
Language and Literacy Development in a Canadian Native Community: Halq'eméylem Revitalization in a Stó:lō Head Start Program in British Columbia

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The following study is part of a larger community-based project¹ that began in 2007 to document Halq'eméylem language and cultural transmission among Elders, family members, and teachers in the Stó:lō First Nation located in Chilliwack, British Columbia, Canada (MacDonald et al., 2010; MacDonald et al., 2011). Within the larger project, this article focuses on Halq'eméylem language and literacy transmission and the ways that literacy practices, including the creation of a Halq'eméylem orthography, and theories of school-based second language acquisition have influenced language revitalization within a British Columbia Aboriginal Head Start program. Using ethnographic methods and grounded theory, findings illustrate how a lack of teacher fluency has influenced the transmission of Halq'eméylem by creating the need to rely on a unique bi-/multiliteracy base where environmental print, translated names, translated songs, and interactive text-based computer games are used to support Halq'eméylem language development among parents and teachers who are jointly and concurrently learning and teaching their ancestral language. The study is anchored in a critical perspective on multilingualism (Creese & Blackledge, 2010) that moves away from ideologized beliefs that linguistic systems should be strictly separated, including within second language classrooms (Cummins, 2008; Lüdi, 2003; Lüdi & Py, 2009; Moore & Gajo, 2009; Swain & Lapkin, 2005).

Keywords: indigenous language revitalization; intergenerational cultural transmission; biliteracy; multiliteracy; codeswitching in the classroom

THE STÓ:LŌ FIRST NATION (PEOPLE OF the River) is made up of 11 Coast Salish bands located in the Fraser Valley in British Columbia (BC), Canada. The Stó:lō people share many language and cultural traditions with other

Aboriginal communities on the west coast of BC. Most notably, this includes a history of colonization and linguistic and cultural disruption across multiple generations as the result of past Canadian government policy placing Aboriginal children in residential schools where the use of their ancestral language was prohibited (Aboriginal Affairs, 1990; Carlson, 2001; Milloy, 2003; White, 2006; see also Moore & MacDonald, 2011). To meet the challenge of culture and identity loss, members of the Stó:lō community have chosen to

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support Halq'eméylem language revitalization across generations as a way to strengthen their identity (Gardner, 2002).

A central means for accomplishing this goal is to create better connections between schools and the community, a task that is particularly challenging for the following reasons: (a) the language itself is under serious threat of extinction for lack of fluent speakers; (b) linguistic analysis of the language remains incomplete despite ongoing efforts, including the creation of an orthographic system; (c) a curriculum for teaching the language and teaching materials suitable for young learners are still in the process of being created; (d) there are only a few government-certified teachers who are competent in the language; (e) alternative forms of certification of teachers have yet to be established; (f) there is a need for adaptable teacher training programs; and finally, and most importantly, (g) community involvement and support are vital if such a project is at all to meet with the hoped-for success.

We are aware that issues regarding language teaching and learning that are central for the Stó:lō Head Start Program are unlikely to be of immediate concern to the majority of FL professionals in their own settings. At the same time, we believe that the project's particularities highlight phenomena that increasingly affect many language learning environments in the age of globalization, migration, and multiple language use with differential social status and political power for different languages and ethnic and linguistic/cultural groupings (Norris & Snider, 2008). This research also illustrates the need for an understanding of the role of the L1 for learning an L2 that is even more capacious than that typically presented in sociocultural theory. Finally, it unmistakably points to the role educational policy plays in language learning, most especially language learning that is at the same time a form of language maintenance, a situation that is frequently exacerbated by societies' ambivalence toward supporting multilingual capacities in their population through an educational system.

One positive consequence of these factors is that the language studies field has come to understand that narrow interpretations of what can and should happen in schools and how it should happen, especially in language classrooms, will no longer suffice. For that reason, language professionals and researchers increasingly affirm the need to establish links between the classroom and the community, a stance that,

for example, is prominently featured in the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* put forth by the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages.² However, most recommendations in favor of such a link are still narrowly focused on enabling classroom learners to use their foreign language in the community and, by doing so, to enrich the classroom and, hopefully, to improve their own language abilities (Byrnes, 2011). Only rarely does the community itself play an essential role in the very project of language learning and teaching, as is the case in this study.

Similarly, professionals are increasingly aware of the influence of government policies on language teaching and learning practices, procedures, and possible outcomes, even when, for most teachers, that awareness concerns such matters as curricular and assessment mandates or diverse intrusions on materials that are prescribed or, in reverse, proscribed. Our study invites readers to look for the larger picture of the sociopolitical environment influencing language education, a picture that in the case of the Stó:lō is extraordinarily burdened and defined by negative government action in the past and complex interrelationships in the present, even as one is now trying to remedy the situation in favor of the interests of the Stó:lō.

In presenting this study, then, we give testimony to the complexities of language use and language learning as we came to understand them through this particular project, but also to the resourcefulness and commitment of those involved in it. At the same time we wish to highlight the urgent need to embrace, not only in research, but in the educational practice of the entire language studies field, a sophisticated awareness of the nature of multiple literacies development in educational settings that are increasingly varied, increasingly subject to various changing dynamics, and increasingly politicized (see, for example, Barton, Hamilton, & Ivanič, 2000; Bigelow & Schwartz, 2010; Moore & Molinié, 2012). At the very least, the situation calls for a kind of professional meta-awareness regarding the nexus of influences that shape the teaching and learning of languages.

BACKGROUND

For over 20 years, educators have attempted to support Native language teachers and their language revitalization efforts within First Nations communities (Toohey & Hansen, 1985). Indeed, the critical issues faced by teachers of native

languages were formally documented at a TESL–Canada (Teachers of English as a Second Language) symposium, an event that led to the development of a program entitled *Language Development in Native Education*. Initially this proposed training was for teachers of Haida, Tsimshian (coastal and interior), Kwak'waka or Nishga; later it expanded to teachers of Halq'eméylem, many of whom had already had previous training with linguist Brent Galloway, who had worked extensively with the community in the mid-1970s in order to create an orthographic system for the language.

