Witsuwit’en English:

Language Shift and First Nations English in Canada

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Sonya Kinsey

aus Three Hills

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Erstgutachter: Prof. Dr. Bernd Kortmann

Zweitgutachter: Prof. Dr. Brigitte Halford

Vorsitzender des Promotionsausschusses
der Gemeinsamen Kommission
der Philologischen und
der Philosophischen Fakultät: Prof. Dr. Daniel Leese

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I wish to acknowledge that this research project was conducted with the assistance of the Witsuwit’en and took place on their ancestral territory. All recordings and data are Witsuwit’en property and are to be disseminated and used with their knowledge and permission.

Summary

The project addresses the history and development of Witsuwit'en English, one of many First Nations English varieties in Canada. It aims to understand under what circumstances Witsuwit'en English (WitEng) developed, and how this set of circumstances compares to other First Nations English (FNE) varieties, and more widely to Native American Englishes (NAE). This thesis also compares the features of WitEng to the English varieties listed in the eWAVE Atlas. FNEs are a little researched group of Englishes used by First Nations groups across Canada. They are often viewed as being less prestigious than more standardized varieties of Canadian English. Speakers may be stigmatized in a number of situations, such as educational and judicial settings, in which standard Canadian English may be perceived as more valuable and prestigious. Researchers have investigated FNEs over the past three decades in the context of the Canadian educational system and in the field of speech pathology. WitEng, being one variety out of around two-hundred possible FNEs in Canada, has received little attention. Most research, so far, has centred on individual varieties such as Tsimshian English, Blackfoot English, and Nain English.

WitEng is spoken by around six thousand Witsuwit'en people in north-central British Columbia. The Witsuwit'en live primarily in five communities, Witset, Hagwilget, Nee-Tahi-Buhn, Skin Tyee, and Browman Lake. Their Ancestral language is part of the Babine-Witsuwit'en family and more broadly on the western-most edge of the Na-Dene Athabaskan language family. Over the past century the Witsuwit'en have shifted to English as an L1, while at the same time their fluency in Witsuwit'en has declined to the point where no children speak it fluently. This research project examines the circumstances under which this transition occurred, based on personal interviews with members of the Witset community, as well as historical sources. The linguistic data are compared to that of known FNEs, NAEs and more widely, varieties of post-colonial World Englishes (WE) as listed in the eWAVE Atlas. The data include a list of morpho-syntactic, phonological, and lexical features.

Approval for the project was obtained from the Witset Band and ethical oversight for the field work was provided by the Human Research Ethics Board and two professors, Sonya Bird and Alexandra D'Arcy, at the University of Victoria. Altogether I recorded thirty usable hours of private interviews with members of the Witset Band. Thirty-six band members between the ages of twenty-two and eighty-one were interviewed by me and a Witsuwit'en assistant, Wanda Nikal.

The Witsuwit'en people have experienced a rapid and severe shift in their cultural and linguistic landscape, beginning with the initial contact with Hudson's Bay Company fur traders, French missionaries, and colonial surveyors. The disruption escalated as colonial authorities continued to exert pressure and promote

assimilation with the colonial culture through the Indian Act and the residential school system. The Witsuwit'en have persistently resisted colonization, but like many First Nations groups, the residential school system was effective in stopping their Ancestral language transmission. The Canadian government forced children to attend residential schools, where they were pressured to forget their language and culture and to assimilate into colonial society. However, they only received few formal lessons in English, being mainly used for labour for the school's profit. Currently, the Witset Band has its own daycare and elementary school, both of which offer Witsuwit'en language and cultural support.

WitEng has phonological features that are considered typical of L2 English learners and post-colonial Englishes. Like many contact varieties, there is consonant cluster reduction in syllable final positions, for example *told*, *went* and *feast* are pronounced as [toʊl], [wɛn], and [fi:s]. Speakers, especially older speakers, change interdental fricatives /ð/ and /θ/ to stops in the onset of words like *this*, *that*, *these*, *those*, and pronouns *they* and *them*. Speakers may exchange the final and the intervocalic /ʃ/ in words like *fish* for an elongated hissing /s/. Intervocalic and word final /s/ may also be pronounced with more spread lips than the usual English phoneme, making it sound similar to fricative /ʃ/. This last feature is transferred from Witsuwit'en.

WitEng has many of the morphological and syntactic features listed in other WE varieties in the eWAVE Atlas. These include overall leveling of verb tenses into the simple present, by deleting the past tense ending *-ed*, verbal *-s*, and progressive *-ing*. Speakers may delete the *to* infinitive, auxiliary verbs *be* and *have* and interchange irregular verb forms. Speakers may also delete definite and indefinite articles or use definite and indefinite articles where standardized Englishes use a zero article. Adverbs may have the same form as adjectives, lacking the *-ly* morpheme. Forms of double negation using *never* are frequent for all ages, although *ain't* appears very rarely. WitEng allows speakers to delete prepositions or use prepositions that would be unusual to speakers of more standardized varieties. These prepositions may reflect Ancestral language traditions and localized spatial orientation, such as 'screaming around' and 'up Alaska way'. Speakers may delete plural *-s* from human and nonhuman referents, and when the noun follows a number, such as '*five dollar*'. Plural *-s* is added to non-count nouns, such as *furnitures* and *womens*. There is often no distinction between *much* and *many*, and *much* may appear in front of count nouns. WitEng also allows for the deletion of pronouns or even main nouns in running speech. Speakers may also refer to a human referent by the 'wrong' gender, something also found throughout FNEs and NAEs. There is also the associative plural construction using *them*, found in *mum an'em* and the construction NOUN/PRONOUN+own, as seen in 'his own laptop' or 'that's her own'. WitEng has a list of lexical items, mostly loans from Witsuwit'en itself, and occasionally from French, the main contact language before English's growth in the area. These include *neeto* [white person, English], *beh*' [smoked salmon].

