parent to two, also chose a neutral response and shared a similar response saying, "I feel we are lack[ing] the culture for our people especially when we have a majority of Native American students." Larise Sohappy, parent to two, and Kristina Pinkham, parent to four, each reported being 'somewhat satisfied'. Larisa commented, "They don't have much curriculum around Tribes," and Kristina wrote, "I feel they need more true native culture inclusion". Another parent who shared that they are 'somewhat satisfied' also touched on this prevalent lack of cultural representation saying, "We're tired of the Western Education system in general." In addition to a lack of representation, Frances Jordan, parent to seven children reporting being only 'somewhat satisfied', brings up a lack of recognition, too, writing, "Children are multi-racial and went to Tacoma public schools and wasn't recognized as natives they was just students."

Besides willing community members, there are an abundance of readily accessible materials and resources developed by educators, too. Some examples can be accessed through Mount Adams School District's Since Time Immemorial (STI) website, which local educators have already gifted considerable thought and labor to create (Mount Adams School District, n.d.). This STI project is part of larger legislation that actually *requires* schools to teach tribally developed curriculum in schools (Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, n.d.). I have been fortunate to collaborate with the STI team and witness the positive impact this curriculum has on the students and how they in turn contribute to the creation of resources. With such ample resources, and

people within Yakama Nation willing to collaborate, there is no legitimate excuse to add this type of call out and advocacy to the burden of parents' already full plates.

Another parent wrote about the balance of kids' enjoyment in school with academic setbacks from the pandemic as reasoning behind their neutral response sharing, "It's hard to be satisfied with the kids getting behind because of covid. But my daughter does enjoy school so I have to be some what satisfied that she likes going to her school." Tiffany George, a parent to one child, elaborated on a response of 'somewhat satisfied' in a positive way regarding remote study at her child's school saying that, "Online Study has been great Even before Covid, they had the tools set up for remote learning/homework." Tillet-Pum also commented on pandemic factors as a reason behind choosing 'somewhat satisfied', saying, "There are no parameters in teaching children during a worldwide pandemic. Not sure what to expect for the most part."

4.3. Question 3 – How much Ichishkíin language do you use daily?

4.3.1. Summary of Results

Question 3 was a multiple-choice question asking parents how much Ichishkíin language they use daily. Five options were presented, ranging from 'none' to 'most conversations'. The slight majority, 45 parents and caretakers (approximately 46%), responded that they use a few words and some phrases of Ichishkíin language on a daily basis while 42 (approximately 43%) use a few words. Five parents and caretakers (approximately 5% of all respondents) reported using no Ichishkíin language in their daily lives while another five reported engaging in some conversations in the language daily. No respondents reported engaging daily in most conversations. Figure 10 illustrates this contrast below.

Figure 10. Daily Ichishkíin Use Pie Chart
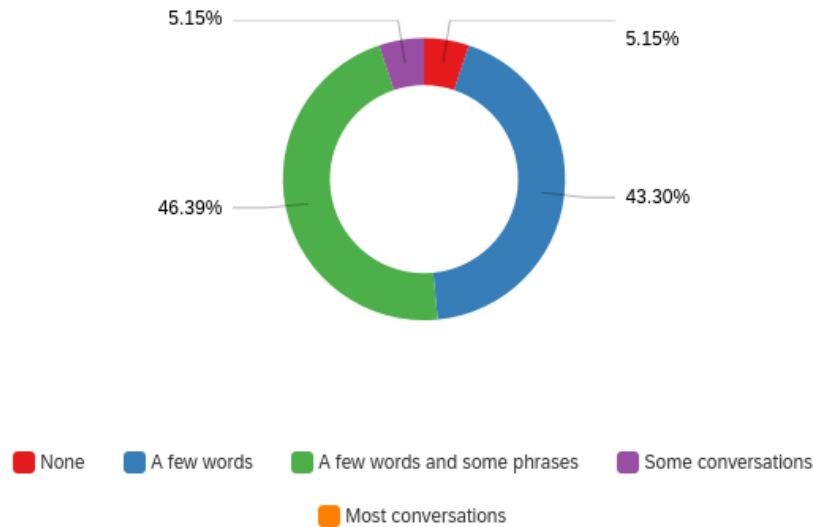
This figure brings striking attention to these breakdowns, particularly that the percentage of parents and caretakers who reported speaking no Ichishkíin on a daily basis are equal in number to those who speak the most in these responses. Put another way, approximately 90% of the parents and caretakers who responded to the survey use a few words and/or phrases while only about 5% have daily conversations, and 5% use no Ichishkíin language daily. As with other questions, space was provided for parents to elaborate on their responses in a text box if they chose. Responses to each choice are discussed in more detail below followed by an analysis organized by themes that came up throughout responses.

4.3.1.1. None

Of the five parents and caretakers who reported that they use no Ichishkíin language daily, two added additional information to their choices, one sharing that, while they do know some words and phrases, they do not use them on a daily basis.

4.3.1.2. A few words

Out of the 42 parents and caretakers who marked that they use a few words daily, 15 added additional thoughts. Many remarked that they use just a handful of 'basic' words, often common commands, greetings, and numbers, relationship terms, Yakama names, and sometimes using multiple dialects.

4.3.1.3. A few words and some phrases

Twenty-one of the 45 parents and caretakers who marked that they use a few words and some phrases daily elaborated on their answer choice. Several of these elaborations mentioned the kids leading the usage from what they have learned in school or summer camps. As with those who marked that they speak a few words daily, topics mentioned include greetings and numbers, but also family, food, animals, body parts and some basic questions around meals or elaborating on greetings. One specified daily usage of words but phrases on a more weekly basis.

4.3.1.4. Some conversations

Of the five parents and caretakers who use some conversation on a daily basis, four added more to their answers in the text box. Two wrote that they use greetings and words around daily activities, one listing examples of many of the phrases that they use throughout the day with their children. Another remarked that his daily usage occurs mostly at work through teaching high school students.

4.3.1.5. Most conversations

No parents and caretakers marked that they practice daily usage of language in most conversations.

4.3.2. Discussion

This question helps provide a glimpse into how much Ichishkíin language is currently used in the homes of families with Yakama children. Looking back to Chapter II, we reviewed how crucial daily language use at home is in determining the status of well-being for a language. McCarty (2003) discusses how language revitalization must also come from outside of the schools, "like the Hawaiian experience, however, data from Fort Defiance clearly show that school-based efforts must be joined by family- and community-based initiatives as well," (p. 156, 157). As we see in this section, families engage in regular use of Ichishkíin at a word and phrase level though it should be noted that the structure of Ichishkíin is such that one word can make up an entire English sentence and it seems some responses indicate more usage in this way through some of the examples they provide. For instance, *átawishamash* looks like one word but it contains all the necessary pieces to convey an English translation of 'I love/value you'.

Several themes emerged through parents' responses about how much Ichishkíin language they use on a daily basis. Themes include sharing language between generations, children taking on leadership with language growth, the types of language used daily within homes such as greetings, commands, relationship terms and questions, and how community supports encourage home use.

4.3.2.1. Intergenerational Language Sharing

One of the most profound and heartwarming themes to surface is the intergenerational language sharing that is still active within a number of families and homes. One parent shared that they have learned some Ichishkíin words and always share what they do know with their grandchild writing, "I'm not Yakama but my husband is so what words that we've picked up we have spoken to our children as they grew up and now are teaching our Grandchild." Another example of intergenerational language use comes from a parent who shares, "I only know a few words. I speak them to my 2 year old granddaughter. My oldest son is taking a language class…and he speaks what he knows to me." Another parent incorporates the words and phrases they learn into daily life saying, "I practice here and there with my daughter. What I learn, I work with her on." Another grandparent shared, "When our grandchildren are with us we use simple language like, are you hungry? Are you thirsty? Do you want water, etc. I have taught them how to count to 10, to say yes and no etc." Melissa Howtopat observes this generational learning in their home, too, and shared, "My mother-in-law knows the language and teaches our grandson all the time." These quotes provide evidence of parents and grandparents carrying the language forward to younger generations along with hope for a future of language growth and potential shift.

4.3.2.2. Children as Language Leaders

Another theme that emerged is how parents and caretakers view and encourage their children as teachers and leaders of language growth and shift. For example, Melissa Kishwalk succinctly illustrates an exciting movement in generational language growth saying, "My kids know more of the language than I do." Tiffany George shares the way

their family reinforces and incorporates language their son learns saying, "my son did the language camps, he remembers phrases and words so we try and use them often as possible." Mary Lee Jones shares, "My daughter is very curious. She builds onto her vocabulary in a playful way. The phrases she uses, Mish nam wa., Ink Nash waniksha Laxayx., Ichi iwa shiyax lkwi. And a few simple phrases and words she experiments with." Mary Lee's description captures how her daughter is using language creatively, indicating a knowledge and comfort that is challenging for many adult learners, as I have learned throughout the years as a teacher of university students.

4.3.2.3. Types of Language Used Daily

Several parents shared some of the types of language they use at home, sometimes sharing specific words, phrases, or sentences. For example, Sandra Patchpe shared some of the types of words they use in their home on a daily basis which she described as, "Greetings, numbers and manner words." Julie Sohappy wrote some of the phrases shared in their home daily, including, "Good morning, Love you," as did Larise Sohappy who uses, "Mainly tuktu [hurry] and shix mytski [good morning]." Another parent similarly wrote that they use, "Only use a few basic words sometimes such as good morning, good day, good night to my baby," matching the greeting type phrases Sandra mentioned above. Another parent shared, "We use a few words and phrases. We count to ten, know some animal names, know relatives/relationship names (grandma, grandpa), and we use phrases such as; good morning, let's eat." Relational terms, as this parent shared using, are used widely within families pointing to a profound relational caretaking so foundational that it is embedded within the language, as Tux̱ámshish continues to emphasize through her relationships with students. Augustine Dick shares, "With my kids

87

we practice good morning, my name is& identify numbers, the school, the teacher and some animals." Another parent similarly shares that they use words and phrases such as, "Greetings-good morning, good afternoon, good night. I love you. My name is... Some animals, body parts, and numbers 1-10" Another communicates in their home with, "Mostly just the basics. *Lut-lut* ['leave it alone/don't touch']. *Chow* ['no']. *Tut* ['spank'] Ayez no but we do a lot of basics." These basic 'baby talk' commands are also an area of language pretty widely known and used in homes with Yakama children showing that functional language with young children has been maintained and is still quite active.

Some parents also shared that they use questions or routine-based language on a daily basis which shows some conversational elements happening within homes. For example, one parent shared that they speak to their kids, "in the morning, ask them how they are, and ask them if they are hungry," and another also included that they ask 'how are you doing?' everyday along with other phrases saying, "We always say I love you Good morning Good night How are you doing Daily." Elese Washines shared some of examples of phrases, sentences and types of language her family uses daily under different categories, listing, "-getting up (*taxshi'aw*), -getting ready (*tatpashishash*), -prayer (*aan, chi ticham, hawlaak, timna, wownakshash, ku wakishwit*) -love you (*atawishamash*) -time to eat (*chuush, ownash'tkwatat*) -basic commands (*uts/aykaawas/ayiktawa owna, chuchu, winam, tuktu, mut*) -settling down for the evening (*pnu'pa, shalowi-*)."

4.3.2.4. Language Movement at Home

Other parents talked about ways language is always in movement within their family spaces. For example, Carina Miller shares that they use words daily in their home

88

but also shared strategies and goals for moving into more phrase-level communication, writing, "We only use a few words daily but are in a stage of fast mapping with our son so are working on visuals for phrases." Sia Aronica reminds us, too, that language is dynamic, sharing that language use in her home mirrors the varied nature of daily life writing, "Some days- this one ['a few words and some phrases'] fits. Other days the conversations fits. Other days a few words fits. It varies day by day depending on what our schedules, stressors and activities looks like." Tillet-Pum speaks to this as well saying their use of words and phrases "Depends on what is happening at that certain moment." This is an important component of language use to remember as we think about supporting families to incorporate more Ichishkíin into their daily lives. Language is as dynamic as human experience so finding ways to work within that flow of daily experience, tending to relationships and the whole family is critical to accommodating language growth.

In another angle of dynamic language use, Danielle Whitefoot, parent to six children, shared that they use words of multiple languages in their home, one being Ichishkíin and one Nez Perce, a sister language to Ichishkíin, writing, "Just simple ones that I learned while growing up but mixed with nez perce as well." Kristina Pinkham also uses these two languages at home, reporting that they use words on a daily basis and elaborating that, "We been [listening] to videos daily and use simple phrases with the kids in Yakama and Nez Perce dialect." Tux̱ámshish has talked about growing up speaking several dialects of Ichishkíin and multiple languages, including Nez Perce. She has said it was normal to be fluent in these language variations and to show respect to relationships by using switching easily between them.

Some parents spoke about language shift as a generational process and how the disruption of intergenerational speaking in their homes is a cause for them using only some words now on a daily basis. For example, Frances (Beavert) Jordan wrote, "Because we didn't grow and learn from family we are having to learn on our own. Before both my parents did [sic] they was teaching us a few words here and there."

4.3.2.5. Community Supports

Parents also shared places outside their homes that support and help incorporate language into their daily and home use, also noting a pressure and desire to learn and speak more. In one example, Damien Dick, a father of one child, shared using Ichishkíin words daily at home and adding, "I use to use more when I was taking the class but I took both classes already." This comment speaks to the need for ongoing supports that move beyond the classroom to support using language at home. Kamushni also reported using words daily in the home and shared that they hear it spoken regularly at longhouse adding, "We need to learn more. We participate in our longhouse and that is where we hear it most." Another parent echoes this sentiment of pressure to speak more saying they use, "Few words and some phrases I know, willing to learn." Other parents shared that they use language at different levels in their workplaces. For example, one parent wrote, "At work we are using greeting and some feeling and some of the actions words." And Túulhinch wrote, "I teach Ichishkin during the school year to HS and MS students. My teaching involves words, phrases, and brief conversations." This is important in considering how community level supports can better support families' goals to use more Ichishkíin language at home.

4.4. Question 4 - Do you have support for using language at home?

4.4.1. Summary of Results

Question four asked parents and caretakers to share what kind of resources they have in their home to support their use of language. We asked that they choose all options that apply to their household and share any additional supports not listed, again allowing space for them to elaborate on their responses if they wished. The four options of support to choose from were largely relational and included 'Fluent Elder Speakers', 'Learning Materials', 'Other Family Members Learning the Language', and 'Other'. The majority of parents and caretakers (about 43%, 61 participants) reported having language learning materials such as books, classes, or other materials. Behind that, 34 (about 24%) shared that they have other family members in the household learning the language. At a relatively close count, 29 parents/caretakers (about 21%) marked that they have other supports not listed. Seventeen (about 12%) shared that they have fluent Elders to support them in using language at home. Figure 11 (on page 92) provides a visual for this breakdown and responses to each are discussed in more detail below according to their categories.

4.4.1.1. Fluent Elders

Of the seventeen parents and caretakers who shared that they have fluent Elder speakers in their households to learn Ichishkíin from, eight added additional comments. Two of this set checked the box that they have this resource but wrote simply 'no' in the text box, and another remarked only that there are "few left". Others shared that they have (or have had) Elder family members – parents, grandparents, an uncle – in their household.

91

Figure 11. Home Language Use Support Breakdown Pie Chart
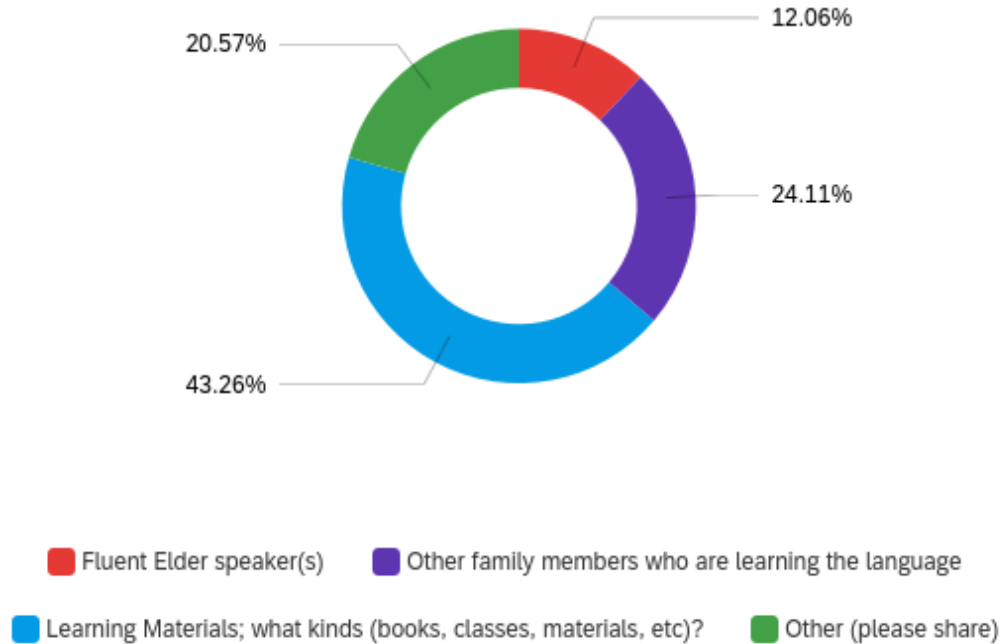
4.4.1.2. Other Family Members who are Learning the Language

Thirty-four parents and caretakers marked that they have other family members in their household who are also learning Ichishkíin, 18 of which added additional information. As with the 'Fluent Elder' choice, one respondent wrote 'no' in the text box. Several identified that their children are the ones learning the language. Other family members mentioned include spouses, parents, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, cousins, aunties, and uncles.

4.4.1.3. Learning Materials (books, classes, materials, etc.)

Of the 61 parents and caretakers who marked having Ichishkíin learning materials in their homes, 42 added additional comments. The majority of these, twenty-one, wrote

that they have various types of materials from their or their children's current or previous Ichishkíin language classes. Eighteen mentioned having one or multiple dictionary resources and 16 mentioned having books besides the dictionaries. Seven mentioned that they reference Ichishkíin YouTube videos and five talked about creating their own materials. Another five wrote that they use the Námi Sínwit language app and four shared that they have things like posters or other visuals up in their house. Three people talked about having audio materials like cd's, tapes, and recordings to learn from. One mentioned songs as learning materials and another talked about things around their home that their children only know the Ichishkíin names for (e.g., plants, necklaces, etc.).

4.4.1.4. Other

Twenty-nine parents and caretakers indicated having other supports for learning Ichishkíin than the four that were listed. Of these, 25 shared more information about what those supports are. Six mentioned technology or electronic supports like apps, online access, and cd's. Another six mentioned family members, friends, teachers, or other people outside of their home that they can turn to for help. Three wrote about having resources from previous classes (theirs or their kids') and another mentioned being able to see and hear language in the community (e.g., on the radio or up on signage). Another three cited their knowledge from memories of growing up with fluent speakers as support for using language now in their homes.

4.4.2. Discussion

Almost everyone aspiring to use more Ichishkíin language at home is a learner of the language We learned from the previous question that speaking at a word to sentence level is most common in daily life throughout homes. Being able to effectively

93

communicate and converse in the language is critical to cultivating language growth and responses to this question help identify ways we might be able to build bridges that allow movement from single words and sentences to more conversational use. This question helps identify what kinds of resources are being used in addition to what works, what doesn't, and what is wanted by parents and caretakers for their families and homes.

Three major themes came to light through parents' responses on having supports to use language at home. The first theme discusses relationships and intergenerational learning, first around learning from Elders and second, learning with other family. The second theme discusses how several parents mentioned having a variety of learning materials that support their home language practice. The third and final theme identifies resources collected through classes, workplaces, and community and is followed by a summary of the themes and literature presented and how they relate to this project.

4.4.2.1. Relationships and Intergenerational Learning – Learning from Elders

Over a third of parents (~36%) shared that part of their home-based resources for supporting language use are relationships with other people, either Elders or other family members. This is another area where we see language being shared through intergenerational use, an inspiring theme to learn more about through answers to the questions in this survey. Elese Washines speaks to the intergenerational language interactions that happen in her close-knit family saying, "My father is fluent and lives 5 minutes away. He sees the kids every day and talks to them." Jeanette Watlamet shares a similar Elder relationship in her family saying, "Have an uncle that talks with the kids when working with horses or at the longhouse," and Mary Lee Jones shared casual use of Ichishkíin between generations in her family writing that her "Daughter, mother and

94

grandmother [support language use] but informally," and another parent writes, "My son…takes Zoom classes My *Tuta* ['father'] speaks fluently."

Other parents shared memories of hearing the language from their Elders growing up. For example, Carina Miller wrote, "I grew up with grandmas speaking around me non stop." Patricia Ashue shared their experience, too, speaking to the power of intergenerational learning and pointing to the weight of carrying a heritage language along with a desire to share language with grandchildren now that she is an Elder. In her words,

> I use to hear the spoken words as a child with my kuth-la and tilla. today not so much. I do not attend any of the sunday services where I would be more likely to hear the words. I admit I have not taken an active role in teaching to my grands. takes me awhile to recall words and phrases.

Rachel Bettles also wrote about learning from Elders naming the knowledge she gained as another resource and sharing how other materials supplement that knowledge saying, "Language that I remember from my elders. If I don't remember something I do use my language book for reference. I don't know a lot but I try to use the language in my home as much as possible." Wade speaks to the power of being raised in a language, too, writing, "My significant other speaks almost fluent. **She understands most of the language because she was raised with it in her family**." These passages all speak to the impact of being raised in the language and Wade's words in particular really highlight how language use later in life is influenced by how immersed one is as a child.

4.4.2.2. Relationships and Intergenerational Learning – Learning with Family

Family members also learning the language were also a resource parents elaborated on. For example, Túulhinch talks about fellow language learners in his family

as resources and how they have been influenced by classes to use language together at home saying, "My children studied Ichishkin during their HS years. My wife successfully completed a semester of Ichishkin from Tuxamshish at Heritage University." Another parent shares similarly that, "My son is taking a class…and he speaks to me," tying back to ideas previously discussed around intergenerational language engagement and younger generations becoming leaders of language cultivation and growth. Part of this is the participation of younger generations in language classes then bringing what they have learned back into the home as another parent shares in the way they are "Picking it up from our daughter-in-law whom speaks the language at school then comes home speaking it."

Several parents shared how family members across households are working together to grow the language in and around their homes and highlighting again the recurring theme of how children are often teachers and language leaders themselves once supported with the knowledge to be so. To share some examples, Sia Aronica wrote, "We are teaching other family members and other people such as teachers. (The 2 youngest have taught and carry on conversations with some of their teachers.)", and Elese Washines shared, "My sister…and her family are active language speakers and learners. Most of [my son's] cousins are learning the language in either after school programs or in the home with their parents." Jeanette Watlamet wrote, too, that, "My siblings are learning with their children." Finally, Laura Canfield shares that her daughter is motivated to learn saying, "My 11 year old (daughter) has participated in the Yakama Language Camp. She has expressed interest in learning the Language." This also ties us back to the strong presence of extended relationships in Yakama families and recognizes

96

the rich learning environment, rooted in relationships, that families provide. Sia Aronica added that others too, such as the parent educators we are hearing from here, are themselves resources that support her family's language use at home, too, writing, "We have the good fortune of having access to other Ichishkíin teachers/speakers of whom we can ask questions," showing that relational supports extend into the community.

4.4.2.3. Variety of Learning Materials

Parents also spoke about a variety of learning materials that they have at home to support their learning. Túulhinch listed some from his home which included books, recordings, videos, and materials he creates through his work teaching the language saying,

> I have access to the Ichishkin language materials I develop and use in my teaching including study guides, audio and video recordings. I also have access to Tuxamshish's Ichishkin dictionary and the accompanying audio files on the UW website. I have copies of Nch'i Wana, Anaku Iwacha, Ttnúwit Átawish Nch'inch'imamí, and Joana Jansen's Ichishkin Grammar. I can access Twalatin's Ichishkin learning YouTube videos online.

One of my favorite aspects of learning and teaching language is that language is a part of everything allowing us to engage in a very authentic way with the world around us. Similar to Túulhinch, Elese Washines, also an educator, shared a variety of material resources in her home but also highlights some of the ways that her kids have learned language by connecting with areas and items in their home. As she wrote,

> I made some learning materials, the curriculum from the yakama nation library that childcare development fund provided, the dictionary from dr beavert, the old dictionary, ipad with the language app, the house is decorated with our beadwork

97

and traditional items and the kids only know the yakama words, and we have a

native plant garden with chokecherries and sage.

I love this approach, too, because it supports a teaching method I have learned from

Tux̱ámshish which seems less of a method than a way of being; a way that once again

centers relationship in the way it encourages meeting anyone who is learning where they

are at in all aspects – emotionally, environmentally, speaking/learning levels, etc.

4.4.2.4. Class, Work, and Community Resources

Several parents mentioned that their resources have been collected in part from

classes and other organizations through the years such as Lavette Holman who also

reported having a variety of resources. Here she shares,

> We have Virginia Beavert's dictionary and her book, Ttnuwit Atawish
> Nch'inch'imani. We also other reading and study materials from Greg Sutterlict's
> Ichishkiin classes that I have been taking. In addition, we have the placemat and
> Naami Sinwit phone app from the YNTS's Ichishkiin camp that my son attended 3
> years ago.

Jeanette Watlamet, also a teacher, shared how materials from classes and a workspace

that supports language also come into play as home resources for family language use.

She wrote, "I have materials from work and other classes I have done we hang them up

on the wall at home," and Frances Jordan shared having relational support through the

workplace, writing that a "Co-worker tries to help out." Elese Washines elaborated, too,

about workplace resources that motivate her to speak more at home, too, writing,

> My work exposes me to the cutting edge language materials being developed. I
> am able to speak the language at work and have people respond to me in the
> language. I can write language in my daily email correspondence. I come home
> from a long day of work feeling energized to speak to my children in the language

98

after being surrounded by language learners and speakers in my day to day work interactions.

Parents mentioned other resources in the community that support their language use at home as well, one mentioning specifically, "Public media, radio, newspaper, bathroom signs, road signs." Melissa Kishwalk reminds us of the support her family receives through attending Longhouse saying, "My kid and grandkids are apart of the Longhouse in White Swan."

Other parents shared types of materials or components within them that help their learning, some of which overlap with materials mentioned above. One parent wrote, "Flash cards help Pictures with both icishkiin and English Books Legends." Julie Sohappy also mentions cards, saying they "Have cards from YN Headstart that I use.i worry about pronunciation though," highlighting a need to incorporate pronunciation support into written materials. And another parent shares interest in having access to materials that support home use saying they have, "No support and or materials. Would be great to have materials." This latter quote also strengthens the importance of making sure materials developed are made accessible to families who want them.

Resources from classes again surfaced as a prominent source for accessing materials. Several parents mentioned having books and class materials as resources, writing,

> I have books by various elders stretching back over a few decades. I use Dr. Beavert's book to learn. I have the dictionary from the 1970s that my mom saved for me plus the newer dictionary. I also have access to online materials I learned about from Twalatin. I also have had the chance to take Twalatin's classes remotely over the past year.

Larena VanPelt echoes this sharing that they have, "books, notes I took while I attended classes a couple years back," and another parent writes similarly that they have, "Dr. Beavert's Dictionary, scads of curriculum, scads of tape, CD's, VHS tapes, recordings of my Sapsikw'alas, Sadie Heemsah, Irene Cloud." Mariana Harvey adds to this type of resource in her home, too, sharing,

> I have been taking virtual Ichichskiin classes for the last 1.5 years. I have the dictionary, Anaku Iwacha, The Gift of Knowledge, Nchi Wana, I have Virginia's audio recording of legends and listen to the one in Ichischskiin...growing up I only had Ghost Voices by Donald Hines and would often look at those few translations for language.

One parent speaks to the longevity of class resources sharing that they have "Old class worksheets from the mid 90's." Other comments about home resources from parents included, "I'm taking yakama language…at YN Higher Education Center. I have the sahaptin dictionary, Anaku Iwacha, and worksheets," and, "Cds, Yakama dictionary, Umatilla dictionary, materials made during my time as a language apprentice, notes from taking classes at NILI." Through caring so well for these resources, often through several years and even decades, we see how parents and families are carrying language forward and engaging in the work of Ichishkíin language preservation. Parents throughout this project have also expressed a desire to gain a better understanding of the resources that have been created as one parent shared that they have, "Some books I've acquired." Adding a request that they, "Would like a better idea of what resources we have with our tribe." Developing a resource center like the one HULC is in the process of is a huge priority and an undertaking that allows for celebration of the ways families have engaged quite literally in saving language.

In addition to resources from parents' own classes, they also mentioned their kids' classes providing resources to support language use at home. For example, Samantha Eyle wrote, "I have taken a few classes and my baby in head start has some stuff they sent home." Kamushni shared, too, that, "I do have materials at home and my children have taken a class with cusumway and they have attended boot camp. When kids' camps come up we like to put them in them." Rose Seymour also shared having "Some material from headstart program," and Becky Donaldson remarked on resources created through an after-school program Twálatin developed and sharing they have "The booklets your students made when you first started at Zillah Elementary School." These examples from parents' and children's classes show how powerful a resource generator classes can be in providing support to families in reaching their goals of using more Ichishkíin language together at home.

4.5. Question 5 - Rank the following supports in the order that they would be helpful for you to use more Ichishkíin language at home.

4.5.1. Summary of Results

Question 5 asked parents/caretakers to rank how helpful particular supports would be in using more Ichishkíin language at home with 1 being the most helpful and 6/7 being the least helpful. The seven supports available to rank consisted of 1) written supports (books, flashcards, posters, etc.), 2) games & activities, 3) songs & videos, 4) electronic supports (e.g.: apps), 5) classes (online or in person), 6) practice with Elders/speakers, 7) other. The 7th support was optional so not all people included it in their ranking. Each choice also provided room for people to elaborate on their choices, and these elaborations are discussed in more detail in the analysis section.

According to their average rankings across responses, 'Written Supports' was ranked as most helpful of all types of resources, averaging at 2.82 out of a ranking of 1-7. Practice with Elders and other speakers came in second place at an average ranking of 3.24 out of 7. In third place was 'Songs & Videos' at an average ranking of 3.38 and 'Classes' in fourth at a ranking of 3.44. 'Electronic Supports' landed fifth in ranking with an average score of 3.74 and 'Games & Activities were ranked sixth most helpful with a score of 4.24. In seventh place was 'Other' which received an average ranking of 6.46. Table 7 displays the overall preference order of categories according to their average ranking across responses. More information about responses for each category is shared below followed by an analysis discussion themes that surfaced throughout responses.

Table 7 – Language Supports Helpfulness Ranking Order

Ranking Order (1 most helpful, 7 least helpful)	Language Speaking Support Categories	Average Ranking
1	Written Supports	2.82
2	Practice with Elders/speakers	3.24
3	Songs & Videos	3.38
4	Classes	3.44
5	Electronic Supports	3.74
6	Games & Activities	4.24
7	'Other'	6.46

4.5.1.1. Category 1 - Written Supports

Order of percentage of ranking: 1 2 3 4 5 6 – average ranking 2.82

Of the 97 parents and caretakers who completed the survey, 92 put a ranking on category 1 'written supports' which includes things like books, flashcards, posters, etc. The average ranking amounts to a mean score of 2.82. Out of these 92 people, 26 (about 28%) ranked this type of support as a 1 out of 7 (most helpful), seven of whom added additional comments often mentioning that the written visuals align well with their learning preferences. Nineteen people (about 21%) ranked it 2nd out of 7, five adding more information, largely regarding written supports as beneficial in supplementing other methods of learning. A ranking of 3 out of 7 was marked for 16 parents and caretakers (about 17%) with three adding additional thoughts such as the visibility of written language reinforcing and contextualizing language learning and use. Fifteen people (about 16%) ranked this category 4th out of 7 and two added more information about this ranking, both mentioning a desire for supports around labeling their homes and time as a barrier from having done this themselves already. Nine people (about 10%) ranked it as 5th with two adding additional comments, one of whom points to the learning curve of seeing sounds and knowing the pronunciation. Seven people (about 8%) ranked it at a 6 out of 7 with one adding comment around it being more helpful to hear the language spoken. There were no rankings of 7th for this category, though category 7 'other' may not have been considered by some of those ranking these supports since it is not a specific listing.

4.5.1.2. Category 2 - Games and Activities

Order of percentage of ranking: 3 5/6 4 2 7 1 – average ranking 4.24

Category 2 'Games and Activities' was ranked by 90 parents and caretakers, the lowest number of responses of all the categories aside from 'Other'. The mean score compared to other categories was 4.24 with the highest number of rankings a 3 out of 7 by 21 respondents, or about 23% of the total who ranked this category. Three of these 21 elaborated on their ranking for this category mentioning the enjoyment games can bring to learning. The second highest ranking was tied by both 5 and 6 out of 7 with 20 parents and caretakers (about 22%). Of those who ranked it at a 5, six wrote additional notes on their entry again largely mentioning fun for kids. One offered concern around games or activities that rely too heavily on written language, and one wrote a preference for one-on-one supports. Two of the 20 parents and caretakers who ranked this category at a 6 added more thoughts, one remarking that they might be helpful to children. Fourteen people (about 16%) ranked this support at a 4 out of 7, three of whom added more thoughts to their entry sharing the benefit to engage kids in language use with this type of support. Ten people (about 11%) ranked it at a 2. Of these, five added additional comments generally mentioning the kids and, like those who ranked it 3rd, the fun games can bring to learning. Three parents and caretakers (about 3%) ranked it last at a 7 out of 7 for 'least helpful' with one adding hopes for more community involvement. Two parents and caretakers (about 2%) ranked it 'most helpful', or 1st out of 7, neither of whom added any additional comments to this ranking.

4.5.1.3. Category 3 - Songs and Videos

Order of percentage of ranking: 2 4 5 3 1 – average ranking 3.38

       Ninety-three parents and caretakers chose a ranking for category 3 'songs and videos'. The mean score compared to all categories lands at 3.38, just slightly behind category 6 'Practice with Elders/speakers' and just ahead of classes. Of all the rankings, the highest for this category was **2** out of 7 with 22 parents and caretakers (about 24%) ranking it here. Of these 22, five elaborated, mostly on songs over videos, commenting on appreciation for repetition, singing along, and acting out. Close behind that, 21 parents and caretakers (about 23%) ranked it 4th out of 7, four of whom added additional thoughts to their entries sharing that singing and/or videos are not part of their daily lives, and that they can take a while to learn. The next highest was a ranking of 5 by 17 parents and caretakers (about 18%) and one added additional comment elaborating that careful consideration for learners is necessary in offering these supports.

A ranking of 3 out of 7 was chosen by 14 parents and caretakers (about 15%). Of these, six provided additional information sharing that both they and their children learn well in this way, one remarking it would be especially helpful as they road trip. Eleven parents and caretakers (about 12%) ranked it as the most helpful support, or 1st out of 7. Four commented, some expressing appreciation for the built-in pronunciation help this type of support offers and that it is a successful support for kids. Finally, eight people (about 9%) ranked this category 6th out of 7. One person elaborated, echoing others' advice that these types of support are often too advanced for a beginning learner. There were no rankings of 7 for this category.

4.5.1.4. Category 4 - Electronic Supports

Order of percentage of rankings: 4 6 2/3 1 5 7 – average ranking 3.74

Ninety-one parents and caretakers provided rankings for category 4 'Electronic Supports' with a mean score of 3.74. Of these, the highest number, 24 (about 26%), ranked this support **4**th out of 7 with seven adding additional information to their entries, largely commenting on the potential ease of access to language with this type of support. The next highest ranking came from 18 parents and caretakers (about 20%) who ranked it as 6th out 7. Five of those who ranked it 6th added more information. One parent shared that some of their younger children watch Ichishkíin YouTube videos. Another suggested adding onto the current app while another talked about utilizing the online dictionary to hear pronunciation of words and wished there was an app for easier access. One shared that electronic resources are just not their preferred means of learning and rarely get used and one remarked that these types of resources are not available. A ranking of 2 and 3 was tied with 13 people (about 14%) ranking at each of those levels. Of those who ranked it at a 2, four added more thoughts speaking to the ease of access and enjoyment of this type of support, specifically mentioning the Ichishkíin app available at this time on iPhones and iPads. Twelve parents and caretakers (about 13%) ranked this support category as 'most helpful', or 1st out of 7 with one adding additional information remarking on the tech skills of their children. Of the equal number of parents and caretakers who ranked it at a 3, two added additional comments mentioning the benefit of access to pronunciation in this format. Nine parents and caretakers (about 10%) ranked it at a 5 out of 7, three of whom commented further, again mentioning the resourcefulness and access to pronunciation support in addition to appealing to younger generations.

106

Finally, two people (about 2%) ranked it as 'least helpful', or 7th out of 7, neither elaborating on their choice for ranking it here.

4.5.1.5. Category 5 - Classes

Order of percentage of rankings: 5 2 1 3 6 4 – average ranking 3.44

Ninety-three parents and caretakers ranked category 5 'Classes' with a mean score of 3.44. The highest ranking for this category was a 5 out of 7 with 23 parents and caretakers (about 25%) choosing this ranking. The second highest was a 2 out of 7 by 19 parents and caretakers (about 20%) while the third highest number, 16 people (roughly 17%) ranked it as 'most helpful', or 1st out of 7. This category was ranked at 3 out of 7 by 13 parents and caretakers (about 14%), and at a 6 out of 7 by 12 people (roughly 13%). A ranking of 4 out of 7 was chosen by 10 parents and caretakers (about 11%). There were no rankings of 7 out of 7 for category 5.

4.5.1.6. Category 6 - Practice with Elders/speakers

Order of percentage of ranking: 1 6 3 2/5 4 – average ranking 3.24

Ninety-one of the 97 survey respondents provided a ranking for category 6 'practice with Elders/speakers. The average ranking for this type of support lands at a mean score of 3.24. The majority, about 30% or 27 of the 91 parents who ranked this category, named it a 1 (most helpful) out of 7. The second largest for this category's ranking was 6 out of 7 with 19 participants, roughly 21%. Fifteen people, about 16%, ranked this category at 3 out of 7. A ranking of both 2 and 5 were chosen by 11 (about 12%) parents and caretakers for each. The smallest ranking for this category was a 4 out of 7 by 8 respondents, or roughly 9%. There were no rankings of 7 for this category.

4.5.1.7. Category 7 - Other

Order of percentage of ranking: 7 6 ½ - average ranking 6.46

In contrast to the other rankings, only 28 parents and caretakers ranked category 7 'other'. The mean score of these rankings was 6.46. Twenty-two (about 79%) of the 28 respondents ranked it at a 7, or 'least helpful'. Four people (about 14%) ranked it a 6 out of 7. Rankings of 1 and 2 out of 7 were chosen by one person (about 4%) each. There were no rankings of 3, 4, or 5 for this category.

4.5.2. Discussion

Similar to the previous question, knowing which supports are more helpful than others allows us to design resources that are tailored to family preferences. While there is variety in the rankings people offered, it does provide some insight into the average preferences across categories. Of course, it is still important to continue developing a range and variety of resources in heavy collaboration with those who wish to use them, since there is urgency to this work, knowing general preferences across a large range of households is helpful.

Again, we see several themes emerge through responses shared by parents ranking which types of resources they find most to least helpful. The first theme highlights how some parents remarked on the equal value they see for the different types of resources presented since there is variation in preferences within households. The second theme I discuss is the importance of language visibility for supporting regular language use. A third theme involves written language and pronunciation including the alphabet and limitations of resources that rely too heavily on written language alone. Fourth, I discuss parents' comments about accessibility of materials. Class materials are

discussed next as a large source of materials families end up having in their homes followed by a discussion of using different types of resources as quick reference materials. A seventh theme shares how parents see different resources interacting with language levels. Considering limitations of supports parents mentioned comes next followed by a substantial section on parents' thoughts around how their families engage differently with different types of resources, including community. How language learning overlaps with daily life is a 10th theme followed by a discussion of class offerings. Relationships as resources are discussed after that followed by a related 13th theme of Elders and Intergenerational Learning. I close with a brief summary of these themes and their connection to literature and cultivating language use at home.