In 1977, one of these teacher-trainees was hired by the district Indian Education Centre to lay out a Halq'eméylem curriculum and, with reference to *Teaching Algonkian as a Second Language* (1974–1976), to develop a comprehensive series of lesson plans for teaching Halq'eméylem. Since then, additional materials have been produced that have benefited from the help of a local artist and from collaborative work among various parties, especially linguist Strang Burton,³ who has worked with the community since the late 1990s to continue the work begun by Brent Galloway to construct an orthography for Halq'eméylem and preserve translations and stories.⁴ Recently, recordings of 13 short documentaries were commissioned by First Voices using 15 distinct languages of BC First Nations people. All these efforts are designed not only “to help B.C. First Nations revitalize, protect and sustain their languages, dialects and culture for future generations” (Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development, 2010), but also to transcend the walls of institutions and classrooms by making archival material public and accessible.

Throughout this local history of language preservation, the community has benefited from the active participation of Elders who have shared their language and wisdom with teachers and families (for examples, see *First Voices* translations). Thus, teachers have described being in communication with Elders for advice, direction, and verification of their teaching and storytelling (Archibald, 2008). Yet, many of the programs supported by Elders are embedded within the Canadian social, economic, institutional, and political systems of teacher training and licensure that influence educational transmission and program structures, the kind of system that Rogoff (2003) has referred to as a two-tiered model of guided participation where institutional practices mitigate other cultural ways of knowing and operating.

Specifically, the current context of language and cultural transmission has been affected by modernist attitudes toward language standardization that are epitomized in the identification of English and French as the two official languages of Canada. As a consequence, even as English has become the dominant language of instruction in schools in British Columbia, and French immersion programs designed to support children's fluency in French as a second or additional language have seen considerable growth, other minority heritage and family languages are devalued. Needless to say, language standardization has directed resources and energy away from minority languages in an effort to encourage Canadians to speak one or both of the official Canadian languages. Finally, at once more subtly but ultimately more consequentially, families have either intentionally or through perceived outside pressure withheld their home or family language from children in order to assist their linguistic and cultural integration, thereby contributing to bilingual majority language practices and attitudes rather than fostering plurilingual practices and minority language proficiency.

As expected, the effect of these social and educational policies is particularly visible in the areas of teacher training and in the provisions made for early childhood education.

Teacher Training

In BC, there are multiple routes to teacher training and teacher certification. Certification to teach kindergarten through grade 12 requires a minimum of four full years of university level courses for a standard teacher certificate or five years for a professional certificate. At the same time, since 1993, the now defunct BC College of Teachers also awarded First Nations Language Teaching Certificates to language teachers of Aboriginal descent who are judged by a designated Language Authority to be proficient in one of over 25 recognized First Nations Languages in British Columbia.⁵ This certification allows fluent speakers of First Nations languages to teach their language within the kindergarten through grade 12 system, provided they are also recommended to do so by the Language Authority appointed for their community. However, of the 239 First Nations Language Teaching Certificates issued between 1994 and 2011, none were issued for teachers of Halq'eméylem (Pauline Klyne, BC College Teachers, personal written communication March 15, 2011).

That situation makes a fourth option all the more important: If prospective teachers are not proficient in a First Nations language, they may obtain the Developmental Standard Teaching Certificate (DSTC) through a program of study that focuses on Language Instruction as a specialization and offers course work that is negotiated between the First Nations community and an accredited university. The program of study is then approved by the BC College of Teachers. In BC, the DSTC typically requires a minimum of three years of approved courses, including linguistics, English, education, math, and science. Not surprisingly, in the Stó:lō community, the DSTC has been the route that most language teachers have taken due to their own limited proficiency in Halq'eméylem, itself a consequence of the community's experiences with residential schooling that privileged English and the attrition of their own language.

Early Childhood Educators

Under these conditions, it stands to reason that early childhood education takes on a critical role both for language education in the native language and for maintenance of the language itself. Because early childhood education is not compulsory in BC, a child's attendance in a preschool program is at the discretion of the family. Reflecting this noncompulsory status of childhood education, the regulations and licensing requirements for teachers of children birth through age 5 and children in out-of-school programs (Early Childhood Educators or ECEs) does not fall under the Ministry of Education but is governed by the provincial Ministry of Children and Family Development.⁶ That means preschool teachers seeking certification are only required to complete a minimum of 45 credits of course work and participate in a practicum from an approved college or university recognized in the Child Care Licensing Regulation (Schedule C); this is followed by 500 hours of work or volunteer experiences under a qualified supervisor. Responsible adults who have taken at least one ECE course can also work as an assistant to the Early Childhood Educator but must be supervised by someone who is fully trained and licensed.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As already indicated, among the considerable challenges Canadian indigenous communities face is the desire to maintain the vitality of their respective languages and to honor traditional ways of transmitting intergenerational knowledge,

while simultaneously getting their children ready to enter mainstream Canadian schools. Working toward that goal is made more daunting because of a lack of fluent Halq'eméylem speakers. While language education in general and child language learning in particular is very nearly equated with learning the language through the spoken medium, the situation in the Stó:lō First Nation necessitates a quite different route, namely learning a first language with the support of language materials that are transmitted through written texts.

This situation calls for the need to adduce theoretical frameworks beyond those that typically inform instructed language learning, even language learning in what are otherwise referred to as bilingual settings. In the case of the Stó:lō First Nation, the setting itself, the interests and goals, and the forms of participation of those who are needed to facilitate the language learning process in the first place are decidedly different from those that otherwise characterize language learning, even the admittedly complex forms of language education in bilingual environments. Even so, it is possible to draw on frameworks that can help illuminate both the language learning situation itself and the measures taken in recognition of its complexities. For our inquiry and its discussion we have chosen three that have the potential of offering particular insights: (a) Hornberger's (2003) notion of continua of biliteracy; (b) an understanding of literacy offered by Martin-Jones and Jones (2000) that highlights its multilingual nature; and (c) in line with this latter characteristic, the role of written codeswitching in the process of indigenous language learning embedded within the more comprehensive effort of revitalizing an indigenous language. These frameworks are embedded within a social theory of literacy that considers literacy as a dynamic and situated social practice (Blackledge & Creese, 2010). As Barton and Hamilton (2000) state, "literacy is best understood as a set of social practices; these are observable in events which are mediated by written texts" (p. 8). For the authors, literacy practices as individual and community resources are "patterned by social institutions and power relationships, and some literacies are more dominant, visible and influential than others" (Barton & Hamilton, 2000, p. 12).