The usage of all these features is optional. Most community members, at least certainly those who are L1 English speakers, are quite capable of using standard English constructions, but may choose not to. WitEng, like other non-prestige varieties, may signal community membership and ambivalence or antagonism to the prestige, standardized variety, and its speaker community. Usage of all nonstandard features drops after the transition from L1 Witsuwit'en to L1 English. This drop occurs with speakers in their mid-fifties and then stabilizes for speakers in their forties and thirties. It developed while its speaker population was under intense pressure. Colonial policies, and a rapid transition to the wage economy, forced the Witsuwit'en to acquire English, however the residential school system limited access to structured English teaching and simultaneously resulted in the total disruption of normal Ancestral language transmission. The Witsuwit'en never had a single target variety as standard or a stable speaker population to model on. Instead, they had to learn English on their own via contact with waves of L1 and L2 English speakers coming into the valley, English, Scottish, Irish, American, and French Canadian, Métis, Dutch, South Africa, and Chinese.

Some literature has claimed that FNEs and NAEs are creoles or the result of creolization and decreolization. However, FNE and NAE varieties do not share the same contact and population history as recognized Pacific and Atlantic creole varieties, nor do they always show the features that are recognized as typical creole features. Residential schools have also been cited as the primary crucible for FNEs and NAEs, but the historical research shows that English was used in the community before residential schools operated in the area, and many children learned English while in the community and at local schools or never attended residential schools. Many of the features can be traced to language contact outcomes like fossilization of learner features and dialect mixing and leveling. WitEng could be currently classified as an unfocused variety of First Nations English, with the Ancestral language acting as a substrate influencing the English superstratum. However, knowledge and use of standard English varieties are seen as essential for Indigenous success in wider Canadian society, and as the younger generation continues to attend school for longer periods and seek employment beyond Witset, their speech is gradually aligning themselves with more mainstream Canadian standards.

Zusammenfassung

Dieses Projekt behandelt die Geschichte und Entwicklung von Witsuwit'en-Englisch, eine von vielen Variationen des First Nations English in Kanada. Das Ziel ist es, zu verstehen, wie und unter welchen Umständen und Bedingungen Witsuwit'en-Englisch entstand, und inwieweit diese Reihe von Umständen a) mit anderen First Nations English (kurz: FNE) Variationen, und b) im weiteren Sinne mit Native American Englishes (kurz: NAE) vergleichbar sind. Ich vergleiche außerdem Eigenschaften der Variation WitEng mit Variationen des Englischen, die im eWAVE Atlas gelistet sind. First Nations Englishes sind eine wenig erforschte Gruppierung des Englischen, die von First-Nations-Fraktionen in ganz Kanada gesprochen werden. Häufig haben diese weniger Ansehen als standardisierte Versionen des kanadischen Englisch. Sprecher können in verschiedenen Kontexten stigmatisiert sein, wie beispielsweise in pädagogischen und juristischen Bereichen, in welchen das standard-kanadische Englisch als nützlicher und angesehener empfunden wird. Der Großteil der Forschungen innerhalb der letzten drei Jahrzehnte wurde in den Bereichen der Logopädie durchgeführt. WitEng ist eine von rund 200 Variationen der FNEs in Kanada. Forschungspublikationen erfolgten bisher für einzelne Variationen, wie Tsimshian English, Blackfoot English und Nain English.

WitEng wird von rund 6000 Personen der Witsuwit'en im mittleren nördlichen Teil von British Columbia gesprochen. Die Witsuwit'en leben primär in fünf Stammesgemeinschaften: den Witset, Hagwilget, Nee-Tahi-Buhn, Skin Tyee, sowie den Browman Lake. Deren Ursprache ist Teil der Babine-Witsuwit'en Familie, im weiteren Sinne die westlichste Randfamilie der Na-Dene Athabaskischen Sprachen. Im Laufe des letzten Jahrhunderts wechselten die Witsuwit'en zum Englischen als ihre Erstsprache (L1), während zeitgleich ihre Geläufigkeit in Witsuwit'en so weit zurückging, dass Kinder die Sprache nicht mehr flüssig sprechen können.

Basierend auf persönlichen Interviews mit Mitgliedern aus der Witset Gemeinschaft, untersucht das vorliegende Forschungsprojekt, unter welchen dieser Übergang stattfand. Es werden zusätzlich historische Quellen hinzugezogen. Die sprachwissenschaftlichen Daten werden mit bekannten FNEs, NAEs und, im weiteren Zusammenhang mit Varietäten von post-kolonialen World-Englishes verglichen, die, wie oben erwähnt, im eWAVE Atlas gelistet sind. Die Daten enthalten eine Auflistung von morpho-syntaktischen, phonologischen und lexikalen Merkmalen.

Dieses Projekt wurde mit Genehmigung der Witset Band durchgeführt. Die ethische Aufsicht für die Feldforschung wurde vom Human Research Ethics Board der University of Victoria, Kanada, sowie zwei Professorinnen vor Ort, Sonya Bird und Alexandra D'Arcy, übernommen. Insgesamt wurden 30

verwertbare Stunden privater Interviews mit Mitgliedern der Witset Gruppe erfasst. 36 Gruppenmitglieder im Alter von 22 bis 31 Jahren wurden von mir befragt. Ein zusätzlicher Gesprächspartner war Wanda Nikal, ein Mitarbeiter der Witsuwit'en Language and Culture Society, die mir bei der Feldforschung und den Interviews assistierte.