4.5.2.1. Varied Interest Calls for Varied Supports

Some parents spoke to the importance of accommodating varied interests and learning preferences with equally varied resources. Of all the questions, this was the one Twálatin and I received the most questions from parents and caretakers about, some of whom did not find it useful to follow strict ranking. Future inquiries of the helpfulness of resources will necessarily include added ways for parents to express preferences about resources they find useful in supporting their language use at home. Some parents added comments about this like Troy Watlamet who remarks on the categories to say, "I think these are all equally important, because people learn better on different avenues and teachings." Likewise, Sloane Seelatsee wrote, "I did not want to rank these, as I believe all of the above would be extremely helpful." Sia Aronica also emphasizes the importance of learners having access to a mix of resources writing,

I think that we need access to all of the supports as we use them all in conjunction with each other. I would be in 7th heaven to have access to classes and other speakers, along with having games and songs to reinforce our language practice and usage here at home.

And Tillet-Pum notes the dynamic nature of language use and hence the helpfulness levels of resources in different contexts reminding us, "These [rankings] change based on environment.

4.5.2.2. Language Visibility

Several parents commented on the visibility aspect of written materials. For example, Sia Aronica, wrote, "I need the written supports. I like having my wall hangings. I like the flashcards. I like having sticky notes with phrases and sayings around. I like some of the labels. I would like to have some more." Damian Dick ranked written supports as most helpful saying, "I learn better when I can read it," and Larise Sohappy shared how written materials help at home so "We could work on it together and they learn better visually." Amelia Morrison shared a similar learning preference writing, "I like to have visuals to look at and study on my own time." Jeanette Watlamet also marked written materials as most helpful noting, "1 for my children they like to have the print in front of them," later adding, "I like the labels just out it everywhere in your home." Lavette Holman also comments on the importance of language visibility in her home and saying, "Flashcards are really helpful if they are in a place that we see them often and pay attention to them, as are posters. The placemat we have is awesome because it is readily available and viewable at meal times." Lavette's comment brings up the important point that, more than just offering visibility, materials must be kept in a

place where we are more likely to actively engage with them on a regular and frequent basis.

4.5.2.3. Written Language and Pronunciation

These sentiments of language engagement are part of the reason Tuẋámshish, in our classes and with teachers, emphasizes the importance of teaching the alphabet. She has said that the written symbol can help learners better understand and build relationships with each of the sounds present in Ichishkíin and has expressed concern for losing some of the unique sounds if the connections aren't maintained. Written visibility can help to reinforce such connections. One parent sums this up well writing, "Anything written that I can reference is my preferred method of learning. It helps to see a word written so I can tie the sound to the alphabet." Marian Dick Squeoch shares a desire to see pronunciation and writing supports incorporated into electronic resources writing, "Apps to speak Sahaptin language Never sure if I am pronouncing my words correctly. I spell my words according to how they sound to me." Many people Marian's strategy of writing what they hear but, since we are simultaneously doing the work of preserving language and cultivating language use, it is helpful to be familiar with a system that others can interpret and understand as well.

Parents' comments about writing above also direct us to the importance of incorporating pronunciation support into written materials. Julie Sohappy elaborated with a, "Worry about correct pronunciation." Another parent reminded, too, that written supports might hinder learning if people aren't familiar enough with the writing system saying games "Might be challenging to use with my children since they don't see the written Ichishkíin and would need to learn in order to fully understand." This also speaks

to a need to create materials and supports that help families learn the relationship between sounds and their written symbols. Perhaps creating games that are geared toward learning the alphabet in a fun way could be helpful. Sia Aronica talks about electronic resources as a way to support pronunciation, writing, "I use my apps like Quizlet. I think these are very important. They help with studying. I would love to get the pronunciation into these types of platforms." Similarly, another parent commenting on electronic supports wrote, "An app to use would be helpful to hear the word/sound."

4.5.2.4. Accessibility

Convenient accessibility to materials was another theme that emerged in parent responses. For example, Mariana Harvey shared a request for more readily available written supports to help increase language visibility in the home and touching on the pressures for parents at this time to create the materials they want to have. In her words,

> I wish we had a file simple small printable labels that we could print and put all over our home. It's hard to come clean that I never did this. As parents of littles it's just so hard to make time for anything extra and I think creating things that are extremely easy to print at home or something we could order would allow me to have labels everywhere!

Kamushni shared an interest, too, tying back to making language more visible in their homes with a tagging service saying, "It would be awesome if we could hire people to come help tag our home and gives us ways to practice using the tags." Damien Dick talked about the convenience of being able to access electronic supports for learning on the go, too, writing, "So I can look at them on my phone when I want too anytime." Another parent similarly shared, "Apps would be a great idea to use when on the go," for their family.

4.5.2.5. Class Materials

Once again, class materials emerged as a prominent source offering valuable support to home language use. Flashcards were one such resource mentioned by some including Laura Canfield who wrote, "When I took the Language class at Heritage University, I found that flashcards were very helpful." Another parent shared that they were also helpful for their family saying, "Flash cards worked really good when I used them with our teens." Adrianne Ramey speaks to the wrap around supports possible through language classes, saying, "I think a class is the best to learn our language. You have somebody working with you and pronouncing works correctly, putting them into sentences. There is somebody to answer your questions." Adrianne's words tie back to the relational elements that many have mentioned are so important in their work to learn language.

4.5.2.6. Reference Materials

Parents talked, too, about materials they prefer to use for reference purposes. For example, Elese Washines uses written materials more as reference saying, "I use the books, flashcards, and posters as reference materials," and ranking them as less helpful than most other resources for supporting her language use at home. Another parent similarly remarked that these types of materials are helpful to enrich background knowledge requesting, "Book lists on history and legends. To know background," and ranking them at a mid-range. Mary Lee Jones added that written materials are a helpful supplement to other resources saying they are a, "Great option to refer to and encourage classes and enriching." Amelia Morrison ranks electronic supports at 5 out of 7 for helpfulness adding that they "Would be cool to have as quick reference." Lavette Holman

ranked these in a mid-range adding that, "This seems to be how people are learning these days. I prefer in person, but the YNTS app is a good "go to" for us when we want to look something up really quick anywhere and anytime!" These comments lend to a call for resources that are accessible and useful in the busier moments in life to supplement and enrich language knowledge as it is needed to fulfill goals of speaking more language at home. As learners, having resources to help fill in knowledge gaps as they arise can go a long way in maintaining good momentum in language use. They help parents engage with *Yaychunal* and continue with *Wapítat Ttáwax̱t.*

4.5.2.7. Learner Levels

Parents also reported that some types of materials would benefit from more targeted design to accommodate different levels of learners. One parent ranked 'Songs and Videos' at a 6 out of 7 sharing, "Songs/videos are typically faster paced and i am still a beginning learner." Lavette Holman adds to the consideration needed in creating songs and videos as learning aids, also commenting on some of their drawbacks, including lacking conversational supports. She ranks them fifth out of 7 for helpfulness and writes,

> Songs are okay, but difficult if you do not know the context/translation. They are also very limited, i.e. not very conversational context. Videos are good as long as they are short and simple for beginners, and have the written translation.

Given Lavette's critiques, other parent's enthusiasm for songs and videos, and the need to support language growth through authentic conversation, it is worth considering ways that this type of resource can better support different levels of learners and conversational aspects of language use.

4.5.2.8. Limitations of Supports

Other parents remarked on the limitations of available electronic supports calling on a need to "Add onto current app" by one parent who ranked this type of support 6th out of 7 for helpfulness while another who ranked it 4th pointed out the unequal access to the current app writing that they, "Don't have an iphone for the app we have available now." Another parent echoes this issue of access, writing, "I don't have an iPhone or iPad so I am currently unable to use the Naami Sinwit app. I would like to see it on Android if possible," and ranking electronic supports at a 3 out of 7. Mariana Harvey shared a comment that hints to an issue of access as well in that the current app is not yet widely known or perhaps could benefit from an upgrade in features (or separate app development) that would better support family use. She ranked this type of support as least helpful adding that,

> This is lowest because all the others feel more important but I would still love an app that can tell me simple phrases, you can hear it. I go the online dictionary often to hear a word or phrase and would love an easier access on an app.

Mary Lee Jones ranks electronic supports at a 4 out of 7 and reminds us of the value in incorporating relational elements into these types of material. She shares an example of one of the electronic resources she does use and shares why, writing, "[I'm] not too savvy but I love the quick bits on YouTube and some of Jefferson Green's sillyness. I love his relationship with people....warm and forgiving. Tie back to earlier mentioned resources' relational components and Virtues.

4.5.2.9. Engagement of Materials

Another theme that emerged was the importance of materials that are engaging for families using language together at home, whether that's materials tailored them to meet

multiple interests at once, or having variety enough to support family interests across the board. Several parents mentioned games as something that would be fun and engaging to use with their kids. For example, Sia Aronica ranked games as second most helpful for her family and writing, "Games and activities are always fun. Anytime we can have fun- it makes learning language more enjoyable and will stick with us." Another parent ranks games fifth out of 7 but adds that they, "Help connect with kids," while another writes that they, "Would make learning the language fun," ranking them second most helpful for family resources. Julie Sohappy agreed that games would, "Be a fun way to learn for all of us," and Larise Sohappy comments on engaging children saying, "They like to play games so easy to teach," both ranking them at a 3 out of 7. Amelia Morrison continues this trend saying, too, that it "Would be fun to have games to play with my kids," and ranking them at a mid-range.

Some parents point out that games might be more fun for younger children than whole families. For example, Laura Day Canfield ranked them at a 5 writing, "Games and activities could be fun and younger children may take to them easier," and Marian Dick Squeoch ranked them at a 4 elaborating that games are "Geared mostly towards our little people." Lavette Holman ranks them at a 6 out of 7 for her family but writes "I have not really done any games or activities in Ichishkiin, but imagine they would be really helpful to children." Jeanette Watlamet shares that her younger children are drawn to electronic supports, writing that "…the 2 younger ones watch the YouTube video," though she ranked this type of support 6th out of 7 for helpfulness in supporting language use at home. These comments point back to the need to consider a number of factors,

including ages, when thinking about creating resources for families to learn and use language together.

Chestina Smith speaks to classroom considerations for children, ranking classes in a mid-range for helpfulness in supporting home language use and writing, "In person class size of about 10 children love the feeling of hierarchy and praise so they listen and learn better." These smaller class sizes are more amenable than larger classes in engaging kids more fully while learning. Considering the ways parents have shared observations of their children as leaders in language learning, teaching, and growth, it is important to pay special attention to the types of supports they are most drawn to both within families and in general.

Parents mentioned other types of supports to be engaging in their worlds, too, like Julie Sohappy who ranked 'Songs and Videos' as second most helpful adding, "This would work because we like to sing." We also see an example of opposing preferences from Larise Sohappy who ranked them fourth because, "We don't sing much." These comments point back again to the need to create varied resources that engage families in ways that suit their unique preferences and dynamics. In considering the helpfulness of songs, too, one parent who ranked them as most helpful added simply that they, "Need more of this in our life." Elese also highlighted how kids are drawn to electronic supports, which she ranked as the second most helpful type of resource for her family, particularly when they engage children, saying, "My son loves the interactive language app on ipad." Another parent comments that the language app is engaging for them as well as for their grandchildren, ranking electronic supports as the second most useful to them and writing, "Love the current ichishkiin app. Our grandkids like using it."

117

Kamushni speaks to the way children and youth are drawn to electronic supports as well, writing, "Kids seem to take to this way of doing things so I'm sure it would be successful amongst the younger people." Just as we saw contrasting preferences above around songs, Laura Canfield reminds us that some people don't find electronic resources to be as engaging. She ranks them 6th out of 7 and adds, "I'm not one that likes to take classes online. It's more difficult for me. I have downloaded apps before but I rarely use them," pointing again to the need to create varied resources designed to fit into the many different dynamics of family language use.

Songs were one resource parents also remarked as an engaging way for their children to learn language. Sia Aronica went to her kids to help rank the helpfulness of different resources and chose 'songs and videos' as number one. Sia shares their choice and reasoning saying, "I asked my girls what they think would help them most- they felt that the songs and videos help them. They can hear the pronunciation and the songs get stuck in their heads." Elese Washines ranked them third out of 7 but added, "Both my kids love the ichishkiin songs and videos that are on youtube." A grandparent also shared how drawn to songs their grandchildren are, ranking them as most helpful and writing, "I've used songs with my grandkids and they learn excellent with this." The catchiness of songs allows for repetition which one parent comments on, ranking 'Songs and Videos' as second most helpful saying, "Repetition and good to go over with kids," though another parent who ranked songs and videos 3 out of 7 points out it "Would take time to catch into the songs. Videos would be helpful." Chestina Smith also remarks on the time it takes to learn songs fully, ranking them at a 4 out of 7 and writing that it "Took about a month and a half to learn the yakama lullaby for graduation." Both Tuxámshish and

Twálatin have advocated heavily for more songs to be developed to help learn language because of how engaging they are for children (and many adults!).

Community level engagement was another theme that emerged from parents' responses. Mary Lee Jones, for example, ranked games as least helpful in terms of home resources to support language use but adds an aspect of that they might bring people together in a larger way writing, "I would like to see a pitch in give away for prizes. It would be fun to see community invest in itself." Another parent calls for, "Use of language in places of employment in the Yakama Nation," and Rachel Bettles shares a similar desire saying, "I think if we incorporate the language for employees within the Yakama nation, it'd be helpful. We could put labels in the language on the restrooms label man an woman...etc." Another would like to see a "Language gathering to talk about culture, songs, where meanings." Here we see parents' knowledge of community spaces lending awareness to opportunities for greater connection and commitment to language growth on a larger scale.

4.5.2.10. Language For Life

Another level of engagement parents commented on brings language into activities the family already engages with. Mariana Harvey speaks to the helpfulness of overlapping language with life in a fun way, too, ranking games at fifth out of 7. In her words, "I like the idea of learning a simple games in Ichichskiin with my kid. Just incorporating what he already loves, like red light, green light, chasing (I'm going to chase you game)." Another parent remarks on wanting to incorporate more games, which they ranked at a 3 out of 7, into their children's routines because of the joy games bring writing, "Kids love to learn through games and activities, I would love to see this more in

their daily routine." Jeanette Watlamet ranked 'Songs and Videos' as the second most helpful resource for her family because, "They like to sing and act out," which points to incorporating language into an already natural mode of play for kids. Mariana also talks about 'Songs and Videos', which she ranked third most helpful, as a regular part of daily life and wishing for Ichishkíin versions of those her son is already drawn to saying,

> I wish I had tons really simple sing a long songs. Far out wish is a Ichichskiin version of cocomelon (a sing a long cartoon my son loves). I haven't memorized the [Ichishkíin] songs we do have already and part of it, is making it a clear easy recording, the other part is I could just listen a dozen+ times and just learn it.

Mary Lee Jones also talks about how songs can help to learn about different things and how they can be adapted to incorporate language, ranking them in a mid-range and writing, "Songs are how I learn. I make songs out of anything. I adapt modern songs and replace with language for my kiddos." Kamushni, who also ranked songs at a mid-range, added, "We road trip so songs and video would be great entertainment." Sandra Patchpe similarly shares time and availability for learning as a factor for her saying, "The schedule I have is a major factor," pointing to a need to support families with language relevant to the routines they are already functioning within rather than adding more scheduling onto their days.

4.5.2.11. Class Offerings

Parents shared contrasting preferences for online vs. in-person classes often citing limitations due to schedule conflicts with in-person or real-time online classes as a reason for more online classes. Sia Aronica adds a request to this call for online access, writing,

> I would love to participate in classes online/person, unfortunately the classes are not always at a time that are accessible or at a time that is open for us. As we are

busy with school and sports, time is very limited. An online course that is pre-recorded and a work at your own pace would be fantastic. (hint, hint).

For this reason, Sia ranked classes at a 6 out of 7 for helpfulness at this time. Another parent joins the call for classes to be offered, "Online at my own pace." Another parent commented in this light, as well, sharing a ranking of 5th out of 7 for helpfulness of classes in supporting their use of language at home and adding they, "Can't make time to attend during my busy days." Similarly, Amelia Morrison shared, "Classes are great but I'm not sure if I could participate at designated hours." Lavette Holman shared appreciation for the effectiveness of classes while also commenting on the level of time and energy they require writing,

> I feel classes are good for adults, and help better learn the structure of the language. However, they are a huge commitment and hard to work in when you work full time. However, it is through my classes that I have learned the most.

Julie Sohappy suggested, "If possible have online learning for about an hour or 2 every other day." These parents are solution-oriented in the way they offer recommendations for classes that would fit into their lives more easily than what is currently offered. These words come at an exciting time, too, with Yakama Nation in the process of developing protocols for certifying language teachers. With more teachers, parent suggestions have hope to become reality, including those they shared for their children's schooling under Question 2.

And just as some parents need easily accessible classes with flexible schedules, others thrive within the structure of in-person, regular meetings, as Laura Canfield shared,

I seemed to retain more when I was in a class at Heritage University. I had taken classes in the past but for whatever reason the information didn't stick with me before. Perhaps because it wasn't consistent like a weekly class?

Another parent shared that class taught "In person is critical to learning and retaining the teachings," while another suggested "Total immersion for a summer might be really good. I know I could personally benefit from this," which is something Twálatin, I and others have been dreaming about for years, too. Troy Watlamet suggested bringing people together to offer, "Songs and legends being sung and told." Again, we hear how much consideration parents are putting into ideas for connecting more deeply with language, imagine the possibilities and potential for language growth if their ideas were formally supported to see through.

4.5.2.12. Relationship

Damian Dick also commented on the helpfulness of classes, which he ranked 6 out of 7, to foster community writing that it, "Helps getting involved with other people." Elese Washines speaks to the relational component of classes as well, ranking them 4th out of 7 for helpfulness and sharing that

> The online classes during the pandemic were healing for us to connect with other native families in positive ways. I am forever grateful to the language teachers who made the online classes available and accepted my kids participating with me.

Jeanette Watlamet commented similarly on classes saying, "Yes having the support is good," and ranking them at a 4 out of 7 for helpfulness. Another parent who ranked them 1st calls for, "Continuance of classes and build an online community," showing that parents want more than just access to classes, but access to community, too. Mariana

Harvey comments on her communal learning experience as well, ranking classes as the second most helpful resource for supporting language use in her home and writing, "Classes have been so important on this journey and especially our learning community." Another parent writes, "Classes and elders I would put together," reminding us of the importance to include Elders and the knowledge they carry into classes in whatever ways makes the most sense to them. Through teaching with Tux̱ámshish, I have learned so much about relating to people, and have witnessed the ways learning is always a communal undertaking. She has guided me and so many others to connect and truly experience collective knowledge cultivation with language and so much more that each person contributes to.

4.5.2.13. Elders and Intergenerational Learning

More relational considerations came up for parents in thinking about practicing speaking language with Elders. Amelia Morrison captures the importance of learning directly from Elders saying, "**Hearing the language from elders and those who are fluent is important to understand how to use the language**." Sia Aronica shares, "I would love this. I feel like this should be the most important, but it took a lower [ranking] precedent as the scheduling is an issue. I feel like I need more vocabulary practice to be most successful when speaking." Sia's account identifies Elders as the most valuable to be in relation with while growing language use, but also expresses a need to know more before engaging with them in this way, identifying a relation with self that perhaps tugs at confidence levels in speaking and understanding which is something expressed by another parent who shared that they are "Not ready to practice like that yet." This type of engagement would certainly need some supports and perhaps help in facilitation as one

parent points out that, "Having a buddy to practice with is helpful. Since Elders are more fluent, it can be more difficult to understand." Mariana Harvey expressed high value in being able to practice with Elders saying, "this is the most ideal, practicing in class is where I really stretch my capacity at speaking and listening - all around learning." Lavette Holman commented on practicing with Elders and spoke to the benefits of practice in general saying, "Doesn't practice make perfect! Practice really helps with the hard thinking and processing of the language, but can be uncomfortable if you don't know the other person. Practice also helps develop listening skills and comprehension." Chestina Smith offers insight, too, into some affective hesitations around engaging in this way, saying, "Most are afraid unless related and if related they think it's being mean." Lavette and Chestina's words remind us that it is important to take time to foster relationships with the people you are learning and speaking with. This is one element I have noticed in classes is very different in the context of learning Ichishkíin compared to other classes like Spanish or French. Incorporating this kind of time for ongoing relationship building is imperative to learning Ichishkíin whether through classes or personal learning and a component Tuxámshish encourages and advocates for.

Perhaps instead of one-on-one conversations between beginner speakers and fluent Elders, more experienced learners could help to facilitate conversations or if Elders were comfortable coming to class or recording ahead of time, teachers could model conversations – including ways to navigate misunderstandings or how to politely ask questions – and even design curriculum to support these types of engagements. Marian Dick Squeoch brings an Elder's perspective to this, thinking of her relationship with her grandchildren saying, "I speak on the Wash at Sunday services. But so far haven't carried

on a conversation with my Allah's yet. I don't see them very often." She also shares that life experiences impact language use, often long term, writing, "Boarding School survivor - limits my speaking of our language in our home. I have to address this issue. Regret not teaching my children when they were little. Frances Jordan speaks to a need for Elder supports, too, writing, "Trying to learn on own because I am the elder for my little family." It would be nice, too, to hear what kinds of supports Elders might want as they hold different roles and responsibilities than many others who are learning.

Parents' comments reflected, too, how this practice of intergenerational and relational teaching has always been part of a Yakama way. Adrianne Ramey remembers learning through family relationship, too, sharing, "My dad use to teach me words," and Kamushni points out larger connections to stories when learning from Elders, saying, "When from an elder speaking I feel we all listen better and they give so much more then just words. They seem to always give stories too." Jeanette Watlamet expresses reverence for learning from Elders sharing, "I would love to sit and listen and learn with our elders," and Elese Washines highlights her children's relationship to Ichishkíin instilled by relationships across generations within her family saying,

> My kids hear their elders speak, they pick up on the sounds more. I am excited
> they can speak the language as well as they do since my dad only spoke to them
> in the language when they were babies.

Educational programs or events helping to support families in growing their home language practice should take inspiration from, not only this call from parents, but from this deeply embedded Yakama way of sharing knowledge and language that has been shaped and maintained through countless generations since time immemorial.

125

Parents expressed limitations and concerns, too, over the idea of practicing language with Elders. For example, Laura Canfield values the importance of speaking but expresses concern around limited access to Elders saying, "Actually speaking the Language would probably be the best way to learn but I don't see Speakers of the Language on a daily/weekly/monthly basis." Some parents point to limitations of place as a barrier to the relational practice of speaking with Elders. For example, Larise Sohappy writes simply that, "We live in Oregon," and another parent shares, "Unfortunately I am not aware of any Yakama elders living in eastern South Dakota." Julie Sohappy expresses concern for the wellness of Elders if people are meeting to speak with them saying, "Worry about this as we have the virus out there."

4.6. A Note About Open Question Responses

I am humbled and overwhelmed in trying to present the information parents have shared throughout this project in general but particularly in these open questions. These narratives exemplify how parents and community members are deeply invested in educational policy and design for their children, and that they are the ultimate experts on how to best serve their children's educational growth intellectually, emotionally, spiritually, physically, etc. To honor that expertise, I present their words, this 'data', according to prominent themes parents and caretakers brought to light through their words in this survey. While it is tempting to try to fully present all information and topics shared, I must keep in mind the purpose of this project – to understand parent's use and desires for use of Ichishkíin language at home with their children. This survey was designed, however, to learn parents' thoughts around a Yakama education more widely and we have heard from parents about the connections between language in the

126

community and schools increasing their use of language at home. There are also topics discussed, such as longhouse practices, that aren't appropriate for me to present in the detail they are shared so I will work with Twálatin and Yakama Nation to share these more fully outside of this project format.

4.7. Question 6 – What Yakama teachings do you think are important for your children to learn?

4.7.1. Summary of Results

All 97 parents and caretakers (about 90%) responded to question 6 which asks what Yakama traditions they feel are important for their children to learn. Figure 12 (page 128) features a word cloud which shares words mentioned in the responses more than others, with the largest words moving from the center out representing ideas were mentioned the most by people. For example, we see 'language' at the center being the largest of all words because it was talked about more than other words throughout the responses. 'Food' was also frequently mentioned as was 'song', 'story', 'teaching', 'history', and 'family', etc. We chose word clouds to present data for all of the open questions to maintain focus on the words of these parents and the power of collective voices which many parents speak about through this survey.

4.7.2. Discussion

Understanding how Yakama teachings matters in terms of cultivating language use comes best from one of the parent's responses to this question. In their words,

> To better understand the Language it is important to also learn a certain amount of the history of The People and their Way Of Life. It makes the Language more personal to you and your Family. There is a difference in learning a Language merely the the sake of Language Acquisition and learning a Language for

Preservation and Utilization. If we learn because that is just the way it's always been we are just skimming the surface. However if we learn as much of the who, where, what, when and whys then it becomes part of Our Very Being. **It shapes how we live and how we pass on that information to future generations.**

Figure 12 – Important Yakama Teachings Survey Word Cloud
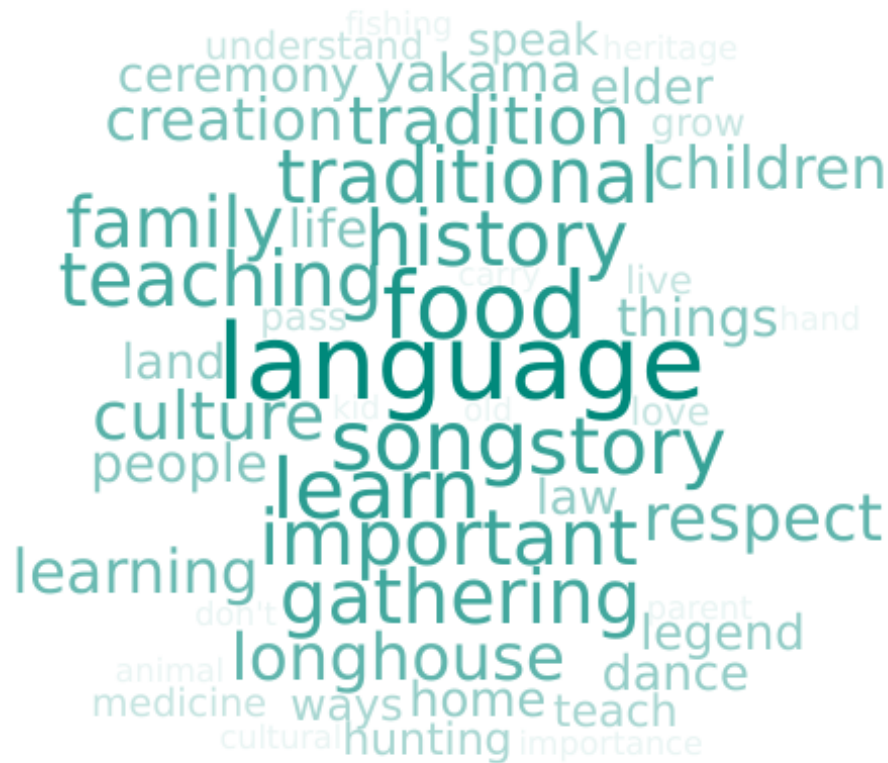
As the word cloud shows in Figure 12, language was mentioned most in response to Yakama teachings parents find important for their children to learn and, just as the parent above highlights its connection to everything, many of the responses reflect this as well. For this reason, there is no sub-heading here dedicated specifically to language, as language surfaced here as a part of all things. For example, Laura Canfield shares words she learned from her relative about how language and identity are interconnected, words I

have also heard Tux̱ámshish express as well. Laura wrote, "I believe that it is important for my children to learn their Language. **One of my Atway Uncles said that our Language is who we are; when we lose our Language, we lose our identity".**

Another parent commented, too, about sharing and incorporating teachings with, "Language especially as it relates to our holistic indigenous lifestyle: nature, foods, family, religion, and cultural practices. Traditional teachings to not be forgotten but passed down to next generations." This connects to Simpson (2017) who discusses Indigenous living, writing, "[w]e live fused to land in a vital way. If we want to create a different future, we need to live a different present, so that present can fully marinate, influence, and create different futurities. If we want to live in a different present, we have to center Indigeneity and allow it to change us," (p. 20).

The following sections describe themes mentioned by parents in response to what Yakama teachings are important for their children to learn. The first section presents comments from parents who shared thoughts around the sentiment that all teachings are important for their children to learn. Themes that follow include how parents are also learners of these teachings; stories and legends; family connections; gathering of foods and medicines; Longhouse; and Unwritten Laws.

4.7.2.1. All Teachings are Important

Several parents remarked that all Yakama teachings are important to include in Yakama children's education. Some, like Melissa Kishwalk, shared that this is in part due to the loss imposed over time saying, "All of it. So much has been lost over the years. The whole language is important to learn," and Julie Sohappy who wrote, "There is so much. We have lost alot because of the lack of teachings. We need to learn all we can."

Others shared the importance to instill Yakama teachings while children are young, like Andrea Compo who wrote that children should learn, "Everything about our culture, it is important that they learn the language so they can pass it down. They are young so they can retain it."

Carina Miller shared some of the beauty of understanding that deepens as she grows and how teachings from her Elders have helped her to recognize her place in the world now and standards for living. In her words,

> Everything. The older I get the more I understand about things my grandmas taught me, or understand them from a new view. Simple things relate to macro issues but they also raised me to go in with eyes wide open, to know and encourage our metamorphasis as individuals and as people and to know that our tribal communities mis treat our women and to not accept my place in it.

Carina's words point to the power of an intergenerational model of education – a traditional Yakama way of educating - showing how teachings remain with children as they grow even if they might not seem to understand at the time. Mikal Gadley extends this sentiment succinctly, writing that kids should learn "Ways to incorporate native ways with our current world," which also speaks to a responsibility to help children navigate the world as it is for them also showing a need to understand the experiences of children to better help them in this regard.

While some parents did not express directly that 'all teachings' are important, many named a variety of teachings they believe are important for their Yakama children to learn. For example, one parent listed five topics they think are important community-wide, elaborating briefly on each one as they're named. In their words,

Important teaching I think are important for children/families/all relatives would be; 1. Our foods: the names, stories of how they were created, how we take care of them, and how we use them. 2. Traditional medicines: what types, their names, how we use them, how we take care of them. 3. Indian New Year: What is it, why do we celebrate, how do we celebrate, why is our new year different than the regular "new year". 4. Grieving: majority of the time families will tell children or those who didn't grow up learning, "this is what we do" but don't explain why. I think learning the teachings behind funerals, the year of grieving could further understanding and connection to healing. 5. "Gender roles": Why and what are the roles of men? Why and what are the role of women? I once heard an elder say, "what I'm teaching is the man's teachings you will need to ask a woman about womens teachings…" It has always stuck with me. There could be more to this list, but having a child of my own know, these are what stuck out to me the most."

This parent, like others, shows connections between different teachings such as the connection of stories to foods, grieving to healing, how teachings are passed down differently through generations according to gender. Another parent refers to varied but connected teachings around the way things are and ways of being, writing that children should learn "The teachings of how things came to be, virtues that Levina Wilkins put together, stories and legends, how to walk in balance with all things-how to be a centered human being," in another example connecting story to teachings.

Elese Washines describes a list of teachings, naming them with Ichishkíin writing,

-choosh is the word of the day. It's the word every day. Everyday and every meal starts with choosh. -wisiix be still when an elder is speaking. Pay attention. -tma'aak respect yourself, respect others, and respect your home/land -ichi thlki tiimini - ticham iwa inmi - this land is a part of who we are. Land acknowledgements are a part of how we introduce ourselves. We introduce ourselves not only to the people around us, but we acknowledge the land and

131

introduce ourselves to the land. -atawi - carry gratefulness for the people and land; share that love with people openly.

Here Elese takes us back to the connection previous comments shared about connections between people and place, sharing how who you are is as inextricably tied to place as it is to people.

Other parents bring attention to the importance of sharing teachings through experience like Noelle Saluskin who reminds us that Yakama children should learn through, "Hands on learning activities," and another parent who writes that children should know "Language, history, learn and explain our treaty and rights, important teachings from long ago and how they helped us to survive. Need to be able to spend time in and with our culture."

4.7.2.2. Parents are Learning, too.

Parents also mentioned ways that they are still learning, too, lending to a call to help families learn together. For example, Sia Aronica wrote that language is connected to these teachings and believes children should be taught,

> As many [Yakama teachings] as possible. I would love them to have access to more. I am always looking form more teachings. I would say that I was not brought up in traditional ways, therefore I look for resources for me to be able to teach, share or take my kids to so they can learn more of our teachings. I feel like for some of us find more opportunities to learn our traditional handicrafts- such as beading, weaving, leather-working, some of the gathering/preserving and the making of things. I think this knowledge is very important and goes hand in hand with the learning of our language.

132

Another parent who identifies as a learner elaborates on the language as an important teaching, noting the way its regular use can help guides one's thoughts in more alignment with a Yakama way saying,

> I think our children need to hear and speak the language every day. I am a very novice user and learner, but **once I started to learn more, it made me think differently**. English words make us think a certain way that can be constraining. When we use our language, we think in ways that are expansive and connected to our ancestors in a different way. Similarly, I think our children need to use our stories for learning, for connecting to the culture, to connect with each other. I think intergenerational learning would be of value. Not shuffling kids into the grades handed to us by western systems. I am still a learner of our ways. I don't know that I can point to values that others would say are strictly Yakama but I think about what my parents gave me, what I am working on as a person/learner myself, and what I want for my own children and grandchildren. Our history... about our territories...

They also bring up the importance of children learning through Yakama stories, which have served as a foundation of Yakama curriculum connecting generations, as this parent describes, in learning throughout time.

4.7.2.3. Stories and Legends

Parents outside of the above passages also mentioned and elaborated on Legends and Stories specifically as teachings important to share with their children. For example, Mary Lee Jones speaks to cultural curriculum they provide saying,

> Creation story as it helps understand identity and order. We have a natural curriculum and lessons that keep us safe. The basis of learning is a safe environment. The safe environment is in Creator's world. We as parents need to nurture this idea.

133

Another parent remembers learning legends from their mother and shares the way these stories include lessons about how to be, writing,

> I think it's important to learn the legends and the messages within them. My mom would tell me abridged versions growing up, but it was something around being respectful, taking care of oneself, or not being boastful. Those stuck with me growing up.

Not everybody has had access to people who know and can share Yakama legends and stories, such as Catherine Visaya who remarked that they would like to find a way to better access storytellings and songs, sharing, "I wish story telling and songs were more accesible to those who may live outside the reservation or do not family who can teach them."

4.7.2.4. Family Connections

Family was another topic of substantial mention and one that Tuxámshish emphasizes the importance of regularly. Several parents, like Ni-pi-cuhn, tied this to the importance of children learning

> How to introduce themselves. Knowing who they are is good for them. Also where they come from. Learn all forms of the creation story. Seasons and foods, why & when we do what we do when gathering and storing foods.

Ni-pi-cuhn's passage illustrates, too, how Yakama story is connected to a knowledge of family and self, and that those both lead into seasonal practices, including gathering. Another parent brings up introductions and seasonal connections but also adds value to learning relationship terms, and writing kids should learn "How to introduce themselves and who their family is. How to address their relatives: Ala, Kuthla etc How to count Different times of the seasons & what foods are important." Another parent touches on

134

this in mentioning the "Importance of water, land, foods," adding that children should learn "The value of family circle & their place within their circle, & duties they will uphold." Another illustration of how relationships extend to all things, including land, people and foods.

4.7.2.5. Gathering

Gathering foods, plants, and medicines was another topic that surfaced prominently throughout parents' comments. In one example, Tiffany George shared children should learn, "Food Gathering, The Times of year we gather and the importance of why we Gather and The different ways to Preserve the Foods." And in another, Mariana Harvey shares the ways gathering connects to so much more writing,

> I do a lot gathering with my son, so 'our foods take care of us, and in return we must care for them,' is a big value in our home. And taking care of ourselves and each other. I don't have a simple phrase for this one, but I always love hearing about the light in each of us...I think instilling that value of our own light at a young age....AND how can we care for that light ongoing so that when children grow up and become so vulnerable to depression, suicide, abuse of self is something they have that foundational understanding of their sacred self, light, being.

In another example, a parent shares connections between songs, gathering, and traditions and advocates for community level support saying they would like Yakama children to learn, "Songs and how to begin process of gathering and traditions. A community of cultural support." This comment brings in the communal nature of this work and highlights again how there are many teachers present in community.

135

4.7.2.6. Longhouse

Many parents emphasized the importance of Longhouse teachings for Yakama children. one parent mentions how that these teachings should be instilled young and names other important teachings, too, writing,

> I believe our long house culture should be taught early. 1st foods, how to gather, hunt and take care of our foods. Singing and carrying on the songs. Such as drum classes. The Creation Story. History of our people. Language of course. And sewing, preparing our traditional attire.

In another example, Lavette Holman shared similar thoughts writing,

> I think it is important for my son to learn about Yakama religion and how to act and what to do at the longhouse and ceremonies. I also think it is important for him to learn about his traditions and why Yakama people have certain ceremonies and do the things that they do. It is also important that he learn how to help preserve the old ways and be a steward of the natural resources and foods of his homeland.

Tasheena Piel highlights longhouse as a place where language is spoken speaking to the importance of, "Faith- longhouse The songs and being able to understand the leaders when they speak our language," for Yakama children.

Dominique Mangini spoke of a heightened reverence for teachings after experiencing so much loss as a community and expresses gratitude for teachings received growing up and the connected ability to now carry those teachings forward through generations, writing,

> I believe it is important for my child to learn about the history of our culture for many reasons. From shaker church meetings to long house ceremonies I find all to be sacred in society with they way we as a nation have lost touch of our culture. Making it mandatory in my parenting practices to teach my child her history, I am

grateful to have been taught what little I know throughout my religion involving: medicinal practices, ceremonies, dancings, norms/morals/taboos, wasshat songs with meaning behind them, and learning to create art by beading or weaving baskets to put huckleberries in. Taking cultural classes on the Yakama nation while attending school and going on field trips for example to pick and harvest sacred roots for ceremonies, has allowed me to be able to practice parts of my culture Acknowledging the importance of placement and orders. Recognizing the distances to which our lands extend throughout history, how our elders expect us to continue our traditions, and also the medicinal foods coming from the soil that we have survived off of for centuries where Mother Earth fruitfully provides. Making all above extremely crucial to know for successfully surviving this era in which we still are living in.

Dominique's passage also again shows us how deeply connected Longhouse teachings are to all things.

Laura Canfield speaks to the importance of teachings for children around funeral protocols saying,

> …Recently, we lost a loved one and I am sorry to say that my children do not know our ways when it comes to funerals. I did not take them to many funerals when they were young because I was told that young children should not be at funerals. And though they are much older, they have only been to a few funerals. Children should know how to act in our Homes (Longhouses) and should listen when an Elder tells them to do something…

While many parents did write about the importance of Longhouse teachings for children, not all excerpts are included here out of respect for the privacy of this sacred Yakama way. I also only sparsely provide my own comment out of recognition that my understanding is incredibly limited and it is not my place to interpret narratives about

practices involving Longhouse. One parent reminds us to respect that some teachings are not meant to be recorded or presented out of context, writing,

> Think certain things like Waashat songs should be learned only in a longhouse or home setting. Not online or shared via video. Yakama values: respect and care for each other, the land, water, animals. We record things in our heart and mind, not everything has to be documented/video…

This sentiment extends to the following section sharing parents' value of teaching children Unwritten Laws.

4.7.2.7. Unwritten Laws

Another important Yakama teaching parents wrote about was that of Unwritten Laws. Elder Marian Dick Squeoch wrote about this, pointing out how they help guide children in a good way through life. In her words,

> There's a reason why we are here. And while we are here, we need to take good care of our heart, body, mind and our soul in a good way. Children need to be taught in a good way. So that they will know the unwritten laws to follow them in their way of life; the language and ceremonies. Be kind to each other and yourself. Need to teach children and others by example, Learn to respect each other.