Continua of Biliteracy

In her seminal treatment of bilingualism, Hornberger (2003) defines biliteracy as "any

and all instances in which communication occurs in two (or more) languages in or around writing" (Hornberger, 2003, p. xiii). The continua model itself is described in terms of four nested sets of features that specify the contexts of their occurrence, the development of biliteracy, the media in which they are conveyed, and content of biliteracy (Hornberger & Skilton-Sylvester, 2000). That kind of disaggregation of a very complex phenomenon makes it possible to take into account (a) varying and intersecting mixes along the monolingual-bilingual and oral-literate levels, (b) majority and minority perspectives and experiences, and (c) the reality of multilingualism and multilingual literacies as resources for further learning.

The Plural, Multilingual Nature of Literacies

A second, related framework that would seem to apply to the linguistic and educational parameters of language teaching and learning in the Stó:lō First Nation is the understanding of literacy as a multilingual phenomenon, offered by Martin-Jones and Jones (2000) and of being multiple, as highlighted by Cope and Kalantzis (2000). Thus, Martin-Jones and Jones (2000) argue that the term *multilingual* is needed in order to signal "the multiplicity and complexity of individual and group repertoires" (p. 5) and of "the communicative purposes (. . .) associated with different spoken and written languages within a group's repertoire" (pp. 5-6) as well as an awareness that there are "multiple paths to the acquisition of the spoken and written languages within the group repertoire and people have varying degrees of expertise in these languages and literacies" (p. 6). It also "focuses attention on the multiple ways in which people draw on and combine the codes of their communicative repertoire when they speak and write" (p. 7). Over time and space, "specific practices [evolve,] which involve the use of different spoken and written languages are always undergoing a process of reaffirmation and redefinition" (p. 8), something that accords with the observations by Cope and Kalantzis (2000) regarding literacy practices as multiple.

Written Codeswitching as Literacy Events

Finally, we also focus on written codeswitches as an interesting locus of literacy events. Historically, codeswitching was devalued as a corrupted form of standardized languages, and the fear that its use interferes with learners' language acquisition

and literacy development has banned bilingualism in classrooms. Over the past 35 years, (socio)linguists have demonstrated not only that codeswitches are legitimate, rule-governed forms of language (Milroy & Muysken, 1995), but that they do not impede learning (Martin-Jones, 1995) and can, in fact, be a trigger and resource for the development of language and concepts (Gajo, 2007; Moore, 2002; Simon, 2001). More recently, researchers have been interested in codeswitching and literacy development, positive literacy transfer, and interliteracy (Willis et al., 2003). Mostly, this strand of research is interested in how learners' literacy experiences in their first language help develop literacy skills in the dominant language of instruction (usually English), linking home, school, and community (Cummins, 2005; Martin-Jones & Jones, 2000).

Interestingly, our research focuses on the reverse: We are looking into how literacy in English is used as a bridge toward the development of language and literacy skills in an endangered language that almost no one speaks fluently anymore. In this view, we regard codeswitches (oral and written) as potential sites for literacy events that we define, following Heath (1983, 1988), as "any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of participants' interactions and their interpretive processes" (Heath, 1988, p. 350). For Heath (1988), the literacy event is a powerful conceptual tool to examine "the actual forms and functions of oral and literate traditions and co-existing relationships between spoken and written language" (p. 350).

Taken together, the *Continua of Biliteracy* framework, the *Multiliteracies Framework*, and an understanding of codeswitching as a springboard for learning offer useful heuristics for describing biliterate contexts, including this highly unusual context of language learning cum language revitalization. They help us understand the complex social practices in and around community uses of literacy in majority-minority languages, they enable us to address the unequal balance of power across languages and literacies that obtains with particular force when one language is critically endangered and in a process of active revitalization, and they provide further insight into intergenerational transmission and curricular development by studying a range of literacy events that must be understood, right from the start, as involving multilingual literacy development in the daily routines of a preschool community-based First-Nation program.

THE STUDY: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

In the present study, language and cultural transmission within the Stó:lō community was investigated using qualitative ethnographic methods and grounded theory (Charmaz, 2005; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998). Phase 1 of the study began with an exploratory series of twelve in-depth interviews with key community members in order to determine background issues and the community context (MacDonald, 2009). All participants in the interviews were persons in positions of language and cultural influence, such as language teachers, community administrators, Elders, and in one case, a linguist employed by the community. According to protocol, interviews were concluded by asking about additional valuable sources of information about language issues within the Stó:lō community.

The most frequently cited issue regarding language and cultural transmission was a lack of language fluency among community members. Indeed, all of the teachers of the language who were interviewed also considered themselves students of the language and reported frustration at not being able to engage in daily practice of the language in order to reach the kind of fluency they deemed necessary for their jobs and critical for maintaining their language abilities in general. The urgency of engaging in language learning as language revitalization and, in reverse, supporting language revitalization through this kind of language learning, became even more pronounced with the recent passing of Elder Dr. Elizabeth Herrling Ts'ats'elexwot (1915–2009). There is now only one fluent Elder, Elizabeth Phillips,⁷ who, together with linguist Strang Burton, is engaged in banking the language and is also directly involved in language programs. The remaining few Elders who are fluent in Halq'eméylem are no longer active in teaching the language for health reasons, or they never actively used their language to begin with, a consequence of their traumatic residential school experiences.

Indeed, language inhibition repeatedly surfaced in the in-depth interviews: Teachers reported that parents and staff members felt inhibited about learning and using their language. As in many other contexts of disempowered language use and language learning, any effort at language teaching and learning in the Stó:lō First Nation must therefore be conceptualized, right from the start, as a community project

that recognizes this traumatic past in relation to the standing and status the language currently has in the community, alongside the community's desire to rectify this past, to the extent possible.