Die Witsuwit'en Bevölkerung erlebte einen rasanten und heftigen Wandel innerhalb ihrer Kultur- und Sprachlandschaft, beginnend mit dem Erstkontakt mit Fellhändlern der Hudson's Bay Company, französischen Missionaren und kolonialen Vermessern. Dies eskalierte zusätzlich, als kanadische Kolonialbehörden zunehmend Druck ausübten und Assimilation zur kolonialen Kultur durch den „Indian Act" und das Wohnschulsystem vorantrieben. Die Witsuwit'en haben der Kolonisation beharrlich standgehalten, aber wie bei vielen anderen First Nations Gruppen, war das Wohnschulsystem darin erfolgreich, die Weitergabe ihrer Ursprache zu stoppen. Zusätzlich begann die kanadische Regierung Kinder zum Besuch von Wohnschulen zu zwingen, wo sie unter Druck gesetzt, wurden ihre Sprache und Kultur zu vergessen und sich der kolonialen Gesellschaft anzupassen. Sie erhielten dort nur in geringem Umfang formalen Englischunterricht, da sie überwiegend als Arbeitskräfte zum Profit der Schulen ausgebeutet wurden. Gegenwärtig hat die Witset Gemeinschaft eine eigene Kindertagesstätte und Grundschule, welche beide die Witsuwit'en Sprache und kulturelle Unterstützung anbieten.

Witsuwit'en-Englisch hat phonologische Merkmale, die als typisch für als Zweitsprache (L2) erlerntes sowie postkoloniales Englisch gelten. Wie bei vielen Kontaktvarietäten gibt es eine Reduktion von Konsonantenclustern im Silbenauslaut, zum Beispiel werden *told, went* und *feast* ausgesprochen als [toʊl], [wɛn] und [fi:s]. Vor allem ältere Sprecher ändern die interdentalen Frikative /ð/ und /θ/ zu alveolaren Plosiven am Wortanfang, wie bei *this, that, these* und *those*, und bei den Pronomen *they* und *them*. Sprecher können das auslautende oder intervokalische /ʃ/ in Worten wie *fish* gegen ein verlängertes gezischtes /s/ austauschen. Das intervokalische oder ein Wort abschließende /s/ kann auch mit weiter gespreizten Lippen ausgesprochen werden als das übliche englische Phonem, was ähnlich dem Frikativen /ʃ/ klingt. Dieses letzte Merkmal wurde aus dem Witsuwit'en übernommen.

WitEng hat viele der morphologischen und syntaktischen Eigenschaften, welche in anderen WE Varietäten im eWAVE Atlas aufgeführt sind. Diese beinhalten eine Gesamtnivellierung von Zeitformen in die einfache Gegenwart durch das Löschen der Endungen der einfachen Vergangenheitsformen *-ed*, verbal *-s*, and progressiv *-ing*. Sprecher können das *to*-Infinitiv, Hilfsverben *be* und *have* auslassen und unregelmäßige Verbformen austauschen. Sprecher können ebenso bestimmte und unbestimmte Artikel weglassen, oder diese dort einsetzten, wo im Standard Englischen kein Artikel genutzt wird. Adverbien können, unter Weglassung des *-ly* Morphem, formidentisch mit Adjektiven sein. Formen der doppelten Negation unter Benutzung von *never* sind in allen Altersgruppen häufig vertreten, wobei *‚ain't'* eher selten vorkommt.

WitEng erlaubt den Sprechern, Präpositionen auszulassen oder Präpositionen zu nutzen, die ungewöhnlich für Sprecher von stärker standardisierten Varietäten wären. Diese Präpositionen können Gepflogenheiten der Ursprache und lokalisierte räumliche Orientierung reflektieren, wie z.B. ‚screaming around' und ‚up Alaska way'. Des Weiteren können Sprecher das Plural *-s* von menschlichen und nichtmenschlichen Referenten weglassen, wenn das Nomen durch eine Zahl ergänzt wird, beispielsweise ‚five dollar'. Das Plural *-s* wird außerdem zu nicht zählbaren Nomen hinzugefügt, wie bei *furnitures* oder *womens*. Oft wird nicht zwischen *much* und *many* unterschieden, und *much* kann vor zählbaren Nomen genutzt werden. WitEng erlaubt auch die Auslassung von Pronomen und sogar von Hauptnomen in der laufenden Rede. Sprecher können sich ebenfalls auf das 'falsche' Geschlecht bei menschlichen Referenten beziehen, ein Merkmal welches auch bei FNEs and NAEs zu finden ist. Es gibt des Weiteren die assoziative Pluralkonstruktion die das *them* nutzt, zu finden in ‚mum an'em' und die Konstruktion NOMEN/PRONOMEN+own, wie in ‚his own laptop' oder ‚that's her own'. WitEng hat eine Auflistung lexikaler Artikel, überwiegend Anleihen aus dem Witsuwit'en selbst und zuweilen aus dem Französischen, die Hauptkontaktsprache vor der regionalen Zunahme des Englischen. Dies schließt *neeto* ‚white person, English', ‚*beh*' ‚smoked salmon' ein.