Túulhinch shared how he was raised in this way and would like to see those teachings continued and done so in Ichishkíin, writing,

> Growing up on the Reservation and even to this day I routinely heard and hear elders refer to the unwritten laws. It is often said these unwritten laws are of the utmost importance, young people need to learn these unwritten laws, live by them, and never forget them. One of these laws is one is not to take their own life. Another is respect all creations and not take/harvest any more than you need. I believe it would be beneficial to current and future Yakamas to identify all of the unwritten laws and teach them to in the language (Ichishkin).

Donella Miller highlighted this as well, expressing a desire to see Yakama children taught, "Respect for our way of life and unwritten laws."

4.8. Question 7 – What seasonal activities should Yakama children learn?

4.8.1. Summary of Results

Ninety-four of the 97 survey respondents (97%) provided an answer to question 7 asking what seasonal activities Yakama children should learn. A word cloud featured in Figure 13 (page 140) shows which words were mentioned most by the parents and caretakers who responded. As you can see in the figure, 'gathering' and 'food' are featured as the most central and largest words meaning that they were the most frequently talked about. Other ideas circling those and moving outward from the center include 'fishing', 'hunting', 'traditional', 'roots', and 'berry', among the others that continue to move outward.

4.8.2. Discussion

As parents have shared, Yakama peoples have always incorporated seasonal activities as a base for educating through the generations. It is natural, too, then to consider the language involved in these activities as part of that education, also meeting families' goals of overlapping language learning with activities they are already participating in. We have heard in previous sections too that parents value experiential learning for their children and the need to create opportunities to engage with children in their learning. Supporting families to use language while participating in traditional seasonal activities helps to restore the practices of the activities themselves and language use within them. This is far from innovative as it follows the lead of the actions parents of

139

Yakama children have engaged in for countless generations; reinforcing supports simply reinforces these practices.

Figure 13. Seasonal Activities Survey Word Cloud

Four main themes surfaced in parents' responses to this question of what types of seasonal activities are important for their children to learn. The first theme includes comments around Traditional Foods, Gathering and Feast, including relational elements and how these activities are connected to daily life. Seasonal Curriculum was a second emerging theme and shares ways parents regard seasonal activities as a basis of traditional Yakama curriculum. The third theme, Stories and Legends, shares another aspect of deeply rooted educational practice while the final section discusses comments

from parents who wrote that all seasonal activities are important for their children to learn. Table 8 presents some of the activities parents mentioned as going along with particular seasons. While I do not have the talent to transform this into a lovely visual, I can recognize the potential for future projects, perhaps involving students and/or artists to create their own versions or even developing a template so families could fill in the activities they engage in together during these different seasons.

Table 8. Activities By Season

Winter	**Spring**
Story time	Root digging
Basketball	Fishing
Learn from legends (anakú iwachá)	Golf
Winter snow bath and to call out *puuy*	Yard work
Winter solstice and our *atwai* loved	Wild flower identification
ones	Colors with *kapashayat* 'rainbow'
Legend telling and rounddance	
Summer	**Fall**
Family time	Fishing
Canning	Hunting
Camping	Beadwork
Swimming	Basket making
Gardening	Getting ready for school
Household chores	Good study habits
(dishes, laundry, cleaning)	Tule gathering
Berry picking	
Drying corn	
Treaty day commemoration	
End of summer – Berry time	

4.8.2.1. Traditional Foods, Gathering, and Feast

Learning about traditional foods and gathering processes was the most prominent theme that surfaced in responses to this question. Many parents pointed to the seasonal round, such as Túulhinch who wrote children should learn about, "…Traditional hunting and gathering activities of our ancestors associated with seasonal round…," and another parent who added gatherings and feasts to the list saying children should learn "The natural supply of our food gatherings, feasts to give thanks, hunting, fishing and preservation of foods. All of which is seasonal including the season changes." Plant identification, medicines, and respecting all parts of an animal were also named as by one parent who wrote children should learn about,

> Gathering medicines that are useful during the year. Learning how to identify the correct medicines. Learn how to fish, for subsistence. Learn to stock their freezer. Learn how to hunt animals, and use each part of the animal, including the hide and some bones.

Noelle Saluskin brings up that they should also understand the "importance of [seasonal teachings] in regards to our daily lives," speaking to the way these practices aren't separated by season but connected and present each day. Kamushni points to the connection, too, that children should also be supported to, "…Understand their rights to gather nomadic all foods,"

Another parent shares how family relationships are involved in their practices, writing that children should learn about,

> Going to the mountains to gather roots/berries. I want my son to learn how to hunt when he's ready, but I've never been so it's something that I would need to wait for my brother's to teach him. I want my children to understand the longhouse and

why things are done a certain way, **I mostly rely on my mother to tech these things as the elder of our family**.”

This passage highlights a regard for Elders as the most valued educators within Yakama families and community.

Another call from parents was one for family and youth programing including perhaps games or traditional sports that also occurred seasonally. In an example, Sloane Seelatsee wrote,

> I think it would be great if there were more programs offered to our youth and their families to show how to gather roots and berries, and when to hunt and fish. These kinds of things, the seasons in which we do these things. Just things like that, when to gather certain things, or if we had any recreational activities at all practiced throughout the seasons, that'd be cool to know too.

While it might be exciting to think of potential ways to support programs for these types of teachings, another parent shares a reminder that the way knowledge is shared is also important writing, “…I feel that certain aspects should be kept in a private manner. I'm willing to share my knowledge but don't want pictures or videos taken while food gathering. **Let sacred stay sacred**…”

Several parents also focused more heavily on children learning about Feasts as another seasonal important seasonal activity for their Yakama children to learn. For example, one parent would like to see Yakama children taught so they “Can participate in feast, picking berries digging roots. Hunting and fishing learning about the foods,” and Lavette Holman adds, “…They should learn and attend the seasonal feasts at the longhouses too, wearing the traditional clothing that they made and sharing the foods that they gathered :) .” Tillet-Pum also shared that children should learn about, “Feasts and

143

their meanings, what happens during feast, why certain things happen and dont happen during feast, what traditional foods look like and when they are harvested/picked."

4.8.2.2. Seasonal Curriculum

Other parents shared ways they see seasonal activities translating to formal curriculum to include in children's education. One parent shares having witnessed such curriculum design other places writing,

> I would love to see us follow a "Yakama" calendar. I, myself, do not know the seasonal activities well enough to speak on this. However, in my own work, I have experienced the kinds of learning that come about on the reservation I live on now and also when visiting the Spokane reservation's schools where they build learning into their year based on traditional activities.

Mariana Harvey also advocates for more seasonal-based education and Elder interaction pointing out the ways a traditional curriculum already covers Western standards. In Mariana's words,

> I think ideally children should be participating/witnessing/present for gathering seasonally. I always love when elders tell the little kids that are taking a day off academic school that going up to the mountains to go dig roots is your classroom today and what we're doing is just as important as what you're learning in school. Our traditional lifeways have all the learning opportunities embedded within them - STEAM, social studies, language arts, fine arts, physical activity, social-emotional-spiritual learning, etc. It's just difficult for many families to live these lifeways day in, day out.

Following the lead of millennia-old educational practices, formal curriculum can be designed to re-align more fully with traditional (naturally seasonal) Yakama ways also offering more support to families who already seek to align their daily/seasonal lives with

these practices. Language materials could be designed to support this goal through formal curriculum with family practice in mind as well.

Other parents talked about some of the summer camps that have been offered, connecting some of these experiences of children with seasonal practices and language. Rachel Bettles shared the importance of this along with gratitude for Elders to learn from and hopes for more opportunities for children moving forward suggesting,

> Outdoor activities when weather permits, to connect with our surroundings, I think places where our ancestors gathered is important so our younger generation don't forget. There is so much beauty in our lands and our ceded lands, places I didn't get to learn or forget and **thankful I have elders to show me**. On road trips we call out animal names or plants in the language and my kids learn that way too. The language summer camp was an awesome experience for my kids they learned SO much. They're like sponges. Camp chapel is a good one too, to learn medicines and plants.

Rachel's passage is another one that speaks to the importance of intergenerational interaction and outside education. Carina Miller adds to the importance of particular activities also reminding that *how* children are taught matters sharing, "Gathering and preserving first foods, making outfits, singing and dancing should be number one but taught in a healthy non punative manner."

4.8.2.3. Stories and Legends

As discussed in Question 6, Stories and Legends are a foundation of a Yakama model of education rooted in seasons in more than one way and contain many other valuable lessons. Elkay Lamebull shared wanting to see children learn "Stories of why we believe how the world, animals, laws were created," and Sia Aronica included these in her response to this question as well, writing,

I also think that the stories/legends of our peoples are very important. I love that the second edition of Anakú Iwachá is out so that our stories can be read and told. While I know that there are many other legends/stories, I am glad for the ones that are included. I absolutely love that there is Ichiskíin included in the second edition. I wish for there to be recordings/pronunciations for these stories. (I bring this up here as there are always seasons for stories.)"

Sia brings up Anakú Iwachá, one of the newest resources for families and others to access Yakama Legends and Stories, the original version of which was out of print and incredibly difficult to find, not to mention often grossly overpriced by private and rare book sellers. The new version includes, as Sia mentions, Ichishkíin versions of some of the stories (the original was published all in English). Sia also adds that she would like to be able to hear audio of these stories while reading. While there are some recordings available of legends and stories told by Elders, no two versions are exactly alike. We have seen in other responses requests for more storytelling events, too, which if supported and offered regularly might help to familiarize people with the language included in the legends and stories told. Language and elementary classes, such as those at UO and Harrah Elementary, have also incorporated legends into their curriculum, connecting together and even helping to add on to available resources through student projects. It is important to find ways, too, to connect families with these resources as well.

4.8.2.4. Everything

In the same way many parents expressed that all Yakama teachings are important to share with children, several also wrote that all seasonal activities are important to

share. It is not surprising either to hear so much overlap between these two areas. Here Amelia Morrison wrote,

> I think learning about all life cycles are important whether it be of the animals, the plants and being human. We all grow and evolve and its important to understand what it is to nurture our nature and be healthy.

Another parent shares relationships between such cycles, emphasizing different activities that come along with seasons and their connection to survival. They write that children should learn "The skills our ancestors had to learn to live off the land, so each season is important. Spring time, our traditional foods, summer foods and fishing. How we prepare our foods for when winter comes." Another parent spoke to this as well, sharing words from Blackfoot woman that resonated with this parent's Yakama practices writing,

> All of them; food gathering, preparing for winter (learning to cut wood), Indian New Year, and what our teachings tell us we should be doing in throughout the different seasons. I was on a zoom with a lady who said, "winter is for us to finish our unfinished projects. It's a time to sit inside and finish those so we don't take them into our next season. I time to reflect". I thought that was beautiful. She was blackfoot.

4.9. Question 8 – What Yakama activities would you like your children to practice daily?

4.9.1. Summary of Results

Question 8 asks parents and caretakers to share what Yakama activities they would like their children to practice daily. Ninety-three parents and caretakers (96%) of our survey's 97 total respondents shared answers to this question. Figure 14 shows which words were mentioned most in their responses. As with question 6, 'language' is featured at the center with the most mentions throughout responses. We also see 'prayer', 'song',

147

'speak', 'family', and 'conversation' surfacing as other prominent mentions, working their way outward from the center.

Figure 14. Yakama Activities Survey Word Cloud

4.9.2. Discussion

Learning what Yakama activities parents and caretakers find important for their children to practice on a daily basis matters in terms of cultivating language use at home as it provides an added glimpse into the ways they are using (or are wanting to use) language in their homes together daily.

Parents' responses to what Yakama specific activities they would like their children to engage with daily included three major themes. Language as a theme is

presented first followed Varied practices mentioned by parents. This second 'theme' encompasses many different activities but it was important to me to maintain parents' voices in describing these varied activities. In the final theme, Living by Yakama Values, I discuss the ways many parents' responses overlap specifically with some of the Nine Virtues Kussumwhy (2008) has written about.

4.9.2.1. Language

As you see in the word cloud in Figure 14, Language was mentioned most by parents in answer to what Yakama activities parents would like their kids to practice daily. Some parents shared small but mighty goals around daily speaking, like Lavette Holman who wrote, "I would like my son to practice Ichishkiin daily, even if just a tiny bit," and Laura Canfield who shared,

> It would be great if my children would just start to use some of our Yakama words on a daily basis. I know that when I took the Language course at Heritage University, it was suggested that we put our Yakama words on doors, tables, chairs...to label items so we can see and use the words daily... repetition can be key to learning.

These comments revisit ideas of repetition and visibility we have heard parents drawn attention to throughout their responses, both of which serve to reinforce familiarity and help us to use language more often.

Others parents shared goals of more long term shifts they would like to see for their children at home including one who shared a vision for

> Authentic use of the language with each other and with their family. I don't know how to describe it, but similar to what I wrote a few responses back--there is a powerful kind of thinking that comes when we are able to use our language in meaningful and authentic ways. **I want our kids to feel that and be able to have**

that experience THINKING in our language as a default, rather than simply falling back into English the way I do.

This passage not only highlights goals but the ways language helps to shape our experiences and relationships with the world around us.

Another parent shared the importance of listening to Ichishkíin daily, "Prayer Listening to recordings of fluent speakers from past. I know there are recordings at language program. That way our youth and adults will know how we sound." This connects to the literature through Brayboy, et al (2012) who discuss the importance of listening to indigenous people writing, "[l]istening, or gathering data by observation and by engaging with the world through the seasons, means understanding how fish or caribou migrate; or when to plant corn, beans, and other foodstuffs; or when or where to build protective living structures," (p. 440).

Some parents mentioned conversation along with other skills and values that they would like their children to engage in daily such as one parent who wrote, "A few basic conversation and dictionary spellings & pronunciations until able to comprehend and express," and Jeanette Watlamet who wrote, "…an activity I would like my children to do is greet each other, have a small conversation with each other, help each other out." Like Jeanette, Marian Dick Squeoch also highlighted wanting to see children, "Speaking to each other in a good way," both reminding us that there is so much more to language than the words we use and that the sentiment behind it also needs guidance. This points back, too, to way Ichishkíin helps shape our experiences; cultural guidance is embedded into the language in many ways and it is important to help children understand the ways this is true for Ichishkíin.

Dominique Mangini reminds us, too, that there is more to communication than spoken language, writing,

> I would like my child to start practicing daily her singing and drumming. With her being mentally disabled having autism I notice she is having a difficult time learning how to communicate with the world, I believe this helps encourage and determine character within herself.

Dominique's words show the way songs help foster connections in ways that other forms of communication don't reach and a grandparent shares a regard for songs saying, "I would like my grandchildren to speak the Language, say morning prayers through songs, my grandson to learn the drum songs from the longhouse."

Another parent wrote about songs and how they might also support daily language learning when they are created to include and reinforce language children are learning. In their words, "Daily songs that teach different things. For instance the songs the included body parts Or songs that are for everyone, like holiday songs..." Augustine Dick mentioned songs as well as a form of positive learning along with other activities, writing, "Ichiskiin language, positive social development through song and play or family activities." We heard comments like these in responses to question 5 from parents in talking about the importance of engagement levels of language learning materials. Songs are an area that many people find to be fun and the catchiness level can get at that aspect of repetition sometimes whether we like it or not! I remember, too, witnessing the children's enthusiasm for learning through songs when I taught at the Yakama Summer Language Bootcamp. I have heard Twálatin speak to the way they are drawn to it but to see it in person was pretty incredible. If we could have spent the whole day singing songs in the language together, I think many would have preferred it. I'll reiterate here, too, that

Tux̱ámshish encourages us to teach children with more songs in this way for the way that she sees them enjoy it and quickly learn.

4.9.2.2. Varied Activities

A number of parents named several activities within their responses, some showing the ways these activities are connected and how they help to bring people together. For example, one parent shared,

> I would like them to practice the language, so that it is not lost. I would like them to know the songs, when to sing them and how to drum. I have shown them how to gather roots and huckleberries. Their Dad showed them how to hunt and only my oldest learned how to fish commercially.

Mariana Harvey also reminds us of the ways seasonal changes hold a daily presence, sharing that she would like her children to "Be outside, witnessing the lands/seasonal change, engaging with and learning from the land, cooking together, creating art projects, Ichichskiin language learning through art, games, songs, and more conversational dialogue spoken around him."

Other parents also mention a desire for their children to use Ichishkíin daily along with other practices like Andrea French who shared a desire for, "Incorporating language into daily activities as well as incorporating cultural activities. Like dancing, singing, and crafting," another example of how we can be more intentional to include language into daily life. Sia Aronica shared a goal of daily language use, along with other activities, and bringing attention to a lack of opportunity for some Yakama children who are not enrolled writing,

> I think I would be happy for my kids to be learning/using Ichishkíin language daily. They are already doing things like weaving and other crafts. I would like

152

for both them and me to do more traditional food/materials gathering in the respective seasons. I would like them to have the opportunity participate in things to learn more. Another roadblock for some kids is the 'enrollment' factor. Not all kids are enrolled, but decedents. Not all opportunities are available for non-enrolled youth.

Gomashie (2019) writes about Mohawk students and their connections of identity with language, writing, "[m]ost students were motivated by a strong identification with the Kanien'keha language as an essential element to their sense of identity and community as a Mohawk person," (p. 162).

4.9.2.3. Living By Yakama Values

Many of parents' responses to this question included wanting to see children practicing Yakama values on a daily basis such as caring for each other, offering respect and gratitude. For example, one parent focuses on relational connections in the home, sharing that they want children to be

> Learning the language. I also think just our daily living habits like how to talk to children (teach), the care and love one puts into doing just daily chores. Learning how we live together as a family even if it grandparents, moms dads and grandkids or cousins in one home. Taking care of each other, whether it's cooking meals, cleaning the little kids or helping take care of them if parents are working.

Elese Washines adds to this, listing that she would like her children to participate in "-starting everyday with a prayer -starting every meal with choosh -practice listening and observing adults-practice conversation during meal," and another parent shared similarly that their children should, "Drink water, greet one another with a positive expression."

Amelia Morrison brings us back to the idea of gratitude and a responsibility to continue share knowledge in sharing, "I like the idea of giving thanks and appreciation

153

for the life that we are living. To understand we are descendants and can continue to learn and share the knowledge of our ancestors."

4.10. Question 9 – What entities within the Yakama Nation would you like to see working more with our children?

4.10.1. Summary of Results

Ninety-one parents and caretakers, or 94% of all who completed the survey, provided answers to question 9 which asked what entities within the Yakama Nation they would like to see working more with our children. Figure 15 (page 155) provides a visual of thoughts that were mentioned most where, again, we find 'language' holding space at the center with the most frequent mentions with 'program' falling just underneath it. Other words with prominent mentions were 'youth', 'elder', 'school', 'activity', and 'health' moving out from that language center.

4.10.2. Discussion

Throughout this project, parents have shared an awareness for the incredible knowledge and resources present within their communities. Understanding which entities parents would like to see more involved with children and youth help to understand the ways gatherings, projects or partnerships might be structured along with language to help people learn in collaboration with those they are in contact most.

My discussion of responses to this question is organized by eight main themes, most of which loosely correspond to the types of entities parents mentioned wanting to see work more closely with their children, such as Language, Classes and Educational Organizations, Wellness Programs, Natural Resources, and Elder Services and Tribal Leaders. Other themes that came up were those of Relationship and Community Experts,

154

and again, parents who expressed a desire for all entities of the Yakama Nation to work more closely with Yakama children and youth.

Figure 15. Yakama Nation Entity Education Partnerships Survey Word Cloud
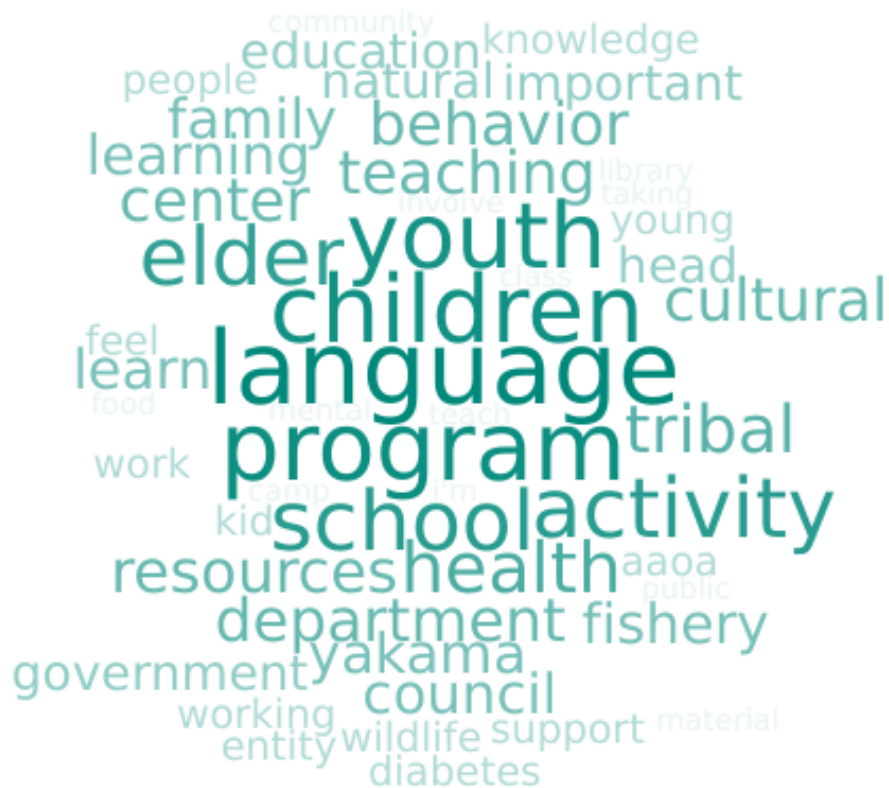
4.10.2.1. Language Programming

As the word cloud in Figure 15 shows, Language was mentioned most by parents in response to what Yakama entities they would like to see involved more with their children. Sia Aronica shared a response that speaks to this, writing about language programming opportunities she would like to see and how she views local entities'

abilities to support that including possibilities through partnership with Heritage

University. In Sia's words,

> I would love to see a more robust language department. I feel like the language
> department could play a much bigger role in the collection of/categorization
> of/the creation of materials and be a resource for so many
> departments/people/programs within our tribe. I think if there were funding, I
> think there could be a really good apprentice program that comes from that
> department. I feel like having Heritage University is such a plus for the 'grow
> your own' type language program. I feel like there should be a way that we can
> produce k-12 certified teachers that have various levels of fluency in Ichishkíin
> and Ichishkíin teaching endorsements upon graduation. If feel like there are many
> programs that I am not aware of, that could contribute to making some very
> successful opportunities for the teaching/learning of both our language and our
> cultural knowledge.

Sia highlights a need for several types of language programming including materials

documentation and development, apprenticeships, and teacher training. Her words take

me to others', too, who speak about an all hands on deck approach to language

cultivation and growth within the community, recognizing the power and skills present

that can lend to such growth and efforts toward language shift.

4.10.2.2. Classes and Educational Organizations

Several parents mentioned continued support through classes and organizations

focused on younger children like Head Start. For example, Ida Shock called for, "Most

importantly the Head Start and public-school pre-K classes," to incorporate language

teaching for children. Another parent writes about the way local HeadStart organizations

already incorporate language and advocate for connection to classes through the Yakama

Nation Language Program saying, "The Head starts are already doing a great job…The

Yakama Language program should be the first priority program to be teaching." Laura Canfield mentioned these spaces, too, reminding us how quickly young children pick up on language when it is present for them, writing "Head Start Centers Young children are like sponges and will learn the language more quickly than older folks. But, I'm sure that it's equally important to use with our Elders (AAOA, Retirement Centers, etc.)" Laura also brings up the need to support Elders through organizations, too, helping to bring attention to these crucial age groups in this language work.

Other parents suggested organizations begin teaching language before Head Start, even, such as Elkay Lamebull who wrote, "Maybe beginning classes for children at a younger age 3 or 4 years of age," and Another parent who advocated for, "Early learning centers not just at head start…" also calling for ongoing education for adults at places such as, "colleges. And also yakama members online who want to learn/work with the language."

Other parents commented on the Casino as another organization they would like to see involved in supporting language teaching. For example, one comments on the work they have done writing, "My children attended the Learning Center/daycare at Legends Casino. They did great work out there, but I know it was difficult for Legends to keep a Cultural Teacher on staff throughout the year," while another wrote about wanting to see this space used more, writing,

> Since they are the cash cow and has the nicest space, I feel that the casino could
> do more to preserve the language by holding regular language camps with free
> materials for participants. They could also hold Yakama art contests and display it
> in the lobby area.

157

This is perhaps another way for organizations to work together such as HULC, where language materials are being developed to share with families and teachers, Yakama Ichishkíin Professional Learning Community (YIPLC), and the Casino which has ample space and other resources that might help to bring people together to learn through different programming or events. As we'll see in the next question, many parents are willing to share their skills and knowledge, including language and crafts, to help others learn what they have learned. This is just one quick example of how entities might work with families to create programming and resources that directly serves their requests and desires for language growth.

Another focus within this theme is around supports through and for Higher Education. Adrianne Ramey is one of the parents who mentioned this identifying interest in involvement from, "Higher education- I'd like to see more encouragement to continue our education."

Becky Donaldson elaborated about helping youth access higher education writing, "It would be really nice to have an entity that will help the youth obtain further education after high school be it either college or a trade to better our Yakama Nation Community and also to help obtain financial aid to help further education."

4.10.2.3. Wellness

Wellness organizations were another type of entity parents named wanting involved more with their children. Marian Dick Squeoch suggests a few also offering ideas for potential collaborations between them and advocating for collaborative language classes as well. In Marian's words,

Chemical Dependency and Mental Health treatment and counseling. Tribal School and our Preschools are already teaching them our language. Maybe some parenting classes coordinated between Nak-Nu-We-Sha and Behavioral Health that includes Sahaptin Language classes for both parents/caretakers with children together?

As this passage helps to highlight, possibilities for collaborations are many and strengthen wrap around supports available without stretching individual organizations too thin. Mariana Harvey also speaks to a desire to see wellness groups supporting Yakama children, noting that there are likely more than any one person can name (another example of the power of collaborative planning). In her words,

I don't know a complete list of entities that are working with our children. So my response comes from that place. I would like to see behavioral health entity create materials and spaces for child empowerment, family empowerment, overall family wellbeing. Food Health type programs focusing on traditional foods, supporting access, supporting families in cooking. Would love to see more intentional spaces for elders and children to connect, learn, support, interact from each other. More libraries! What if each town had library complete with all the amazing programming libraries can have!

Again, the organizations Mariana mentions could also partner with the language efforts of organizations like HULC to help produce materials specific to their purposes and serve families more fully with language in that way and these materials in turn could be additionally housed at the local library for families to have another point of centralized access as well for tangible materials.

Another parent shares Mariana's sentiment around not having full knowledge of community entities and echoes earlier comments from parents about involvement from the language department while also bringing up youth programs. They name some of the

159

same entities focused on wellbeing as the other parents in this section and name others along with ways they can also incorporate traditional knowledge. In their words,

> I've lived off reservation for a long time so I don't know if I can answer this question well. I want us to have a thriving language department and have it available in our schools. I also know many other Yakamas who live off reservation (and on the same reservation as me away from YN) who wish we had access virtually to the language for family learning. I do think youth athletics is important and can/should be incorporated into our children's lives. I think if we could have behavioral health, the medical clinic, other programs that are here for our wellbeing engage with youth and families from a standpoint of centering our traditional ways and to teach our traditional ways we would benefit.

This parent goes on to remind us that,

> All of this calls for a collective effort to learn COLLECTIVELY. This is not about who knows more or who doesn't know things and is meant to feel ashamed. **Learning and celebrating learning could be so powerful if we all commit to taking it on together.**

Which sums up so beautifully what many parents have shared and advocated for throughout their narratives in this project.

4.10.2.4. Natural Resources

Several parents specifically mentioned Natural Resources, too, as an entity they would like to see more involved with their Yakama children. Amelia Morrison wrote simply, "I think our children need to learn more about the importance of our natural resources," speaking to the need for children to gain knowledge about why and how this matters to them. Rose Seymour calls for, "More hands on education" which pairs nicely with some of the examples Mercedes Andrews shares about organizations, connecting them with some of the hands-on knowledge kids might learn from the entities named. In

Mercedes' words, "Things like our wildlife and natural resources teaching them on stuff the fish and elk. Fire department about fire safety and camping safety. Also after school programs to keep kids off the street."

These comments help point out some of the ways natural resources, like language, are intimately tied to so many of the other themes mentioned and an integral component held by Yakama practices for educating children as is evidenced by the legends and stories, and seasonal activities parents have spoken about in previous sections. Wilson & Kamanā (2009) also discuss the connection between language and place saying, "[s]uccessful Indigenous language maintenance is based on strong bonds between use of a language and a particular geographic location. Such bonds existed in all Indigenous communities in traditional times," (p. 371).

4.10.2.5. Elders and Tribal Leaders

Several people expressed an interest in connecting Elders and the entities that support them with children of all ages as one parent suggests, "Elders and preschool," and "Elders and all other school ages." For example, one parent shares the simple but profound desire to see, "Elders talking to the young ones, telling their stories…" in a continuance of intergenerational education practice that fosters understanding of so many things for children about life experiences and their culture. Larena VanPelt adds some other lessons children might learn from this type of interaction, identifying the Area Agency on Aging (AAOA) writing, "AAOA-I think it would be nice to have elders interact with children it would be good teachings of patience and respect for our children."

In addition to fostering more connections between Elders and children, Tribal leaders and government were another entity named by several parents. For example, one parent speaks to beginning to support this type of connection for children from an early age, saying, "Tribal government (teach them young, get them interested and involved)." Another parent added they would like to see "maybe involvement of out tribal council in how our tribal government works, teaching them about our treaty of 1855. Finally, Sloane Seelatsee also advocated for more connections with children to "The tribal government, would like them to work towards enriching our children and offering them more opportunities and experiences, so that we can actually thrive as a people," highlighting again the power of connections in strengthening shared knowledge and community collaboration.

4.10.2.6. Relationships and Community Experts

This is another theme that is so present through so many others as well since the entities and organizations parents have spoken of are made up of individuals working together for common goals and purposes. One parent reminds us of the power of daily interactions through relationship sharing, "Every person who comes in contact with daily is important in having it be a wrap around teaching moments." Another parent puts a call out to, "…Maybe anyone with knowledge they're willing to share," to work more with Yakama children, showing recognition for the knowledge and expertise individuals hold within the community and pointing to a need to center relationships to help encourage or ask people to share what they have learned if they are able and willing.

Other parents suggested connecting children with community members to help expand their knowledge about different possibilities they might also want to aspire to or

162

learn more about. For example, one parent suggested connecting children with, "…those working people that do jobs that younger kids never would consider because they didn't know about it," and another names some examples of such positions writing, "Some of our educated members, employees that work within the tribe in different fields, council members."

Finally, Catherine Visaya wrote about the power of these connections to build larger support networks and tying us back to the theme of wellness and the role relationship plays in wellness. In Catherine's words,

> I would like to see children working with others in ways that give back to the community. I think through these actions they can build extended families and relationships if they dont have one that is supporting their cultural growth and well being.

This connects to the way McCarty (2003) talks about how Native students benefit from learning their language and ways: "These processes can be described as 'bottom-up' language planning: emanating from within Indigenous communities, these initiatives created a means of empowerment for Native teachers, children and communities," (p. 152).

4.10.2.7. All Entities

As with other questions, many parents expressed a desire to see all entities within the Yakama Nation working more with their children. In a simple statement, one parent wrote, "All of them. The more the better!" Rachel Bettles agreed, noting the importance of children, saying, "All of them, our children are so important, especially our at risk kids." Another parent elaborates to include a generational view calling on

ALL OF THEM. Our tribe talks about taking care of the next generation, and

caring for children. So we need to support them and create a wrap-around of

services, resources, and supports our children. I believe this starts before birth.

This comment brings us back again to the collaborative community structure of supports

parents have repeatedly called for in their comments throughout this project.

Other parents call attention to entities that are overdue for reparative acts and

those designs specifically at least in part to serve children. For example, Mary Lee Jones

wrote, "All of them. The federal government especially to reverse some of the hurt

done," and another shared, "All the programs that receive funds to serve families and

children! Again, holistic approach: mind-body-spirit and humans among nature." This

parent speaks to that collaborative piece again, also indicating its contribution to

wellness. Other parents called on a need to incorporate more culture throughout

programs, like Andrea French who commented on wanting to see, "All tribal programs

working with children. More cultural activities included in outreach events," and another

parent who wrote about a need for, "Integration of Yakama values and language

throughout all entities & activities."

4.11. Question 10 – What knowledge or skills would you or your family be willing to share with children in our community?

4.11.1. Summary of Results

Question 10 asks parents and caretakers to answer what knowledge or skills they

or their family would be willing to share with the children in our community. Eighty-nine

of our 97 respondents answered this question, a response rate of about 92%. As you can

see in Figure 16, the idea to 'share' was mentioned most throughout the responses.

'Language' also holds a prominent spot, as do 'beading', 'food', 'learning', 'sewing' and 'knowledge'.

Figure 16. Parent and Family Knowledge and Skills Survey Word Cloud
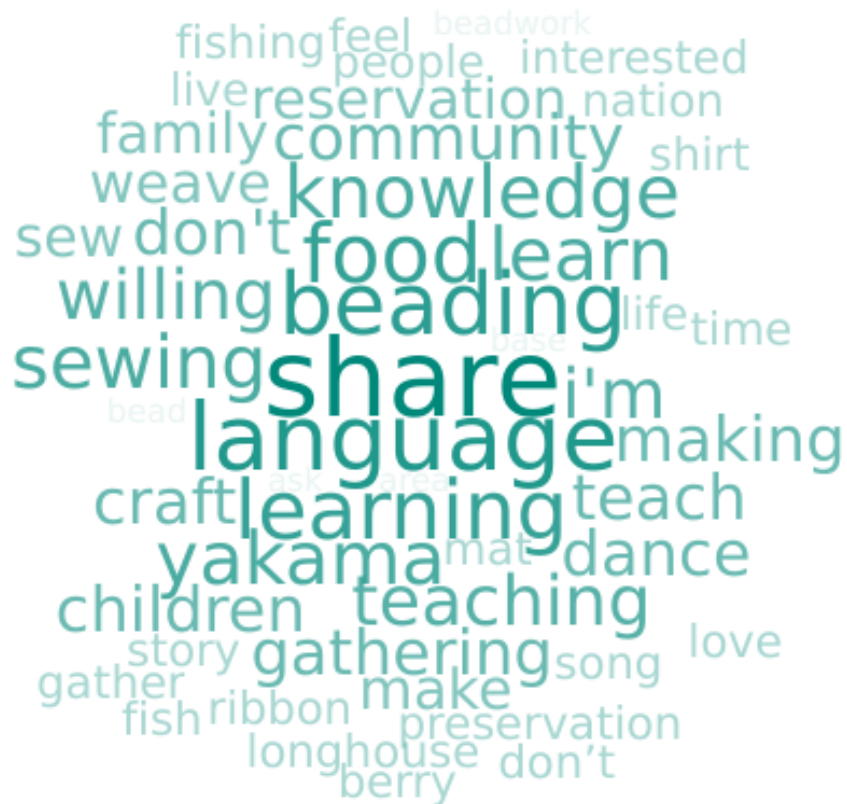
4.11.2. Discussion

Parents and caretakers each have unique experiences and skills that contribute to specialized knowledges and expertise in a given area, including language, to varying degrees. Learning what knowledge or skills they are willing to share matters for cultivating language use at home as language supports, such as materials, gatherings or home-based activities for engaging families, can be designed around their specialized

skills and knowledge, embedding language into the activities they are already practicing regularly. In this way parents and families become caretakers, too, of the Ichishkíin associated with their skills. Spreading the work out in this way can also help to bring people together to practice language in engaging, hands-on ways.

Themes that emerged from parents naming knowledge and skills they would be willing to share with children in the community included some of the knowledge or skills themselves like Language, Caring for Plants, Medicine and Food, Making Clothing, and Educational Design while other themes included more abstract offerings like offering to spend time when needed and helping children find balance. Another two themes included parents talking about themselves as learners, and others who offered to help with whatever was asked of them, if able. As expected, too, many parents shared a knowledge or skills they would be willing to share so the final section discusses these responses

4.11.2.1. Language

While this question is framed in a future looking tone, Túulhinch reminds us that parents are already doing this work on a regular basis sharing his contributions to say, "I'm doing it already. I'm an Ichishkin teacher for the Wapato SD, teaching 5 HS classes and 1 MS class everyday during the school year." It would be beneficial, too, in future work to collaborate with teachers to learn more about the language children are learning in school spaces and how those children see connections between their what they are learning and home language use. This project is a start to hearing parent perspectives but, as we've heard so many parents talk about their children and future generations as leaders of language change, it seems right to learn from those children, too. Parents and teachers with an established relationship might be able to help facilitate children's thoughts on

166

their relationship and hopes for language, too, which in turn can help guide us in a direction they find meaningful for their future.

I remember my first summer teaching at the Yakama Summer Language Bootcamp and learning from high school students what kinds of language they most wanted to learn. When they finished their (very substantial) list, one student asked why we hadn't also asked the younger students and designed the whole camp around their interests which seems to me like an ideal way to approach curriculum design in general. Their list included topics that could easily meet and exceed any state standards and matched much of what parents are also expressing interest in their children learning through their responses in this project. It also shows that youth are wanting curriculum like that required since 2015 by Senate Bill 5433 that is yet to be implemented widely.

Other comments centered around parents wanting to have more conversation practice in Ichishkíin. Elder Marian Dick Squeoch shares a willingness to offer this type of practice for Yakama children writing,

> I speak our language…in the longhouse. But that seems to be the only place I speak. I think in our language when I am talking or writing. I need to make speaking our language more of everyday conversations with people.

Marian highlights the way she, as a speaker, is able to think in the language pointing back to parents' comments in previous questions about wanting this for their children. This shows that we are at a point now where we have people who are able and willing to reconnect the language intergenerationally in this way. There are many languages who are not fortunate to have Elder speakers to engage with children in this way. This lends strength to holding such connection as one of the highest priorities for supporting language growth and movement towards eventual shift.

A final thought for this theme in one parent's response to this question highlights the connections between language and identity. They remind us that "It's never too late to engage your children, yourself into learning the language. It is very important for tribal sovereignty, resiliency, and who we are as yakama people." This parent's words connect to Brayboy (2005) as they discuss sovereignty, too, saying, "[p]ower through an Indigenous lens is an expression of sovereignty—defined as self-determination, self-government, self-identification, and self-education. In this way, sovereignty is community based," (p. 435).

4.11.2.2. Plants, Medicine and Food

Another prominent theme that surfaced among skills and knowledge parents expressed a willingness to share included plants, medicines and foods. Many of these came in list form so the brevity of this section is not reflective of the generosity offered in these areas. Many of the parents who did comment humbly offered to share their language knowledge, too. For example, Mariana Harvey wrote, "My family would be happy to share any medicine making, plant ID, gathering, and healthy cooking offerings. I'm happy to share my humble level of Ichichskiin too," and Jeanette Watlamet offers, "The husband is a hunter he can show and teach the young men I have been working with the head start for a while now I do what I can with language."

Others offered skills around food preparation, preservation and care such as Kamushni who wrote, "We love to care for fish. I can and preserve food for the longhouse. We would love to share our limited knowledge." Lavette Holman also offered skills around food preservation in addition to making moccasins writing, "I can salmon, berries, jams, elk, deer meat, and garden foods, and would be happy to share that with the

community. I also like to make moccasins and would be happy to teach others how to do that."

4.11.2.3. Clothing

Another area of knowledge several parents offered to share included sewing and making clothing. Andrea French shared her knowledge in relation to her and her husband's lineage to help share also the connections through which she has learned these skills. Andrea offered,

> My husband is Yakama Enrolled and a descendant from Rocky Boy Chippewa Cree, and my children are first descendants from Yakama Nation. I am a first descendant from Fort Belknap Indian Community Assiniboine, Santee Sioux, Turtle Mountain Chippewa and plains Cree from Canada. I can bead and sew powwow regalia, ribbon shirts and skirts. But I don't know how to do specific Yakama Crafts or knowledge.