It is with these insights that Phase 2, the current study, was begun. It identified the following guiding question: *How is Halq'eméylem being revitalized within a British Columbia Aboriginal Head Start program where the Aboriginal teachers of the language are not themselves fluent in the language of instruction?*

To begin to answer this question, a series of observations and video-recordings was made over a period of a year. On the more informal side, these observations took place during various community events, such as a ceremony to honor the Stó:lō babies. On a more formal, structured side, they involved observations in a Stó:lō Head Start Family Program that took place twice a week for an entire year-long observation period. Data from these events included 12 hours of video recordings, field notes that accompanied each visit, and weekly informal and 2 formal verification interviews with teachers. Photographs and video recordings of the children and families were taken on three occasions preselected by the Stó:lō teachers to document Halq'eméylem language lessons and routines, including classroom arrival, breakfast, play, lunch, art, and craft time.

These data were systematically analyzed using compare and contrast methods associated with Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2005; Corbin, & Strauss, 2008; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998). They were coded initially by using descriptive terms, which were then further reduced by comparing terms across the classroom contexts. This process yielded dominant patterns across all areas of the classroom and during various classroom routines and interactions. Our understanding was further aided by video analysis software that was used to transcribe, code, sort, and compare video segments. These selections were triangulated with field notes and previous interview findings to refine understandings and reflect on literacy events across people and contexts. Finally, verification interviews with the classroom teachers validated provisional understandings and enabled us to grasp more thoroughly the complex dynamics of the development of Halq'eméylem literacy in this minoritized context of language learning.

THE STÓ:LŌ HEAD START FAMILY PROGRAM: AN ANALYSIS

The Stó:lō Head Start Family Program served up to 20 families who were transported to the

centre two mornings per week. Literacy practices identified in the videos and from field notes were compared across people and contexts and analyzed for type of interaction and purpose. Specifically, we explored literacy events (Heath, 1983) understood as situated “activities where literacy has a role” (Barton & Hamilton, 2000, p. 8). This was done to analyze a wide range of literacy activities within the Stó:lō Head Start Family Program, and to compare literacy events associated with the teaching and learning of Halq'eméylem across people and contexts. To identify speech and literacy interactions related to these education events around literacy, we attended to the meta-language accompanying the language transmission in Halq'eméylem, noting the context and discourse surrounding the teaching event, notably taking into account instances of codeswitching (oral and written).

Program Details

In keeping with the program goals of the Aboriginal Head Start Association of British Columbia, the Stó:lō Head Start Family Program is designed to support culture and language development, education, health, nutrition, and social support within the local Aboriginal context.⁸ The program runs from 9:00 am to 12:30 pm twice per week throughout the year and typically has 15 to 20 families registered and in attendance. To facilitate participation, the children and families are picked up from their homes and bused to and from the Stó:lō Child Care Centre. Classroom teachers were language teachers who had taken linguistics courses as part of their Developmental Standard Teaching Certificate as well as teachers who had obtained Early Childhood Education Certification. This created a unique program structure that heavily relied on a print-based Halq'eméylem approach to language teaching and learning. At the time of the study, the program included two Elders, Elizabeth Phillips and Mona Sepass; a Coordinator and program designer, Koyàlemót Mary Stewart; language teacher Seliselwet Bibiana Norris; and several other ECE trained staff members from the Stó:lō community.

The program drew strongly on activities or themes related to the community's Seasonal Activity Chart that had been constructed by Elders in the 1970s (e.g., return of the salmon, harvesting). Accordingly, extended themes within the program reflected activities based on the Seasonal Activity Chart and special community

events such as ceremonies to honor the return of the salmon. At the same time, classroom activities also reflected the contemporary North American themes of Halloween and Christmas as they occur in many Early Childhood Education programs. These content foci were embedded in the very nature of the program itself, which included a hot breakfast for families at their arrival, opportunities for play and interactions with books (mostly written in English), puzzles, toys, and dramatic play materials in the housekeeping corner. Transition songs were used to signal clean up time and lead the children and adults to a circle time focused on songs and activities, such as identifying clothing or fruit and vegetable items in Halq'eméylem. Procedural instructions were given mainly in English, to explain and describe the next sequence of activities within the program. Typically, this was followed by craft time, a whole group pre-meal prayer, and lunch.

While classroom management directions occurred primarily in English, they were liberally combined, using codeswitching in Halq'eméylem to reinforce key words and phrases. For example, the teacher asked, “Elets'e te Semoye? (Where is Semoye?).” Reference was also made to labels on the walls as well as to diverse activity and song sheets. In addition to the direct participation of Elders and indirect Elder input provided by the Seasonal Activity Chart, parents, grandparents, and, at times, great-grandparents occasionally attended the program with young children. We came to appreciate this intergenerational nature of the program, with its presence, indeed often its active participation and guidance, by the Elders as a significant and distinctive program attribute that differentiated it from other non-Native programs. Thus, Elders were positioned in the centre of new practices, such as by featuring their voice recordings in interactive games and in storytelling and through electronic and printed books (see Appendix B for Pictures 1 and 2 and all subsequent picture illustrations). Significant as well for the very conduct of the program and, as we believe, for its realization of the link between language learning and an existing community, was the fact that all program teachers, cook/driver, and a coordinator were members of the local Stó:lō community. The fact that all participated in learning and transmitting the language to the mothers and their children allowed strong modeling to take place, where mothers could identify culturally with the teachers and other program leaders.

Much like other programs that are directed toward revitalizing endangered languages, this program, too, aims at transmitting oral skills to young mothers and grandmothers, who then pass them on to the children in the Head Start Family program. However, it does so through extensive use of written material, in Halq'eméylem and English, in order to support language transmission. This means that the development of literacy in Halq'eméylem is thus a central part of language transmission in this community, in a written code designed in the 1970s by linguist Brent Galloway and continued by other linguists including Strang Burton and Susan Urbanczyk (see the additional discussion in the next section).