Die Nutzung all dieser Merkmale ist optional. Die meisten Gemeinschaftsmitglieder, zumindest die L1 Englisch Sprecher, sind durchaus in der Lage, die Standardstruktur des Englischen zu nutzen, könnten sich jedoch bewusst dagegen entscheiden. WitEng kann – ebenso wie andere nicht angesehene Varietäten – Gemeinschaftszugehörigkeit und Ambivalenz, oder Antagonismus gegenüber der angesehenen standardisierten Varietät und deren Sprachgemeinschaft signalisieren. Die Nutzung aller nicht standardisierten Merkmale sinkt nach dem Übergang von L1 Witsuwit'en zu L1 Englisch. Dieser Rückgang tritt zunächst bei Sprechern Mitte Fünfzig auf und stabilisiert sich bei Sprechern in ihren Vierzigern und Dreißigern. Dieser Rückgang entstand zu der Zeit, als die sprechende Bevölkerung unter starkem Druck stand. Kolonialpolitik und ein rasanter Übergang zur Lohnwirtschaft zwangen die Witsuwit'en, sich die englische Sprache anzueignen, während das Wohnschulsystem zu einer vollständigen Störung der Übermittlung der Ursprache führte. Den Witsuwit'en wurde die Möglichkeit auf formalen Englischunterreich verwehrt und sie hatten nie eine Zielvarietät als Standard, oder eine stabile Sprecherpopulation, an der man sich hätte orientieren können. Stattdessen mussten sie sich die englische Sprache de facto selbst beibringen über Kontakte zu Wellen von L1 und L2 Englisch Sprechern, die in das Tal kamen; Engländer, Schotten, Iren, Amerikaner und Franko Kanadier, Metis, Niederländer, Südafrikaner und Chinesen.

Einige Publikationen behaupten, dass FNEs und NAEs kreolisch sind, oder das Ergebnis von Kreolisierung und späterer Dekreolisierung. Jedoch haben FNE and NAE-Varietäten keine gemeinsame Kontakt- und

Populationsgeschichte mit den anerkannten Pazifischen und Atlantischen kreolischen Varietäten, und zeigen auch nicht immer die als typisch kreolischen Merkmale anerkannten Eigenschaften auf. Wohnschulen wurden ebenso als „Primärtiegel“ für FNEs and NAEs aufgeführt, aber die Geschichtsforschung zeigt, dass die englische Sprache bereits innerhalb der Gemeinschaft genutzt wurde, bevor Wohnschulen vor Ort betrieben wurden, und dass viele Kinder Englisch in der Gemeinde und den lokalen Schulen lernten oder sogar nie eine Wohnschule besuchten. Viele der Merkmale können zu Ergebnissen von Sprachkontakten zurückverfolgt werden, wie das Verfestigen der Lerneigenschaften sowie Mischungen von Dialekt und Nivellierung.

WitEng kann gegenwärtig als eine unkoordinierte Varietät von First Nations English klassifiziert werden, wobei die Ursprache, als Substrat wirkend, das englische Superstrat beeinflusst. Indes wird das Wissen und die Nutzung des Kanadischen Englisch als essentiell für ein erfolgreiches Leben für die indigene Bevölkerung innerhalb der breiteren kanadischen Gesellschaft angesehen. Während also die junge Generation weiterhin für längere Zeit zur Schule geht und nach Arbeitsplätzen außerhalb von Witset sucht, so gleicht sich auch ihre Sprache nach und nach dem kanadischen Standard an.

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support me with feedback and advice when needed and I am deeply indebted to her for her aid and trust. She also obtained one of the last available copies of the first edition Witsuwit'en history for me to purchase.

The Bulkley Valley Museum was the source of the photos in this book, and they helped provide some context for those who have never visited northern British Columbia or meeting the Witsuwit'en.

I also would like to thank Alexandra D'Arcy and Sonya Bird for their support and assistance at the University of Victoria. They kindly assisted me in preparing my HREB application and offered further advice to me after I arrived in Canada. They also arranged for me to borrow recording equipment from the phonetics lab.

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Like all researchers involved in long term projects, I am grateful for the support from my family. My parents have, as I suspect the parents of most doctoral candidates have been, been generous with their patience. My aunt and uncle put me in contact with the Witsuwit'en, and also allowed me to stay at their home near Witset during my fieldwork. This project would most assuredly not been possible without my grandparents. They've taken the time to send me cards and care-packages from Canada since I began living oversees and has been a constant source of support. For the duration of my fieldwork, my grandmother drove me around the area, to and from the reserve, thus making working in such a remote community possible. She has continued to support me through the lockdowns and my final editing efforts and is the best grandmother anyone could have.

List of Terms and Abbreviations

Ab	-	Aboriginal
AL	-	Ancestral language
AusAbE	-	Australian Aboriginal English
FN	-	First Nations
FNE	-	First Nations English
GCE	-	General Canadian English
HBC	-	Hudson's Bay Company
INAC	-	Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada
Ind	-	Indigenous
NA	-	Native American
NAE	-	Native American English
NfndE	-	Newfoundland English
SCE	-	Standard Canadian English
StE	-	Standard English- eWAVE Atlas
WE	-	World Englishes
WitEng	-	Witsuwit'en English

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1 Introduction

This dissertation looks at a single community of speakers, the Witsuwit'en living in Witset in north-central British Columbia and attempts to provide not only a description of their English variety, but also to understand the community's and the Witsuwit'en people's transition to English as a first language; that is how, why and when this transition occurred. Witsuwit'en English will also be compared with some of the most well-known emergent varieties of World English via the eWAVE Atlas (Kortmann & Lunkenheimer, 2013), including other First Nations Englishes, especially Native American Englishes (NAEs) to determine if there are any parallels in their development, as well as if any or how many features they hold in common with other varieties (Leap, 1993) and if there are any parallels in their development.