4.11.2.4. Education Design

Another area of community expertise that surfaced was educational design, from materials to systemic level design. Mersaedy Atkins, for example, shared, "I could help create teaching guides/materials. I am a graphic designer." The skills Mersaedy offers here are so needed when thinking through the amount of materials that could be developed to support families' use of language together at home as well as classroom or community supports. Kids and youth, as we have heard many parents reflect, are drawn to a digital medium, too, and might love to learn more from Mersaedy and others about graphic design.

Another parent who is well versed in systemic views of education offers their knowledge, too, writing,

169

Well, I am feeling like there is just so much I don't know. I am interested, as a
formal educator, and someone from a big family of educators, in helping to build
systems and learning experiences. What I know, I know from my own western
education...but then teachings from my elders in Yakama and Tulalip have helped
me re-center Native ways. I would be willing to contribute that.

I also dream of someday teaching Ichishkiin in a place like Harrah
Elementary...but, I don't know if my family is willing to leave our community we
have been in for so long on this reservation. :)

Skills like this (and a potential future Harrah Elementary educator!) could really help to
shape educational programs in a way that is more engaging and culturally enriching to
Yakama children and youth. This theme and these parents' comments brought me back to
some of the discussion around relationships that surfaced in responses to Question 9 that
honored community knowledge and parents' desires to expose a variety of opportunities
to children to help them learn more about their own interests.

4.11.2.5. Sharing Time and Finding Balance

Another theme that emerged was one of sharing time with children. One parent
wrote "We would share our time with the community. We would share what we know in
language," while another offered skills of "Sewing, basketball and just being available to
spend time with children who need it." There are so many unpredictable circumstances
that make this particular offering of time so generous in the way it simply holds space to
be in relation as needed.

A second theme of related nature surfaced around an offering to share knowledge
and skills with children to help them navigate different social aspects of their
experiences, leaning on relationships and culture to keep grounded. As Kwasa wrote,
"balancing public education while maintaining, living & preserving our yakama way of

170

life reading life stories about the history of our land." This offering ties to community calls for wellness supports we have learned about in previous sections, also highlighting how a strong knowledge of Yakama ways and history help tend to a sense of wellness.

4.11.2.6. Still Learning

Some parents shared that they are still learning themselves and are not ready to teach anything for that reason. For example, Samantha Eyle wrote, "I'm still learning and don't have much to share," and another parent wrote, "I am not sure we would be ready to share what we know. We need to learn more." Amelia Morrison adds to this sharing, "I myself was not raised with tradition. I do not feel knowledgeable or skilled to share. I would like to learn and understand a lot more." These parents expressed that their learning is in motion, suggesting a desire and willingness to learn. Laura Canfield also calls attention to the importance of continued practice with language and other knowledge as we learn, writing,

> Once upon a time, I wanted to help teach the language but that fell through. I haven't really taken a course in our language since 2015 and (sadly) I feel like the lack of usage is making me forget. I have tried to take courses here and there but I haven't been able to stick to it due to work and personal schedules. Not sure how helpful I would be now but I could try to help the best hat I can.

Other parents wrote, too, about a willingness to teach as or once they learn or to help out in different ways like Andrea Compo who wrote, "I have very little but once I learn I can help out," and another who shared, "I'm still learning myself but would be willing to volunteer." Another parent shares, "I would be willing to share whatever language knowledge I have with others even though it is limited."

With so many parents and families wanting to learn, and so many skills and areas of knowledge parents are generously offering to share, learning events could be structured to embed teaching, learning, and learning to teach for those who are interested in working together to carry their new knowledge forward in varied and supported ways.

4.11.2.7. Just Ask

Several other parents wrote that they would be happy to share anything asked of them if they have the skills or knowledge to share. Sia Aronica wrote also that she is still learning but has a willingness to share if asked writing,

> I don't claim to have much in the way of skills and knowledge. I am willing to share anything I can that would be of help. Both Regan and Greg know me and some of my skills. IF they need me- I hope they will reach out.

Other parents mentioned, too, that they would share anything they were capable of like Tillet-Pum who wrote she would share, "Any asked of me if qualified," and Sandra Patchpe who offered to help find the knowledge sought if she didn't have it herself writing, "Anything that we can help with or finding resources." These comments come back to the importance of relationships and collaborating to always learn more about and from each other. Troy Watlamet also shared an open willingness speaking again to the relational component involved in the learning process, writing, "Ask and we shall see, I think it depends on what it is they would be willing to learn." Mary Lee Jones also wrote a willingness to share knowledge of, "Foods, mats, whatever we know we will teach. Songs, dances.... All of it."

4.11.2.8. Variety

As could easily be expected, many parents hold a variety of knowledge and skills, and several reflected this in naming those they would be willing to share. In one example,

Augustine Dick wrote, "We can share about language, some sports, ice breaker games for friendship building, some weaving and some traditional food gathering. Catherine Visaya names some related knowledge and adds skills around educational subjects like art and science that could be shared virtually or sometimes in person. In Catherine's words,

> We are learners of language and would participate in these activities. I am a art teacher and interested in how I can learn and share more. I am also experienced in math and science and could possibly be helpful in these areas. I am not an expert by any means but have a little experience beading, crotcheting, language learning, berry picking, fishing. We do not live on the reservation but could do activities remotely or on occasional weekends.

> In another angle of community knowledge, Elese Washines wrote, "I would be able to share my knowledge of the traditional form of tribal government, yakama nation as a resolution-based tribe, and how to lobby for legislation within tribal government." All of these parents provide a no doubt small sampling of the wealth of knowledge and skills present through families of Yakama children that offer incredible education to the community.

4.12. Question 11 – Is there anything else you'd like to share to help Yakama children become speakers and leaders in our community?

4.12.1. Summary of Results

Question 11 asks parents and caretakers to share any final thoughts around ways to help support Yakama children in becoming speakers and leaders in the community. There was an 87% response rate for this question with 84 parents and caretakers providing responses. Once again, 'language' holds the center space across responses, as

shown in the word cloud in Figure 17. Other words that stand out in this final question include, 'children', 'people', 'learn', and 'speak'.

Figure 17. Final Thoughts Survey Word Cloud

4.12.2. Discussion

One of my favorite quotes from this question that illustrates how parents' and caretakers' final thoughts matter for cultivating language use is also the shortest and comes from Laura Van Pelt who encourages that we "Stick to it...". This messaging and support present in this small phrase is something we could all stand to hear on a daily basis. As a learner of Ichishkíin who is trying to raise my ísha in the language as much as possible, I'm in a constant state of trying to translate phrases that find their way into my

daily life. Some phrases are easier than others, I fumble on the grammar a lot but then there are those, like this one, that make me appreciate the need to stop and really think about the meaning behind the message. Sometimes in class, a student will ask Tux̱ámshish how to say something and she'll come back to them several times in a row sometimes asking, 'well, what do you really *mean*?'. It's an exercise in intentional thought and one that helps shape and strengthen the ability to think in Ichishkíin, and shift the experience of your words. I love this phrase, too, for the way it meets you in the moment of what you need the most encouragement for and in that it communicates the inherent value in us all that deserves to stick with our goals and reach our best selves, whatever that looks like in the moment. Right now, in the context of this project, as a parent-learner of Ichishkíin, what I really mean in this moment is simply *sínwik* 'speak'.

Seven Themes emerged from parents sharing their final thoughts in this last question of the survey. The sections that follow are organized by these themes, also presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Themes from Parent and Caretakers' Final Thoughts

	Final Thought Themes
1	Language
2	Leadership
3	Community Action
4	Classes and Programming
5	Accessible Resources and Materials
6	Compassion and Love
7	Final Words of Advice

The first theme is Language, which we see again in Figure 17 as the most frequently mentioned concept in the center of the word cloud. Ideas under this theme included issues of urgency for language work to be done, increased visibility and opportunities for language exposure and use, expectations of responsibility and leadership for those who are learning, and connections to identity and wellness. Leadership was a second theme that came up which included ideas of focused collaboration. Another related theme was Community Action and a desire for community and unity to accomplish shared goals. Classes and Programming along with Accessible Resources and Materials are two other themes, the latter including greater need for resources designed for families and a centralized access point for them. Compassion and Love was another prominent theme several parents mentioned, bringing attention to inevitable mistakes made in the process of learning, ties between wellness and culture again and how interventions of this nature can help to save the lives of youth. The final theme offers words of advice from parents to Yakama children.

4.12.2.1. Language

Parents spoke to different angles of language in sharing their final thoughts through this survey. Some wrote about the urgency of this language work, like Tasheena Piel who wrote, "I just appreciate the willingness to grow our language. It's so important. Even at my age I'm just now learning. I tell my kids learn now. It's important." Túulhinch also spoke to the issue of urgency and comparing the work to other important preservation initiatives he's witnessed at Yakama Nation. In his words,

Our language (Ichishkin) is beyond endangered, it is almost dead. Ichishkin will only survive and thrive if children become fluent speakers, continue to speak Ichishkin, and then their children, and the children of those children learn Ichishkin from their parents and family/community members just like how we and our current generation of children learn English...naturally in perpetuity. We, the Yakama people and leadership, need to admit what we have done to this point in regards to saving the language and creating new speakers has failed miserably. If the language, and the truest form of cultural knowledge within that language is to be learned and passed on, then something drastically different needs to be done. Nearly extinct languages have been revitalized in other parts of the world. Successful language revitalization programs have been created and implemented. The YN has utilized outside experts to assist in the revitalization and restoration of fish. I believe it is time to use similar outside experts to assist in the revitalization and restoration of our Ichishkin language.

Túulhinch's words highlight the intention behind this project's purpose in the way he describes family language use and a restored intergenerational use of Ichishkíin as crucial to the wellness of it. He calls for a collaborative triage of sorts to draw on expertise both within and outside Yakama Nation to see this wellness through.

Parents also talked about the importance of having regular exposure to language to help support Ichishkíin use growth. For example, Sia Aronica talks about the cycle of language exposure and use, writing,

The more exposure and usage of the language in everyday life, the more usage and exposure to the language you will have. We want to empower our kids to speak and not be afraid of using the language in everyday life. We are going to need a strong group of people that can help keep our language moving forward- to make it a usable everyday language. We don't want our language to stay a secret, only spoken in our longhouses and in ceremonies. We want our kids texting each other using language. We want them excited to use it- all the time. For this to

177

become a reality the language will need to grow with the speakers. I am all in for this adventure.

Sia's comment points, too, to the natural leadership of kids in moving language forward and how we can support them by creating opportunities for engagement which Jeanette Watlamet spoke to, too, encouraging, "Just to get them interested, find out what is easiest or enjoyable for them to keep learning and use language." Laura Canfield also echoes Sia's observation of the connections between language exposure and use in some final thoughts writing,

> The only thing that I could think of is using the Language wherever and whenever possible. The more our children see the Language and hear the Language, the more they'll be able to soak it in and learn it, both written and orally.

This written piece that Laura adds also connects to that idea of language visibility we have heard about through several parents' responses in this survey. Another parent returns us to a call for greater visibility through things like signage writing,

> Hope our tribal membership can come together to support our youth and future.
>
> It'd be great to see our language be used in signage all over our tribal agency, casino, billboards, Yakamart, tribal owned small businesses. Sometimes it feels like I'm a foreigner in our own lands with all of the Spanish language signs.
>
> We really don't have time to waste, we need to treasure our language and fluent speakers.

This parent's last sentence also brings our attention back to the urgency of action concerning language.

In her final thoughts, Elder Marian Dick Squeoch calls attention to the responsibility for anyone learning the language to represent and offer greater exposure to others in the community writing,

> I see some of our people who speak our language learned through classes receive certificates. I encourage those who have learned our language through classes, to get up and speak in our language, whether it's at a longhouse, church, school. People need to hear you speak so they will learn the language from hearing it being spoken.

This is encouragement I have heard Twálatin share often with his students, too. Another parent reminds learners to take pride in representing their language knowledge saying,

> When they talk to talk loud for all people to hear. When I was growing up, we were made to speak at the table introducing ourselves and tell what we learned in school. We couldn't cry or mumble. We had to speak loud and clear.

This is something Tux̱ámshish emphasizes to students in class, too, reminding them to be proud and confident also keeping in mind that some of those listening might be hard of hearing as well.

Other parents added comments about the connection of language to identity in their final thoughts. For example, Cricket Herrera offered, "We need our language back and be fluent so we get our identity back so we can reconnect through our words." And another parent wrote,

> Tuxamshish once told my wife and me that **if we (younger generations) do not focus on the language and culture, we won't be the same people anymore**.

> I hope our tribal community finds ways to reconnect with the language and not leave it up to the dedicated individuals who are keeping it alive right now. We all need to play our role.

> A Tulalip elder said that his dream was that our ancestors would look down from above and see our children practicing our ways and speaking our language and know that their work paid off. He said they would have tears in their eyes and nod their heads and say "yes."

179

I want us to take all of these amazing sparks of language and culture and build it into a roaring fire of our lifeways.

I appreciate all those who protected our culture and those who share it now. I can get embarrassed about all the things I do not know...until I remember that I still can and must reclaim as much as I can so I can share it with my children and grandchildren. I want my elders to look down and say, "íi"

This parent's words echo those of Marian's above, too, in the way they speak to the responsibility to share the language they have learned. They bring us back, too, to the importance of intergenerational connection with language and the power of community collaboration.

In another identity-related comment, Danette Rene' Wyman shared, "I think it starts at a very young age how your child views everything.." which highlights the way language is connected to shaping a world view for children also reaffirming the importance of sharing the teachings inherent to language with children from as young an age as possible.

In parting hopes on the theme of language, Amelia Morrison reminds, too, "There is so much to gain from learning our language. Speaking and sharing this knowledge is such a Beautiful gift."

4.12.2.2. Leadership

Another theme that came up from parents' final thoughts was one of leadership. On this, some parents expressed a desire to see more focused collaboration such as Damian Dick who suggests developing more "leadership programs," and another parent who added wanting to, "Develop our own heroes, mentors, and leaders. Be focused not sporadic of limited. Work community to community." Sandra Patchpe also described

how a committee with varied invested community representatives might help to reach goals of language growth in a good way, writing,

> Development a committee that includes language learners, language teachers, council, or anyone who have ideas and suggestions as to develop a system where we can improve on how we reach out and include community members to learn the language. This committee help school districts and families have access to learn. I remember that there's a lengthy plan, but unsure who is making sure that it is being followed through.

And Ida Shock wrote,

> It would be nice to have monthly or bi-monthly meetings with adults who have a vested interest in Yakama language, I would like to brainstorm ideas to publish our language. I have many ideas but do not know where to start.

Sandra and Ida's comment's show an interest in simply knowing what is happening and how they and others can help which echoes so many comments we've heard through responses to other questions recognizing the many strengths present within the community and how this work of language growth can be spread out to be more manageable and accessible, allowing parents and others to take on more manageable leadership roles that all work well together.

Another concept that connects to responses and themes previously discussed is the tendency for children to naturally share language with their peers and others. Augustine Dick wrote about this saying,

> …Children are always willing to learn if others are willing to teach. One of the best ways I've seen children learn is from other children so we need to be sure not to underestimate our youth and their potential and abilities.

181

Augustine's comment highlights how an awareness of the initiative children takes allows us to learn from them, foster their interest in language and follow their lead in moving it forward into their and future generations.

4.12.2.3. Community Action

Community action is another theme several parents wrote passionately about. For example, Kwasa wrote,

> it is imperative for ALL of our people to unify and continue to represent in the systems that were never created for us, especially considering we only make a minute fraction of the overall population. we need to grow our own to rise up and be a voice! we need to instill self-sufficiency and independence so we can be visible. we are underrepresented and unheard. we have to come together as a people to have common goals and outcomes. i commend the selfless work you are committing yourself to on behalf of actively finding ways and DOING the work to preserve our language. may the seeds that are being planted now, grow into a stronger future for our people.

In this passage, Kwasa speaks to the power of community voice and visibility in working together towards common goals. They go on to add another sentiment we've heard around holding educational institutions accountable to Yakama children, writing,

> i believe it's important to develop methods on enforcing our school systems be held accountable to intentionally serve our kids. witnessing firsthand the amount of our kids that slip "between the cracks" is heartbreaking. it is our job and responsibility to instill pride, teach meaningful lessons and truly care about our kids.

This was a common call from many parents in responses to these survey question and one that, again, public schools are required to show up to. As discussed previously, there are many community-developed resources available to schools to meet this call.

182

Touching on that notion of again of community responsibility and individuals holding particular knowledges, including speaking Ichishkíin, contributes to communal strength, one parent wrote, "**It is everyone's job to make sure that we are not losing our language and culture**. Whether it be learning something about the foods, songs, or any part of our culture. Sharing and keeping these alive is vital." Becky Donaldson speaks to this idea of responsibility and representation to, writing, "The more knowledge and experience we obtain as we grow, makes us better reprentatives for the rest of our community and for those that are unable to speak for themselves," showing how people are connected through their responsibility, too.

4.12.2.4. Classes and Programming

While many parents shared final thoughts around a theme of offering Ichishkíin classes and programming, Donella Miller reminds, "Our culture is a way of life not just a class that you take," and Dionna Bennett emphasizes Yakama ways of educating writing, "I think another way for children to learn is through story telling and legends!" Other parents reiterated some Yakama practices they would like their children to learn, writing, "Curriculum designed to commence with the Traditional New Year, Dec. 21st, attendance at a Kaatnam ['longhouse'] to learn the significance and teach throughout the year. Sewing, singing, drumming, gathering, etc.," And another parent added, "Our children need to learn the importance of education and personal hygiene and how our ancestors took care of themselves." Mersaedy Atkins shared a need, too, to support learning between generations advising to, "Create more spaces for intergenerational learning. In person and online. Since it's still pandemic," highlighting that such practices

must be done mindfully as there are always factors of safety to consider such as the current pandemic.

Parents also advocated for, "More language learning in school," as one parent wrote, and

Elese Washines shared, "I hope Yakama Nation begins to subsidize childcare centers and schools that offer language instruction for children. I hope that we can further develop our ichishkiin language standards and curriculum," speaking again to a need for collaborative efforts and perhaps committee actions that others spoke to as well. Mary Lee Jones adds that language can be incorporated into classes and school activities already in progress, writing, "Prioritize our children in the community. Basketball, volleyball and mainstream is fine but coaches should learn basic words for run, hustle, etc." This, of course, ties back to parents' calls for language in general to overlap with the daily activities families are already engaging with regularly.

Several parents wrote, too, about the importance of offering classes and programming outside of the school day. For example, Mercedes Andrews wrote, "I feel after school programs or summer programs would be good for kids," and Samantha Eyle requests, "Special after school programs some with sports to encourage more to participate." Lavette Holman wrote,

> I think short weekend and summer camps are a really good idea, even if they are just day camps - focusing on different traditional (seasonal) activities that incorporate the language. I suggest short because people are really busy and a journey of a thousand miles begins with one small, single step.

And another parent shared, "I keep thinking about a language immersion program where you go for 3 months and away from any English and just live, breathe and speak the

language with fluent speakers." All of these comments speak to a need for a variety of offerings that accommodate different schedules and interests. Another parent calls attention, too, to the accessibility aspect of location, advocating that "Classes held locally for children within their own area...White Swan, Harrah, Wapati, Toppenish, etc." Regardless of where and how classes and programming are offered, Kamushni calls for, "Options for education and consistency and advertising such things," speaking again to issues of accessibility and inclusion of offerings.

4.12.2.5. Accessible Resources and Materials

Another theme related to classes is that of creating materials and resources that are accessible to families. As we heard in responses to previous questions, many home-based resources that support language use for families come directly from parent or children's classes. Parents call too, however, for materials geared specifically for families or those designed for home use. For example, Mariana Harvey identified a need for,

> Easy materials for families to run with - easy print or order labels, QR codes on things and phrases, children's books in Ichichskiin (I really love Emma Noyes book in interior Salish and how she spell things out phonetically - even though you told us that the way Ichichskiin is written is phonetic...it's unfortunately not intuitive for everyone to follow).

> My son was 1.5 when I really started learning and I used as much as I could along the way but he is still surrounded by English. He really started watching cartoons by then too, but mostly in the last year. I really hope for my children books, songs and cartoons that help surround children with Ichichskiin that are geared for them.

> I feel like the support I've gotten through candid conversations in class and our study group has helped me use more language in my home. I feel more empowered through our learning community and especially when we air out the

185

hot topics around language learning, sharing, etc. I hope for that level of support for families that need that."

Mariana's words mention several resources that help fit the unique dynamics of family life, including materials with pronunciation supports, greater visibility and exposure to Ichishkíin, materials designed specially for children like books, songs and cartoons, and supports for parents to connect with others in a learning community. Tillet-Pum adds to this saying, "Age specific materials would be helpful," reminding us that many households, as we saw in responses to Question 1, have multiple children of varying ages.

In another suggestion, one parent brings attention back to a need for a centralized location where materials can be easily accessed by families and others, writing,

> I would reccomend a website for all things related to the language such as revitalization, dictionaries, flash cards,videos, classes, ect. I don't believe there is one that has all these data bases together. Would be great for awareness and help out families much more.

A resource center of this nature would help families feel supported in their language learning while also reversing some of the frustrations that have come with a lack of access such as one Andrea French writes of saying, "I believe that language resources should be shared widely and that gatekeeping shouldn't be a common practice like it has been." Results of this survey show how families are ready and have been waiting for this type of support in accessing materials that help them learn together.

4.12.2.6. Compassion and Love

A final and very prominent theme from parents in their final thoughts revolved around sharing knowledge with compassion and love. One parent's comment in this way

touched also on the theme of community collaboration writing, "We will become teachers amongst our own selves. Nobody shall claim to be right or wrong, just keep sharing to make it stay within our hearts."

Other parents spoke to the importance of accepting mistakes in learning spaces. For example, one wrote, "I'd like to share, I would like to see open, compassionate, and learning spacing for all. Spaces to be taught in a loving way with grace as everyone learns and makes mistakes in learning," and another parent encourages, "Respect for others who want to learn, not making fun of mistakes made while learning…" Laura Canfield recalls some memories around making mistakes and feelings that followed, writing,

> I remember when I was young, I tried to say words in our language and some older folks seemed to chuckle at me. It made me feel like I was saying it wrong and didn't want to try anymore. I'm sure that they weren't laughing at me (they were laughing with me...ha ha). But that's how I felt at the time. Many of us are Language Learners (Life Long Learners) and we should try to be as supportive as possible when our youth are learning, writing, and speaking our Language.

This is another area Tux̱ámshish is always encouraging me as an educator around along with students in class, showing us how mistakes are just opportunities to solidify our learning around different topics. She teaches that this allows for recognizing, too, how mistakes allow us to learn more about each other and ourselves for the parts of language we grasp onto more or less easily which lends strength to our process together as a learning community.

Other parents' comments involved tending to children's well-being by instilling cultural knowledge and pride. In one example, a parent advised, "Always encourage them

187

to be the best they can be. There is nothing they can't achieve with hard work...that they are not lower class citizens they are as good as if not better." In another example, one parent spoke to the kinds of support needed writing, "They need more exposure to our culture. They need opportunities to expess their originality and not be talked down to or ashamed of our culture." In a final comment, Frances Jordan brings attention to the higher suicide rates among Native youth saying,

> Children go thru a lot and their culture has a lot to do with it. That's why suicide is high in I dian country because they try to fit in…it's not easy being native but it's pride that helps you along the way.

As Frances' comment emphasizes, supporting Yakama children through culture and with compassion is not simply a matter of encouragement but one with serious stakes of life or death. This takes me back to those parents who offered time and skills of helping children find their balance in Question 10 and the value of those offerings. Midgette (as cited in Reyhner, 2010), too, discusses the power of learning one's Native language writing, "[t]he use of the native tongue is like therapy, specific native words express love and caring. Knowing the language presents one with a strong self-identity, a culture with which to identify, and a sense of wellness," (p. 3 and p. 142). In a final note, another parent encourages that we remind children "That they will always be supported and encouraged to learn," and promising "We will be better at finding more resources for them to learn."

4.12.2.7. Final Words of Advice

In sharing their final thoughts, some parents included advice drawn from their own experiences written directly to Yakama children such as Rachel Bettles who wrote,

188

When I was younger I thought my elders would always be around, sadly I learned that's not the case, I wish I would have payed more attention. I hope as a youngster, you pay attention and learn everything you can.

Sloane Seelatsee also wrote hopes and encouragement directly to children and youth saying,

Just want them to have some pride in themselves, know that there is a big world out there, respect one another, be careful, thoughtful, be the best you, you can be, so that you can help others around you too.

4.13. Discussion

Through our survey, we anticipated hearing how relationships and language interact within the home, expecting to hear it is not used at a highly conversational level. We also expected to hear heavy interest to strengthen language knowledge and use, desires for children and families to have a variety of consistent access to learning Yakama language and ways (i.e., school, home, and community-level outlets for learning), and what knowledge, skills, and assets are already present throughout the community. These anticipations did hold true though many more themes emerged through parents' responses to our questions.

Some additional themes surrounded relational components such as intergenerational teaching and learning which surfaced in questions 3, 4, and 5 inquiring about home language supports and resources. School relationships including aspects of trust and Indigenous representation came up, too, in parents' responses to school satisfaction which also showed to be connected to whether or not Ichishkíin was included in their children's education. Relationships were also brought up as a focus for community assets in thinking about increasing supports for Yakama children. Language,

189

including discussions of classes and programming were emphasized in several of the open questions asking about practices parents want their children to engage with daily, and any final thoughts they'd like to share. Many parents commented as well on practices of gathering, learning longhouse ways, and drawing on community strengths across questions showing a strong desire to instill a Yakama grounding for children as part of their education.

The following chapter shares excerpts from conversations with a smaller group of parents with Yakama children under the age of four and Chapter VI visits some of the ways the survey and conversations work together to further our understanding of how families are engaging with Ichishkíin language at home and what kinds of strategies might help support increased use.

CHAPTER V

CONVERSATIONS WITH PARENTS AND CARETAKERS OF YAKAMA

BABIES AND TODDLERS

I am grateful for the time I was able to spend with several parents and caretakers of Yakama children four years of age and younger who took time to talk with me in February and March of 2022 about using Ichishkíin language in their homes. I sent an online consent form along with a Zoom meeting link ahead of our scheduled meeting and we addressed any questions parents/caretakers had about the project or conversation process at the start of our meeting. All parent/caretaker conversations took place individually via zoom and were recorded with explicit permission in that platform and on audacity as a backup. Conversations lasted anywhere from 30 to 90 minutes, depending on parent/caretaker availability. Through a question on the consent form, parents indicated whether or not they would like their name shared and if they may be quoted directly. Three of the eight chose not to be acknowledged by name in this work while the other five granted permission for their names to be used. All eight gave permission to share their quotes directly.

The data collected through conversations with parents of Yakama babies and toddlers provides a critical lens into language relationships within the home, potentially offering healing and insight into strategies that will help meet family goals for language growth. It also interacts with data from the parent survey to inform strategies to meet larger communal goals. This latter interaction will be explored more in Chapter VI. In this chapter, I present the *tímnanaxt* 'stories' shared by parents and caretakers. These

stories provide a look into the language work that families cultivate on a daily basis, from the sunny days of children speaking their first words in Ichishkíin to those days where the storms of self-doubt and learner insecurities keep us inside.

The Nine Virtues of the Yakama Nation (Wilkins, 2008) are deeply relational, cultural concepts that I turn to here to help guide my analysis. I list them here for reference:

1. K̲'wyáamtimt   *'honesty, being truthful'*

2. Timnák'nik   *'extending from the heart, compassion'*

3. Itmá'áakshá   *'cautious and careful of all things and others; restrained, peaceful, and responsible'*

4. Yáych'unal   *'Not afraid of any type of challenge; courage; heroic perseverance'*

5. Pina'tma'áakt   *'taking care and being aware of one's total being; balance and harmony; integrity; honor; nobility in crisis'*

6. Tma'áakni   *'respect'*

7. Átaw px̲wíni   *'deep thought and feeling; meditation and mindfulness'*

8. Piná'iwaat kw'ałáni   *'self-denial and gratitude, humility'*

9. Wapítat Ttáwax̲t   *'help family growth; service to others'*

These virtues are evident throughout these stories showing some of the ways language is conceptually active within these families' homes. We heard through survey responses how language helps to shape thoughts and interaction with the world and these stories show some of the ways these virtues and their connection to language are thriving within homes at this time.

192

This chapter is organized into five main parts that mirror the themes around which our conversations centered: 1) how parents/caretakers currently use Ichishkíin in their homes, 2) what challenges or barriers they face in doing so 3) what their hopes are for immediate and long-term future language use, 4) what resources are most wanted, and 5) potential partnerships that might support families in their goals of language use and growth. This overarching structure is meant to bring readers into the flow of conversations as they happened as much as possible. Each part is further divided into themes that emerged across conversations. I blend analysis of the stories with the relational lens of Yakama frameworks, mainly the Nine Virtues of the Yakama Nation (Wilkins, 2008), which helps offer theoretical guidance in considering the significance of including this Yakama specific work in education and education research, how the experiences of parents and caretakers are deeply engaged in cultivating language use, and how intergenerational teaching practices are encountered.

Three of the Nine Virtues of the Yakama Nation (Wilkins, 2008) stand out as inherent to the parents and caretakers' willingness to even show up for these conversations in the first place. For example, the first Virtue Kussumwhy (Levina Wilkins) shares is ḵ'wyáamtɨmt 'honesty, being truthful'. I was incredibly humbled by the stories that were trusted to me in this process. Parents' accounts also most certainly embody the second Virtue listed, *tɨmnák'nik* 'extending from the heart, compassion' and I strive to work in this way, too, as Tux̱ámshish has guided me to do through the years. The ninth virtue on Kussumwhy's list is *wapítat ttáwax̱t* 'help family growth; service to others' which is the foundation and purpose of this project and, I believe, one of the forces leading parents and caretakers to want to participate in this exploration of how we

193

as parents of Yakama children can support each other and our young ones to speak more Ichishkíin language in our homes every day.

5.1. Current Ichishkíin Language Use in the Home and Community

Conversations brought varied examples of some of the ways Ichishkíin language continues to live through the voices of Yakama families on a daily basis. While it remains largely at this point in the form of single words and short phrases between parents and children, the daily presence and use is significant in terms of language cultivation and revitalization efforts. As a reminder from the literature presented in Chapter II, regular, intergenerational transmission of a language in the home is crucial in maintaining or cultivating its vitality (Albury, 2015; Fishman, 1990; Fishman, 1991; Hinton, 2013; Jansen, et al, 2013; O'Grady & Hattori, 2016; Todal, 2018; Wilson & Kamanā, 2009). Engaging in such transmission can be challenging, as many of the parents pointed out, when those trying to pass it on are also learners of the language.

This first section, 5.1., shares how the Ichishkíin language is currently active in the homes and daily lives of the parents and caretakers who spoke with me for this project; their stories of interactions with their children are evidence of a daily intergenerational practice of Ichishkíin still happening in the homes of Yakama families. It is broken further into some of the ways language is used within home spaces (section 5.1.1.) and outside of the home (section 5.1.2.), what kinds of resources parents have to support their language use at home (section 5.1.3.), and how they engage with language in community and through intergenerational relationships (section 5.1.4.). These narratives can help guide us practically, too, as we think about developing more materials and supports for families.

5.1.1. Language Use in the Home

Parents and I talked about whether and how they use Ichishkíin language at home and this section presents their responses along with analysis and discussion of them. Three additional themes also surfaced under this topic and are discussed in this section in turn. Parents shared different types of language and domains they use together at home (section 5.1.1.1.), and how the pandemic has impacted their daily lives and therefore language (section 5.1.1.2.).

In answer to whether her family uses Ichishkíin language in their home, Mariana Harvey, a mother to two children – one three-year-old toddler and one *myálas* 'baby' still growing in her womb at the time of our conversation, shared,

> I mean the quick answer is yes, we use language in the home. It's what we did from the very beginning, before I even started learning in the classes, I just used any word I knew in Ichishkiin. Even if I wasn't even saying things right, I'd be like, 'it's raining' but I'd say '*t'ʼx tix ,t'ʼx tix* '...So there's a lot of simple things like that that we use all the time. And of course we say *átawishamash* ['I love you'], and *shix máytski* ['good morning'], and *kw'ałanúushamash* ['thank you'] and those are ones that are pretty easy for him to reflect back...Yeah so that's kind of where we're at with using it - it's used everyday, we used it from the beginning, but it's a lot of words, and not as many phrases, and there's not as much like sentence structure coming back to us at all.

Here, Mariana gives personal account to what we also learned from the survey – that much of the language used in our homes is word or phrase-based rather than conversational (though it's important to note there are structural differences between Ichishkíin and English that lend complications to this framing). She also reflects on how some of the phrases she shares with her son can easily be repeated or 'reflected back' by

him just as she said them but that such practice simply brings about repetition rather than generating larger, more complex conversation or varied sentence structures. Though we'll talk more explicitly about challenges parents face in the following section, this excerpt also brings light to one of the challenges faced by parents who are also language learners trying to teach language with limited resources to their children as a first language in an effort to cultivate its regular use. This conversational piece is what many parents strive for (which we'll hear more about in the section on hopes for the future) but supports to help make this more attainable for families are still wanting.

To be a parent learning Ichishkíin while also trying to raise your babies in it requires this attuned mindfulness Mariana speaks about – really contemplating *how* to model language for our kids when we don't necessarily have it readily available for ourselves. This practice engages, *Átaw pẋwíni* 'deep thought and feeling, meditation and mindfulness, the 7th virtue Wilkins (2008) lists, while also embracing the 8th listed virtue, *Piná'iwaat kw'ałáni* 'Self-denial and gratitude, humility', since we often have to accept where we are as learners and acknowledge that we simply do not have some phrases or aspects of the language to offer our children at a given time and keep in constant remind that the span of this work is generational. These virtues often lead into one another, for example, such acceptance can be the spark for us to embody the 4th virtue, *Yáych'unal* 'Not afraid of any type of challenge; courage; heroic perseverance, as we continue to seek the knowledge we want to be able to share with our children.

Other parents shared, too, that they use single words and short familiar phrases on a regular basis within their homes. Jasmine Yellow Owl who has two children, one a toddler and one a teen shared,

We don't use it a lot like we should but my boyfriend will use on a hunting trip or when we are in the closed area of the Yakama Reservation. If he sees a deer, he'll call it bit its name, yaamash.

Another mother whose child was a newborn *myálas* at the time of our conversation talks about the ways they, too, incorporate small phrases and words into their daily interactions, saying they'll use

…little phrases like *shix máytki* ['good morning'], sometimes I count with the baby or when we go for walks I point out animals to him, but don't know many phrases. I say *mish* a lot like 'what'…'what are you saying?'…because I want him to say it, so I'm always telling him that. Yeah, so I just use little things.

These 'little things' are such gifts of language that these parents offer to their children on a daily basis. They help to shape these babies' knowledge of not just the words and what they represent but the sounds and world view inherent to the Ichishkíin language. While these words or phrases may seem small, they are evidence of continued intergenerational language transmission in progress – a celebratory resistance of colonial efforts toward language shift; one that is growing and contributing to a shift back in favor of Ichishkíin knowledge and use. These small acts are so big from a generational lens showing how parents have served to breathe life into this language and teach their children to do the same for their own sake and for future generations. These 'little things' show how parents have been and continue to be leaders of language preservation and growth and it's such a privilege to participate in supporting their efforts. What feels like baby steps to so many is perhaps the clearest example of *Yaychunal* 'Not afraid of any type of challenge; courage; heroic perseverance' while also embodying *Piná'iwaat kw'ałáni* 'Self-denial and gratitude, humility' and *Wapítat Ttáwaxt* 'Help family growth; service to others'.

197

Another parent who has older children as well as one under the age of four, reflected on their own intuition around their young child's ability to comprehend Ichishkíin when they are not yet able to communicate verbally for themselves. For example, they shared that their youngest is,

> …not verbal, he don't have language at all yet, we're going through speech, but he understands. Like if we give him a command then he'll do it but we're still working on getting sounds out of him. But I know he understands it.

In this way they are interacting together with the language in ways that show their shared understanding and are communicating successfully in Ichishkíin on a daily basis in their home. Again, we see a beautiful example here of intergenerational transmission that is evident through the relationship between parent and child and occurring on a daily basis. This is an expression of *Pina'tma'áakt* 'Taking care and being aware of one's total being; balance and harmony; integrity; honor; nobility in crisis'. This parent and child find a balance and harmony in understanding and communicating together, aware of their own being within that shared space. This example is a clear testament to the educational leadership and expertise inherent to the relationship between parents and children.

5.1.1.1. Types and Domains of Language Use

In considering types of language or language domains in use, some simple commands and common greetings are used regularly by Yakama families. Elese Washines is a mother of two children, the youngest of whom had just turned four at the time of our meeting. In reflecting on language their family uses daily, Elese shared,

> …they know all those different kind of basics, kind of what my dad would call 'baby language' commands like *wínam* ['come here'] and *túktu* ['hurry up']

and…let's see what else did – yeah, like the more basic commands, I would say, the all the greetings…

In talking about her daily Ichishkíin use, Elese also shared how she switches between Ichishkíin and English without realizing. When the pandemic changed her family's routine, these language choices became more apparent. In her words,

> I never really paid attention to when I was speaking in English or Ichishkíin…when I was just with the kids on my own and I think that that became apparent to me…during the pandemic, 'cause my husband had to go to the office…and, um, I stayed home with the babies because there's no childcare. Everything was shut down and…I would work from home, and I didn't pay attention to like when I was switching from one language to another. I never really paid attention to when I was speaking in English or Ichishkíin…on the weekends my husband would be involved in our day to day activities and, and he'd be trying to get our baby dressed and then I would be like, 'why isn't she helping him, like, why isn't she doing what she's supposed to be doing when she gets dressed?' and then I realized that it's probably because when I'm dressing her, I don't speak to her in English. I speak to her in Ichishkíin and just…really basic things you know and that's what she knew as a…3-year-old. And so, then I became more intentional about it in general…

This excerpt again, like Mariana's above, exemplifies the 7th listed virtue (Wilkins, 2008), *Átaw pxwíni* 'deep thought and feeling; meditation and mindfulness in the way Elese's awareness and reflection brought language use into focus more deeply and she talks about how such awareness ignited a stronger drive to increase her language use with her children during their days, too. In her words, "…because I became more aware on the the fact that I was using it interchangeably, then I realized that the times that I'm not using it and I was like, 'oh maybe I should be using it more.'" These types of switches

can also help us learn more about areas or domains we should focus on in creating

supports or materials to expand our home language abilities.

5.1.1.2. Impacts of the Pandemic

The pandemic has had significant impacts on the daily lives of families globally

in their homes and in their schooling. Elese shared how remote learning at home, as a

result of the pandemic, brought opportunity and influenced her to incorporate more

language into her children's lessons, saying,

> …there was a point in the course of their learning where we had not not gotten
> together…in the education world, about how to work, remote learning, and so I
> went ahead and designed some of my own lessons and every lesson, at least for
> mathematics…was integrated between two the two languages and mathematics
> and then…I would read to them in the language…and just translate as I went
> some of the words…so they would, they would hear the language every day and
> then we got to the point where we were, they were able to sing songs…

While I realize it is not possible for all families to adapt their children's education in this

way, and that the pandemic, for many, has posed excruciating challenge and hardship,

Elese's context and background as an educator helped her to find some silver linings in

the shifting practice to home-based remote education for her children and incorporate

more Ichishkíin language. Elese walked into these changing times in the company of

Wilkin's (2008) 4th listed virtue, *Yáych'unal* 'Not afraid of any type of challenge;

courage; heroic perseverance' and enhanced the situation to better meet the needs of her

children, family, and community.

During this time, too, Elese incorporated cultural teachings that became salient to

her through continued intergenerational teachings in her family sharing,

…one of the things that stuck with me a long time is, you know, my uncle, he was talking about his work and how he's a leader for our department. And…they asked him during the interview…'How are you going to lead, how are you going to - what's your priority?...how are you going to lead this tribe?'…and he had said in his interview, he said, 'With prayer. That's how we lead'. And so, every day of the the pandemic was - it's fascinating and a little bit of a struggle but every day we started with that same kind of teaching that my uncle…indicated that, you know, you start your day with prayer…whatever the day brings you start with prayer. And so, I, one of the first things I taught them to do was to smudge, and then I taught them a prayer, just a really small prayer…taught [to] me when I was…growing up when I was a young girl. And so, [my children] would go round and smudge and say the say the little prayer [in Ichishkíin] that, you know, came from my Elder.