Seasonal Activity Chart

Although the Seasonal Activity Chart was not a prominent visible feature of the classroom, information from this print-based graphic reference (reproduced in Appendix A) nevertheless affected every aspect of the planning process for the program. It can therefore be fairly characterized as being deeply embedded within the structure of the program. As described in a personal written communication to the authors by Koyàlemót Mary Stewart, Early Childhood Development Manager of Stó:lō Head Start Family Program, the program follows Seasonal Rounds based on traditional practices and teachings. By way of background, in the 1970s, the Coqualeetza Educational Cultural Centre developed the Stó:lō Seasonal Chart. Thereafter, the Stó:lō Elders together with Peter Lindley were instrumental in designing a Stó:lō calendar, based on the Stó:lō perspective (see, for example, Carlson, 2001). In a nonlinear fashion, they established what key traditional activities and practices take place throughout the four seasons. This is important because, as Carlson (2001) emphasized, the Stó:lō's cyclical seasonal rounds are inseparable from the community's spiritual and social life as well as the changes the community has experienced in the most recent past. Thus, the Stó:lō's staple foods were fish, wild birds, meat, berries, and plants. However, contact with the outside world has changed the community's relationship to the land inasmuch as subsistence hunting, fishing, and gathering are no longer core cultural activities. With this complex cultural and linguistic role, the Stó:lō Seasonal Chart is one of the key instruments for cultural linguistic enrichment of the curricula in the Stó:lō Nation's Head Start program.

Environmental Print

Within the centre, environmental print takes on many diverse forms, including bilingual notes on walls, teacher-made bilingual texts and songs, bilingual illustrated children's songs, bilingual dictionaries, books in English and a few in Halq'eméylem, teacher guides and materials, and computer printouts. Even with that diversity, our conversations with the teachers, observations, and field notes in reference to material use indicated that dominant forms of environmental print supporting Halq'eméylem literacy transmission in the end made direct or indirect reference to the seasonal activity chart, including translating names, translating songs, and creating interactive computer games. Outside the centre, on Stó:lō territory, these activities are supported by bilingual signage in the neighborhood on the streets around the Head Start Family building (see Pictures 3 and 4). Inside the classroom, signage includes bilingual translations of the children's names above their cubbies, accompanied by a native motif or animal picture. English and translated Halq'eméylem names provide labels for the children's craft activities and placemats (see Picture 5) and diverse forms of bilingual signage are available on walls below pictures of food, dishes, and utensils and bulletin board items highlight current themes (see Picture 6) and direct children's activities, such as hand washing. Labels without pictures can be seen within the classroom environment for words such as *Sq'áq'epáqw'tel sq'èp'tel* ('hair tie'), *Qwelhí:xwł* ('shoes') or *Kwíkuáwt* ('kitchen') (see Picture 7). Monolingual posters in Halq'eméylem are used in those instances when meaning is directly transparent, for example with colour names (Picture 8).

Most of the translated words on the bulletin boards and walls in the classroom were not referred to directly by the teachers or other adults in the classroom, with the exception of the children's names which were pointed out during transitions to and from the centre, and when the children were labeling crafts or art work. Some children recognized these English/Halq'eméylem translations of their names, locating them as labels for their artwork and their placemats at lunch time.

As pointed out by Stahl and Murray (1993), a child's ability to read logos does not automatically imply an ability to attend to the word incorporated within or below the logo, nor does it indicate an increased ability in word recognition outside the context of the logo. Further incidental

instruction would therefore be necessary to facilitate a transition from reading the graphic logo to reading manuscript print out of the context of the logo or picture (Kuby & Aldridge, 2004). Even at this stage, however, seeing and hearing their translated name enabled the children to become familiar with the symbolic re-representation of their name in Halq'eméylem. Another important aspect of this process was the engagement of the teachers in the very activity of creating these labels. Having to look up words and create the translated names from linguistic code required the teachers to be active in print conventions and reinforced their linguistics training and the use of the written form of the language in contrast with their familiarity with only an oral tradition.

Translated Names

Translated names were used to create a Halq'eméylem sounding name from the children's and parents' English names using Halq'eméylem orthography. For example, Margaret became *Mokelet*, and Danièle, *Taliyel*. This was done for all children and parents and grandparents in the program unless a Halq'eméylem name (often called an Indian name) had already been given to them (Moore & MacDonald, 2011). Naming practices customarily do not involve translations of English to Halq'eméylem. However, when they were asked about this and when teachers explained this to parents, the teachers described this as a way of bringing the children and families back to their traditions, most particularly by helping the children and families to become familiar with the Halq'eméylem sounds. During the naming songs that were part of the program and in a separate naming ceremony held as a special dinner event for young families in the community, language teacher Bibiana Norris commonly introduced herself in both her translated name as well as *Selisekwet*, the Indian name that had been given to her by her family. By providing children with a translated name during the naming ceremony, community leaders were modeling acceptance of Halq'eméylem written script and furthering its use by the family through a written translation of their English name on a laminated card. Even though this practice was clearly intended to support the development of a bicultural identity and biliteracy, we observed that English to Halq'eméylem translations of names were not always automatically accepted by the parents. When objections occurred because the trans-

lations sounded like other words with different meanings or had unusual sounds that were in some way out of the ordinary (e.g., funny), alternative forms, suggested by the Elder working in the program, were adopted.

Translated Songs

All of the songs sung at the circle time were based on familiar children's songs typical in early childhood programs, translated into Halq'eméylem and presented on bilingual documents, either typed using different colors and scripts (as in Picture 9) or handwritten again with a color code for easier reference (like blue for Halq'eméylem and green for English). These included songs such as "Good Day My Friends Good Day/*Ey Swayel Tel siyá:ye, Ey Swayel*" (Picture 9), "Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, Turn Around/*Pesí Pesí ts'e Olesem*" (Picture 10), "May There Always Be Sunshine/*Iselh Swiwel wa Yótha*," as well as songs adapted and sung to familiar tunes. An interesting example of this is an adaption of the song "Higgilty Piggilty Bumble Bee." The Stó:lō version, written by one of the ECE teachers, is a song called "Flying Swooping Eagle" sung to the French Canadian tune of *Frère Jacques*.

EXTRACT 1. Lyrics to *Lhólhek'w' te Sp'óq'es* ('Flying Swooping Eagle')

Lhólhek'w' te Sp'óq'es, Lhólhek'w' te Sp'óq'es

'Flying, swooping eagle, Flying, swooping eagle'

Twat te' skwix? Twat te' skwix?