English, as it exists now, is a global and complicated network of dialects and speaker communities. Issues of native speaker authority, the connection between language, culture and nationality, language change and language policies all rear their heads when English is discussed. As a "global language" (Crystal, 2003) and perhaps is the only language to have truly become so, as even Latin, Russian, Chinese, and Arabic have not had the same impact as English or been so widely spoken across the surface of the Earth. The pervasiveness of English creates a puzzle with ever-multiplying pieces, a picture with borders we can never close.

While in some places English wilted away as plantations and settlements failed to take hold, in other places it has taken root, and has thrived. Research in places like Singapore, Hong Kong, Nigeria, Jamaica and more has given new insights in the process of language contact and dialect development. However, First Nations Englishes (FNEs) has rarely been investigated in the wider context of World Englishes and of post-colonial English language varieties. It is essentially unknown how language contact processes for FNEs work and if they are comparable to scenarios elsewhere. In Canada, because of the historical links between English and colonialism, and the contemporary connection between English and Canadian institutions, English is often positioned in opposition to First Nations Ancestral languages and the programs that support them. English is undeniably the language of the colonizer (Sterzuk, 2011). Aggressive policies of assimilation attempted to force First Nations peoples to Ancestral language and culture, and to adopt colonial culture and learn English. First Nations peoples have indeed learnt English, but instead of learning "the Queen's English", they have instead extensively reworked the language to suit their cultural needs.

1.1 First Nations English in Canada

Types of Indigenous Englishes, in some form, have likely been in existence for around two hundred years or more, yet have received scant academic attention. The reason is twofold: like other varieties spoken by

depowered communities, they have been considered by conservative, colonial speakers as "broken" and unworthy of study. Secondly, efforts have been focused on Indigenous languages and their revival. While plenty of attention has recently been given to Canadian English, or rather varieties of English in Canada, the focus is invariably on varieties of English founded and spoken by the descendants of colonists from England, Scotland, Ireland, and other non-Indigenous settler populations. This discounts the reality that FNEs are spoken by a large and growing segment of Canada's population. FNE speakers continue to gain visibility and prominence in Canadian society and institutions, even while their L1 dialects are ignored or actively devalued. Moreover, this lack of focus means it is still difficult to compare FNEs with other varieties of English world-wide and that the history of language contact in Canada remains incompletely described.

Development of First Nations Englishes is closely intertwined with the history of contact between Indigenous peoples and Europeans, and the accompanying changes to their cultures. The history of FNEs is also tied into the policies of the Indian Act and implementation of Canada's residential school system. Presently, many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children risk being sent into unnecessary remedial and speech therapy because their speech contains elements that are not recognized as features of a dialect (Ball & Bernhardt, 2008, p. 570). Even today there are educators who refuse to recognize that Canada's Indigenous peoples are not speakers of a "broken" version of English but rather users of a legitimate, non-standard English variety.

Canada also continues to lag behind the US and Australia in research of Indigenous English. Major publications on the topic are few and far between but do include William Leap's American Indian Englishes in 1993, Lorna Fadden's, Jennifer LaFrance's and Jessica Ball's work in the 2000s on speech pathology at University of British Columbia, Andrea Sterzuk's ongoing work in the context of the classroom, and Jennifer Thorburn's 2014 Ph.D. publication on Nain English in Labrador. The small amount of literature that does concern Indigenous English typically focuses on the validity of oral history in the courts, linguistic rights, post-colonization and decolonization, rather than describing the varieties.

1.2 Research questions

This research project addresses First Nations Englishes (FNEs) with the frameworks of sociolinguistics, language contact and language shift by looking into the roots of Witsuwit'en English (WitEng). The primary research questions are:

- What circumstances prompted the Witsuwit'en to switch to English?
- Does Witsuwit'en English, or English as spoken by the Witsuwit'en have distinguishing structural features and if so, where did they originate from?

- Are these features found in other First Nations Englishes?
- In what ways does Witsuwit'en English show sociolinguistic variation?
- How does Witsuwit'en English fit into a wider network of post-colonial Englishes, in terms of its speaker community, contact history, and structural features?
- How does language contact theory account for the development of Witsuwit'en English?

1.3 Fieldwork and analysis methodology

The primary data for this project is a series of interviews from thirty-six Witsuwit'en participants who live in Witset, the largest Witsuwit'en reserve. The interviews provide two angles for the analysis of Witsuwit'en English. First, the recordings provide first-hand accounts of language change from the participants own stories and viewpoints. Participants were invited to describe their experiences regarding English and Witsuwit'en and to tell stories about themselves and their culture. Second, the text itself is analyzed to provide data as to the features and structure of WitEng. I use historical written texts to examine the earliest contacts between the Witsuwit'en, neighbouring First Nations groups and Europeans traders and missionaries, and the effects of the Indian Act. Critically, the introduction and continued presence of local schooling is discussed along with the impact that residential schooling in the community had, especially in suppressing Witsuwit'en as a viable transmittable language. The linguistic data on Witsuwit'en English is compared to the available research on other First Nations Englishes, Native American Englishes, and World English varieties in the eWAVE Atlas (Kortmann & Lunkenheimer, 2013).