This practice, of course, embodies multiple virtues, too, from Wilkin's (2008) list including *Pina'tma'áakt* 'Taking care and being aware of one's total being; balance and harmony; integrity; honor; nobility in crisis'; Elese turned to family teachings that have been shared throughout generations to model leadership through difficulty in a grounded way, connected to those generations spanning back through time immemorial. To carry this practice out, too, requires the 7th virtue, *Átaw pxwíni* 'Deep thought and feeling; meditation and mindfulness' as well as *Piná'iwaat kw'ałáni* 'Self-denial and gratitude, humility'. In carrying these teachings through to her children, to lead them in these difficult times, she contributes, too, to the 9th listed virtue *Wapítat Ttáwaxt* 'Help family growth; service to others'.

Mersaedy Atkins, mother to a two-year-old child, also commented on how the pandemic has allowed her family to connect through having more time together at home. She says,

I feel like we have that advantage of, like, since we're still home to use this time to be more, what's the word, useful I guess…well, we have this opportunity. Because if it wasn't for [the pandemic] we, both parents, would be working, he'd be in daycare, back to the everyday grind and you won't have that fully committed family home time to spend together.

Many parents, as we'll read more about in the section on challenges, identified the pressures of time as a major barrier to their language use. While the pandemic hasn't alleviated the pressures of time and, in many cases, has exacerbated or brought about new pressures, Mersaedy's family has been reminded that their time together is precious. By taking time to recognize this moment, Mersaedy is practicing *Átaw pxwíni* 'Deep thought and feeling; meditation and mindfulness', considering the way this moment might encourage her family to somehow maintain this togetherness after the restrictions of the pandemic are lifted. Such maintenance aligns with *Pina'tma'áakt* 'Taking care and being aware of one's total being; balance and harmony; integrity; honor; nobility in crisis' in the way Mersaedy strives to hang on to that time with family at home as other obligations come back around, requesting more presence and attention.

Mersaedy also discusses limitations of local daycare facilities or schools in providing opportunities for Ichishkíin language use for young children and the ways the pandemic disrupted plans for such programming, saying,

I don't know of any programs honestly that would teach him language or use language a lot, I guess. I remember before the pandemic started a lot of the schools like Head Start were looking for language and culture teachers. And I did get hired to be a language teacher at the Wapato Head start then COVID hit and then that just dropped. And then I know casino daycare was looking for a language and culture teacher, but I don't really know of any daycares or schools…that teach the language as a primary. Like they could probably use

202

colors during the day or numbers, but it's just supplemental, like 'this is how you say 1, 2, 3 and this is how you say it in Ichishkíin', but it's not a first or primary [language].

Mersaedy's awareness here ties back to that balance of *Pina'tma'áakt* and the desire to support greater alignment between home and community values for Ichishkíin language use and programs that support Yakama children. Her desire for more 'primary' use of the language in daycares and schools shows *Tma'áakni* 'Respect' for language preservation while also recognizing how such establishments can engage with this Virtue and process as well.

The following section shares some of the language resources parents mentioned having in their homes already that help support their Ichishkíin use at home.

5.1.2. Home Resources

These conversations brought forth a variety of resources parents use help to center language use within their home spaces, celebrating the ingenuity and resourcefulness of parents as prominent educators. Many talked about the importance of making language visible in the home to help encourage regular use. For instance, one parent shares one of their family strategies for incorporating new words and phrases, saying,

> …I write them down on big poster boards, so I have poster boards up and down my hallway…and then when I ask the kids something – because for a while there…for them to leave the dinner table…they had to say words that they remembered…but we haven't done that in a while…I should start getting back into that. Yeah, but I would have them…hanging in my house. It's just a big poster board with just words, random words on there and…Yeah, and if we couldn't figure, or, you know, couldn't find a word, they'd ask…but we usually try to look it up and figure out the words, too…Yeah, but that's like how we

would…find the word and we'd write it down and hang it up so that way we would remember.

In addition to making language visible with poster boards, this parent shared, "Yeah, so we've been watching some of those…videos, and then we still watch Twálatin's too, so…Yeah, and the dictionary, the dictionary's my go-to to find things,". This parent is creating and finding resources that make language easy to access within their home while also learning along with their children. This practice within the family easily and sweetly falls into the Value of *Wapítat Ttáwaxt* (Wilkins, 2008) in the way it contributes to their communal well-being and pursuit of goals to learn language together.

This Virtue of *Wapítat Ttáwaxt* extends well through the stories shared by other parents, too, about ways they support learning in their families and ways those practices are connected to the larger learning community as well. For example, multiple parents shared language materials they have collected and kept over time, from their classes or their children's, or from other community organizations sharing resources through the years. Perhaps because Elese is an educator herself, it seems to come naturally to her to create and adapt materials to incorporate more Ichishkíin language in her children's education. This kind of creation is a common activity for her as illustrated by her words here which she shared while showing me some of the resources she had within grabbing distance. She says,

> Yeah, we've just gotten – this is your guys' stuff [materials Twálatin and I have shared through our work] – I don't know, we have a bunch of different language materials…What other? I suppose everybody does this kind of stuff…they make their own stuff.

204

Elese then took me on a virtual tour of some areas in her home including the 'Learning Center' her family, including her children, has created together. Of the Learning Center, Elese says, "It's like my my school that I set up for them." She shared some of the books kept there that she reads to her children; they are written in English, but she shares that she translates what she knows as they read. There is a prominent book of flashcards well-displayed for easy accessibility in a repurposed carpet sample book she found in a sale when a local business was closing down. After touring the 'Learning Center' she adds, "It feels like we do have other language resources around the house a lot of videos and stuff…". She spoke, too, about things they have up on the walls and around the house that the kids only know Ichishkíin names for that they like to look at and talk about.

Elese's family also has a big multilingual white board wall calendar which serves as a symbol of visibility and diversity, thus embodying the 2ⁿᵈ listed Virtue (Wilkins, 2008) *Tɨmnák'nik* 'Extending from the heart, compassion' under which we are guided to keep the feelings and wellness of others present in our thoughts and actions. Here too, in the way Elese articulates respect for multilingualism in her home, community, and in her children's education, there is overlap with the Virtue of *Itmá'akshá* 'Cautious and careful of all things and others; restrained, peaceful, and responsible' and its instruction to care for and maintain harmony with all people

> And then this is our calendar and…when we're looking at how to make each of these days important and what, what is the focus for the month, you know, especially for February, I, I like that some of our school calendars include all three languages, um, English and Ichishkíin and Spanish, and so that's what I try to put on all the calendars.

Elese elaborates on what this represents to her and her family, further demonstrating its connection to the Virtues mentioned above:

> And where where we live on our reservation, I feel like it's important to be respectful of all languages and also be understanding multiple languages in this community, at least. I've lived in another country and in Rome or in Italy and I spoke Italian and I still speak Italian and around here I, you know, speak some Spanish and I think it's important. So, when we - they learn, I'm very open to them learning Spanish and English and Ichishkíin.

Jasmine remarked on having materials at home either from those she'd helped to develop through her work at Head Start or from an after-school program her children attended saying,

> At home I had materials that we created, for example, I had my clock labled with the time on it, I had different flash cards taped to different places. When my oldest son was in the language program with Greg he would bring home materials that we could use at home or create materials out of the handouts.

Here Jasmine echoes Elese's view that materials creating is just part of an everyday activity. Another parent identified materials from classes as resources they still use at home, too, saying, "I used to go to the Tribe's classes. I got materials from there got all the CDs, recordings…" Some of these materials have been cared for by these parents and their families for several years showing *Wapítat Ttáwaxt* 'Help family growth; service to others' through caretaking of the language and its role in the home. The care shown to these materials through time speaks to the value they hold within family spaces and the need to continue creating materials to meet the specific, varied, and evolving goals different families hold for learning and speaking their language.

Tillet-Pum lives in Warm Springs and is a mother to three children, including a *myálas*. Her sister is currently taking Ichishkíin language classes and turns what she learns into materials for Tillet-pum and her family. Tillet-pum shares,

> my *nána* ['older sister'] …she does – with everything that she learns in 102, she sends us a lot of stuff that I try to use on a daily basis. Like, she sent us a color book that has all the colors and it has some animals in it and she printed off – it has like the butterfly 'this butterfly is purple', 'the bear is brown', 'the cloud is white', and 'the bird is blue' – and so she printed off labels and with the colors on them and put what those colors are.

Tillet-pum and her *nána* provide us here with a beautiful example of how this is indeed family work, exhibiting *Wapítat Ttáwaxt* 'Help family growth; service to others' in the way they share in each other's learning experiences. Tillet-pum's *nána* isn't just sharing what she learns with family members, or solidifying her own learning by teaching others, but creating a context for greater language use that they can all engage in together. Tillet-pum mentioned using these materials from her *nána* on a daily basis with her children and how their presence alone in their home (tying back to the power of language visibility) inspires and supports her to use more language at home with her children. This suggests a need, too, for resources that support conversational level speaking, perhaps tending to that modeling of responses for children that Mariana spoke about that doesn't always come naturally to parents who are learning Ichishkíin along with their children.

Along the lines of materials visibility, Elese shared a central spot within her home, that evolves with her family's experiences, a space with which everybody in her family interacts regularly. This space has cultural significance to them and her children

have grown fond of contributing to it, "they add their own flair," she said, then spoke to the significance of spaces in our homes and the centers we create within them,

> …any kind of center that we make at the home, it allows for growth and input in progress…and change according to the needs of the learners. And that's from my own educational background and social and emotional learning structures where you, you create learning environments that are best for the learner themselves and that adapt to the activities going on around them and adapt to the values of the people that are interacting with those, those centers. And so, at some point during the pandemic I consider my whole house like a Montessori and we just created well defined Centers for each of the activities they could want to do, and then they kind of modified them.

Elese's narrative here aligns well with the 5th listed virtue, *Pina'tma'áakt* 'Taking care and being aware of one's total being; balance and harmony; integrity; honor; nobility in crisis'. This Virtue advises that we continually strive to understand ourselves and remain aligned with our beliefs. She and her family allot physical space within their home to honor and celebrate their truths-in-progress to aid in bringing awareness and *Tma'áakni* 'Respect', the 6th listed virtue, for their individual and shared experiences into their daily lives. In this space, Elese's family collaborates to connect and understand each other and themselves more fully. The following section explores ways parents mentioned their language use extending outside of their homes.

5.1.3. Language Use Outside of the Home

While language use in the home is significant, in some ways we might consider our own being and knowledge as a kind of home to the language, too. We bring this knowledge outside of our home spaces, into community, and in relation with other spaces and beings. In turn, as parents mentioned as well, these spaces and relationships

reciprocate and influence our language use at home. In our conversations parents talked about some of the ways they engage with Ichishkíin language daily outside of their home spaces. Jasmine speaks to this impact in talking about the ways her use of language and materials creation at work overlapped with her language practice at home saying,

> …I think being at work and having it just as a constant…model or that repetition of doing it, it carried in. So, I don't have tons of material at home. I know Twálatin had a disc he made, like a CD that we could watch, too, and I know it was of the kids that were in that class of them doing and saying things…During that time I think we made a lot of our own…and so at Head Start it was just we…make our stuff and then you attach the language to it and…so just to carry that over into the home, just making those things that I needed at home…

Jasmine's comments here share how her use of language at work carried over to the way she would use language at home, but it also shines light on some of the ways teachers and school programming can help support families to use language at home. If teachers – or employees of any establishment for that matter – are encouraged and supported to use language at work, that will likely carry back to their home practices. Such support would show *Tma'áakni* 'Respect' for preserving and cultivating language use at the community level and engage in large scale *Wapítat Ttáwaxt* 'Help family growth; service to others'. I have no doubt that Jasmine's efforts carried over to her student's and fellow teacher's home worlds as well.

In a related example, one parent shared strategies they use as a teacher in their classroom space to help aid Ichishkíin comprehension for preschool students to help them build language to use both in class and out in the world. They shared,

> Yeah, I did a zoom meeting this morning…and I was doing the color cards, we did animals, then the stars…and we been doing it for a while but they always say,

'oh, what's this?' and I'll be all 'oh, that's the sun'…trying to get the word out of them but they still use the English word…and when I say, *aan* ['sun'] then they'll repeat *aan*…I'm not sure if they're getting it so I started saying 'The sun's name is *aan*' so hopefully they'll pick it up that way.

This parent reframes language for their young students in relational terms to help them make a deeper and lasting connection not just between the Ichishkíin and English names for things but to the entities they represent as well. The action of this teacher/parent brings together so many of the Nine Virtues (Wilkins, 2008) but most clearly the following three: 1) *Tma'áakni* 'respect' in the way they are teaching kids to consider their connection to the environment around them in multiple ways, 2) *Átaw pxwíni* 'Deep thought and feeling; meditation and mindfulness' through the mindful act of naming of these entities in relational terms. Wilkins talks about this virtue and includes the idea of mindful growth, particularly through education. Finally, it is a prime example of 3) *Wapítat Ttáwaxt* 'Help family growth; service to others' for the way this parent continues to find ways to help grow their students' knowledge and use of Ichishkíin. This work of cultivating language with these children also contributes to the larger community and healing that can come from connection to language.

This parent also brings this idea of *Wapítat Ttáwaxt* into their work by using Ichishkíin regularly with their coworkers, encouraging and supporting language use in their routines together. Here they share, "Um, well here at work…the coworkers we do just little like the introductions before our meetings everyone will do their introductions and I'll help them out with those…". They go on to express hesitation, in comparison, about speaking in Ichishkíin when at the Longhouse,

but when we go to Longhouse I feel intimidated like I don't wanna go out on the *waash* and then say something wrong…so at *Káatnam* [' Longhouse'] I won't use the language too much, it's just, I feel like I'm gonna get in trouble or that's the place where you should get it right, or you know what I mean?

They use Ichishkíin daily inside and outside of the home, but different spaces and contexts seem to bring out different levels of comfort or confidence to use or practice Ichishkíin. This hesitation aligns with Wilkins (2008) third listed Virtue, *Itmá'akshá* 'Cautious and careful of all things and others; restrained, peaceful, and responsible', in the way that this parent speaks their responsibility to "get it right" in this context. Wilkins' description of this virtue also includes an awareness of the effect your speech and actions might have on other people, and to avoid causing harm to yourself or others.

It's interesting to think about the potential overlap of this virtue, *Itmá'akshá* with that of *Timnák'nik* 'Extending from the heart, compassion', as they both ask you to consider others and the impact your words or actions might have on their experience. I wonder what an Elder would say about the connection between these two virtues and how they might interact in this – or other similar – contexts of hesitations to speak. People shy away from speaking because they seem to worry about doing some level of harm to the language by speaking incorrectly or through the language to those listening, but I wonder how much *not* speaking might also have the potential to cause pain. *Timnák'nik* includes the notion of performing a service for people while *Itmá'akshá* involves personal accountability and responsibility. Speaking the language can be seen as providing a service – providing an opportunity for people to hear it (i.e., learners who might also be afraid to make a public mistake; speakers who rarely get to hear their first language spoken).

This reminds me of an Ichishkíin phrase I have heard Twálatin share with students for several years now, one he was taught from an Elder: *Pamíshpamish nash pinásapsikw'asha Chíshkin Sínwit* 'I am trying to learn the Ichishkíin Language'. With this phrase, he encourages his students towards the fourth listed Virtue, *Yáychunal* 'Not afraid of any type of challenge; courage; heroic perseverance'; he tells them they are responsible for speaking the language they have learned, that the language needs their breath to live and grow; he tells them to stand up at gatherings and speak what they have learned, and to use this phrase as a sort of 'disclaimer', as he calls it, to remind the people listening that they are learning and trying their best but that they might make mistakes. In this way, this phrase is one that connects the Virtues of *Tɨmnák'nik, Itmá'akshá,* and *Yáychunal* well and might help tend to this feeling of hesitation for learners to speak in these *átaw* 'valued' spaces, though I am sure there are many other contributing, potentially complicated factors that might fuel hesitation in these spaces. Such hesitations might be well tended to in the more intimate setting of home spaces and future resources developed should consider this aspect of learning and speaking Ichishkíin. The following section looks at ways relationships are valued and help to support language at a community and intergenerational scope.

5.1.4. Language in Community, Intergenerational Connection

Relationality has always been a strong value for Yakama peoples and is embedded in the very structure of Ichishkíin language and the work being done to cultivate its use and growth. This section looks at the ways parents mentioned family and community relationships as further resources for language use and learning both inside and outside of the home. One parent shared how they bring their children together with

older relatives and observe how language is practiced in this space with hopes for sustained caretaking of it. In their words,

> …when I take the kids over to help [my uncle] with horses then he's talking to them too so they're getting it from there, too. I'm just hoping that they keep it, you know, they learn it and keep it.

In this way, they're providing precious exposure to the language for their children and strengthening their connection and knowledge through relationship and intergenerational transmission and teaching. This type of relationality is present throughout so many of the Virtues - all of which are inherently relational, not only in content but in that they have been passed down through countless generations since time immemorial. This example, though seemingly brief, carries so much of the richness embedded in all the Nine Virtues: this parent exhibits *k̲'wyáamtimt* 'honesty, being truthful' in sharing their hopes for their children's ability to keep and learn the language that is shared with them by their relatives and speaks with *Timnák'nik* 'Extending from the heart, compassion' showing deep care for the relationship and futures of their children and language; *Itmá'akshá* 'Cautious and careful of all things and others; restrained, peaceful, and responsible' is present in the way they provide opportunity for their children to hear the language used by their Elders and hoping – without pressuring – that they will take it in which also leans into *Pina'tma'áakt* 'Taking care and being aware of one's total being; balance and harmony; integrity; honor; nobility in crisis' as this parent models reverence for the language with their children; *Yáychunal* 'Not afraid of any type of challenge; courage; heroic perseverance' in the way this parent fosters intergenerational relationships and language engagement for their children while being a learner themselves; *Tma'áakni* 'Respect' is present in the way this parent trusts and

supports their children to make their own choices along with *Átaw pxwíni* 'Deep thought and feeling; meditation and mindfulness' in the way they are able to articulate their awareness of their family's roles in caring for the language and cultivating its use; *Piná'iwaat kw'ałáni* 'Self-denial and gratitude, humility' works with the other Virtues as this parent quietly holds hope while cultivating opportunity and encouragement with the language; finally and, again, we see *Wapítat Ttáwaxt* 'Help family growth; service to others' woven throughout all of these acts as this brief excerpt shares a glimpse of how this family continues to bring generations together, allowing children to help Elders while learning from them at the same time.

Experiences of relationships and intergenerational connections grow along with children and last throughout their lives. Elese remembers hearing Ichishkíin spoken regularly when she was growing up and shares memories from that time,

> …my dad is a fluent speaker and my grandmother, my dad's mom, that's mostly all she spoke was in the language…let's see, she was alive until 2001, December 2001 is when she passed very peacefully, surrounded by her grandchildren, which is how - what she wished for…but the whole time when she would greet us, it was always in language, and she talked to us at the table or in family ceremonies. It was mostly in the language - she would speak in English, too, but mostly most of the messages she gave were, were in the language...

This is but one example of how prevalent Ichishkíin was – just two generations back – spoken as a first language and used regularly in the home and community; some who are adults now grew up hearing the language spoken fluently at home. This passage also sheds light on the process of language shift and how quickly it can happen. All of the parents and caretakers who lent thoughts to this project are working to learn how quickly it can also be shifted back in the other direction.

Elese also reflects on how common it was to hear multiple dialects spoken within her family,

> We have two different dialects we grew up with, it's my dad and my uncle…They took care of my great grandma in the back house, the mother-in-law, and they spoke that dialect and then my other uncles, the younger uncles, they stayed in the front house with my mom or with my grandma and they spoke a - another dialect, so they, they speak both dialects, but mostly my dad and Tony speak one, and then the the other uncles they speak a different, slightly different, very similar [dialect].

This shows not just how prevalent the language was spoken relatively recently, but also the variation that was common and understood widely within the community. Tillet-pum, too, reflects on growing up in a multi-dialect household, not realizing the differences until she was older, and also remarking on the influence of intergenerational relationships, and intergenerational trauma, to language use. She shared,

> I grew up listening, my great grandpa, when he was around - he passed when I was 11 - he would talk to me like that my *púsha* ['paternal grandfather'] would talk to me like that…it was difficult because he wouldn't know who he was talking to because a lot of the times he suffered from alcoholism. So, when he would talk that way, it was more of in an aggressive way because he grew up in that generation that we, they were, you know, they were beaten…when they would talk their language. So it was in an aggressive way and I would never understand what he was saying, but he would talk to all of us that way and my learning is kind of…it wasn't until I got with my husband that I learned that my understanding was mixed because my dad is Warm Springs and my mom is Yakama and I did not know that there were differences in dialects. Like me and my husband, we battle over it all the time when we're teaching our young ones. The number 2 and like, that's a huge, huge thing. He's like, no, it's not *niipt* [2 in Yakama dialect] it's *napt* [2 in Warm Springs dialect]. Well, they can learn both

ways, it doesn't matter. They just need to know…but my husband said that his grandparents were Yakama and Warm springs, too…. his grandma was Warm Springs and his grandpa was Yakama and they did the same thing. So, he kind of just does it, just because it reminds him when he was little. So, it's like our kids can tell their kids that we did that…when they were little.

Tillet-pum's family not only continues to provide a multi-dialect household for their children but continue also the playful banter previous generations practiced around dialect differences; a loving strategy for teaching dialect differences within the home that connects and preserves variation and language use through the generations. This practice offers *Tma'áakni* 'Respect' to those connections, remembering where the language has come from and where it will go while also practicing *Piná'iwaat kw'aláni* 'Self-denial and gratitude, humility' in the way they celebrate in their differences together. Modeling this way of speaking also serves *Wapítat Ttáwaxt* 'Help family growth; service to others' in the way it works to heal the generational trauma Tillet-pum spoke of in describing the way her *púsha* would use language. She, her husband, and *nána* are providing a very different experience with the language for their family's children than she experienced growing up.

Grandparent's, too, are taking initiative to envelop their grandbabies in language. One parent, for example shares how their mother and grandmother engage in intimate exchanges in Ichishkíin with their newborn.

…I do have my mom who comes and says some phrases and I don't know what she says…. But she talks to the baby and I know I should ask her…you know, 'what are you saying?' And I do have a grandma left and she comes, and she talks to him, too, and I don't know what she's saying to him either, but I don't want to interrupt her either when she's talking with him.

216

Elese's father also continues the strong intergenerational practice of speaking to his *púshayin* 'two grandchildren (from daughter)' in Ichishkíin and did so exclusively when they were babies. Elese shares her observations and some of his profound words,

> …and my dad does that, he'll speak - he spoke almost 100% in Ichishkíin to [my children], went all the way up until they're about 1 1/2 and then now he speaks English and Ichishkíin to them. But when they're babies, like, he'll speak just constantly in the language to them, and then he says **'that's what they understand…they're born knowing the language**'. And so, he speaks in the language to them. And it was funny because we walked in the room and then he would change over to English and we're like, 'dad just still keep speaking in the language that - it's fine…

These grandparents engage with *Tɨmnák'nik* 'Extending from the heart, compassion' when they share Ichishkíin with their grandbabies, helping them to recognize their environment and place within it through the language they are already born knowing. In this way, too, they show *Pina'tma'áakt* 'Taking care and being aware of one's total being; balance and harmony; integrity; honor; nobility in crisis', sharing teachings and beliefs with their children and grandchildren that have been in practice for countless generations. It is also another clear example of *Wapítat Ttáwaxt* 'Help family growth; service to others'. In this way these grandparents are also providing their own children with a model for intergenerational language use and sharing the importance of speaking Ichishkíin to babies and young children.

Elese shares a sweet moment she happened to catch out in community at a professional gathering where she heard a parent speaking to her own baby in their Indigenous language in a quiet way, much like she recounted her father doing with her

217

children. Her recount reminds me, too, of the ways I hear Elders teach about talking with children…a gentle and intimate experience of connection. In Elese's words,

> …I went over to [a] meeting before and there was a lady there who's a teacher who – she's teaches the language for her, for her tribe and she had a brand new baby with her that's about a year, less than a year old, and they were getting food at the buffet and, um, if I hadn't been close to her, I wouldn't have heard or picked up on that – she was talking to her baby the whole time she was getting food, but it was like whispering to the baby and – now I don't know if that's a practice, but that feels like an important way to teach and talk to your children, like in that whisper and talking as you do things 'cause I know talking to them in general, is important. But I don't I don't know if anybody ever really thought about, like, it felt so loving and and intentional to see her leaning down and talking to her baby...

In this example, Elese listened with and observed *Tɨmnák'nik* 'Extending from the heart, compassion' and engaged at the same time with *Átaw pxwíni* 'Deep thought and feeling; meditation and mindfulness' in the way she was drawn to this interaction and deeply considered the significance of such communicative, relational intimacy and the positive impact it could have on our children.

While there are parents, grandparents, and other relations speaking Ichishkíin regularly to young Yakama children, there are not yet many organizations providing children under the age of four with additional Ichishkíin language support in a formal capacity. There are some, however, that try to incorporate it into their daily routines with the young children they serve. Elese shares some efforts by the Yakama Nation Early Childhood Education where her children, now four and six, have attended since they were 12 months old. She shares,

…and also from the Yakama Nation early Childhood Education Center…when I take both of my babies there… at 12 months …they started off with sign language. And I told them…these are the commands that they know in in our Yakima language, and if you tell them in English they won't understand it in English. And they also have babies there that are monolingual in Spanish, and so they have care providers who are mostly bilingual in Spanish and in English, and because the Center director…she speaks English and Spanish and she picked up on some of the the Ichishkíin words pretty quickly. And so, like, even in the baby room, when my baby was there, like very barely learning to speak in general and use their voice, she counted with them. She'd have their, their hands and she'd say, 'one, two, three, four, five' and then she'd say 'naxsh, niipt, mítaat, píniipt, páxaat'* [one through five in Ichishkíin]. And then she'd say 'uno, dos, tres, cuatro, cinco' [one through five in Spanish]. And she would say it in all all three versions [English, Ichishkíin, and Spanish]. And that was like how she greeted the babies. And, and she supported that in all of her staff. So, in the very first part of the morning…whoever is greeting at the gate, will see us and say…'hey shix máytski [good morning] and it's really cool and you know [my daughter] knows how to respond to that...

This example reflects beautifully back to the sentiments of the Virtues discussed around Elese's multilingual white board calendar, *Tímnáknik*, and *Itmá'akshá* while also supporting the ninth listed virtue, *Wapítat Ttáwaxt* 'helping family growth; service to others'. Incorporating language into the children's daily experiences at school not only helps them learn their language but also shows them that their language is equal to others in its representation alongside them and thus serves to further cultivate their relationship with language and identity.

Another parent I spoke with also has multiple children, one of whom is about three years old and another under a year old. They grew up hearing Ichishkíin spoken in

their family and continue to hear it from Elders and at the longhouse. In their family, grandparents, great-grandparents, aunties, all spoke the language, so they have current and past relationships to hearing the language regularly at home and in their family community. They shared that they are able to call some of these relations up to ask questions about the language, too. They have also attended some language and culture classes throughout the years and shared that they incorporate both culture and language into their coaching practice, encouraging kids to remember to take care of themselves and each other following their Yakama teachings and to use language to express some of those ways saying, for example,

> …So, I'm like, 'hey, we gotta remember our culture' you know and so I'm trying to, you know, have them do the play names…then, you know, just talk to them about different teachings and trying to remind them, you know like, 'our culture is more important than [sports], but we can include that in what we're doing'…

Carrying these teachings forward to these children in this way shares Wilkin's (2008) 3rd listed virtue, *Itmá'áakshá* 'Cautious and careful of all things and others; restrained, peaceful, and responsible', reminding the children to remember their culture above all else, perhaps even the competitive nature and draw sports can bring about. That they are working in a relational, team setting in this way, too, brings to light the 9th listed virtue, *Wapítat Ttáwax̱t* 'Help family growth; service to others'. This passage reminds us of the non-binding connections between language use in the home and how our own relationship with it naturally extends into community use.

5.2. Challenges and Barriers to Use Ichishkíin Language at Home

Parents named several factors that get in the way of them being able to use more Ichishkíin language at home with their families. This section is organized by themes that

arose during our conversations about these types of barriers. Challenges include those associated with being adult language learners trying to raise their children in language (section 5.2.1.), balancing multilingual homes (section 5.2.2.), challenges of time (section 5.2.3.), learner differences such as language levels or experiences (section 5.2.4.), accessibility of resources (section 5.2.5.), considerations around schooling and programming (section 5.2.6.), and consistently feeling like their work is not enough (section 5.2.7.).

5.2.1. Second Language Parents Raising First Language Children

One of the biggest challenges parents and caretakers mentioned in our conversations was the prevalence of English language use in so many key spaces and just the overwhelming inundation in our social sphere. As one parent shares,

> …Well with my little guy, we use words but then it, it kinda seems hard because he goes to daycare and he don't, they don't use it there. And then he started at the elementary school and they're trying but it's...so when we come home and we'll use those words and he'll say English version and I'm like 'uuh' so it's just like starting over every day and at home we, we just use little words not whole sentences…

In this example, this parent demonstrates *Yáychunal* 'Not afraid of any type of challenge; courage; heroic perseverance' in the way they keep coming back to language every day in their home even through those days when it feels like they're not making the progress they want to be making. English is everywhere around us – in the street signs, at the grocery store, in our workspaces and inboxes, even flooding our thoughts and speech. In the previous section, we saw another act of *Yáychunal* in the way parents create more visibility for Ichishkíin language in their home spaces, thus resisting the pervasive

inundation of English that surrounds us. This challenge is also a call for greater representation of Ichishkíin in many of the places we still see and hear only English.

Tillet-pum reminds us lack of representation is a continued effect of colonization and language shift, and the reason she and others are in a position to now learn as adults and try to restore as much intergenerational teaching with their children as possible. She shares one of the biggest challenges for her is

> Just the barriers of not having it be my first language, you know. I mean everybody who is in that class or knows anything about it, they know that it was intentionally…to be erased so it, you know, it's difficult to know that it probably will never be a first language for all of my kids but getting it to be their most used and their second language is a goal for me. I can't really think of anything else that would stop me just from that because I am trying to learn…And at the same time, I think a lot of us are trying to learn. It's just they don't, they don't know about the resources that are out there.

Tillet-pum's passage highlights once again how this work is generational rather than focused on any one individual trying to learn language. To be able to share Ichishkíin with children such that it becomes one of their most used languages is an incredible act of generational *Yaych'unal*.

Mariana talks about the prevalence of the English language as well in key learning spaces while also contemplating some of the complexities of learning Ichishkíin as an adult and teaching it to her child as one of his first languages. She shares,

> I think the hardest thing that I've realized…are the phrases and having the phrases down. There are some phrases I have memorized but it's difficult giving him the language to even respond... when he was really little, I would ask things like *mish nam anawisha?* ['are you hungry?'] or *mish nam wa?* ['how are you?']...but it's mostly me asking or stating something and he can't reply in Ichishskiin. I might

222

say *shalawishaash* ['I'm tired'] or *mish nam shalawisha?* ['are you tired'] and it is weird as he gets more words and phrases in English...I wonder, does he even know what I'm saying? Whereas before I never really thought about that. It's like you're, **you're learning everything from from us**.

This last line from Mariana is so powerful and so directly points to the innate role of parents in education. Children look to us to show them how to be, how to speak, and relate to the world around them. Her articulation of this role is an example of *Átaw pxwíni* 'Deep thought and feeling; meditation and mindfulness'. Being aware of this role and the power it holds is an incredible responsibility, also reflecting *Itmá'akshá* 'Cautious and careful of all things and others; restrained, peaceful, and responsible' in the way it amplifies the weight of our decisions as parents and the contribution of this role and its connection to all people, beings, and things around us.

Mariana mentioned, too, the related struggle of modeling conversation for her son so he can know how to respond to her when she asks him a question in Ichishkíin. Elese touches on this idea of a child's responses, too,

> …the longest thing that they say back for me or back for each other is *áwna tkwátat* ['let's eat'] but you know other than that, like really small phrases like that…that's probably the biggest thing that they say to each other on a day to day basis and I think those those small phrases are the ones that I, I get stuck on...

Both of these examples indicate a need for more support towards having simple, daily conversations together in Ichishkíin and again these parents embody *Átaw pxwíni* 'Deep thought and feeling; meditation and mindfulness' in their observations of their family interactions and differing roles as learners and speakers of Ichishkíin.

Mersaedy talked, too, about the difficulties of speaking language to her *myálas* when she is still learning so much herself, sharing,

I want to speak with him more on a regular basis, but it's really hard like you're saying, it's…'oh, he's just a baby you could talk to him', but it's a lot more difficult than I had anticipated or even thought. I think mainly just my own speaking. I don't know a lot of like phrases or terms or verbs, I don't know…

She goes on to talk specifically about other pressures as a learner, strategies that are geared toward home learning but that are challenging to take on on top of everything else, too.

…and then I just keep going back to how you hear like reclaim your domains I have to do a lot more work with that so in each different room you're able to use those those phrases or commands, or terminology, and I think I just need to do more work with that and then maybe even just have it in each room on the wall, so then we could refer to it because my memory isn't very great. Then you don't use it every day so you don't remember it and it's just tough trying to to go back to the dictionary and trying to find or sift through my binders or notebooks and this and that. So, I think that's the biggest part of it is just like the common phrases and terminology, and even putting, like instead of just simple commands, even telling them longer sentences, like a whole sentence or instead of just phrases or words or commands. I think that's my struggle so in order for me to teach and tell him that then that means I gotta do more homework to learn more…

We hear Mersaedy working through strategies and feeling tasked to create materials that would support her home use in these ways, also mentioning that drive we hear from other parents to always 'do more' which serves as a clear call for more organized, program level supports and materials creation. As we hear throughout this chapter, and Chapter IV, so many parents share this drive to speak more language and feel a responsibility to create all of the supports necessary to do so. A centralized place or go-to organization is overdue to support these incredible efforts of *Wapítat Ttáwax̱t* 'Help family growth; service to others' that come so naturally from parents for their children.

Mersaedy also talks about the process of *using* language rather than just learning it and the work it takes to solidify new language into regular, automatic use. She goes back to the sentiment of family learning together as well. This passage shows a that it might benefit families to provide opportunities to aid in that process of moving from language *learning* to *use.* This also ties back to Mariana and Elese's earlier comments about their children repeating language back to them but not having or even having enough support to help them learn more responsive and conversational language patterns.

> …So, it's kind of like we're going to be learning together. I've heard different things before, but I haven't really learned them. I've heard them and I might know, the verb or the noun, but it's never been used, so it hasn't been retained and I'm not able to change it into different forms to be to be useful for both of us. Yeah, so I think that's been my main struggle…

She elaborates on how home language is different in that it is a constant responsibility rather, coming back, too, to the timing of being home more together during the pandemic and seeing it as an opportunity to focus on language learning and use together as a family. In her words,

> …for home, it's pretty much all the time and so, **this is the time for us** I think to use as much language as we can, truly create a language house in our own home. And then my partner, he's willing to learn and speak so all three of us would be learning and speaking, and so I think that's something that I need to put more time and effort into, especially since he's so little. He's not talking very much like at all, but I know he listens. Now is the time to grab him when he's young and teach him Ichishkíin, you know, and so then we start talking, then he can speak both.

Throughout these passages, Mersaedy sways back and forth between the seemingly simple idea of 'just' speaking more language but also digging into the complexities that underlie that not-so-simple action. The language is in such a place that it needs speakers

225

and we hear Mersaedy and other parents wholeheartedly committed to wanting to be those speakers, and to raise their babies with Ichishkíin. As Mersaedy says here, "this is the time for us"; we are in a place and time where parents, babies, professionals, organizations, and more are able to put energy into this work and parents are crucial in the forefront of raising the language along with their babies.

Parents also mentioned challenges that spring from their own learner processing when trying to use the language at home. One parent said, "I get confused, too, like I mix up words and I'm like 'oh wait, that came out completely wrong' so…and then my uncle is always like 'what is that?!'… 'cause he speaks the language." Similarly, Mariana provides a particular example of her thought process in any given moment as she strives, too, to incorporate new language into her family's daily world while also considering her son's language processing and growth, saying,

> I think it just feels like life is just so fast, you know, in this time frame of raising a child and working and then trying to learn and then trying to confidently share the language back and integrate what I'm learning. When I learn a new word for something, I want to remember it and only use that word from then on. One day at breakfast, I kind of remembered *áytalu* is oatmeal, I hadn't thought that I should just start calling it *áytalu*. We eat a lot of oatmeal...and I wondered, will he get confused? If I stop saying oatmeal? I get in my head a lot, like, do I need to now translate that for you? Or do I just say *áytalu* or do we just stop calling it oatmeal, like I don't know what...language advocates would say for a 3-year-old at this point...

These parents are speaking to one of the challenges of learning Ichishkíin as an adult while teaching it to their children as a first language, again highlighting *Átaw pxwíni* 'Deep thought and feeling; meditation and mindfulness' in their awareness around

226

potential differences between her own processing and acquiring language and their children's. This is an important point as the work of language revitalization requires that we move in a sort of backwards motion from that of a more natural human process of intergenerational language transmission.

Learning a language, particularly as an adult, is hard work; it takes an incredible amount of mental energy and time and, for those who have a deeper, cultural, ancestral connection to the language, especially when knowledge of it has been so violently disrupted, there is considerable emotional energy involved in learning and speaking it as well. Mariana, in talking about different types of learners – those who have more confidence to make mistakes and those who hold back speaking out of a fear of messing up – articulates her position well, bringing back that idea of the incredible force that guides parents of babies in particular with their Indigenous language, saying, **"…it feels like a higher stakes when you are trying to raise a learner…".** This sentiment seems to get at the heart of *Wapítat Ttáwaxt* 'Help family growth; service to others' as parents consider their service, not just to their own children but to future and past generations as well.

5.2.2. Multilingual Homes

In Mariana's home, they are also learning and using Nahuatl, her partner's Indigenous language. Here she shares some of their practices as a tri-lingual family and her thought processes around some of the ways their son interacts through the languages.

My partner is Mexica and Apache and a couple other different things but the language that he shares most, which is not a lot, is Nahuatl. Sometimes if I don't know the word in Ichishkiin, but we know it in Nahuatl, we'll go with Nahuatl or we might use both...so we say tochltli which is bunny in Nahuatl whenever we see

227

or talk about bunnies. Metzli is moon in Nahuatl and it's interesting that one day my son got really upset when I pointed out metzli in the sky and he was like, 'no, it's 'Moon'!' 'not metzli!', and I said, 'it's the same thing, just different names.'

This ties back, too, to earlier comments about the power of English presence and visibility for our kids. Though we might use these Indigenous words more at home, they hear the English version perhaps more frequently or just notice the Indigenous words spoken largely only at home rather than out in the community or at school, for example. She goes on to share,

> So it's been interesting to see how he's code switching I guess, I've seen him around other people and when other people are referring to me as 'mom', he'll sometimes start to call me mom, which at home he only calls me ika… well it was funny 'cause at first when he first started to try to say 'iła', he said 'unga'. And then it went to 'ika' and as much as I try to get him to Iła, its still Ika for now. It's interesting how he interprets being in spaces where people are using a word for something that we don't use as much, we'll use the Ichishkiin or a Nahuatl version.

In supporting the natural code-switching choices her son makes, Mariana is extending *Tma'áakni* 'Respect' along with *Tɨmnák'nik* 'Extending from the heart, compassion', as her son learns and teaches them both about his own relationship to the three languages he is learning daily.