'Can you say your name for me? Can you say your name for me?'

Éy te' skwix

'That's a very nice name'

All lyrics to the songs sung at the circle times were written on chart paper, and finger tracking was used by the teacher to guide the parents' attention through the Halq'eméylem and English words (see Picture 11). This had the effect of focusing attention on the text of the song in Halq'eméylem while strengthening literacy skills in English. This was done in all cases except when there were hand or arm gestures associated with the song in the form of fingerplays. To reiterate, songs that included the Halq'eméylem text were directed at the parents of the children participating in the program with the goal of having the parents learn and share these songs with the children. All print material associated with these songs was distributed to the parents prior to the start of the program along with the

songs on tape. The intent was to support the family's use of the songs with their children, singing them again with their parents at other times in a way that was, at the same time, considered a culturally appropriate way of teaching.

Interactive Computer Games

For an older boy in the program, one of the most engaging activities was playing a Halq'eméylem language-based computer game with his mother that involved layers of animal pictures, corresponding to the animal's paw prints, words in English and Halq'eméylem, animal sounds, and the pronunciation of the Halq'eméylem words (see Picture 12). Such joint and cooperative play periods on the computer created rich opportunities for practicing biliteracy skills and for observing other levels of symbolic representation. As shown in Extract 2, this mother and her son were able to use the text to support the Halq'eméylem pronunciation of the animal names.

Codeswitching

Unquestionably, the dominant language of instruction at the time of our observations was English. During educational events, switches were commonly from Halq'eméylem back to English for discussion of instructional procedures or for verification. Three broad purposes of codeswitching were identified: (a) switches from Halq'eméylem back to English to convey next steps or instructional tasks (e.g., "We have a birthday today and we're going to sing Happy Birthday before we sing the dinner song"); (b) switches from Halq'eméylem to English to convey cultural protocols (e.g., "the next song we are going to sing is a Chief Dan George song. He passed the song down and gave permission for all our people to sing it"), and, importantly (c) switches from Halq'eméylem back to English to check in with the Elder for verification purposes (e.g., "Should we start with introductions? [Elder Siyamiyateliyot Elizabeth Phillips nods yes] We're going to get our Elder to introduce our visitors today").

EXTRACT 2. The Computer Game (0:16:48.9)

- Mother: There's the arrow, there it is . . . click it . . . hear it
(Computer voices word in Halq'eméylem using an Elder's voice)
- Mother: Do you want to see the writing? (Mom points to screen) What about that one? Say "deerwho"
(covers mouth to cough, boy points at screen with cursor)
- Mother: That one. (Boy points cursor to top right of the screen). Say that one again
(Boy clicks on icon at bottom instead and computer reads)
- Mother: This one about a different one. (Boy presses top left not where mom is pointing. Mom asks again) This one, a different one, press one of these.
- Boy: uhh!
- Mother: Yup (Mom points there) go slow, yup uh, good
- Both: hee
- Mother: bearfox—click him
(Boy moves away slightly and Mom clicks it. The computer sounds Twetwo.)
- Boy: "Twetwo"
- Mother: There you go now you can see him.
(Boy makes sound, both looking at the screen throughout. Now boy squeals, mom looks down at him. Boy clicks on bottom left and repeats after hearing the computer "Sulewet." Mom points to screen.)
- Mother: What are these?
- Boy: Ahhah
- Mother: This one? One of these
(Mom repeats, boy moves cursor. Mom laughs)
- Mother: Good boy. Good boy!
(Boy pushes cursor again. The computer repeats the word and the Mom repeats it)
- Mother: Press this one. Can you see more?
(Boy climbs on chair to press screen instead of using the cursor).
- Mother: No with the arrow.
- Mother: Cougar (boy continues to click) wolf, fox. That's a "shohoo" (mom makes soft throaty sound to imitate sound of animal) because of the sound it makes. (linking word sound to animal sounds. Boy presses and sound repeats "Squowet." Boy repeats). End (0:19:58.1)

In all cases, these codeswitches provided information about the nature of the teacher's thoughts during instruction in Halq'eméylem. Importantly, codeswitches could not be categorized simply as cultural shifts; instead, they provided examples of English being used to mitigate, verify, and shape non-English cultural practice in an educational context. In this unique form of codeswitching, the meta-content occurring in English was primarily concerned with transmission of Halq'eméylem. Verification interviews with teachers Koyàlemót and Seliselwet confirmed the importance of teaching cultural protocols directly, a way of clarifying their own understandings made necessary because of insufficient opportunity to observe such things directly. Not surprisingly, Seliselwet described the frustration of not being fully fluent in the language of her own culture in the following way:

My mom always used to say, that without your language you are only half a person and the language goes with the land. You have to know the language in order to fight for your land. You need that language. We don't have very many people that speak the language, it goes together. And to me the language is very important to me because in many ways it helps us spiritually with the longhouse and with the ancestors you know because you even dream it you even dream in the language. [Interviewer: *You dream in the language?*] . . . Yah and I dreamt one night but I don't remember, my brothers were saying 'you were speaking the language' and I said 'was I' and then they were saying 'what were you saying' and I said 'I don't know' (laughter). You know identity is very important to me, I teach my children about their identity especially our teaching that people need to know who you are.

There is little doubt that Seliselwet is proud that she has dreamed in her ancestral language. But her brothers are not able to convey to her what she said and she herself is not able to respond. This provides an interesting example of unconscious codeswitching and the difficulties of preserving a language in which few speakers claim fluency.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In the current study, grounded theory (Charmaz, 2005; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998) was used to investigate literacy events across classroom contexts taking into account the development of Halq'eméylem biliteracy in the Canadian historic and ecological context. Our understanding of literacy development and language transmission was informed by a dynamic and multiplex vision

of repertoires and practices, as developed by researchers such as Hornberger (2003), Martin-Jones and Jones (2000), and Cope and Kalantzis (2000).