This dissertation is structured to first provide the reader sufficient background knowledge with which to address such a complicated topic, and to provide a context for the interview data. Chapter two discusses Canada's Indigenous peoples, with definitions of terms and an explanation of the issues that any researcher working with a First Nations community must address. It also provides an overview of Witsuwit'en culture, language, and history from just before the time of European contact to today. Chapter three reviews previous research on FNEs, Native American Englishes (NAEs), Aboriginal Australian Englishes (AusAbE) as well as identifying gaps in the research landscape. Chapter four reviews the research methodology, including the special considerations regarding ethics and fieldwork that any project of this nature necessitates. This is followed by the two core chapters. The fifth chapter is based on historical research and the oral testimony of the project participants, as they tell the story of language shift to English. They are living witnesses to language contact and change, and their testimony is supported by information from historical written sources. The sixth chapter describes the morpho-syntactic features of WitEng, taken from interview data and notes when similar structural features are found in other varieties of FNEs and World Englishes (WEs). The structural comparisons with contemporary WE varieties are made via the eWAVE Atlas of World

Englishes (Kortmann & Lunkenheimer, 2013) and the influence of residential schools and language contact are discussed. The conclusion proposes a future path for research.

I should acknowledge that this project, with the exception of the fieldwork and my bookend visits to the University of Victoria, has been conducted almost entirely within the framework of German and European sociolinguistics and language contact research. As such, I have chosen to write this book with a very thorough explanation of the topic, with the expectation that my readers may not be familiar with the history of contact and colonization of First Nations people in Canada and the USA. Cultural appropriation is not a well understood term here and most Germans have not had direct contact with Indigenous people in Canada and the US. On the other hand, those interested in this book from the perspective of Native studies may not have a background in linguistics. As such, I hope that German, Canadian and more widely, European and global readers of this text will find that it enhances their perspective in several fields. This is a linguistic project, with a focus on sociolinguistics, language contact and World English research, but there is also a great deal to be found here concerning colonization and decolonization, language policy and language rights, and the remediation and reinterpretation of the English language in a global context.

1.4 Personal Accountability

It should be made clear that with the publication of this text, I become part of a long line of academics and scholars who have engaged in fieldwork with Indigenous people and have directly benefited from such a relationship. Like many other researchers I must account for the fact that I am indeed taking something away from the community and from these speakers, and that my work would not exist without the massive cultural trauma of colonization. I am a Canadian of European descent and I have therefore benefited from the displacement and dispossession of First Nations peoples. My research questions would not even exist without this history. Other researchers have written about the dilemma this creates. Andrea Sterzuk, writing in her 2011 book *The Struggle for Legitimacy: Indigenized Englishes in Settler Schools*, says (Sterzuk 2011, p. 19):

> "As a white settler speaker of a prestige variety of English, I wonder if I would even be capable of providing a robust and multifaceted representation of the Indigenous Englishes of students involved in my study."

The same uncertainty is echoed by Lynne Wiltse in her article of the same year, '*But My Students All Speak English': Ethical Research Issues of Aboriginal English* (Wiltse, 2011, p. 54):

> "I wondered how different my initial teaching experiences might have been for both my students and me had I been exposed to knowledge of this nature in my teacher educator program rather than learning later on the job by trial and error."

Before this project's publication, there is a growing call to recognize that collective Indigenous trauma has become a kind of "settler capital." Academics can collect and disseminate the experiences of residential school survivors and others who have suffered, for their own advancement. Moreover, in between my completing this manuscript and the publication, gravesites were discovered at residential school sites across Canada, including at the Lejac school, where many Witsuwit'en children were sent. The gravesites will most be addressed in this text, as they were discovered after I completed the manuscript and the situation has been continuously developing. My research project is not solely about residential schools, but the system of residential schools was so long-lasting and pervasive in Canada and is completely tied into the very language loss that helped create First Nations English varieties, that it is inevitable that my research must address it. I asked my participants to tell me about their lives, and they did. There are some parts of the text that I have elected not to repeat in this book because they relate a specific traumatic event that could identify the informant or trigger trauma in others. I appreciate that I received permission to conduct these interviews and that many band members were so honest and forthcoming with me. I am grateful to have been invited to so many community events, and to those who took the time to answer my questions. It is standard in academic publishing to maintain an objective worldview in writing, and while the rest of this book is written to that standard, I think it is important to acknowledge, here and now, that the time I did my fieldwork in Witset was very emotional. I was very moved by the experiences of those I interviewed, and by their resilience. It has not been easy to analyze some of these texts and I think it would be wrong for any researcher, working with this kind of material, to not acknowledge the weight of what is being said here. So it is with all sincerity that I ask my readers to remember that linguistics has an integral human element.

I began this project out of a genuine interest in First Nations English as a post-colonial English variety. It is not my intention to be a "white saviour." The Witsuwit'en people and their variety of English will continue, regardless of my research. However, I sincerely hope that this project will help support further acceptance of First Nations English dialects in Canada and bring awareness of these varieties and the issues around them to a larger, more global, readership. Because, while I did not commit these acts, I did benefit from them. My father's family are British. In the 1930s my mother's great-grand parents arrived in Canada from Russia. They were Mennonites, followers of a pacifist Christian church movement of German, Swiss and Dutch descent, fleeing persecution in Russia. They found safety and peace in Canada, but at the same time as my great-grandparents were building their homes and farms, First Nations people were being forced into reserves. And while my grandparents were growing up safely in Ontario, going home from school each day to their families, there were First Nations families across the country being ripped apart by residential schooling. I, and my family, have what we have, because First Nations and other Indigenous people do not. Therefore, it my responsibility to help change the situation. As a Canadian woman of European-Canadian ancestry, I was born with more privileges and more advantages than First Nations peoples. I cannot claim

to understand, firsthand, the experience of growing up Indigenous in Canada and I can only express my thanks to those who have chosen to share that experience, so that I could try to understand. People in Canada, ordinary people, when confronted with the actions of the colonial system, and individual acts of cruelty and racism, will often try to protect themselves from feelings of guilt by claiming “that’s in the past” by denying the legitimacy of Indigenous people’s anger, sadness, and frustration, and by directing that anger towards Indigenous people, or even non-Indigenous people who are attempting to address these issues. If Canada is going to move forward, and finally redress over two hundred years of abuse and genocide, then we must be able to accept this discomfort. Even if we as a modern society did not create colonialism, or the residential school system, we have benefitted from it and if we do not directly dismantle these systems, then we perpetuate the inequalities it created.