Another parent mentioned having tri-lingual presence in their home with generational ties and how the languages hold different levels of visibility embedded in those intergenerational relationships with language. They share,

> Uh, I have a Tł'ingit language in our home, so our home…well it's my grandparents' home we were gifted their home and they passed away in August and so my grandma who lived here was Tł'ingit and she had a lot of language

228

up…And so there's still like some like paintings that were my uncles that are up in the house and so there's a lot of Tł'ingit stuff everywhere and so, but none of like Yakama things…But my grandpa, who did live here, he's the one who spoke it and so…So I wish there was more.

This passage ties back, too, to the power of language visibility as this parent longs for a more visible Yakama language experience in their home, too, equal to another of their heritage languages. Later they add ways that outside experiences also help to bring more Indigenous language into their home, tying back to comments we'd heard in the previous section about language in community supporting home practice. They share,

Yeah, and then we do hear a lot of, so my husband is, goes to [University] right now and…all those classes [in his program] have Native professors and it's like indigenized curriculum, so it's constantly, like, hearing language is like – one of his professors is always playing Tł'ingit, one of his professors is talking like in Blackfeet, and so there's a lot of the different things that we hear in our home, from him doing his homework at home.

These words celebrate the presence of multi-lingual practice and presence, supporting many communities at once, which in turn creates a world that is also better suited to support Ichishkíin language and community. Celebrating this larger Indigenous presence in the home ties back to some of the comments in previous sections, too, about respecting and making space for others, practicing *Tma'áakni* 'Respect' in supporting and helping to protect others, and engaging in *Átaw pxwíni* 'Deep thought and feeling; meditation and mindfulness' by recognizing one's place within the world and being aware of all that is influencing and supporting you. By celebrating many cultures and multi-lingual homes, this family is in service to the unity of their own and other communities thereby modeling *Wapítat Ttáwaxt* 'Help family growth; service to others' for their children.

5.2.3. Challenges of Time

Another major challenge parents brought up is the issue of time; the time it takes to learn language, process it in the moment, and incorporate it regularly in their home use on top of their other many responsibilities. As one parent shares,

> Yeah but just time, too, cause I feel like I don't have *any* time and I'm here at work then I get home and then I have to take care of baby and it feels like it's already bedtime and I'm like 'where'd all the time go?'

Another parent brings up the difficulty of time saying, "Sometimes it's hard, like, I know Twálatin has daytime classes, but then I got, you know [my baby], you know, if he were older I might try to bring him..." and then adding an additional layer of responsibility that comes with the accessibility of remote options, saying, "I have no excuse 'cause there's zoom classes now,". Mariana adds to this in terms of complicated family schedules, sharing, "…we all have pretty uh, differing schedules and then sleep catch up. So even if were all waking up, we might not all get out of bed at the same time…".

Jasmine adds to this issue of time, too, noting the energy it takes to process and use language on top of other responsibilities saying,

> I'm currently working and going to school fulltime, while transitioning back to Head Start in a new position. Trying to remember the correct way to pronounce words in the language can zap your energy a bit because it requires brain work to recall on those words and pronunciations.

She brings us back to the benefits of wrap around supports and how her language use at home increases when she is working in a place that also helps to foster language use. In Jasmine's words,

> As I reflect, I have a busy schedule and limited time for extra things. Going back to Head Start, I'll be able to bring that language use back because I'll be in an

environment that uses it daily and it doesn't feel like you're doing too much. But I
wonder what that would look like if I wasn't going back to Head Start?

Jasmine expressed relief to be able to count on engaging with language through her work,
knowing it will come back into her home, and contemplates how it would have worked if
it weren't present for her at work in this way. Her words here highlight the importance of
finding ways to support families to embed language use into existing daily routines rather
than creating additional activities or adding to the responsibilities of the days.

Mariana elaborates further on the issue of time sharing that, even though she
might have the skills and resources to create quick references for herself and family with
the language she uses most frequently, time constraints still create a barrier to doing so.
She says,

> I think about those quick phrases that I don't even know how to say, 'Are you
> done?'...'Are you still hungry?', it's like things that are hard to admit 'cause I
> could translate them. I know if I sat with my dictionary and my notes, it wouldn't
> be...that hard, but it's the time...I feel like, as things just go so fast, having charts -
> like even in our group, our study group, we talked about these things..I haven't
> even labeled stuff. I have such a little amount of time to get anything outside of
> work done, and then you know cooking and cleaning. It's just hard to even create
> time to really intentionally study Ichishkíin or have some sort of hands-on
> practice outside of class time. And with my son, he changes into a different
> human every six months, so there's always differing levels of my attention and
> what I can actually do, even when I'm in class...

These parents' passages also highlight some of the emotional challenges that come up
from being pulled in multiple directions by varied, all incredibly important commitments
like language, family, work, classes, and caring for the home. Through such busy times,
we hear these parents striving to balance it all, holding true to their beliefs and staying

231

grounded in their roots; an act of *Pinátma'áakt* 'Taking care and being aware of one's total being; balance and harmony; integrity; honor; nobility in crisis' and also continuing on despite the challenges, tapping into *Yáychunal* 'Not afraid of any type of challenge; courage; heroic perseverance' and leading their children in language through everything else that is going on daily in little and big ways. This issue of time highlights an urgent call to increase capacity to create family-friendly materials that are easily accessible and practical to use while on the go.

5.2.4. Learner Differences

Mariana talks more specifically about materials creation and considerations for tending to different levels and experiences of learners when designing them. She talks specifically about the sound system as some Ichishkíin sounds are very different from those we have learned in English (e.g. the eight-way k-distinction: k, k', kw, kw', k̲, k̲', k̲w, k̲w') which is relevant as it can create tension and sometimes be intimidating or frustrating for those who are wanting to learn but are not yet familiar with these symbols and the sounds they represent. She says,

> ...and then there's the spelling part which is complex and even more so when we as a group have thought about creating different things for people to use for learning, will they know how to say the words written out? how do you help them? The online dictionary is incredibly helpful for pronunciation, I go to that all the time with the question, ''how do I say that'...There are some words where I'm like oh my god, I don't even know how to begin to say that...And so I could see how even just trying to phonetically write, would be really hard. So I see the challenges alongside each other...

The challenge she speaks about here also includes the commitment from many teachers to use the alphabet provided in the dictionary that Tux̲ámshish (Virginia Beavert) has

helped to develop and refine through the years in her linguistics work. She and other contributors were intentional to make sure that each letter represents only one sound so what you see you say but there is still a learning curve, and the sounds aren't necessarily intuitive without targeted instruction. Mariana's thoughtfulness about all who might want to access resources is an example of both *Timnák'nik* 'Extending from the heart; compassion' and *Itmá'akshá* 'Cautious and careful of all things and others; restrained, peaceful, and responsible' as she considers the intentions behind those who are creating materials with a particular writing system and the impact the design can have on those eager to access them. She is careful in her approach and advocacy to tend, too, to *Wapítat Ttáwaxt* 'Help family growth; service to others' ultimately recognizing that all involved are striving toward the same goal of cultivating language use in their homes and community.

For reference, Table 10 (page 234) shows again the alphabet sounds, this time highlighting those that do not have an English equivalent in *miҳíshpyat* 'green'. It is important to note, too, that even those not highlighted that seem more familiar to English speakers also make different sounds than the way they are used in English, for example, the *i* 'short i', makes an 'ee' sound like that of 'beep' in English. Once learned, as Tuҳámshish and her colleagues intended, each letter you see you say as opposed to English which can often be unpredictable (e.g., produce – depending on your emphasis is either a verb meaning to create something, or a noun referring to fruits and vegetables, etc.). Since the alphabet, as Mariana points out, can be intimidating to people who haven't had time or resources to learn it, it is important to continue to find ways that link

the written language to its spoken form, such as QR codes or other links to audio and video.

Table 10. Yakima/Yakama Ichishkíin Alphabet Highlighted

a	aa	ch	ch'	h	i	ii	ɨ	k	k'	kw	kw'	ḵ
ḵ'	ḵw	ḵw'	l	ł	m	n	p	p'	s	sh	t	t'
tł	tł'	ts	ts'	u	uu	w	x	x̱	xw	x̱w	y	'

Jasmine also spoke about the importance of being able to quickly access support for accurate pronunciation saying,

> I think being able to have easy access to the pronunciations of the words would help with language use. I know you can go online and look up some words and hear it pronounced but actually having access to an app that you can pull up quickly would help. With technology now a days if you pull up a word to listen to then most likely someone else would be around to also hear that word.

With parents' and families' desires to use language, creating these quick-access materials that support them to use Ichishkíin in context on the spot should be considered high priority. Providing such materials would enact *Pina'tma'áakt* 'Taking care and being aware of one's total being; balance and harmony; integrity; honor; nobility in crisis' in the way it would support the integrity of language use. While time is necessary to enable more natural use of Ichishkíin, saving as many steps as possible along the way is a worthwhile goal.

5.2.5. Resource Accessibility

Mariana also talked about the specific challenge of simply accessing materials. There is no centralized space at this point to find resources that have been created and word of mouth, sharing out in emails, or creating shared online folders has not been widely effective. UO creates materials through student projects, but it has been difficult to get them 'out there'. Sometimes, and rightfully so, there are politics involved around who can or should be able to share them along with where and how widely that have complicated access. Mariana talked about creating her own resources for her children with things like colors and numbers but points out that kids don't always gravitate towards quick, handmade materials by their busy *ila*. I shared with her that UO students have created posters for colors and numbers among other things but that, once again, easy access to them is 'in the works'. The HULC resource center is an imperative and urgent need, one which this dissertation along with Twálatin's has helped to ignite significant movement on and which will be prioritized as the next step in the larger scope of this work.

Mariana talks, too, about curriculum that has been developed with the intention of adaptations by different tribes to work with in their own way, but another struggle is the translation aspect, especially when we have so few fluent Elders to even ask to engage in this type of labor. We do our best to use resources to translate but that final eye by first language speakers while we have it is so crucial to know if we have it quite right, though we also must remember as learners with such limited resources, sometimes coming close is better than not speaking at all. Even when the translations are there, political factors might still come in to play. There has been so much damage by educational and government institutions and the individuals that represent them that sharing this language

out widely is not always welcome or wanted, sometimes more or less so depending on the topic, but there are so many stakeholders that it can be challenging to find the balance of access and healing.

5.2.6. Schooling and Programming

Another challenge that came up was one of schooling and the reality of current considerations for even choosing which school to have your children attend. One parent (PC2) shares the weight of considerations for factors like safety, culture, religion, and discrimination, saying,

> …because of that [school shooting] like, I didn't want to send my kids there, so I sent them to the private school and that's, you know, like the Catholic religion and, you know, it's not really aligned with my family, you know. And then typically they get treated differently…being Indian, you know, and looking Native, you know looking Native, my kids do. And then I'm just like, yeah, I noticed they don't get invited to all the things that other kids do. Or, you know, so I'm considering sending them back, you know, somewhere around here next year…

This excerpt shows considerable engagement with *Yáychunal* 'Not afraid of any type of challenge; courage; heroic perseverance' as they navigate these factors, trying to find the best path available to support *Pina'tma'áakt* 'Taking care and being aware of one's total being; balance and harmony; integrity; honor; nobility in crisis', when none of the paths are ideal. They're made to choose between factors of safety and quality of education with having to endure blatant institutional and individual racism and discrimination, but they make these unfair choices in the best interest of their children's well-being; in the interest of *Wapítat Ttáwaxt* 'Help family growth; service to others' in modeling pursuit of a better, more unified, and just world through gaining knowledge and living a healthy life.

236

This parent elaborates to envision future choices with schooling and speaks to the frustrations of being forced to choose between culture and education,

> …my ears do perk up when I hear about opportunities at, you know, the local schools, like, for culture and stuff. I…think well, maybe I could send them there, but they do very well in school…so, like, I want to keep that going, but then at the same time I feel torn and I'm like, why do we have to choose between, you know, being around kids that look like you versus getting a good education, you know?…So that's why I'm happy that, you know, they go to the longhouse, with kids their own age there and build those friendships with the [sports], you know, full team of little Yakama [kids]...

This passage further exemplifies *Yáychunal* in the way that this parent finds hope in the efforts of community to support culture and language for Yakama children. They go on to add thoughts around challenges that can come from not having full support of language and culture programming in leadership, sharing,

> …I feel bad, you know, sometimes when I hear our leaders kind of put those type of things down, you know, like 'Oh, that's not our style…you don't write [the language] down, that's not our way. You don't record it'…and I'm like well we're gonna be losing out. And I think in the longhouse…in my mind that's a big crossroad of our culture…'that's not the right way to learn', you know, and then it makes me bad 'cause I have recorded my [relative] in the past and I have gotten that feedback it's like 'you're not supposed to record her', you know, like make me feel bad about it and I'm like, ok she wanted to so I don't see why not, you know?

This parent goes on to share gratitude to Tux̱ámshish for all she has documented and recorded through the years saying, "I'm just thankful to her that she's done all the work she has 'cause if it wasn't for - you know, who knows what we would be left with in a few generations and I'm thankful to her...," (PC2). Knowing there are many tensions around

237

these topics, this parent takes care to engage with K̲'wyáamtɨmt 'Honesty, being truthful' in sharing their thoughts fully, and *Pina'tma'áakt* 'Taking care and being aware of one's total being; balance and harmony; integrity; honor; nobility in crisis' in keeping balance with their beliefs through these tensions, and models *Tma'áakni* 'Respect' in their desire to protect Yakama language and culture while maintaining respectful cooperation with those who hold different opinions.

Elese reflects on her own experience growing up as a bilingual child in school and how that influenced her and her sister's choices to intentionally teach their children own Ichishkíin. She says,

> …me and my sister,…we definitely set out to, to teach more on the language and teach it past kindergarten, 'cause I think what happened with us was that we heard it all the time. But then when you're bilingual and you go into a school district, even Toppenish where it's right in the middle of the reservation, you go into the school district, they don't they don't recognize you as bilingual. When you speak in the Native language, or at least they didn't 30 some years ago when we were in elementary, and so when they're testing us for different things, like colors, I didn't know to say in English, and I said it in Ichishkíin kind of and then it just set me back in all of the different ability groups that they had designated for each of those students at that point, um, and not recognize that I was saying the colors correctly, just not in the, not in English.

Elese and her sister's decisions to be intentional in teaching Ichishkíin to their children show *Átaw px̲wíni* 'Deep thought and feeling; meditation and mindfulness' through their awareness of how growing up as Ichishkíin speakers impacted them – and others, even educational administrators, and teachers. Elese not only supports her children's use of Ichishkíin but helps to teach her children's teachers some of the common language her family uses and works tirelessly to improve access to Yakama language and culture

238

throughout curriculum for all students on and around Yakama Nation. When it comes to educational sovereignty, *Yáychunal* is certainly a Virtue Elese seems to have a strong grasp on while unwaveringly grounding herself in her beliefs with *Pina'tma'áakt* 'Taking care and being aware of one's total being; balance and harmony; integrity; honor; nobility in crisis'. I've also had the privilege to serve on projects with Elese and witness her incredible ability to speak through tensions with such *Tma'áakni* 'Respect' that it bridges perspectives and realigns the room to remind that everyone present is working towards the same goal.

5.2.7. "It's Not Enough"

A final yet constant challenge for parents is the feeling that there is always more we could be doing with language. As one shares, "we do a little bit, but not enough, you know. I think there needs to be a lot more opportunities". Mersaedy speaks to this as well, also bringing back the challenges of time and desires to incorporate more structured commitment to language in her home that could be or become a more automatic part of their daily routine saying,

> …I say, I want it; I say I wanna do this but then I got all these other different projects that I'm working on, like different things that I got going on and I don't fully dedicate enough time to language. I say I want it, but I'm I'm not giving it as much as I like or want to, so put in, maybe even dedicating every day, one hour or a certain day like Thursday morning or Saturday afternoon we're gonna go over this or that, or different things. And so that's what I've been trying to figure out. Since we're all home creating a schedule of, OK, these are the projects on the board, these are our timelines or deadlines and but then making sure language gets right in there as well, like equal time and dedication. Then time frame, so creating a schedule so it's more structured and it becomes a routine. We're gonna go over this or that on this day, or even if it's just time like reading or going over things or

239

even discussion. And so, I think that's been one of my own frustrations and it's just something that I need to work on and make that full commitment and not just be like yeah that's what I wanna do, but truly do it, don't just talk about it, be about it.

While parents and caretakers might be more acutely aware of this need to do more for their children and in their homes regarding language, again, the burden should not fall on them alone. There is so much knowledge and so many skills within the community, we can draw on partnerships to spread this responsibility out, contributing to a more unified approach aligning with both *Pina'tma'áakt* 'taking care and being aware of one's total being; balance and harmony; integrity; honor; nobility in crisis', and *Wapítat Ttáwaxt* 'help family growth; service to others'. In the following section, I present some of the hopes parents have for future Ichishkíin use in their homes and community, resources they identify as in need, and share ideas about potential future partnerships.

5.3. Hopes for Future Language Use

Parents shared some of their more immediate goals for their Ichishkíin language use as well as more long-term hopes and dreams. Eight themes emerged through our conversations including things parents are looking forward to after the pandemic (section 5.4.1.), reintegrating more place based and experiential learning into their children's lives (section 5.4.2), a special kind of motivation many parents mention around using language once they become parents (section 5.4.3.), hopes for living more in the language (section 5.4.4.), hopes for their children to share their language knowledge with others (section 5.4.5.), hopes for future schooling (section 5.4.6.) and community collaborations (section 5.4.7.), and a powerful reflection on the position of hope one parent expresses gratitude to have (section 5.4.8.).

To begin, one parent shared an immediate hope for their children to recognize the access to language that their family has now that won't always be there. They share,

> I always tell them that 'you need to listen' 'cause I tell them 'I didn't…growing up I didn't pay attention cause I was playing or just not listening. It's just like now I'm having a hard time trying to learn it all of it. I was like 'you guys are young; you can do it' (laugh).

This passage shows this parent engaging in *Átaw p̲x̲wíni* 'Deep thought and feeling; meditation and mindfulness' in the way they are able to reflect on their own experiences and opportunity while at the same time modeling that for their kids in the hopes that they will be mindful of the opportunity they have now. Through that modeling, too, they are practicing *Wapítat Ttáwaxt* 'Help family growth; service to others' in the way they encourage their children to learn the language and model the struggle that comes with learning later in life.

5.3.1. Post-Pandemic Goals

This parent shared another immediate goal of resuming *Káatnam* 'Longhouse' attendance which was disrupted by the pandemic along with other gatherings, saying,

> Yeah, well, we used to, we always go to the Longhouse so, but lately 'cause COVID picked up everything's been cancelled so everyone's been home…but the longhouse is where the kids would hear a lot of the language, I mean like spoken not just single words or phrases so that was…I really liked that because they got to hear when my Uncle and them would get up and talk about the land and where the songs come from…so if we could go to the Longhouse every day that would be awesome.

As stated, this is a space their family would hear the language spoken regularly, a rich resource that is not replicable through things like remote gatherings during pandemic

restrictions. This pandemic has been a time that has required us to practice *Itmá'akshá* 'Cautious and careful of all things and others; restrained, peaceful, and responsible' where we sacrifice so many aspects of community out of *Tma'áakni* 'Respect' for the well-being and protection of all. By *not* gathering together at this time, too, we practice *Wapítat Ttáwaxt* 'Help family growth; service to others' in the hopes that it will ultimately help us gather again sooner rather than later.

Jasmine also talked about the longhouse as a place where Ichishkíin is spoken and Tma'áakni 'Respect' is taught through the language. She shared hopes of bringing her children to longhouse so that they, particularly her youngest, doesn't have to go back when he's older to learn but rather that he grows with the language and teachings as part of his being – not just for special events but as a way of life. In her words,

> …I didn't grow up in the longhouse and so everything I'm doing now is, I'm learning as an adult because I want to learn as an adult. And so, one thing that I've been kind of going back and forth in my head is someday going to the longhouse and if I go to longhouse is it going to be…where I'm plugged in regularly? Is it just gonna be just during the feast that they have? Because right now all – I go to the longhouse, it's only for funerals and I don't want to just go for funerals. And so I would want my kids to have that exposure, I'd want my youngest to know that and I know that's a place where you can pick up the language, they speak the language, do their teachings, they'll teach you in the language first if they have something to say, then they will translate it to you in English…so I would want that to be something that, that's part of my son, my youngest son's way of life. We're learning it, but for him I would hope that would be more of a natural thing that he doesn't have to learn those things, that it's something that he will pass down and it will be something that runs through his bloodline…so I know I would want that for my future for my grandkids to have that, like that's who they

are, that's their way of life. That's not something that you're having to relearn or something, it's who you are…

Similarly, a post-pandemic goal for Elese is to be able to resume regular practices that bring opportunities to hear and use language and conduct themselves appropriately in those contexts. In her words,

> I want to bring my children back into back into the practice of going and attending Sunday services, whether it's a Shaker church or a longhouse. And that they're able to understand what's going on and what's being said…during that ceremony and during those services, and then they're able to carry themselves and conduct themselves you know, as appropriate for whichever place they're at…

Elese emphasizes here a desire for opportunities that help teach her children *Tma'áakni* 'Respect' in carrying out cultural practices and helping to preserve Yakama ways. She elaborates to share how language fits into this Virtue, too, saying,

> …and that when they speak 'cause one of the things that I grew up with is that when they speak, especially if they're in on the *Waash* ['longhouse floor'] or something, that you're supposed to speak in the language first and, and almost entirely if possible, you know, and I think that that teaching in my family is important and I, I want them to be able to introduce themselves and be able to speak and say their intentions about speaking. Even if they have to do some of it in English. I want them to be able to…speak and present themselves appropriate for like the setting that they're in.

In addition to *Tma'áakni,* this is also an example, again, of *Wapítat Ttáwaxt* 'Help family growth; service to others' in the way she is raising her children to contribute to their community in a positive way and uphold their Yakama teachings. She continues to describe aspects of Yakama educational practices, which are inherently connected to place, and shares hopes to integrate language into those practices, too,

243

And…I think that there are certain activities that we do, so I want them to learn how to do those activities and learn how to call out those activities in the language. Very much like a place-based kind of learning, which is what we're really devoid of right now. Because I just keep them all hunkered down in our house [due to the pandemic].

We see an example again of how families are practicing *Itmá'akshá* 'Cautious and careful of all things and others; restrained, peaceful, and responsible' during the pandemic in the way she has shifted regular activities with her family to avoid harm.

5.3.2. Place-Based and Experiential Learning

Tma'áakni, too, is evident again in Elese's commitment to educating her children in a Yakama way. She goes on to provide a beautiful example of a place-based practice she and a few others engaged in with their kids,

We've taken them out together [for] Tules and I felt like that was a good one. It… was very, like, difficult work because again, it was like a real, a real tight knit cluster of me and my sister and I think one other adult with a bunch of kids and so we had to focus on our activity of cutting while at the same time, we had like a 3-year-old, you know – a bunch of a bunch of babies wandering around. It's a little bit hard they, they learn by observing, right?

Elese continues with a reflection and notes for improvement from an educational standpoint, including incorporating more Ichishkíin into the experience. Her words point back to some of the challenges of limited resources and time Elese and other parents mentioned earlier; seeking that balance associated with *Pina'tma'áakt* and preserving cultural teachings and ways of educating with *Tma'áakni.*

But then…there's some things where I wish that that could have been strengthened. It wasn't so hard for us to get out there and do those things so that we could pay more attention to, you know, what they're taking in and ask them questions about, you know, what they're seeing and and talk to them more in the language, because when you go out there and you have your kids it's good to bring them. But at some point you have to you have to get the work done, right? and so it's not like you can sit there and talk to them about the tules and what we're going to be doing with the tule it's – you just have to get it done.

Elese goes on further to remind us of the need to keep our little ones' perspectives in mind while they are experiencing and learning from their environment, reminding us of our role to teach them to relate with *Tma'áakni* to all that is around them and to engage with *Átaw px̱wíni*, growing along with all they are taking in.

I think a lot of the learning modules have been set up for like a classroom-based structure. But with little ones, it's it's almost like you you you have to be ready to explore the environment just as much as just as much as they are, you know, being new to an environment. And then be able to talk with them about whatever is going on in that environment. And and have those words already available that's, it's tough sometimes.

In addition to the Virtues mentioned above, this contemplation also touches again on the challenge of having limited ability with language as learners ourselves, highlighting a need for supports around outdoor education and language for traditional activities such as gathering tule.

5.3.3. Intergenerational Force of Motivation

Of her immediate hopes, Mariana shared, "A month from now I hope I just have a little bit more in the present perfective or something and do my homework." She goes on to envision a year further out, sharing,

> I think in a year imagining having 9 month old, I want to be that much more intentional with the language because **as soon as we had Ayút immediately we both started using as much language in our home than we have ever done ever** you know I have always just said I love you and good morning and these things to my partner but **it becomes this whole other energy when we are both committed to saying them to our son**. So I feel excited the more phrases I will learn and more I can share with my next baby and of course my first born. And I feel like that is a **role of parents life in general you want to set him up with more – way more whatever way more is** even if you are not fluent in language and culture...I want him to just have that much more than I did.

Mariana talks here about that force so many parents have remarked on that enhances our motivation around speaking to babies in their Indigenous language. This force, that, as Mariana says, also guides us to want more for our children seems to embody all of the Nine Virtues (Wilkins, 2008) and more but perhaps most noticeably *Wapítat Ttáwaxt* in the way we recognize language as an inherently relational entity that connects so directly to culture, identity, and well-being while strengthening the relationships it connects itself and us through. She talks about this relationship to identity and belonging that she has observed comes from being named in the language at birth, saying, "And even just like, even with my friends that have Indian names as their first names, like, I already have seen that in them just understanding that value was there at birth…"

Another parent speaks to this sense of intergenerational motivation as well and how it inspires a heightened cultural engagement with babies and intergenerational connection and knowledge sharing. In this parent's words,

> Having him makes me excited to do things like more cultural things and so I, I've always sewn but like learning to sew ribbon shirt like ok, that's that's actually fun now like I want to learn to do that yeah, I mean I should have done that when I was, like…when I've been with my husband, but like I don't want to sew for him (laughs)…Yeah, no it is like when he came I was like OK so like he's growing out of his first baby board. So, I bought material for the second one and my aunt, my cousin, makes boards so like, oh we'll get started on his board and I was like, oh, I want to learn so you need to teach me. And so, there's this drive now it's like oh now you want to learn. I want to learn now…I think having him is this big push or motivation to like learn more, to do more.

Mersaedy also talks about this special motivation and its connection to creating a new generation of first language speakers, saying,

> Yeah, that's kind of where I'm at too, how my language journey learning, it's like, oh yeah, I can speak a little bit but I want to become more fluent become a better speaker/teacher and then it's something that I wanted for myself, but after having him, it's like the the push is even more. It's like, alright I had that time to learn and whatever but now I have him and I gotta do this, I wanna do this, the drive is even stronger, but it's more like right now, immediate, I gotta do something right now because now is the time, when they're little sponges and they could pick it up and not be bashful about speaking it they'll just be ok to speak, you know. Essentially it could possibly be his first language, you know, so that's kind of my push and drive right now is to really put more time, effort and dedication into our language learning and change it from just my own personal vision and journey to a family journey, I guess you know together our language learning. Essentially how it's

247

going to come back is, you know, different families taking that step of speaking it and learning it together in a home.

Mersaedy elaborates on the idea that this is truly family work saying,

> I feel kind of rejuvenated after having my son I'm like not lollygagging, you know…but now I feel it's not for me anymore…It is but it's more so for him…I don't know. It's hard to explain it, I guess, but it's – the drive is even more like I gotta do more, I gotta get me dedicated more, give more time and effort, and take it more serious about our language learning and speaking, change the dynamic of this, of me learning to now it's my family. Figure out how to best do that. Learn and speak together.

Mersaedy's words highlight the magnitude of this work and the way it takes daily efforts by families within their own homes but how connection between families is also needed to generate a substantial shift. Later she adds how her own background with language impacts her choices and motivation now, sharing,

> Chaw, I didn't have any language growing up. I had to kind of seek it later on and I'd say high school when I started learning and hearing it and so it's just been a lifelong journey to learn my language and culture, history and places and family, you know, so that's something that's in the back of my mind that is a huge part of my drive is to – I see kids today and even parents, maybe some grandparents, they weren't given the language or know the language or any of that, so this is our opportunity to learn what we can to give it to them, and so then they're raised in it and so they know, and so they won't have to go search and try to find and so that's a huge part of it as well is kind of breaking that cycle of disconnect of the trauma, the boarding schools, colonization all that. This is our chance, you know, like you're saying, even with us and so. That's another big piece of it for me as well.

248

Mersaedy describes here how the choices parents have made to learn throughout their lives so far has culminated in their children being in often completely different positions with language than they had started with. This ties to desires several parents have mentioned about wanting more for their children than they had. She also cycles back to the forced disruptions parents are actively resisting and working to repair through their daily decisions to raise their children in language.

Mariana expands on this, reflecting from her parental lens on the differences between generational learning and how her children's experiences will necessarily be different than hers, and how hers differed from her own parents'. She shares,

> My dad grew up hearing his mom speak the language mostly when she visited her parents but wasn't taught any, so he only kept a few words. So I only grew up with a few words too. Now my son is exposed to way more of the language than I ever had and is getting the intentional learning space that my dad and I never had. I want to shoot for the stars for him to reach some level of fluency but I know he will just pick up what he picks up and I'll just have to see where he may take the language learning journey when he gets older.

We see in her reflection here Mariana engaging in *Átaw pxwíni*, considering her place now compared to her childhood and her father's childhood, both hearing the language but in different ways, not having to engage with it through thoughts of activism or revitalization, but experiencing it as the norm. Now as a parent, Mariana considers her role in cultivating language with her son and other future generations. She also echoes other parents' hopes for a post-pandemic future where opportunities to connect in

community with language resume as well as hopes for her son and his role and responsibility as a speaker.

> …and I will try to you know like, in the future, and in the non-covid inundated future you know, I bring him to the longhouse more and, you know, whatever language bootcamp kid things more, you know, or camp Chapparral or something, you know, where he is within it and then just would to be a stronger speaker advocate and pass that on and, you know, see the value.

Though already mentioned, I am just so struck to say again that this series of intergenerational reflection beautifully exemplifies both *Átaw px̱wíni* and *Wapítat Ttáwax̱t* in the way Mariana shares her position in the flow of time between generations, looking both forward and back. It also touches on comments above around the backwards work she is engaged in to work towards a future where children are able to hear the language fluently spoken in everyday life, like her father and other previous generations experienced.

5.3.4. Living in Language

In talking about their hopes for future Ichishkíin language use, many parents shared a desire to be able to simply 'live' in the language; have regular, everyday discussions, carry out routines, joke around, etc. One parent brought up the hope of being able to talk more casually with their children in Ichishkíin on a daily basis. They share simply that they want, "Conversation, no English…just to talk…to be able to hold that conversation with all my kids. That would be awesome," (PI1). Another parent shares a goal of "just being able to use like full sentences with each other, you know, and

250

understanding those and like baby understanding them. Uhm, I think that would be really beautiful," (PC3). Along these lines, too, Mersaedy reflects on specific activities her family engages in together, like mealtimes, where she hopes they will be able to bring in and use more language sharing,

> I think mealtimes are a good time that we all sit down at the table and eat together and so that's one thing that we do…altogether is meal time. And even in the evening time we'll sit together in the living room and watch Wheel of Fortune or just different things like that where we're all together. Bedtime, you know, getting ready. So, there are times that we are together…I would probably utilize those times like you're saying instead of adding something on like this and feeding those times that we already have with learning and speaking…

In their desires to align language practice into familiar routines and daily conversations, these parents are practicing *Átaw px̣wíni* 'Deep thought and feeling; meditation and mindfulness' in the way they reflect on how language corresponds to the daily life their families already enjoy together. In this way they are working towards *Pina'tma'áakt* 'Taking care and being aware of one's total being; balance and harmony; integrity; honor; nobility in crisis', seeking balance for their family to tend language use their daily lives. Mersaedy goes on to envision an ideal day at home with the language and where she would like to hear it spoken instead of English saying,

> I think it would be our basic everyday routines, like instead of 'time to wake up' or 'are are you hungry' or 'sit down' time to eat', just those basic everyday functions of like the family unit. I'd like to use that daily instead of basic English, you know? The English could easily be swapped out daily if we knew it and if we – I think it was just knowing those phrases and terminology and words that it could become a daily thing and it wouldn't have to be anything super extravagant,

251

you know, but I foresee a start in the future of just everyday habitual actions and things...

Tillet-pum also shared hopes for conversational Ichishkíin, reflecting on the conversations she wished she could have had with her own Elders and looking forward to being an Elder herself in conversation with younger generations in Ichishkíin. In her words,

> My dream, for the future is for it to be at least, well, I mean, it can't be a first language for my kids already, because we've already passed those learning years, but hopefully a first language for my grandkids possibly great grandkids. But, for the closest future, is being able to have a conversation with somebody. I would have liked to have conversation with elders, who are not here anymore, yeah, because a whole lot more can be told from that side of a conversation than speaking to them in English, you know? But if I could be an Elder like that one day where a younger person could have that kind of a conversation with me, yeah, fluently is what I would consider to be a huge dream, and I mean it's not impossible because we're here…and having my kids learn it to where they would want their friends to learn it…

Tillet-pum shares here how her experiences help shape her hopes for the future and in this way she influences a reality for those dreams reminding us profoundly again that this is generational work and sharing reflections in *Átaw pxwíni* 'Deep thought and feeling; meditation and mindfulness' of her role and placement in the larger picture of Wapítat Ttáwaxt 'Help family growth; service to others' and *Tma'áakni* 'Respect' in the way she situates herself to preserve and protect teachings from her Elders and helps extend them to future generations.

5.3.5. Sharing What They Learn

Parents also shared hopes that their children will continue sharing the Ichishkíin they learn with others. As one parent articulates,

> …what I want is for them to know the language and to speak it, teach it and just have uh – even my [student] babies, just to have them learn it and go to elementary and you know just teach the other kids and just use it all the time every day. That would be really cool.

Jasmine shares similar hopes, about her children growing to also teach what they have learned hoping

> …they're also able to use the language, but they're able to teach it to others as well, so to be a teacher, too. And we talk about – that it be normalized for them…for my youngest, that it's like that when he's my oldest son's age. That it's – I have no doubt in his mind that it's something naturally that comes out; those are the words and he has to be asked 'what did you say?, can you translate that for me?' And then he's able to teach based off maybe someone's curiosity.

These parents envision a future where the children take over leadership in growing and protecting the language, becoming teachers themselves with what they have learned and to cultivate a world where they can speak fluently, once again, in Ichishkíin. Through their hopes and encouragement, these parents are helping to instill the virtue of *Yáychunal* 'Not afraid of any type of challenge; courage; heroic perseverance' to help their children carry the language forward in a practice of *Tma'áakni* 'Respect' for all that it connects them to among each other and to their community and environment.

5.3.6. The Future of Schooling

Another parent shares dreams for an ideal future around schooling for her children and Elders with language, saying, "Oh, an immersion school would be amazing…I wish we had that because we have a little bit of fluent speakers left and why not, you know, like have them get that going, like, time's of the essence, you know," (PC2). They elaborate more on the importance of fostering intergenerational connections in this type of setting while we still can, saying,

> And I think for the ones, for our first language speakers like my grandma and stuff, you know, it's like, that's a whole another thing…you know what I mean? Like to hear it from a first language speaker like Tux̱ámshish, you know people like that, I'm like, we need to do it now while we still have them…Let it go and make it a priority, you know? And then we lost our Councilman, who was a fluent speaker. Why isn't this happening already?...I think that could be transformative in our community even if it's not complete immersion school, like seeing how close we could get to that, you know, I know it takes time to like, you know, really, like, develop a cohort…it's kind of tricky, you know, to to do that, but even if we could get as close as we could that would be a start, something…

This parent emphasizes an imperative point about the urgency to take action now to learn all we can from Elders and to connect them to the children in their community so they can have that experience, and hear the language in a way that the rest of us, no matter how hard we try, simply cannot offer in such a significant way. The best we can do is offer all the support possible to make these profound connections possible, and to continue our own learning, too. This brings the awareness associated with *Átaw px̱wíni* and allows us to learn more about how to engage in *Tma'áakni* to contribute to the

254

growth of young speakers and future educational endeavors available for Yakama

children in an effort to serve in alignment with *Wapítat Ttáwaxt*.

5.3.7. Community Collaboration

This parent advocates, too, for a variety of opportunities for language learning and use

which ties back to the idea of visibility and a need to combat the inundation of English

mentioned by several parents earlier. This parent shares it well, saying,

> …you gotta have it coming at you from a bunch of different angles…I don't want
> to hear like people saying, 'Oh well, we already have this going on so' - you
> know what I mean? There can't be that. It's like you need an action from all
> different angles, whether it's…in person classes, whether it's your digital
> learning…it's not just a one effort thing, it's like you gotta have different options
> too, you know, and have different, you know, speakers too, you know, like to kind
> of show you...

They really get to the heart of a need for an all-hands-on deck approach and a celebration

of people's skills and sharing in that together for the sake of community learning and

change. In their words,

> …I think it would take a community effort in providing, you know, a bunch of
> different things, you know, because as much as one person could do, say, one
> person could work their butt off to do one class – that's not enough, you know,
> like, bless their heart they're – thank goodness for them, that person that's doing
> that but then you can't hear somebody say, 'Oh well, we already got that one class
> going we're putting [resources] toward that', like you know what I mean? Like –
> no, it needs to be more, it needs to be all different angles teaching our kids for

255

them to really become good speakers. That's what I think anyway...it just, just
takes the support from the community and the leadership, that's all it takes.

This passage is evident of *Piná'iwaat kw'aɬáni* 'Self-denial and gratitude, humility',
recognizing a need to be humble and put all else aside to work towards a common goal,
as well as *Tma'áakni* 'Respect' to recognize the strength of community and its ability to
affect the change so many people have shared a desire to see. It isn't uncommon to hear
that those working with language revitalization often feel overwhelmed and stretched
thin. If we can recognize the many incredible strengths already present, we can imagine
where a collective effort can lead. They elaborate to emphasize the richness of skills and
knowledge present in the community, saying, "…you know, we have a lot of cultural
resources from our people in this area, but for some the opportunities are not
translating…". Such resources could be heightened through organization and advocacy,
programming, support groups, educational and cultural events, etc.

As we have heard in this section, parents' hopes are overflowing for a future that
offers their children more access and opportunities to hear and use Ichishkíin; they wish
for the ability to share simple, daily conversations with their children in the language and
hope their children will grow to teach their peers and others and become leaders with the
language as one of their many strengths and grounding forces. *Wapítat Ttáwaxt* 'Help
family growth; service to others' is such a prevalent Virtue throughout these stories and I
am humbled in the way these parents so generously articulated their thoughts with *Átaw
pxwíni* 'Deep thought and feeling; meditation and mindfulness' each sharing the ways
they guide their children with *Yáychunal* 'Not afraid of any type of challenge; courage;
heroic perseverance'. The following section shares some of the resources parents

256

identified would be helpful in supporting them to use more language with their families in the short and long-term.

5.3.8. There is Hope

Here Mersaedy shares some final thoughts reflecting a sense of hope stemming from the momentum she observes happening towards language cultivation, sharing, and growth. She talks about the gifts of knowledge Elders have shared that allow us to have this language now to share with our children and follow the leadership of youth for whom interest is growing, too. In her words,

> I think there is hope even though we're at the tail end of the Elders, the old ones, you know, they've left enough tidbits and pieces and everything behind that we can still pick it up, and especially with this kind of language momentum going right now, and immersion schools coming back and language classes in the school and the different tribes, being able to certify their own teachers to put them into their own schools and language nests popping up and the online classes and then there's apps now there's a lot of resources out there, and, I think, I feel hopeful for it. Like, 10 years ago maybe I wasn't so sure, you know, it was kind of like scary…I don't know the word, but now I see hope because with all the different – for instance around here, the interest in language learning and a lot of it is in preservation, but the shift is kind of going to from preservation to revitalization so we're not just recording and documenting writing all these notebooks and shoving them away, you know, in repository to safekeeping but we're doing that. But now it's like, OK we got this, let's create new stuff different for different ages and put it back out there to bring it back alive. So, **I feel real hopeful in the sense that it can be done in our lifetime,** like not 100% fluent across the board but enough to where it's not just teachers and elders speaking it, but you have like parents and kids that are able to be like semi fluent you know.