These frameworks provide powerful tools to understand and conceptualize the complex and multifold nature of situated bilingual development and bilingual literacy in minoritized contexts, such as those involving endangered languages. As aptly described by Christie (2002), "Language is never neutral, for it is necessarily involved in the realization of values and ideologies; just as it serves to realize such values and ideologies, it also serves to silence others" (p. 7). In our observations, we noted a blend of traditional Aboriginal practices with contemporary teaching methodology. For example, part of the whole language movement that inspired many educators in North America throughout the 1990s included classroom labeling through signage on classroom items and posted on walls, containers, or desks. This has been a popular way to support emergent reading and writing development in early elementary classrooms over the last three decades (Schickendanz et al., 1990). By adopting the view that children, and in this case adults, come to school with knowledge of signage and symbols outside the classroom (e.g., stop signs, walk signals, various advertising, and logos), classroom teachers can support the use of Halq'eméylem through the use of print and bilingual labels inside the classrooms.

The ethnographic approach chosen for the study provided a close analysis of situated use of language(s), literacy practices, and code alternation in language teaching, and showed how teachers, Elders, and parents (re)appropriate their own ancestral language through the available resources, and in so doing, reshaped the language classroom into a multilingual space for learning. As we hope has become clear, our primary concern was not to assess language competence as a result of the program, but to investigate the range of language practices, notably around the role of literacy and English, to support the revitalization of a seriously endangered First Nation language.

Teaching a second language, whether in a monolingual or bilingual setting, raises questions regarding one's underlying assumptions about the nature of language learning, most especially the role of the L1 as a pedagogic tool for language teaching and learning and as a means to raise participants' confidence and empowerment in a minoritized learning context where none of the

participants, including the teachers and only one Elder, are fluent speakers of the language taught. As our study of situated language transmission and teaching–learning behaviour indicates, rather than interpreting a biliterate environment and especially the use of English within such an environment as a problematic encroachment on the development of native language literacy, a carefully considered form of biliteracy in educational contexts can be facilitative of the very goals of learning that language in relationship to one’s own cultural identity, both by children and other members of the community.

Indeed, over the time of the study, teachers understood such an approach as a necessary part of innovative curricular scenarios and teaching methodologies in their language revitalization program, a requirement particularly when the teachers involved in the language instruction had a weak base of language from which to operate and did not consider themselves fluent speakers of Halq’eméylem. As a particular complement to the nature of the Developmental Standard Certification as devised in British Columbia, the teachers found themselves learning a linguistic code as a way of navigating through the language and, subsequently, using that structure to teach the language to the parents and children of this program.

In addition to enabling the identification of a range of literacy events and patterns, data analysis revealed a principled, purposeful, and organized use of oral and written codeswitching, akin to what Gutiérrez, Lopez, and Tejada (2003) refer to as “hybrid [literacy] practices” (p. 171). Codeswitching in the classroom, and the heavy reliance on the use of English, revealed complex learning and communicative strategies (Moore, 2002). In oral communication, Halq’eméylem keywords were embedded in English sentences, using codeswitching to maintain conversational fluidity, while focusing participants’ attention on linguistic forms they needed to learn and remember.

In the Stó:lō Head Start program, Halq’eméylem was being taught by reading and attending to the written code while singing. This overlapping or nearly simultaneous form of learning through the written medium horizontally related oral to written language (i.e., one form of knowledge to another) and tied it to a known language through familiar words and phrases. In this context of language and literacy development, the codeswitches were used to heavily scaffold the oral from the written forms of Halq’eméylem while English songs were used to support the meaning. In this way, learning through language became a con-

centrated encounter with both the oral and written language codes used to construct meaning and build representational understandings to honor multiple forms of knowledge (Christie, 2005).

Written codeswitches revealed considerable effort devoted to checking linguistic forms and encouraging proficiency in Halq’eméylem. Using the written material and the translation prompts, learners and teachers were empowered to overcome communication problems and participants were enabled to produce language appropriate to the situation, despite limited linguistic skills in the language. Use of written codeswitching as a literacy event supported not only the relevance of Halq’eméylem but also the relevance of the translated songs within the classroom context. When seen and used together, written codes in both Halq’eméylem and English were constructed and modeled by the teachers and sung in both languages to promote language use and competence in multiple forms of linguistic expression (written and spoken Halq’eméylem and English). These events were directed toward the adult participants by using a regulative and instructional register aimed at parents who were asked early in the program to reinforce language use by demonstrating the songs at home with their children. This indirect teaching style targeting the parents rather than the children was also notably devoid of evaluative features (i.e., was not presented in the form of a question and response pattern to evaluate the children or parents). When we asked about both the modeling and the non-evaluative style we were told that this was done to honor the traditional teaching style used with young children within the Stó:lō community. As described by Heath (1983), children build tacit understandings of how to learn through their early language experiences. Within this classroom context, the children were not taught directly but were able to participate if they chose to (something we saw among the older children) while being offered adult models they could observe. Both learning opportunities were offered to the children to better prepare them for the formal language events of school while continuing to expose children and families to the cultural values of learning through demonstration and observation.

The bilingual quality of the documents and conversations around literacy, notably during singing and other activities in the circle, created a step-by-step strategy that was carefully monitored by the teacher while being aided by the Elders. Hybridization in these cases appeared to

be structured as an essential part of the teacher's design for language transmission, while mothers and grandmothers alike relied heavily on the same process in their efforts to grasp the language. These findings emphasize the need to foreground and appreciate the role of bilingual interactions in the learning process and as ways to ensure that the community's young mothers achieve a greater level of participation in their own culture and development of oral and written skills in Halq'eméylem, as well as in English.

An additional point worth making is that the transmission of Stó:lō cultural practices, emblematically represented through the Seasonal Activity Chart, is not just a here-and-now activity. Rather, it lends historical perspective by its very content as a form of accumulated cultural knowledge and through the further elaboration of its graphics and coded descriptions accomplished with Elders and other cultural carriers of knowledge. In other words, teachers, Elders, and participants co-constructed for themselves a learning space that opened up a range of literacy practices and content, using a multiplicity of channels, visual and spatial (learning in a circle, and using a variety of semiotic symbols), audiovisual (using books and print but also computers and computer games, as well as traditional drumming and songs), and behavioral (singing authorized songs in a traditional way). With no ready-to-use materials, teachers designed their own documents and texts to use in the classroom and chose a multiple literacy approach to ensure the linguistic and cultural inter-generational transmission of their endangered and partially lost language. In doing so, all participants created their own scaffold, which enabled them to overcome a potentially debilitating gap in communication and build what they saw as the only possible bridge toward language revitalization and transmission. In this sense, the Halq'eméylem classroom opened new flexible spaces where multiple literacies became a meaningful practice and unlocked the kind of emancipatory possibilities for all participants that Hornberger (2002) highlighted. Its most visible site and the key piece of biliteracy was the seasonal chart, a way of providing a strong linguistic-cultural base within the Stó:lō Head Start Family.