2 First Nations history in Canada and the Witsuwit'en

This chapter provides both a historical and immediate context for this research project. I begin by providing definitions the terminology used in First Nations research areas. I then follow with a brief overview of the history of Indigenous people in Canada, ending with comments on developments that are relevant at the time of publication. Finally, I provide a history of the Witsuwit'en, along with a description of their culture and language. Since readers may be unfamiliar or only briefly familiar with the history of colonialism and interactions between settlers and First Nations people in Canada, this chapter is meant to set the stage for the interviews that come later, and help the reader to understand the complex narrative that First Nations Englishes are enmeshed in. The discussion around First Nations English specifically takes place in chapters three. I should note that the issues under discussion here, concerning colonialism in Canada, and the treatment of Indigenous peoples, cannot really be dealt with fully in this single publication.

2.1 Naming: A changing landscape

This book makes use of a body of terminology that is subject to continuous shift. Reading above, one has already encountered the terms *Indigenous*, *Aboriginal*, *First Nations*, and *Native American*. Changes in terminology reflect the overall shift in attitude towards the First Peoples in North America, especially in academic work, often due to the efforts of Indigenous people campaigning for recognition as historical and distinct polities. Some of the terms used in the field have problematic histories and, like all labels, these run the risk of stereotyping or marginalizing the people to whom they refer, flattening out the differences between groups of people for the sake of narrative convenience. As Hugh Brody writes in the foreword to the 1988 edition of *Maps & Dreams*, the terms we use today are "colonial labels" that have "long been used to lump together the original occupants of Europe's new-found lands, obscuring the real names of cultures" (Brody, 1981, p. x). That these cultures now use these terms to refer to themselves is "a measure of the extent of the invasions" (Brody, 1981, p. x). While changes and updates to terminology in various scientific fields is quite standard, the core terms used in research involving Indigenous peoples are especially prone to instability. *First Nations English* is itself relatively new, emerging only in the mid-2000s as an alternative to terms like *Indian English*, *Native American English*, and *American Indian English*.

More widely, naming is an ongoing issue in anthropological, linguistic, and sociolinguistic research. Academic research does require the use of some labels and general terminology, so as to discuss ideas and data pertaining to different groups of people. "Experiences do not exist in raw or unaffected form but, unavoidably, are filtered through words" (Sterzuk, 2011, p. 3) and we must find the best words we can. Naming from the outside is always risky and carries a history of hastily created names that bear a pejorative weight. When researchers come into a community to work there is almost always an inherently unequal

power relationship at work. In Canadian society there exists a racial hierarchy, created and perpetuated by colonial and imperialist histories, laws and politics that extend and replicate British society (Sterzuk, 2011, p. 2). Having grown up in Alberta, I understand how easy it is to take the environment that many Canadians live in for granted. It is just as easy to take names for granted, and let labels settle over whole peoples like a smothering blanket.

What is really meant when referring to something like "Aboriginal" or "Indigenous" culture? Within the scope of these terms, we find such a wide range of cultures and languages as Haida, Gitxsan, Blackfoot, and Mi'kmaq. *Aboriginal* and *Indigenous* are terms that are best taken as starting points, allowing for a supralocal view of situations, demographics, and trends. When discussing specific groups and places, then the use of names of individual groups, bands, and reserves is appropriate. It behooves us as researchers to be as specific as possible, and to be respectful in our naming. This includes acknowledging the Indigenous names for local topography, especially when it conflicts with the names used on maps and titles. At the time of this writing, there is an increasing push to remediate the Canadian urban and university landscape, by acknowledging the original Indigenous place names in cities like Vancouver and Ottawa, and by removing the names and statues of individuals who were active in repressing and destroying Indigenous cultures (Zimonjic, 2017).

In the United States, the terms *Indian*, *Native American*, and *American Indian*, are still used. In Canada, with a few exceptions, the term *Indian* has fallen out of use. The word *Indian* infamously stems from the fact that Christopher Columbus thought he had arrived in India, and so named the denizens of the New World after another continent. While saddling the inhabitants of the Americas with an inaccurate name is by far the least horrible thing that Christopher Columbus ever did, the name remains a persistent source of controversy. This term still used in the news media and popular culture as a blanket term to cover all the distinct Indigenous cultures, from Northern Canada all the way down through to South America. It is for the most part considered racist and derogative when used by non-Indigenous people, outside of specific legal contexts, such as when discussing the Indian Act. The term *First Nations* began to replace it in the 1980s, but it is still used as a legal definition, as part of the wording of Canada's Indian Act and other legislation. As a legal term, it was used extensively to discriminate against and control Aboriginal populations, and to segregate settler and Indigenous communities, and to prevent them from gaining economic or political power (Castor, 2009).

The term First Nations was born in 1980, when a meeting of chiefs in Ottawa published their *Declaration of the First Nations*. This document by the Indian Brotherhood, the organization that would two years later become the Assembly of First Nations, declared a right to recognition and sovereignty by First Nations people as the original inhabitants of Canada (Assembly of First Nations, 2018). Technically, it does not

include the Inuit, who live in the Arctic Circle, or the Métis, who descend from Scottish or French fur traders and Indigenous women. In both Canada and the US, the term is used to designate a person who has been granted special status as a member of a reserve.