257

And I think even our youth are taking a more, are more interested in it, it's not something that, Oh yeah, we're Indian and then and yeah my grandpas spoke Indian then, but doesn't, you know, the youth are more interested in it right now and so I'm excited about that and I think what we gotta do is just move with the times and I hear elders say, yeah, we weren't supposed to record it, or yeah, we're not supposed to, I don't know, give it to everybody because they're gonna still make a book and make money off of it but I think a lot of people are more open minded in the sense that the only way to truly revitalize it is to put it out there and even if we do put it on apps or on websites or whatever, we gotta utilize technology, move with the times and I think, with that in mind, I think we'll be able to do great things here shortly, you know, and even especially with some, There's a lot of grant money out there, like tons of grants and there's money out there, but you can't go for it if you don't have a clear vision and a strong team. And so, people across Indian Country are building these teams and the strong teams with strong visions and like-minded individuals and getting grants and creating immersion schools or creating programs or creating these different opportunities and I just feel really hopeful, and I feel excited about, just that it's not gonna be lost or forgotten.

Yakamas we have a pretty good, pretty good start on things, you know, there's a lot of people out there that are, and I think part of it is people they speak are speakers or have stories, or these knowledge bearers like they don't, I don't think we fully have the, like reached out to them, they don't know how to give or when or what you know like they wanna help but they don't know how to help and so a lot of times you hear people talk about council and language and elders, but it's not priority, but they say it is but then it's like we gotta change that mindset of like yeah, we know all that, but you can't just cry about everything, you know, you gotta be part of the solution. Like, OK, yeah, we see that's an issue we see that's a problem, but how are we going to step in and make change or be the change or initiate what you want to see or what you want for your kids are our tribe, our future, and so by having these conversations, that's a that's a huge start.

258

This section allowed us to hear from parents about some of the hopes they have for a future with Ichishkíin for themselves, their children, their ancestors, and community. They shared words of healing and unity; of promise, dedication, and encouragement. They shared humility and profound awareness about their place in time, in people, land and language. They shared feelings of responsibility, rigor, resilience, and joy.

5.4. Resources Wanted

Parents provided a robust road map to follow in creating resources focused on family and home learning. Parents articulated explicitly what resources they want when it comes to Ichishkíin language support and opportunities for their children, homes, and community. This section shares their requests and recommendations including resources to support their daily worlds (section 5.5.1.), those to learn and use language through play (section 5.5.2.), language for relationships (section 5.5.3.), electronic resources (section 5.5.4.), dialect differences (section 5.5.5.), durability and longevity of resources (section 5.5.6.), reference materials to help support language use in the busy moments (section 5.5.7.), accessibility of resources (section 5.5.8.), visibility of language at home and in community (section 5.5.9.), language for conversations (section 5.5.10), community supports (5.5.11), language education (section 5.5.12.), and documenting Elder voices (section 5.5.13). Keep in mind, we'll see some overlap with challenges as identifying resources often involves identifying solutions to struggles.

5.4.1. Language in Life

Parents also talked about parts of their days where language might fit more easily than other times. Mariana identifies mealtimes as one potential space to intentionally practice more language together with her family in their home. Other times she envisioned revolved around transitional activities: wake up time, and going to bedtime, getting out of the house, etc. Even in thinking about these ideal contexts for potential language use, Mariana points back to the challenges of time, sharing:

> Yeah, mealtime – and we don't always have meals together every day because our schedules are so different. But I try to, you know like, I try to just sit with him at least for one meal 'cause sometimes it's like feeding him and then I'm cleaning and then I'm not sitting with him while he eats.

This speaks again to the need to find ways to design materials that fit into families lives rather than add more to their often already overflowing to-do lists. The placemats included in our gift bundle jump out to me as a material of this nature. I use one with my toddler at home and he'll look at the pictures on it, point to things, name them; he has brought his own ideas to it, too, using a dry erase pen to color in different items while naming them. With the QR code providing easy access to audio of the phrases on the back of the placemat, it's easy – even when we do have to get up and multi-task during meals – to play through them and hear, if not echo, the phrases as we listen. This passage reminds me, too, that it is important to create materials that can be adapted or flexible for families to sort of customize them in ways that are most useful to them.

Bringing us back for a moment to one of the Nine Virtues (Wilkins, 2008), Mariana also talks about a sense of mindfulness reflective of *Átaw pxwíni* 'Deep thought

260

and feeling; meditation and mindfulness' that came up for her in considering daily routines and being intentional to designate Ichishkíin use specially for them,

> …that's just a helpful question…I don't think about in my day-to-day 'how do I bring more Ichishkíin?' I guess I think it is sort of like…I have it, I'm just using it and I might pick up something and then I'm using it. But like, how do I intentionally sit with my son?

Later she adds, too, "…I think sometimes just posing those good questions for families open ended questions like that…I feel like sometimes you just get something [from the inquiry]." This speaks to a potential need for regular opportunities to pose these sorts of questions and support each other as parents and families in these efforts; a way to engage in *Átaw pxwíni* to help support individual and communal growth in language through intention and *Wapítat Ttáwaxt* 'Help family growth; service to others'. Along these lines of support and community, Mariana also shared an important reminder that came from meeting with her own supportive group of Ichishkíin learners and advocates,

> …I think sometimes its like that permission piece – and we talked about this in our study group too – you have permission to speak your language at home and make mistakes, or you have permission to learn one of these Yakama legends in the Anakú Iwachá book and share it with your family, and I feel like sometimes people need to hear that…

She adds that it could be helpful, too, even to include encouragement and reminder to families in the materials we create, saying, "…I feel like just some sort of a welcoming like, 'this is for you, we want you to share this' maybe even acknowledge that 'you are

261

gonna make mistakes and that's part of it'…" She further supports creating spaces for families to feel supported in their journeys with Ichishkíin learning, saying,

> …I think for me a big thing…that has helped is just that, the community part of that we've had in our study group. It feels like we created this, like, safe space for us with these very different background of Yakamas and where we live and our upbringing and to just kind of flesh out things that I feel like has made it easier for me to speak and write…how can you give that to families that aren't gonna be in those spaces but still feel like they are getting this like warm welcoming to just share and try on anything…

Mariana speaks from the experience of being part of a committed class-based cohort of Ichishkíin learners going on three years and how that sense of community and shared experience is something she believes would help families as they strive to speak more together at home. Tying back to the topic of challenges, Mariana also comments on the potential power, too, of the larger Tribal community to contribute to hesitations in using more language. In her words,

> …I feel like the hesitation is a big challenge to just like starting somewhere and you hear it pretty much from anybody ever that does language work – start somewhere, share words, do anything, you know, but and I don't know sometimes I feel like you really need to hear it clear and loud from your own people because I, I don't know how much I have heard it from specifically Yakamas. But I have just done a lot of work in several Native organizations over the years and working with lots of different Tribes I have heard it, but I don't know how much I have heard it from my own community, you know?

Jasmine talks about mealtime, again bringing up the benefits of language visibility in supporting daily use and how materials (like the placemat presented in Chapter III) can

be designed to support other practices, too, like eating or talking about traditional foods. Concerning materials of this nature, Jasmine suggests

> …I think those would be helpful as a parent, that's something you can put on your table at your house if you wanted to laminate it and you have it on your table and you could see it every day and maybe even when you're eating those foods, or maybe it would encourage a family to make sure they have those foods more regularly or how to access them too...

5.4.2. Language in Play

Jasmine goes on to elaborate about being mindful of where language materials and supports can fit into daily life and encourage not just learning but language *use* saying,

> I think really just time at the end of the day. Making time to be mindful of using it, I guess. And ways – so if I'm playing with him it's like, oh can I – he has colored blocks, can I use the language and the colored blocks? Can we count in the language, count his blocks? Can we count the animals the way you would count people and be mindful in those ways of of doing that? And so, yeah, I think just **taking more of a step back to see where I can include it in just the small moments of the day,** or even just – again, I think even bringing back in the phrases. How do I, how can I just bring back those little phrases into the regular day? So, when I'm waking up in the morning, so I'm saying good morning, telling him *shix máytsk̲i* and stuff like that so yeah, I think just practicing it, getting back in the habit of practicing it.

Tillet-pum shares some of the resources her family creates and how it's a constant search for materials that are meaningful in matching Ichishkíin and some of the ways she adapts with other materials and activities to help fill some of the gaps.

> …my *Nána* also sends things like…stuffed toys that she names already, and though when she names them, if it's a stuffed elephant or something, she gives it

263

the elephant name…she hasn't really been able to find more traditional animals like a salmon or a deer or anything…I'm working at that though, because she has the cards and…the words printed out. But, you know, she just doesn't have the object to send to us 'cause she lives in [another state] and we live in Warm Springs…so that, it's like her way of trying to help me introduce it 'cause I don't have the resources that she does. She's making some up just like the book, she'll go and she'll buy the book and with that – she knows what the colors are or what the numbers are and she'll just print them off, put them in the book.

Tillet-pum's words here take us back to that notion of *Yaychunal* in the way a lack of adequate materials does not stop her from teaching her children Ichishkíin; she draws on her own knowledge and resources, including family, to navigate around potential obstacles. Her passage speaks to a need for relevant materials – objects such as toys and stuffed animals with their names attached, books and cards that are specific to culture and language rather than including those as an overlay to resources that don't exactly match up.

5.4.2.1. Children's Books

Another resource several parents identified a want for was children's books. For example, Tillet-pum identified this as a lacking area saying,

…it's been really hard for me trying to find children books. I mean, I think that's something that I did mention to [my *nána*] before and I think that's why she started finding books with the animals, she's like 'well, I'm just gonna buy this book. I know all of these colors, at least I've heard them in class before' so she'd print it off and send it to me because I told her, I said, I don't know any of the books and if there are books, there's maybe one available in Oregon and the language program here in Warm Springs that had started – they teach it every day

or twice a week, I think, in their school. But because we have agency District, and Paiute District and some national district, they have their own dialects of the language they send kids off wherever the parent says, 'well, we're more Paiutes, so they're gonna learn about Paiutes'. And I'm like, well, we just want to know the language and we can adjust dialects as we learn and if they have books, like some of those books, they're nonexistent anymore…and they, they really covet it. So, I have gotten some books that they've made in the language class, like they'll have kids draw a picture and they'll write a sentence under it you know, and I have some of those, but again, they're different dialects and their hash marks are different. So, try to teach that a five and a nine-year-old is not, I'm not prepared to do that yet so.

Tillet-pum points to a need for books to perhaps serve multiple dialects of the area, or support for parents to be able to work with those that are written in a different dialect.

Mersaedy also mentioned books as a needed resource for how drawn to them her son is and how much time he spends engaging with them. She shared,

…he loves reading his books. He has a lot of books and he'll always go to his corner and pick books out. So I think that would be awesome to have just even little picture books – even with just simple phrases, you know, like the brown bear, simple ones like that where they're learning different animals or colors or numbers, or even just, I don't know anything really. I think that would be really helpful, too, because at this little age, less than two, they're really curious on the pictures and pointing and flipping pages and the books really captivate his attention like a bunch during the day, and so that's something that, I need to spend more time with him on that.

Here Mersaedy echoes that need we have heard mentioned throughout this dissertation to design resources to better fit into the lives of families rather. Since her son and other children spend so much time already reading books and learning from them, it makes sense to provide materials of this type in Ichishkíin.

265

Elese shared that, as a math teacher, she hadn't given much previous thought to literacy materials until more recently. In thinking about what resources would be helpful to her and her children, Elese also mentioned books, specifically those that reinforce language through repetition. She held up an activity book designed for kids to practice different ways of learning to read, write, and work with the written representations of a language's sounds. She shared that her younger child is very drawn to these sorts of books, saying,

> The biggest gap is like repetitive kinds of easily accessible - because people are so, so short on time and to create materials that we don't have - books like this, like you can walk into any store and get a book like this one for preschool…but I think that we don't have…these kinds of activity books that are just almost self-directed…just self-explanatory for people who don't have a background in, in teaching. Because you can find these at Walmart or Target or any other store for English and even for Spanish, but not for Ichishkíin. And I feel like even though it looks like a low kind of cognitive activity, what it's doing is it's reinforcing seeing the letters, it's reinforcing like the words themselves, and I think that things like this are easy enough to make…for our language. But I mean for, for me it's like I just write it in a notebook and then and here we go, right?

As Elese was speaking, she was showing me an activity book her youngest child enjoys working with, flipping to pages designed for children to trace the letters or words to begin to learn how to write them, eventually filling in blank lines with letters or words they no longer have to trace. As she said, this might seem simple but this kind of practice provides another targeted way for children to strengthen their relationship with the sounds of the language.

5.4.2.2. Songs and Cartoons

Mariana also brings up the natural gravitation of kids to songs and cartoons, and how quickly they pick up on language in these forms. She says,

> ...it's so hard 'cause in the idyllic form of me parenting...we're not going to watch a lot of TV. But we're in a pandemic and it helped me work from home. During the onset of the pandemic was when he turned into a toddler and when we started watching more shows and he became interested in this show called CocoMelon… which is just a bunch of animated sing-alongs and he picked up the songs easily...which makes sense, how do kids learn? They learn with songs, you know…

Mariana goes on to talk about some of the songs that are available in Ichishkíin but notes the difference between those that are designed specifically to capture children's attention compared to more simple recordings of kids singing. In her words,

> I know that there are some of the sing-alongs [in Ichishkíin] but some of them are harder to pick up. I love watching the kids sing it, but it's really hard to actually hear what they're all saying enough to memorize it. If there was something like that QR code...that would be amazing to just have, something super simple to learn and to see the words. Having a song with a really catchy tune - and it doesn't even have to be the catchy tune in terms of like this Western ideal, and to have the animation piece because that's what they're drawn to, ...So if there was like something I would want (laughs) in Ichishkíin, it would be the CocoMelon done in Ichishkíin, or even...those song books or books with QR codes. I feel like, you know, that's the next best option to have for the kid to hear it, you know...

In saying she loves watching the kids sing, Mariana's referring to YouTube videos on Twálatin's channel of children in the Zillah After School program and at the Yakama Nation Summer Language Bootcamp singing live versions of songs in Ichishkíin like 'If

267

you're happy and you know it' and a lullabye '*Kakyamamí walptáykt'* 'Song about Creatures' Twálatin learned from and Elder. People in the community do enjoy seeing the kids representing the language in this way but, as Mariana shares, those resources alone are not always easy to learn from for either her or her son and might benefit from adding other supports to help learners take on the new language and sing along more easily. She also talks about books with audio that her son gravitates towards, saying,

> We found this songbook at a yard sale, it was plastic and every page had the rhyme. He would press a button, hear a song, and he just picks them up so fast and ...sometimes I have these moments where I just feel extremely behind in what he's picking up. I feel the urgency to learn this Ichishkíin lullaby really quick, so I can share it...I guess my thought is that inundation, you know, it's like he's hearing all these catchy English songs from the TV or whatever songs they're sharing at his preschool. But what if at least he had, like, this Ichishkíin version which feels, you know, pretty futuristic now but **how do you surround them with the language when we're not going to be surrounded by Elders?** Even just for people like myself living in Olympia where we just don't get to go to the longhouse very much, and other spaces where we are hearing language.

She talks about that idea of inundation that is such a common goal in incorporating more language into our daily lives; replacing things that are already regular parts of our worlds with Ichishkíin versions of them is a dream many of us share. On this Mariana asks a key question that bears repeating as it speaks to the heart of all of our efforts, and the motivation behind this project - **how can we surround our children with Ichishkíin when we're not able to be surrounded by fluent Elders regularly?** Mariana's passages here call out a need to find ways to incorporate Ichishkíin into the everyday items and activities our children are already engaging with on a daily basis – books, toys, songs, etc.

While, like Mariana, most of us do not have Elders to lovingly envelop our children in their Ichishkíin language every day, we do have a fair and growing amount of resources that can help expose our children – and us as learners – to the language, though nothing replaces that customized, relational interaction that comes with daily conversation. Once again, we come back to the urgent need to provide access to existing materials for families to learn from together, build supports into those that aren't quite meeting their needs or drawing children in like some of their English counterparts do, and to create new materials that will support families to reach their goals of increasing conversational engagement in their homes.

5.4.2.3. Toys

Mariana elaborates on some of the toys her son and other young children generally play with on a regular basis and considers how they would be valuable resources to help learn language, too, saying,

> …even just the really bare bones, things that he's picking up like…we had these, like, board puzzles like the kind of first puzzles that they have, and it's like different fruits, so, it's like even if you had that…board puzzle…that he's interacting with and it has the name so that I can repeat that back to them, you know, 'cause really that name is for me not for a one year old that really begins to play with those puzzles. I think, like, thinking of like the really basic toys like more kinetic toy type things, classic toys that toddlers and really babies start with like how, how would there be language on there for that parent to just begin to name those things and then. Yeah, I think even…if they had more, just the phrases that you just say to your kids.

Jasmine also talked about embedding language into simple toys as a marker for parents to have little visual reminders to use the language when they see it, saying,

269

…I've even seen little toys, like those little squishy toys that have – so if it was the eagle it would have x̱wayamá on the back, you know. So toys that already have the label too that a kid can play with, and then if a parent is playing with their child and they can say 'oh this is a x̱wayamá', you can see that name if you don't remember what it's actually called, right?

These excerpts make me visualize these toys as building blocks for both parents and babies to learn together, scaffolding language development according to young children's needs and allowing parents to incorporate language into activities they are already engaged in with their children as they grow which helps also with the barriers of time we heard so much about in previous stories. To start this could be as simple as adding QR code stickers to existing toys for parents to scan and practice during play with their children and grow to include more sophisticated language as development and language skills progress for both parents and their young children.

Thinking developmentally like this, too, another parent brings up that there is specific 'baby talk' in Ichishkíin and shares a desire for mothers to have access to this saying, "for the mothers…learning more of the baby talk would be helpful, you know. You can start that language thinking; get in the zone for that life with that baby."

5.4.3. Language for Relationships

Tillet-pum shares the importance of teaching her children family terms and making those relational connections, a practice which has been heightened by the distance between family members during the pandemic saying,

…trying to distinguish differences with our son, our oldest, because he's nonverbal he does say some things, like he calls me and his *ála* [paternal grandmother/dad's mom], both of us mom….we're all mommy. So, we're trying

270

to say that's your *ála*, that's *ála*, 'cause it might be easier, but we're not, we're not at that point yet. Because *íła* [mom] is really hard to say for him. With his *púsha* [paternal grandfather/dad's dad], we say 'that's your *púsha*, go see *púsha*', and *tíla* [maternal grandfather/mom's dad], they're really confused because they're cousins, when their cousins are around and they say 'that's my *tíla*' and they're like, 'wait, but how come my grandpa is my *púsha* and your grandpa is your *tíla*?', they're super confused with it. But identifying people is really important at this point, because like with the pandemic and everything, we're trying to help them and show them that – I mean, you know, they don't just have their their *ála* and their *púsha* who are here with us in Warm Springs but their *káła* [maternal grandmother/mom's mom]. And all their aunties are all over in Washington and Idaho, and all these other places. **So**, **for us trying to get them to identify who they are and what what to call them is super super important for us right now** because some of them they have not seen in two years or two or three years whenever all of this started.

Using family terms is also a practice Tux̱ámshish holds as incredibly important and one she emphasizes regularly as an area to teach and support people to use. She says these terms help people remember how they are connected and through using them those relationships are more intimately acknowledged and respected

5.4.4. Electronic Resources

Tillet-pum shares that videos as such aren't a go to resource for her but that she appreciates the being able to listen to the language in them sharing,

We we don't watch them, we listen to them. If I hook my phone up to my car we listen to it on the car or on a drive up. That's mostly it or…if I have headphones on, I'll just listen to it when I'm cleaning or doing dishes, or doing laundry or something, but that's about it…It just depends on what the day looks like…I try to do it at least weekly though, just because it's one of those things that I do miss,

271

you know, I miss listening to it. So…if I have that feeling or I just really miss something more, nine times out of 10, most often it's going to be because I miss hearing people talk like that.

Another parent talked about digital resources, sharing an affinity for videos that present language in a classroom style manner over things like the language app that has been developed relatively recently also bringing up again the challenges of written materials and pronunciation. They share,

> …I think new the app is nice but I'm not drawn to it. Maybe I just need to figure it out a little bit more, too. But I do like like Greg's old videos they're super, like, they're funny and like, you can learn from them. So, I like those video parts 'cause it's visual and you can like rewatch and rewatch to learn. So, I think videos are nice because when it comes to print, like, I don't know how to pronounce it when I see it printed, you know? So that part is hard…

Later adding a component of support embedded to address the writing-pronunciation issue, saying, "I like those [old school videos] 'cause like you're visually seeing him write it out and then like saying them and how to say them." One such example of those videos is [this one of Twálatin walking us through an Ichishkíin self-introduction](#).

Another angle of visibility and access to language that caters to busy families came from one parent's suggestion to create a listserv or text notifications for events and other happenings. This parent shares,

> I would love if you guys would do some type of…maybe mass Email newsletter. Like people could, 'Oh yeah put my name on the email listserv and then there's just like reminders, 'oh, here's the link, here's class if you can make it' or, you know, 'here's this going on' language stuff…I think that would be helpful. You know having a listserv for anything you guys are doing and then - Or, you know, even a text, text would be even more optimal, 'cause sometimes they don't check

272

email but check text messages and like yeah 'you want to opt into text messages?'
Then, oh yeah, there's class starting soon. Like boom, right? That would be
good… big help for me to remind me, I get so wrapped up in my kids.

This type of resource would go nicely with the implementation of a resource center at
HULC which also organizes Ichishkíin language classes at Heritage University and is in
the process of expanding its program. For example, as we work to respond to parent
requests for resources including outreach, gatherings, support groups and classes,
notifications through a listserv or text reminder could help to raise awareness of events
before they happen or alert and route parents to new resources as they become available.

5.4.5. Dialect Differences

Tillet-pum speaks to a need for resources that support different aspects of dialect
variation, saying,

> Uh, super helpful so over here in Warm Springs we have KWSO on our local
> radio they have…they have elders who have already passed on, and once their
> memorial passes then they put it back on the radio, who say certain phrases in
> Ichishkíin, and…they kind of put a little note, I guess or disclosure that this is not
> all Warm Springs language, this is in Paiute…but they don't go over the other
> district languages so. And then the next day they'll put it - this is what we used to
> speak in Simnasho and this is 'cause we're all Warm Springs and if you're a part of
> this district this is what you speak or and they had other Elders or previous chiefs
> or just even previous professions…they would spotlight people who were like the
> tribal fishermen or people who were in the tribe or they would go out and dig
> roots or based care, take for the longhouse you know they would have them say a
> phrase and 'cause it it pertains to what they did for their people, you know? Yeah,
> but on the radio – I don't listen to local radio, the local radio station as much as I
> should I will admit that, but when I do, it's like very enlightening to know certain

273

things, but at the same time it is like, well, how come you said two is *niipt* and they say two is this and I'm just like I don't, I don't know. But that's, that's what it is for us and we also, we don't always say *niipt* we say *napt* [two in Warm Springs dialect] because we have to appease to their other tribe which is the one they're enrolled in. So, I guess for them their other tribe is, is *niipt*, but I'm the primary language speaker – trying to be – so I'm gonna say whatever I want!

Tillet-pum reflects on the challenges in recognizing how almost every word has such a big back story while also trying to use this language as a learner and being responsible for explaining so much that goes along with it to her children. More kid friendly resources might be helpful that include ways to help families identify and think through language differences, and how to show respect for them in their learning and language use. It would also be nice to hear more from Elders about how dialects, languages and code-switching would happen naturally when the languages were used more regularly in and across communities. This is another area where Tillet-pum goes along with the language as it is used by different people, keeping the goal of just getting started in mind and accepting that there are differences to be mindful of while still using the language as she has learned it. In doing so, she models this practice for her children and talks with them about the different languages or language patterns they might hear from others as well. In her words,

So, it's just, I guess having the bases covered is what's most important for the most part right now. So, I mean, when my husband says *napt* I don't press them meet and just know that both are right that's all that you need to know, is that both are right, *niipt* and *napt*. Your friend from Chiloquin, if she says something different, she's right, too, but she's right for her…and that's…just trying to appease to everything, because that's how everything is supposed to be for, you know, that longhouse, or that district or tribe or ceremony or practice, you know?

274

While these will always be conversations parents are likely to have with their children, books or materials that teach them about the cultures in their area might help to foster those conversations and help kids to recognize and celebrate the Indigenous peoples, cultures, and languages of the area. Too often, particularly in public school curricula, Native peoples are lumped together which easily lends to greater confusion and potentially conflict for kids in trying to represent their own unique heritage.

5.4.6. Resource Durability

Tillet-pum offers practical considerations around resources in the home for children. For example, she shares that things get handled and need to be durable to stand up to the reality of children's interactions with them. In responding to whether posters would be a useful resource she said,

> …not really posters, but…if we can stick them on the wall, 'cause a lot of the times what will happen is…they'll just tear it down 'cause…that's what kids do, you know? We're learning things and…they want to see it, they want to touch it, they want to feel it so I don't stop them from doing it. So, I guess if it were a poster type thing it would be something that they can't reach, and if they can't reach it, they have no interest in it, you know? But it would definitely be helpful for me, like, how I hang it up and I'll look at it all the time…and if it were things like that, I would only want it to be something like, as a parent – so it would have to be something that had like the days or the months and numbers because they're so young, you know, it would have to be something that they could comprehend…Things like that as a parent is what would be the most helpful in trying to get everyday objects to be something that they would use on a daily basis.

Tillet-pum reminds us here of the need for interactive materials that kids can grab and use and experience somehow. Materials should be made to be protected, perhaps laminated or

275

some other way, so that they are durable and useful to children over time – they can create a relationship with materials this way, one that will last.

5.4.7. Reference Materials

Mersaedy shared a need for quick reference materials that will help her use more language at home while carrying out daily routines at different times throughout the day. For example, she shares

> I think even just, say, morning time…routine, even a lunch routine…maybe night time routines and then even something by the door…so just different, I think, phrases at first but even have like conversational…So then it becomes, like we'll reference them on the wall but then it'll get to the point where we see it, and then we'll start using it, and then we'll know it. So then...you won't have to look at the wall for everything…That would be helpful, helpful for our family and especially with him. And even my son, commands 'cause there's a – everything is pretty much a command right now…he's just a little guy, but I think just those common phrases and commands would be really helpful.

Mersaedy's words share a need to create materials that not just serve as quick reference but that also, perhaps, support a scaffolded approach to language learning and use; to find ways to help parents and families go from those beginning stages to that end stage of not needing the reference so much and taking things to a conversational level as well.

In thinking about language use, Mersaedy shared that quick reference materials for different grammar patterns would be helpful around the house when she's looking to communicate in more more authentic, conversational ways in the moment.

> I think where I'm struggling still right now is some of the grammar and then the prefix and suffix. So, what I'm thinking is putting these different lists that we worked on in the different classes I've taken, putting those on the wall – we know the phonetics and we know some verbs and some nouns, but it's actually being

able to use them. And then the, I guess, the clitics I guess the he/she/it, even transitivity and then the stuff like -*yaw* [~into/for] and -*kan* [towards] and even like theirs or mine or ours, those different ones – the grammar I still struggle with. But that's something that I want to spend more time on and I think even if we put that on our wall that would help. And trying to put different sentences or phrases like what we're trying to communicate with, and then even, even if we're not saying things right, but as long as we're starting to try to put conversation or speak to each other I think that's a start. And so, by may not fully understanding and knowing the grammar part of everything but we could learn together. I think that would be helpful so even just maybe some grammar lists of those different prefix and suffix and some of the rules of second position or those different things that are gonna be the same throughout everything like language, speaking.

Again, here Mersaedy is highlighting the need to support efforts that lead to meeting parent's goals for engaging in everyday conversations with their kids in the language. As a learner, I can relate to getting stuck on the grammar and how not having it automatized in my mind and mouth can derails me mid-sentence, sometimes taking me out of the language moment completely.

Another parent elaborates on the need to have quick and varied reference materials around regular activities such as picking up toys that are also engaging for the kids. They share,

…well, my youngest he – it's picking his toys up. I'm like (sigh) and it's just, I'm like always telling him 'hurry, hurry' then he'll stop, he'll play, I'm all 'no we're putting them awaayy!' (laugh). But yeah, I was trying to remember when I did the language class with the Bootcamp with Greg he was singing a song [about picking up toys] and I was like 'I can't remember it'.

Just after this conversation, I asked Twálatin (Greg) for a quick recording of that song to send along to this parent. We also added it to the list of quick reference materials to develop and make accessible to parents and teachers of Yakama children through HULC. Another parent brought up hearing about other Tribes creating cartoons to engage children, sharing, "I've heard about other tribes have done cartoons with, you know, their language…I think that would good. Kids, you know, of course they love watching cartoons…".

5.4.8. Resource Accessibility

Mersaedy begins a discussion of accessibility of materials bringing up frustrations around knowing things are out there but not being able to incorporate them into her family learning. In her words,

> …I do want help or how to - something for language in their homes for like little, tiny ones like. Even if you guys have books or pictures or flash cards or whatever, somehow make – I don't know if it's for everybody, but I'm speaking for me right now – those resources available. So, then I can put those in my home right now to use with my son, but as a family unit. I think that would be really helpful because a lot of time it seems like you have your teachers here in the valley and everyone has their own curriculum, their lesson plans, and they teach whatever grade and sometimes people aren't so giving of all the work that they've done like, 'Oh no, I've done all this, I can't share that', you know? It's like, well yeah I get it, that's hard work but then that's the shift that we have to take of sharing with each other and taking that risk – a lot of times people are scared to give away what they've learned or attained. I guess you can't change people or how they're thinking about taking a healthy risk of like, 'oh, you want to teach your family in your home', or 'oh you wanna teach your kids' or whatever, 'here this is what I've done, this is what I've came up with there, this is what I've created and shared'.

And so, I've kind of met that – where it's like I've asked for different things and it's like, 'oh, I don't know, I don't think we can do that', you know? But not in a mean way, but kind of like – yeah, like way closed off. And so, I think even if we created something like a resource database, I seen that NILI has something but even here for Yakama I think that would be cool and I even though I'm out of the language world, I'm not teaching right now, I still follow everybody to see what everybody's got going on or what they're doing. That would be helpful, a resource database with all these teachers or language people.

As Mersaedy shares, we are overdue in finding a way to make language materials accessible at a more community level. A resource center is in immediate demand which is why Twálatin and I are working in collaboration with HULC to make sure this request is the highest priority and first step of action after hearing from parents. Ideally it will be a place where parents can also share what they have created so, as many parents have shown interest in, we can all learn from each other and get a clear idea of what even is available for helping grow our home language practice which inevitably extends to the community. This act of sharing is another way parents can come together, creating that community of shared learning and shared goals, while helping to strengthen the journeys of their own homes and others.

We have heard there is a common feeling from parents that there is always more we could be doing with language, especially for our children. As one shares, "we do a little bit, but not enough, you know. I think there needs to be a lot more opportunities." This lends to the call for more organized efforts to bring people together in the community to create programming and materials that will support them in pursuing the shared goal of increasing language use.

5.4.9. Language Visibility

Parents also shared ideas about resources that would help them to use more Ichishhkíin language in their homes. Labels were one that was mentioned multiple times, with one parent simply saying, "Oh yeah, labeling," (PI1). Mariana expands on this idea as another quick reference material and brings up the usefulness of easy access for busy parents saying,

> …we've talked about like what if we just like had premade labels that people can, like you know, quickly, you know, use blue painter tape and put it everywhere on their house or just like…having things that are just ready-made that you can, like, print and download that are the right size or you can, like, order and it's like you know all – everything just ready to go…

And another shares, "…sometimes just even putting little notes, sticky notes or whatever around the house to kind of remind you the names of different things probably get us more, you know, being able to use it throughout the day." And yet another reflects on seeing labels during visits to a friend's house that stayed up until that friend moved saying,

> I thought it was super cool and even though I didn't know how to pronounce them or say those words I thought it was really beautiful that her place was labeled, and it was labeled for years until she moved into her new home and so I thought That was super cool.

Labels contribute to the desire brought up in previous sections to make the language more visible in homes as well as out in the community and this visibility can have a powerful impact. One parent shares their experience on another Tribe's territory and remarks,

280

…you drive around and you see signs in the language just driving around in the community and that kind of like gets it in your, you know, just when you see it visually like that, that helps too you know, like, and then it's the journey thinking more about, 'oh I want my language in my life', you know, or whatever or just, you know…encouragement for it to be spoken in the workplace…maybe even incentives…

This parent brings up the added benefit of language visibility to spark interest and inspire motivation to bring language more closely into your life, like a communal reminder that this is important with more formal community-level signage serving as stable representation of that importance. They also speak to the opposite end, remarking on a lack of visibility and the impacts of that on declining language use, saying, "well, like, you know, like out of sight out of mind," (PC2), touching on the idea that finding ways to keep it "fresh in your mind" is necessary for reminding to engage in regular practice and growth.

5.4.10. Language for Conversation

Continuing with developmental considerations brings us back to the challenge parents mentioned, too, about modeling conversation for children and giving them the skills to respond appropriately to questions and language a parent has learned to ask or say. Here is another quote from Mariana sharing concern for supporting this particular type of language development for her whole family,

How do you even reflect back the answers, can they think – that, that goes into like my partnership…he can say probably the things that I'm saying really commonly, but he probably doesn't know, you know, how to answer if I am hungry, you know?

This idea of modeling language is so crucial to be intentional with in thinking about raising our children in a language we are also working to learn. Mariana expands on this, sharing another layer of resources needed for her partner who has not learned Ichishkíin so that they can model conversational phrases and interactions together for their children,

> …how do you work with your non-Yakama or Ichishkíin speaking partner and... family, you know?...I know my partner would be supportive. It's just like, it's that time, piece and…if I have labels up and, you know like, I have a label and here's a wolf like, is he really gonna know how to say *x̣álish*…

This comes back to the writing system Mariana spoke of earlier and, as mentioned, while it is phonetically designed, there is still a significant learning curve. This speaks again to the importance of providing audio along with written materials as we develop and distribute them.

Parents also shared phrases and language they use regularly that they would like to be able to say in Ichishkíin. For example, Elese highlighted parts of her family's daily routine for which language is *not* incorporated. She says,

> Yeah, like there's some everyday activities that are really common, but I don't have the language to tell tell my kids what they're doing like 'go get the mail'. I, I don't know how to say that. And 'go to the mailbox, get the mail'. Yeah, no idea. 'Get in the car'. Yeah, I can tell them to get their shoes on, but I mean at some point I just feel like if I yell out too much I'm being disrespectful to the language, yeah?

She shares more phrases, also bringing up some of the ways language use and interaction has changed since she was a child hearing language,

> ...there's some like everyday commands that you tell kids nowadays, but…I don't understand how to say them in the language too much. 'Go get the mail', 'put your mask up over your nose'. You know, 'get into the car', 'walk to the

car'…'I'll pick you up after work'. Those kinds of things are not things that I heard growing up, and they're not things that I, I can look up easily to say conversationally to the kids if I say I'm gonna be real formal. Normally when I talk to them, I just keep it real.

Because parents shared particular language and phrases they use frequently in English that they would like to be able to say in Ichishkíin, this language will be compiled with the phrases included with language parents identified as using regularly and made accessible to more families through the resource center currently under development at HULC.

5.4.11. Community Supports

In thinking about future community level supports, Mariana offers up interest in participating despite an already busy schedule. Here she shares,

> …I would so love to be a part of that lead that in any way - no I don't have time, but I mean I want to be in that space… I remember I missed Twálatin was sharing about like family zoom classes that they have done in the pandemic and I never went to any and I really wished I had…I think that is such a sweet space even if there was just some foundational phrases that we practiced and then maybe some open dialogue…I mean, you know, the thing with any dynamic is the like organic trust building and safe space that is naturally built over time…I think, yeah, there could be just these loaded feelings around whatever everybody is coming from and guilt around how much you don't have and I would love for that to happen and be a part of it in some way. And yeah I feel like I am hungry for whenever we could just actually have more in person gatherings of any kind…

In this passage, Mariana mentions three types of gatherings, all of which could have overlapping qualities. First, a zoom class for families that Twálatin offered early on in the

pandemic when we were all in shock at the dramatic changes to our social worlds. This class was low stakes, geared toward children, and focused on speaking, offering families a chance to tune in together and practice language on daily topics, sing songs, and ask questions with no requirements for attendance or commitment (it was really fun!). Second, Mariana talks about a more intimate gathering that takes time for building trust and community around learning and growing together. Last, she speaks about gathering again in person and just being together, physically in community again, after such a long time apart. This brings me back to one parent's earlier comments about needing to offer a variety of programming and opportunity for people to engage with the language in different ways, drawing from the combined strengths of the people that make up the community.

Another parent reflects on family-friendly community gatherings with meals that have been offered in the past alongside classes sharing interest in those types of gatherings again, too, saying,

> …when they had the in-person classes, then a meal provided - because then you don't have to take all that time, 'well, I've got to make dinner' and then it just doesn't work out, you know what I mean? So, like, if it's like having a meal there and they're cool with the kids being there, that's ideal.

This passage hints again at the need to create opportunities and resources that save families time rather than add to the mountains of obligations they already face in a given day. The gatherings described here offer a meal and community connection that welcomes the entire family.

284

Other parents talked positively, too, about the idea of connecting parents through gatherings or support groups. Jasmine, for example, talked in support of language gatherings with the constant caveat of time to keep in mind saying,

> So, it would depend on the time and what's going on and squeezing it in, and I have classes in the evening and I have classes on the weekends. So, it's just making time to do that. I think it would be beneficial 'cause I think you learn from other parents 'cause everyone does things differently and so I think when you get to share of like 'oh, this is what I'm doing at home', maybe somebody may not think of counting blocks in the language, or counting the toys, or realizing that hey, when they line up their animal toys you can count those in a different way. And so, I would be curious…of what another parent does at home with the language with their kid so that I could take it to my house. So I think that would be beneficial.

That time hurdle, as we heard in the section about challenges, is massive. There are so many things parents would ideally want to participate in with their children, including gatherings of some kind, but as Jasmine's excerpt illustrates, - when in the world would they do this? Perhaps gatherings in person but also creating some sort of online networking space so parents could connect at their own convenience – sometimes 2 in the morning, as Tillet-pum points out in response to whether gatherings would work with her family. She said,

> I would say yes and no. That would be super helpful resource, but at the same time it is like we would not have time unless we were meeting at 2:00 o'clock in the morning. Everyone would be asleep and we might actually have the time to talk without being interrupted…

Jasmine reminds us, too, about the power of food in bringing people together saying, "I think food's always a winner at any function you throw when you have food, whether it's snacks or a meal…"

285

Jasmine spoke about time in regard to gatherings from another angle as well and how the design of a gathering that welcomes whole families might even offer relief to parents around time and the many activities they facilitate daily.

> I think [gatherings] help any parent out if they're bringing their kids. You don't have to worry about finding a babysitter to go talk about language, you don't have to cook dinner for anybody before you…go to a meeting. So, yeah, I think a meal and then it's for the whole family…

Jasmine also talks about how gatherings can also tend to a need to normalize the language for kids – providing opportunities for them to hear it spoken, see it around, connect with their friends and others, etc., saying, "Yeah, and then with my oldest two just kind of getting that restart for him as well to expose him and maybe it might bring out something like 'oh yeah, I do know those things, too'."

> Considering Zoom gatherings/groups vs. in person, Jasmine goes on to say,

> if we're able to do it in person, I always think in person is better. I know not everybody is comfortable with that as well, and if we had to do it on Zoom, you have to do it on zoom. The only thing is, if we're on Zoom and the screen and I'm trying to get my my toddler in here he's gonna like hit the keyboards and then he's taking off, so it's more work I think, yeah…so he may not be involved the whole time.

Gatherings that maybe offer different activities/focus for different groups – an area/activity for babies/toddlers complete with child care, an area for older kids, for teens, and for adults, for example. Also thinking through things that can be done engaging all groups at once.