As previously discussed, the notion of bi- (or multi-)literacy assumes that one language and literacy is developing in relation to one or more other languages and literacies (*language evolution*). The model situates biliteracy development (whether in the individual, classroom, communi-

ty, or society) in relation to the contexts, media, and content in and through which it develops (i.e., *language environment*). At the same time, it provides a heuristic for addressing the unequal balance of power across languages and literacies (i.e., for both studying and counteracting *language endangerment*). Finally, while the specifics will surely vary—at times quite dramatically—across different language learning contexts, and indeed might reveal conflicting educational goals and values (Head Start programs in North America, language revitalization movements in Indigenous communities, instructed second and foreign language learning), we propose that the study challenges existing hierarchies of knowledge and knowledge creation through multiple languages wherever they occur and suggests directions in which we might understand and make use of languages and multiple literacies as powerful resources for further learning and as ways to empower parents to claim multiple identities for themselves and their children (see, e.g., McCarty & Zepeda, 2006). Seen from that vantage point, our observations highlighted the fact that “the very nature and definition of what is powerful biliteracy is open to transformation through what actors—educators, researchers, community members, and policy makers—do in their everyday practices” (Hornberger & Skilton-Sylvester, 2000, p. 99).

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NOTES

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² The standards are available on the ACTFL website: <http://www.actfl.org>.

³ Burton continues to work closely with Elder Siyamiyateiyot Elizabeth Phillips and other members of the community on the preservation and documentation of Halq'eméylem (through documentation of oral stories, development of bilingual dictionaries, and computerized materials for teacher training).

⁴ See the “First Voices” program (<http://www.first-voices.com/>) for examples of technology and web design used to make endangered language archives accessible.

⁵ See <http://www.bcteacherregulation.ca>.

⁶ Licensing regulations and harmonization between Ministries is currently taking place to improve regulations and programming as part of the Early Learning Initiative in BC (Susan Kennedy, personal written communication, October 2009).

⁷ Teachers, Elders, and other participants in the study wished their real names to be used in the research. We did so to honour their work in the program and their Stó:lō identity. We received ethics approval from our university for using participants’ names.

⁸ See <http://www.ahsabc.com.self-edit.com> for more information.

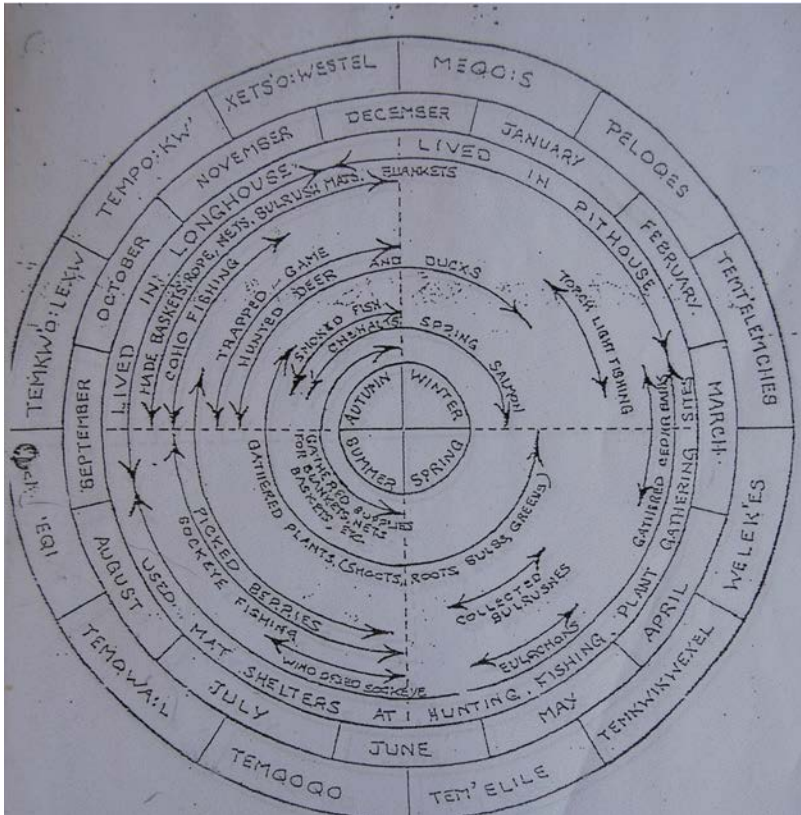
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APPENDIX A

Seasonal Activity Chart



APPENDIX B

Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3



Picture 4



Picture 5



Picture 6



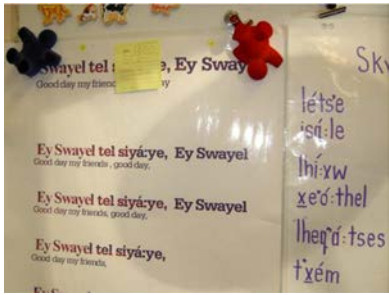
Picture 7



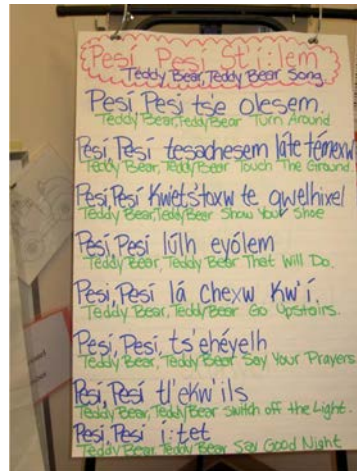
Picture 8



Picture 9



Picture 10



Picture 11



Picture 12