286

In thinking about a Support group specifically, Tillet-pum shares,

> Yeah, I think that would be super helpful, especially with learning different ways
> of how parents, they might incorporate the language into their daily lives in a way
> that I never thought of but it would be something that I might want to give a shot
> you know and when it comes to something like…if there was a once a month type
> of thing I could move my schedule around to attend, you know,

Tillet-pum suggests webinars as another work-around for busy schedules, sharing,

> and [a webinar] is even more helpful…because if, I don't know, if I have a crying
> kid or something and had to step away and they're like 'OK well [Tillet-pum,] I
> need you to say something' and I can't 'cause I stepped away so I don't know that
> they need me to talk, you know? But there are the once-a-month webinars, I catch
> them if they are something that pertains to my family. Something like this pertains
> all the time to my family, so I would definitely wanna get on it and and I feel like
> a lot of other parents might feel that way, too, as if it's given out ahead of time…I
> would definitely make time around my schedule to attend rather than well, if it's
> this Tuesday I can't make it because kids have their practice, we have to go out of
> town or whatever the case may be, you know, but we plan ahead of time and I
> have it in my calendar, OK, this is something that I'm definitely gonna be
> attending. It's not it, it would be almost a nonnegotiable for me.

Personalities are also an important component in organizing community events. While
some parents might enjoy large gatherings, others might find them overwhelming or off-
putting. For example, one parent shared,

> …like for me, I'm very introverted and a homebody, so I don't see myself going,
> like, coming out of my comfort zone to do that…Like, if it was for work like OK,
> I wear a different hat at work, I have to go to that….But if it was just for me,
> personally, I don't personally see myself going in person to a group, like I get

social anxiety, so that's something – not saying I wouldn't want to go like I'd probably go like 'I wish I could go'. I wish I could go but my anxiety keeps me captive sometimes to be like I can't do that I can't do a group today. But I think if it was maybe a small group, I would possibly, you know, OK, you gotta get out of your comfort zone it's OK to do this…And then go.

Finding ways to tend to different comfort zones should be an aspect of facilitating gatherings, too.

Mersaedy also spoke in favor of gatherings that connect parents in their efforts to speak more language at home, saying,

Yeah, I think that would be awesome. I think that would be really helpful because I know other people, other parents, they're trying to learn a language taking language classes so they try to teach their kids, but they're kind of in the same boat, I know handful of verbs, a handful nouns, I want to speak it with my kids. But so I think it would be good to have those conversations with other parents so then we can kind of see we kind of have similar goals like we want to learn language and teach it with our kids and so with other parents on board I think that would be helpful 'cause they probably have some of the same questions or thoughts…what they see and envision of language in the home with their family. I think that would be a good space to share with other parents because it's different when it's just open for like whoever when language is concerned, but the community dedication isn't fully there but if we have the parents' group, they want it so they're going to be committed and dedicated. You're not having a group that will come then stop going and come and you have more commitment and dedication and you're not trying to beg people to come like you have certain people that truly, really want to learn.

A focused group on parents, commitment perhaps inspired by a shared purpose and similar goals are important to think about too in bringing people together in this way.

Mersaedy also talks about gatherings at a program level approach as a supplement to classes as well as creating classes structured specifically for families with an all hands on deck approach that celebrates the skills of the group and the ways we can all learn from and teach each other. In her words,

> I think if there was a program in place I would like to – I don't know, classes can only go so far, but I think classes would be good…because we're all parents, we all have children and kind of the same phrases or words or sentence - dialogue, similar dialogue. I think that would be good to just go over with other parents or kids, you know, so it'd be like interactive, kind of. And then what would be cool is a family class, because we've we've taught classes where it was like the kids show up, or the parent shows up, but really, it's ideal for a family to learn together because like how it was when I was over there was we'd teach the kids they'd go home they have no one to talk to and then even the parents or grandparents were just like, oh, I don't know, you know and so it's not being as beneficial. and so, it kind of has to be like a family unit learning and speaking together in order to, I don't know, bring it back I guess. But I think even just for the home, you know, for everyday use. But if we were to have a class with families, which we really encouraged families at first we just was individual. But then we're like no bring the whole family, you know, if you can get your family to come bring them, because that's how you're gonna learn better and speak better with each other in the home, because you can come to class one day a week or twice a week and speak but when you go home, it's not really helpful if you aren't able to use it with anybody. So, I think just like a family class of, I don't know, parents with some kids and all different ages even, you know, older ones, younger ones. We can speak and talk and learn. Or even events like seasonal calendar going along that

289

like going picking or going digging like, now it's digging time. Or even like classes on making making things like now that it's feast time, everyone making shirts, shops, new outfits. And even those different types of cultural classes. And I think as a start, it wouldn't necessarily have to be in the language we could start with, the vocabulary and then work towards like, ok now we're gonna cut this, so now we're gonna do that and so it's not just everything thrown at once and then you'll have a variation of people speaking and learning and their knowledge, like it's not too much, you know what I mean? 'Cause some people get overwhelmed like Oh my gosh, talking all Indian I have no clue, all I heard was wing dress. So, it'd be like in stages maybe. Or you could start basic and then slowly dish or give like chunks of a little bit more advanced with people, but I think that would that would be good, you know, and that's kind of a win win thing of like, OK, we're creating these spaces, but then we're not only just teaching language, but we're also giving this cultural component of like digging or making a ribbon shirt or moccasins or drum or so, then it's it's all it's all connected. You know, but. I think that would be good, and that's something that I was I've always wanted to do, but it takes a lot of planning and resources and commitment and dedication, you know, doing that but I think when I heard you guys doing this so I was excited because just taking that initiative is a start and like when I looked at it, the big picture is that I want to do this do that, I have all these big dreams but then it's a lot but if you have other people that have similar visions and goals, then you can create a team and then once you have your team with everything on the table, people pick and choose what their role is and how they can help then the team will function a lot smoother because you're not like begging people to be a part of it, or you're not delegating and people are taking it the wrong way, like, I don't want to that. I think that I think it would be good and I'm I'm interested to help in whatever way I can.

Elese shares caution around important considerations for intergenerational gatherings, reminding us that some lessons, like teaching our little ones to be *wisíix* 'still'

and listen to Elders when they speak, take an incredible amount of time and discipline to teach. Elese expresses caution to keep this at the forefront in organizing these kinds of gatherings. In her words,

I think that…one of the biggest lessons that I have for my babies - one of the *biggest* lessons that I have for them is that – I even wrote it into the remote learning curriculum that I sent out to the schools – is that they must learn to respect their Elders. And if an Elder is speaking, everything else stops so that you can listen to that Elder, like everything, tablets are down, phone down for the Elder, and I think that's one of the biggest lessons that I have for my little ones and my only hesitancy with working with other families – and I'll emphasize that as like one of the most basic, foundational learnings for, for my children. I'm not sure that everybody has the same teaching…when I when I see how their children act when an Elder is speaking. But I don't want to judge it, you know? They're, they're being quiet, but they're not…hearing it, the whole thing, and I kind of worry about that, and I think to myself…if an Elder is up there speaking, your cell phone is away 'cause…**you don't know when it's next time you're going to hear them talk**…So…that's the one like healthy discipline that I'm teaching my children is to be disciplined, to pay attention to Elders and to to be 'still' *wisíix* when they're around the Elders. Even if they take a nap like [while an Elder is talking], that's more acceptable than…if they're distracting themselves from that message.

Elese reminds us again here that our time with Elders is precious and limited, a lesson our little ones need to be taught early and diligently reinforced.

5.4.12. Language Education

Returning to the topic of schooling, one parent spoke of the relationship between kids having access to Ichishkíin in schools and how that in turn can impact relationships and language use at home, building in support. In their words,

> I definitely think at the schools that it needs to be offered a lot…more strongly 'cause if my kids were, you know, still in it, you know, then I would be like, yeah, we'd all build off each other, like, you can only really practice it…if you're building it, building off other members in your household, you know, like if it's just one person learning yeah, it's kind of weird to just like be like pounding it in the rest of your family's ear, you know…

Later, they emphasize this idea, sharing, "It's the kids' schools, I think that's the biggest need. Of course, with the adult classes too. I think if they were taking it in school I'd be more likely to show up to the adult classes…". This passage emphasizes the call to create varied programs and materials, and to enhance partnerships and collaborations that support family and community learning.

Jasmine further supports this connection between language use and exposure at school or the workplace and the impact it can have on home use sharing her experience as an educator,

> I think about language with him my oldest compared to the language I do now with my youngest and so with my oldest, I think about what was I doing during that time and I was working at Head start up where it was readily available to us all the time and it was something that was expected of us to teach the children. And so, at Head Start I was using it a lot more, I was using it all the time because we were supposed to be doing it, so it was integrated into our curriculums and how do we do it through daily commands, daily simple objects that we use all the

292

time. And so I was able to carry it back home and so now that I don't – I think 'cause, of COVID and not working…with the kids at Head Start from when the COVID year happened and then I transitioned into Tribal School, I just don't use it…and I was, I miss hearing the language and having those opportunities to use it, and I don't feel like I use it at home because I'm not using it how I was using it at work and so right now I don't feel like I'm – I know stuff I'm just not utilizing it…

Later she adds,

> …I felt like at Head Start it was, I guess the expectation was there that we used it, everyone used it. We started our meetings with it, it was normal I guess to use it and so, when you got to work, it was the first thing you tell somebody was *shix máytsxi*, it wasn't 'good morning', or if you said good morning somebody would be like *shix máytski*…And then going to a different place – and I'm not saying language isn't important there – but you see the difference where if you said *shix máytski*, you kind of stick out as the one that is kind of like OK, *shix máytski*…

Mariana shares her thoughts about a Yakama centered school as a welcome and exciting future resource (and the basis for Twálatin's project). She shares,

> ...I kind of heard Twálatin share about...schooling because...I really thought a lot about if I am gonna put my son in a regular k-12 education. There is so much that is at conflict for my own ideals of how they teach children and the negative experiences I and many others have had in regular education and just a lot of the problems that are obvious and maybe not as obvious but I have read about different people that do unschooling and deschooling or traditional schooling or, of course, some schools that are having language in their schools. There are tribal schools like Chief Leschi where it is still a standard school, but they have culture there and Wahelute here that is a little closer to us...Our culture is our curriculum like **teaching kids about plants.** The curriculum I helped co-develop, Tend, Gather and Grow infuses culture and storytelling while sharing about native

293

plants and we've been partnering with this Since Time Immemorial Sovereignty curriculum.

This passage also ties back to earlier comments about the considerations that go into choosing different types of schooling for our children and the dreams for many parents of a school that embeds their children's learning in more traditional ways of educating. Mariana envisions such an experience sharing examples of what some activities might look like,

> Future dreaming of an ideal school would be an outdoor immersion camp or school where there is language. I could see us doing some hands on activity with rose, share some teachings about rose, how to identify it and then we'll make something together with rose or we go root digging and use some of the cultural curriculum people already have like how to identify, dig and process roots..there are endless ideas for educating and engaging our children outside with culture and the land, a lot of it is already within our traditional, pre colonial way of life. I am personally really interested in being a part of any outdoor education with our language.

In this passage, Mariana brings us back again to the idea of learing in community, thinking of the curriculum and educational framework already innately embedded in the natural world. She also talks about wanting to participate in this type of education reminding us of the energy and generosity parents have to share their knowledge and skills. Mariana is knowledgeable about many different types of plants and their uses and would be an incredible guide for children – and adults – in a program that allowed for community collaborations, knowledge sharing, and collective curriculum and materials design.

Mariana continues, contemplating the ways settler-colonialism and White supremacy intertwine with education – both Indigenous and Western – and how our children are made to process these conflicts and trauma as part of their education which, more often than not, enforces an institutionalized culture of silence around it.

> ...I am really interested in alternative forms of education, mostly traditional Indigenous education. I love learning the little bits that Tux̱ ámshish has shared about traditional child rearing. There is so much trauma in our families today and I often wonder what were the values and practices around our children before colonization. So much of the trauma is normalized in our families and communities, and I wonder, **how do you separate things that are so present in colonialism and Whitesupremacy?** And how does it show up in our longhouses or other spaces and what unrealistic things do we expect from kids? We can't keep passing down the trauma.

Another parent advocates for a Yakama centered history to be included alongside language education. In their words,

> I think what needs to go hand in hand with the language is the history. I feel like there's a big gap in our tribal history...Or in as well as, obviously, you know the names of places, what happened there, you know, and kind of connecting it full circle.

This inclusion would allow children to learn these truths from their community and have more support in processing them and understanding their place and the world around them.

Many parents have also mentioned wanting to return to the longhouse, not just after the pandemic but generationally speaking, too, as it's a place they recognize they can go to hear the language and where traditional teachings and ways of educating are

still consistently practiced. Mariana shares the struggle of wanting to bring her toddler into this space, too, though traditionally, as we have heard from Elders, toddlers would be home with their grandparents until they were old enough to attend *káatnam* 'longhouse'. Mariana shares an experience she had trying to take her son once,

> Sometimes I feel like there is blurred lines of what is best to do I hear bring your children to the longhouse so they can learn but then I always remembered in one of Tux̱ ámshish books she said kids didn't go to longhouse until they are like five. And I am like, oh I get it. I took my son to huckleberry feast last year but he just wouldn't go inside and I could've forced him to go in and he would have cried and been disruptive and we would then likely go right back outside. So I said, ok then we are not gonna go inside, me and his dad took turns sitting with him outside that day.

She goes on to share some of the teachings she longs to learn more about through *káatnam* and the ways children were traditionally taught, saying,

> I am so extremely curious about manners and expectations on children traditionally and every step of the pregnancy to small child raising because some of the standards that you see today in our families, I don't think we did some of those things, like I don't think we really hit our kids I don't really think we did that.

These words from Mariana shed light on a need for continued healing and guidance on returning to Yakama ways of leading and protecting children. We have seen in previous sections of this chapter some of the ways that parents and caretakers continue to uphold Yakama values in their homes and everyday lives by reading their stories through the lens of the Nine Virtues of the Yakama Nation (Wilkins, 2008). Their stories, like Mariana's

here, also share an eagerness to learn or hear more about the countless other Yakama

Virtues that Kussumwhy (Wilkins) nods to in her publication.

Another parent shares a longing for a deeper connection to their culture through

longhouse participation. In their words,

> …I feel like there's a disconnect from me and culture some ways…So I grew up
> in a shaker household, but when I got older, I – what what works best for me was
> when I started going to a Christian Church, so I consider myself Christian and I
> know there's just like a disconnect from being like at the longhouse or in the
> shaker that now having a son I'm like OK now I want to go back to there so he
> can hear those songs and be a part of that...

One parent talks, too, about the need to find ways to share language and cultural

knowledge that is strictly not to be recorded, aligning with upholding *Tma'áakni*

'Respect' for unwritten laws. They share,

> You know the other thing too is the meaning of our *Wáashat* ['Longhouse
> religion'] songs now making sure you maintain the knowledge what those words
> mean in the song what those songs were all about and that's important. But it's
> kind of hard 'cause, you know, I know those are definitely not to be recorded, you
> know, the songs. But like, even if our Yakama kids had a physical place to go and
> hear the song…I mean, that's somewhat what the longhouse is for, but you know
> they don't stop after each song and - sometimes they do say, 'this is what the song
> meant'.

Others have spoken of a desire for a 'learning longhouse'.

> I think what would be super like interesting or cool is to have, like, a learning
> longhouse, or like a learning a like shaker – whatever your denomination is – like
> a learning place. Uhm, 'cause I know from my – only speaking for myself like I
> don't participate because I've been yelled at in each setting and I just felt like OK,
> I'm done. I'm not coming back, you know? That was very rude, I didn't grow up

here. I'm sorry that I, you know, I mean, that's just my own personal, like, I'm feeling not welcome and so I would love to see like a like a school of it. Or, you know what I mean? Like a learning one I've been to… [some families']…Longhouse…and I thought it was very beautiful, like that's how I would like to go to longhouses. Their whole line is all the little girls, the drummers are all their little, like all the little, tiny boys. I thought that was really neat and there was like somebody like coaching them or teaching them as they went, and it was just very low like oh, this is really like a learning place. They're learning like they weren't corrected like in a harsh way. It was like 'oh, that song doesn't come out right now 'and then they're like 'OK' and then they started they would start another song. Um, so that, it was just really beautiful to be in that, uh, setting of like, just learn a learning environment.

5.4.13. Documenting Elder Voices

In their final thoughts, one parent shared,

> I would love for the Elders to be recorded and I know there would be a bit – lot of push back for that. But when you miss your Elders and you think wow I could have recordings of them speaking in language and how much that would mean to their children, grandchildren, descendants; how much pride that would give them. But you know, I know I've heard a lot of times, you know, 'you don't record' or maybe even the Elders feel, 'oh, I don't want to be recorded', but I think it just takes the right person because – or, you know, the right approach.

This parent also shares a first-hand experience about some of the conflicts that come up for learners in working with Elders who do want to be recorded or share their knowledge in this way,

> …I feel really bad because our [Elder] that passed away, you know they just had his memorial last weekend…I told him I want to record him and then he he kept asking me, 'so when are you gonna come record me?' And I'm like, I got kind of embarrassed 'cause I was like…I don't think I'm ready because I wanted to ask

298

him in the language and I wanted to be practiced up and ready to ask him questions in the language and I'll be like, 'yeah, I'm gonna come', you know. And I never did and now he's gone, you know, and I had things that I wanted to ask him. And he was willing to be recorded. And now I'm feeling sad about that, you know?

They elaborate that the sentiment behind the recording should be thoughtful and less formal; more about personal, intergenerational connection rather than research. In their words,

And so I don't know, I guess, maybe if there was a way we could get our Elders to feel like they wanna be recorded, even though like maybe if it's somebody that they trust and care for, you know what I mean, like not just so formal that they're like, 'Whoa, whoa whoa', you know, like 'you're doing this for what, now?' You know what I mean? Like type feeling but like, 'oh, so and so wants to record me, that touches my heart', you know, like more of that feeling…I think that would be great.

This type of family or personal connection situates the purpose of recording in a relational way rather than an extractive one that has become the norm in so many Indigenous communities by researchers. Perhaps there is a way to connect the resources of HULC with families to record whatever they wish to preserve and, if desired, work together to transcribe and translate any Ichishkíin shared, then have the Elder and their family or loved ones decide whether they would like it to be archived or accessible to others, selectively or widely. Translation of fluent speakers is important to do while we still have fluent Elders to guide us in understanding the full meaning behind the language and ensure accurate interpretations. Any Elder who wishes to document their knowledge in Ichishkíin should be fully supported, if desired, to see it through to as detailed a translation as they like and shared with whomever they wish in the format of their

choosing. The next section considers other potential partnerships parents mentioned

might be beneficial as we all take steps to cultivate Ichishkíin language growth within our

homes and the Yakama community.

5.5. Potential Partnerships

Just through visiting about ideas for getting language out there, conversations

with parents led naturally to ways we might expand our resources by connecting with

other people and organizations in the community, so the work is spread out and making

its rounds without the outreach falling on one corner of folks. As one example, when

talking about a toothbrushing video that was created, Jasmine thought of a way to share it

out through local dentist offices who are already passing out toothbrushing kits to

patients. In her words,

> So, an idea that's coming to my mind…I'm thinking right now of like our, the
> dental program at IHS…And so you're saying for the toothbrushing kits, maybe
> you don't even have to make a tooth brushing kit. You can just make the QR
> card…give it to IHS dentists and they can put it in their kits that they give out to
> families anyways and you would get it out a lot, I think, quicker and to more
> people…so, yeah I was just thinking like what what programs do we already have
> in the Community that do outreach stuff? Or you can just make a card for their
> bundles that goes out, you know, and then boom, you have other people doing
> your work for the language...

Jasmine's focus on outreach and knowledge of community resources catapulted the

potential reach of language materials we were talking about. Just like we want to

incorporate language into the daily lives of families through routines and activities they

are already engaged in and committed to and think about ways to incorporate language into already well-functioning systems within the community. We are all already doing so much and part of my and Twálatin's roles as language apprentices and educators is to support education in a way that honors Yakama culture – by focusing on community and the 'all-hands-on-deck' approach many parents in these conversations advocates for.

Another parent shared ways that Elders are involved in their workplace and efforts to engage in language culture outreach under their guidance. They share,

> We have two Elders at our work that are only there to do cultural things, and so they translate things for us, or they help us do things if we need stuff culturally. Like right now they took our, like, non-Native employees, and they took them out to like teach them how to dig roots and take care of them and stuff like that. And so, we're supposed to have a feast sometime as a program about – and they're going to teach us…how the foods are set out and why they're set out that way, so I think that's really cool to learn…Yes, I love those Elders, like, I'm always trying to make them like come to my events so they'll be there. I feel like they – I work with a lot of younger people, and I feel sometimes they don't include them and maybe there's like, they don't know how to talk to Elders. But I grew up, my grandma raised me, so I grew up with Elders all the time. So, I'm just always including them and they're super nice.

This parent highlights the importance of helping to foster relationships between Elders and younger generations acknowledging that not everybody is raised to understand such dynamics. Through a partnership between Elders and their workplace, they are able to bring this understanding and intergenerational connection which inevitably includes language forward, thus contributing to the education of community youth and young adults.

This parent also shared that one of their learning goals corresponds to a potential to bring language into cultural classes that they teach saying,

> But I wish I knew more. 'cause I teach [a cultural activity], so I think it'll be really cool to like incorporate the language in[to the teaching] …to be able to like, translate that or like talk more about it…or like where the word came from, what the word, actual breakdown of the word is. I thought that would be neat to do...

This ties back to Mersaedy's hopes for more language to come into cultural classes and activities illustrating how parent's goals align and how helping support people in learning language particular to the things they're already doing is a lower stress approach with farther reach than teaching classes to people and tasking them in their own time with the work that gets language into their activities.

Elese shares information about local organizations she's come in contact with through her roles as both parent and educator. These are places that already support babies and toddlers have potential to strengthen partnerships around language support for them. Elese says,

> Heritage University Early Learning Center has become like a model program for all of the different early childhood centers in and around the reservation. Uhm, with with some of the highest marks from like University of Washington who…supervises them and comes and observes things from time to time. And also, from the Yakama Nation Early Childhood Education Center for its approaches to diversity and supporting diversity and linguistical diversity.

She brings up the Early Learning Center (ELC) at Heritage University again in thinking about places to support language in community, recalling the time Twálatin (Greg) worked with Elders to develop and implement a program for two-year-olds. In her words,

…I really thought Greg would restart the immersion school at the ELC. And I
was, I was down for that, and I think sometimes that you know if I ever, if I ever
wanted to step away from working for the government and just be my own, my
own like, worker that that would be ideal – would be to set up a uh, kind of co-op,
where we exchange our our time and our effort with other parents for different
lessons and stuff and and my contribution would be in mathematics and
in language and mathematics *and* language, aye – underline the *and*. And I think
that I recognize other people that I know in the community that can also do those
kinds of things, but they might be reading and language. You know? Or singing
and language.

Mariana talks about the potential alignment with Montessori practices she has seen
implemented in her son's school and imagines Ichishkíin use with young children
through these activities, saying,

..his school is Montessori and it's really sweet...it's such a simple way of
understanding life skills and learning. I could see how their approach could easily
have Ichishkíin in there. Like how they're doing a letter of the week but it could
be in Ichishkíin.

Talking with Mariana, she emphasized the need for pronunciation support to be
accessible and even embedded into materials and we talked about perhaps creating "like a
little a little easy reference tab of just like 'this is called a back X' and how you do it, just
a description of how to make the sounds."

One parent speaks on a larger scale, advocating about learning from other Tribes
who are working to grow their own languages, too, saying, "I guess kind of looking at
what other tribes are doing the you know best practices and taking them back here. I
mean it's hard to reinvent the wheel as they say, right? You know other tribes have laid a

303

foundation, including our own, including all the work that the Yakama Nation has done. You know so, but you look in the Southwest they, you know, they've got their language, really strong and a lot of their tribes too, you know, and like how are they making that happen?...What have they invested in?..." (PC2). Twálatin's dissertation takes a look at literature around just this and we have begun conversations with some who have successfully created and maintained immersion schools over the course of many years. 'Safety in numbers' certainly is a phrase that applies to Indigenous languages in terms of speakers, and it could be said of friendly connections, too, with others who have and are doing this hard work in their own communities, too.

5.6. Summary

In this chapter, we learned from parents about ways they continue to maintain regular use of language in their own and their children's lives both at home and in their communities, fostering intergenerational relationships and Yakama values in a variety of ways.. We also learned about the varied resources they have cared for, sometimes over many years, and some of which they have created themselves and ways they adapt to meet their family's needs to learn and use language regularly. Parents shared some of the ways they bring language from their homes out into community along with ways that they bring language home from longhouses and workplaces, and how relationships support and inspire use.

Parents shared challenges they face in not being able to use as much language at home as they would like. Some of the most prominent barriers come from their resisting the effects of language shift. Because they are second language learners, a consequence

of colonialization, working to raise their children in Ichishkíin to whatever extent they are able is incredibly difficult. Often they must create resources to meet their daily language needs, for example. In day-to-day living, they face numerous missed language moments.

The trauma of boarding schools, racial bias and discrimination in education, lack of access to resources, even lack of access to family members due to generational trauma, and the dominance of English, are all effects of colonization and attempts at linguistic and cultural genocide that continue still and, as the parents' narratives in this project demonstrate, are present in the daily lives of families and their relationship to language. Other challenges represented in their narratives also included learning other Indigenous languages in their homes; the busyness of life in general; not having adequate access to materials and feeling pressed to create them; issues around schooling and education; and an overwhelming knowledge that there is always more to be done.

Parents were generous in sharing their hopes for a future full of Ichishkíin language use and see their children as leaders in that future that they are working together now to create. They spoke to an intergenerational force of motivation that supports them in sharing the language they know with their children while seeking growth for their family and future generations. Many spoke of a hope to grow their ability to simply 'live' in the language and enjoy conversations and daily chit chat with their children regularly. They spoke passionately about hopes for future schooling that includes language and Yakama methods of educating their youth, and spoke to the strengths present in their community and the dreams possible with strategic collaboration. Along with envisioning futures with language, they identified resources that would benefit their efforts and

305

potential community partnerships that would help tend to *Wapítat Ttáwaxt* and wider community goals of language cultivation.

These parents shared the many ways that they participate in, think about, and advocate for the wellness of their Ichishkíin language and families' relationships to it. The work they do daily is one of the reasons I shift terminology of language revitalization to that of language cultivation. To me, revitalization has connotations that a language is static and needs rebirth whereas cultivation respects that parents have been breathing life into Ichishkíin, and teaching their children through generations upon generations. This work is a celebration of these parents' efforts and a call to support them every way possible with resources to enhance their skills and expertise of cultivation and education.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION

6.1. Revisiting My Research Questions

Through this project, I set out to answer two main research questions and three related follow-up questions. To review, my main questions ask:

1) How are parents and caretakers of Yakama babies and toddlers interacting with Ichishkíin language in their homes? and

2) What kinds of strategies would help increase their language use?

The three follow up questions are:

1) What challenges and opportunities do parents face in using language in their homes on a daily basis?

2) How do relational components impact daily language use?

3) What types of resources or materials might help increase daily language use in the home?

Parents were generous in sharing answers to these questions both through the survey and our conversations. In answer to the first part of my main question – How are parents and caretakers of Yakama babies and toddlers interacting with Ichishkíin language in their homes? – we learned a great deal. We learned that many homes use single words and phrases on a daily basis including relationship terms, greetings, commands, baby talk, and simple questions and answers. This is significant as these narratives provide evidence of intergenerational language use occurring daily in the homes of Yakama families. Other interactions include deep thought, goals, hopes and

307

advocacy for increasing language use. Through survey responses and conversations, parents exhibited their expertise and engagement daily in a type of strategic planning around language cultivation that is sophisticated and prominent within their homes. They regularly foster language growth and hold visions for continued growth through future generations in their interactions with their children at home. The second part of the question asked what kinds of strategies would help parents increase language use at home and parents shared a variety of ideas that would tend to family learning together in engaging ways that complement their daily lives and the activities they are already familiar and involved with, also reminding us that language learning and use is fluid and dynamic (recall Sia Aronica's and Tillet-pum's comments on page 84, for example).

The work of language shift is monumental, and parents spoke about some of the barriers they face in taking it on. They mentioned a number of struggles in trying not only to teach their babies but to raise them in language that they are trying to learn themselves with very limited resources. Time and the pull of all life's responsibilities was another challenge many parents spoke of along with limited knowledge of or access to materials to learn from or people to practice with. They mentioned classes and the difficulty to fit them in on top of everything else. While the barriers discussed were not miniscule by any means, parents also shared some of the ways they work around them, involving their children even to create materials or find ways to use language in spaces it is not always present.

Parents also identified a number of relational elements as having an impact on their daily language use, including the presence of language use in the workplace and community spaces, and having people to talk with both in the language and about their

308

language learning process through classes or more casual settings. Intergenerational relationships showed lasting impacts through parents sharing memories of growing up hearing their Elder speak and in the way they observe their own children and parents interacting together in language. Relational supports such as classes, people to practice with, parent and family groups, and regular gatherings were spoken of positively along with efforts to organize community level opportunities for language education and growth.

This project, while marking the end of my academic journey as a student, marks the beginning of so much work to be done. Parents identified an impressive list of projects, materials, and resources that would support their work to continue raising their children and Ichishkíin language together. They called for committees of parents, learners, advocates and leaders, development of books, apps, toys, visual aids and reference materials, signage in the community and so much more. They spoke of the strengths of people they see and know in their community and the dreams of language growth they know they can reach through drawing on those strengths and working together. They spoke with pride about Yakama ways of educating and how those ways tend to the wellness of their children in a way Western education falls short.

Parents provided answers to the questions this project sought to answer and then some. The insight they shared exemplifies their work as caretakers and educators of their children and language and calls us to action in support of their *átawtxaw* 'most valued' endeavors.

6.2. How the Survey and Parent Conversations Work Together

Much of what we learned through the parent survey was reinforced through conversations with parents of young Yakama children. For example, parents are interested in education for their children that includes language, cultural representation, and supportive relationships that nurture their wellness and joy in learning and in life. We learned about language used in the home currently and goals to increase use, largely through conversations with each other about daily life at home and that intergenerational knowledge sharing and language speaking occurs regularly at home and in community. Parents expressed intimate knowledge and observation of the ways language moves within their home, often with strategies in action for increasing their family's language use.

So many parents spoke to the power of community and the strength it lends to their relationship with Ichishkíin and each other. Parents named specific strengths they see through entities and people in and around Yakama Nation and also offered their own services to contribute toward sharing knowledge and skills with each other whether it's spending time with kids or families who need it, teaching about plants, language, food preservation, education design, or storytelling. In this way, strategies for increasing language use at home really stem from that community power, working together in smaller ways to contribute together to a bigger picture of language visibility, representation, opportunity toward shift.

6.3. Connections and Contributions to Literature, Education, and Education Research

This work engages, in part, with Yakama scholars discussed in Chapter II including two Elders, Tux̱ámshish with her guidance for academic researchers (Beavert 2017) and Kussumwhy who presented Nine Virtues of the Yakama Nation (Wilkins 2008). Tux̱ámshish, through her publication and mentorship teaches to hold relationships at the center of all of our work and to remember it's for relationships that we even do any of it. She advises to take the time to tend to relationships no matter the time it takes as it is what this work is for. In gathering and processing data for this project, I worked in close collaboration with Twálatin, and we relied on relationships with parents of Yakama children in seeking answers to our questions and this project would not have been possible without them. Tux̱ámshish and Kussumwhy's voices guide us to understand, too, that the work does not end with these dissertation projects. Now that we have learned what parents want for their children with language we are responsible to see it through; this project is just the beginning. Kussumwhy's publication of Nine Virtues also helps to bring light to the ways parents are engaging with Yakama Values to cultivate Ichishkíin use within their homes on a daily basis. It is their theoretical guidance and methodology that allowed such themes of language shift to emerge.

Learning about the intensive work families are doing to break the cycles and effects of colonization through language speaks to the literature of healing that Jacob (2013) and Underriner (2020) write about. This project provides evidence of intergenerational transmission that does not fit neatly into the confines of Fishman's language stages (1991) shown in Table 1 (page 10), or adaptations like Lewis & Simons'

311

(2010) Expanded Scale of Language Endangerment presented in Table 2 (page 12).

These scales are overdue for an upgrade, or a revision. I imagine a scale that more accurately reflects the extensive variation and dynamic nature of language cultivation across communities.

These scales are designed to assess language vitality on a global scale. What would better serve this project and others like it would, by necessity, be a collaborative project involving many voices from as many communities as possible with Indigenous perspectives taking lead. I do wonder what a redesign might look like through a model cultivation and relationship rather than a linear model as the scales are now. Simply referring to a language as 'IL' (Indigenous Language) in the scales rather than 'Xish' is more representative of relationship and a connection between language and people. The scales as they are also frame some standards for vitality according to Western notions, such as literacy, written language, and formal schooling. While, following the mentorship of Tux̱ámshish, I am an avid supporter of reading and writing Ichishkíin, it is important to acknowledge in terms of standards and scales that languages have been successfully vital throughout time without prior to being written. Colonization, its educational policies, and the inundation of English play a role in why literacy of written forms of language are related to its vitality. While I have more notes on this topic as it relates to my own work as a parent and researcher, a full analysis, critique and redesign will make a worthy future project – again, one that is highly collaborative for the purposes it strives to serve in Indigenous language work.

The deep motivational push parents spoke of repeatedly throughout this project speak to the perhaps innate knowledge of parents to instill the gift of fluency and

312

worldview that strengthens dramatically with exposure to language from the time are babies can first hear. Parents, overwhelmed by a desire to raise their children in a language they are themselves learning, might be relieved to learn of the impact small steps can take, for example, playing recordings of Elders speaking during a child's first year of life would them up to acquire the sounds of Ichishkíin in a way us learner parents could not offer (O'Grady & Hattory, 2016). This also carves out room for families to listen to legends together and know that this, too, is the work.

In terms of contributions to Education and Education Research, this project presents a drastically different view of what education entails compared to Western education models. The parents we learned from here serve as caretakers, teachers, advocates, role models, leaders, aunties, uncles, grandparents, ancestors, and healers to name just a few of the roles they take on in their work to raise their Yakama babies and language together. Education is ongoing and compassionate, beginning in the womb and extending through generations; it is outside, in prayer, with land, and in relation. Tests are embedded in life skills and joy; merit and integrity are inseparable. This research employed a Yakama methodology for research that centers relationship and learns through listening, working within a framework that Kovach (2010) calls a nest, "influencing the process and content of the research journey," (p. 42). It has been an honor to be invited and supported to conduct this research in this way.

APPENDIX A

YAKAMA NATION IRB DOCUMENTATION

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3. Loan, Extension, Education & Housing Committee

FY 2021

OFFICIAL ACTION
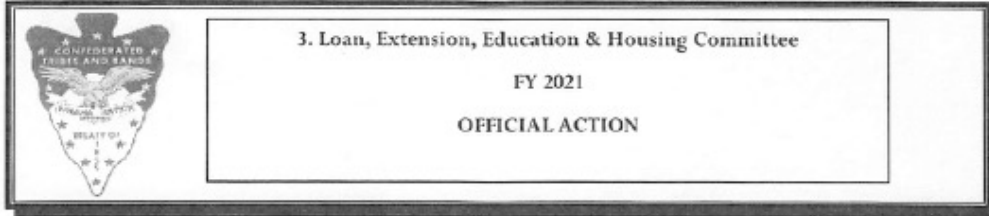
Date: August 03, 2021

TOPIC: Yakama Nation Ichishkiin Language Study P.I. Anderson

ACTION REQUESTED: Approve a dissertation study focused on learning from Yakama Elders and parents/caretakers about supports that would help families speak more Ichishkiin language together in their homes. Conversations and survey results will help to understand and shape what materials and programming are necessary to help families meet their goals. Principal investigator is Regan Anderson, PhD candidate at University of Oregon.

ACTION TAKEN: Approve proposed study with the requirement that Yakama Tribal Council Education Committee will be presented with preliminary analysis, results, and findings before publication to ensure protection of Yakama Nation's cultural and intellectual property with the right to request removal of culturally protected place names, unwritten laws, and other protected knowledge.

MEMBERS		COMMITTEE ACTIVITY			
		Roll Call	Motion	Second	Vote
Raymond Smartlowit	Chairman	Absent			
Charlene Tillequots	Secretary	Present	CT		for
Dana Miller	Member	D		DM	feb
Terry Goudy-Rambler	Member	Absent			
	Ex Officio				

DECISION: ☒APPROVED   ☐DISAPPROVED   ☐TABLED

VOTE: TOTAL _3_   FOR _2_   AGAINST _0_   ABSTAINED _0_

OTHERS PRESENT: _____

CERTIFICATION _____
                                    CHAIRMAN

Committee Action Number: 070-2021-3

314

APPENDIX B

PARENT AND CARETAKER CONVERSATION SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Questions to Guide Conversations with Parents and Caretakers of Yakama

Children

If it doesn't come up in the initial sharing, I would engage in conversation to ask more questions around three themes (language use, challenges, and goals):

Language use

- their language use/experience growing up and currently. For example, did they grow up speaking/hearing Ichishkíin (or hearing about it)? Have they taken classes as children, youth, or adults?

- a typical day with (or without) language use in their homes currently - Are they using any language at home with their children now?

  o If so, what kind of language (particular topics or words?)?

  o If not, why not?

  o Are there others in their household/close relation that use language?

Challenges:

- what frustrations come up in thinking about language use at home with children?

- what supports can they imagine might help them meet their goals for increasing language use in their home with children?

Goals/Future thinking:

- what an ideal day might look like with language use (now more practically or future imagining)

- their hopes for the language (in their lifetime, their children's lifetime(s) and/or future generations)

YAKAMA EDUCATION PARENT AND CARETAKER SURVEY

Shared Qualtrics Survey for Parents and Caretakers of Yakama Children

Yakama Education - Parent/Caretaker Survey

Kw'ałá nam wyánawi! Welcome!

Kw'ałanúushamash for taking the time to complete this survey! It should take approximately 15 minutes. Your participation is voluntary and greatly appreciated. Your answers will be used to help guide how Yakama children learn their language and cultural ways.

General Information

Q1 How many children do you have and how old are they?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q2 How satisfied are you with your child/childrens school? (add any additional information you would like)

○ Extremely satisfied (1)

○ Somewhat satisfied (2)

○ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (3)

○ Somewhat dissatisfied (4)

○ Extremely dissatisfied (5)

Ichishkiin language experience, use and goals

Q3 How much Ichishkiin language do you use daily? (add any additional information you would like)

○ None (1) _____

○ A few words (2) _____

○ A few words and some phrases (3)
_____

○ Some conversations (4) _____

○ Most conversations (5) _____

Q4 Do you have support for using language at home? If yes, what kinds of support? (check all that apply and add any information you'd like)

☐ Fluent Elder speaker(s) (1)

_____

☐ Other family members who are learning the language (2)

_____

☐ Learning Materials – what kinds (books, classes, materials, etc)? (3)

_____

☐ Other (please share) (4)

_____

- -

Q5 Rank which supports would be most helpful for you to use more Ichishkiin language at home? (1 being most helpful, 7 being the least helpful) (add any additional information you'd like)

_____ Written supports - books, flashcards, posters, etc. (1)
_____ Games & activities (2)
_____ Songs & videos (3)
_____ Electronic supports - apps (4)
_____ Classes - online or in person (5)
_____ Practice with Elders/speakers (6)
_____ Other (7)

Educating with Yakama knowledge and lifeways

Q6 What Yakama teachings do you think are important for your children to learn?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

319

Q7 What seasonal activities should Yakama children learn?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Daily Activities

Q8 What Yakama activities would you like your children to practice daily?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Community Resources

Q9 What entities within the Yakama Nation would you like to see working more with our children?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q10 What knowledge or skills would you or your family be willing to share with children in our community?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Other Thoughts and Raffle Entry

Q11 Is there anything else you'd like to share to help Yakama children become speakers and leaders in our community?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q12 In thanks for sharing your thoughts here, we are offering entry into a raffle. If you would like to be entered, please share your name and preferred contact information. Your name will ONLY be used for the raffle.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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