The Indian Act and the reserves have served to create and reinforce First Nations speech communities, by forcing individuals to live and remain at specific locations inadvertently and artificially. The Indian Act determined who could live on or off the reserves and worked to segregate First Nations peoples from Euro-colonial society, while paradoxically trying to force them to assimilate with that colonial society (Sinclair, 2015, p. 63). By introducing a system where band membership and access to services is tied not only to ethnicity and parentage, but to marriage, work and location, the reserve system itself makes, breaks down and remixes speech communities. There are three overall important distinctions in both Canada and the USA: *on-reservation*, *off-reservation/rural*, and *urban* (Leap, 1993). In the US, the most relevant features of urban Indian communities may be that these are multi-tribal and not concentrated around any single area or neighbourhood (Leap, 1993). On-reserve communities are more homogenous linguistically and culturally and are associated with a higher incidence of Ancestral language fluency (Leap, 1993). In 2011, nearly half the First Nations population lived on reserves (Turner, et al., 2016) with the rest of the off-reserve population concentrated in various urban centres. In Canada, the Urban Aboriginal population is increasing, and an increasing amount of research is dedicated to addressing their experiences. Key findings from the Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study, run by the University of Winnipeg, shows that most Urban Aboriginals feel well connected to their culture, and stay well connected to their home communities (Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study, 2010).

Indigenous people "are not indigenous before they discover themselves as such, mainly by being 'discovered' by others" (Isernhagen, 2009, p. 239). The term can become contested, relational to who is making the claim (Isernhagen, 2009). The meaning of the term *Aboriginal* and *Indigenous* can be taken to have three components: geographical, epistemological, and political (Castor, 2009). Geographically, they can lay claim to a place by having been there first, and much longer than incoming settler populations. Secondly, Aboriginal peoples world-wide can be described as having a kind of shared knowledge system, in which the world and humans are seen as part of an interconnected network, and interdependence, sharing and respect are seen as key tenets (Castor, 2009). This second concept places Indigenous people in stark contrast with those societies that have been colonizers in the past five hundred years, that is, European cultures which have a world-view of classical liberal individualism, and who have philosophically treated the world as a resource to be used and exploited (Castor, 2009). The desire of colonizers to seize land and resources, and even people, from Indigenous communities, has led to the third aspect of Aboriginal or Indigenous identity, that of political power, tying these terms into a relationship with colonialism. Again, a

people can only be indigenous in contrast to foreign colonizers (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005). Colonizers have used military and economic power to dominate Indigenous peoples and systematically dismantle and destroy their societies (Castor, 2009). It is the history of resistance against colonization that has united various groups of peoples together, by necessity that they define themselves as *Aboriginal* or *Indigenous* against the existing colonial power structure. To claim indigeneity is to claim the right to exist, a power-move outside of the colonial social hierarchy (Isernhagen, 2009).

Since this project was completed at a German university, and is comparing English varieties on a global level, I have elected to use the term *Indigenous* to refer to the original peoples living in North America. The German term *das Indigene* exists, and it has no negative connotation. However, researchers in European linguistics generally associate the term *Aboriginal* with research in Australia. In most of the topical academic literature, both terms are capitalized, the same way terms such as *German*, *English* or *European* would be. Two other terms which will appear in this book are *Ancestral* and *Heritage* language (AL and HL). Both terms refer to the language or languages originally spoken by ethnic groups and speech communities. Here, these will usually be the non-European languages spoken by First Nations and other Indigenous peoples in contrast to those languages that have been imported via contact or colonization.

The terms *Euro-Canadian*, *settler* and *white* appear within various fields of research and refer to the non-indigenous population of Canada. I have elected to use the term *Euro-Canadian* instead of *white*, which I find to be a very vague and nebulous term, especially given Canada's late-20th century surge in immigration from non-European countries. *Euro-Canadian* should be understood as referring to the descendants of Western European immigrants, that British, Scottish, Irish, French, Dutch, German and Scandinavian colonists. It could also be extended to those immigrants from what is generally classified as "Eastern Europe", Poland, the Balkans, and Ukraine. Certainly, Polish and Ukrainian immigration has left its mark on Canada, especially on the Prairies. This population group has inherited a culture that is primarily based on colonial-British customs and attitudes (Boberg, 2010; Chambers, 1998). These cultural practices, while having undergone some reorientation in the 1970s to accommodate official policies of multiculturalism, nonetheless remain the norm, and are usually adopted, along with Standard Canadian English, by first and second-generation immigrants from Asia, Africa, South America and other places (Chambers, 1998) although an increasing number of respondents are choosing to identify as "Canadian" when reporting their ethnicity, rather than "British" or "French" or "Canadian" in combination with other origins (Lee & Edmonston, 1999).

What then, would a term such as W*itsuwit'en English* even cover? Witset, which while having the highest number of Witsuwit'en residing there, is only one of six Witsuwit'en communities. The review of the history of language contact encompasses the Witsuwit'en collectively, but will inevitably have gaps, and

the fieldwork itself involved only participants living in Witset. Although the interviews reveal an awareness of language differences between communities, the term does run the risk of becoming an imposed label, given by outsiders who are unaware of the subtle nuances that distinguish so many close-knit speech communities, and who do not really have the right to assign such names. Thus, I use the term Witsuwit'en English, but with the reminder that it should be taken with a grain of salt.

2.2 Canada's Indigenous Peoples: First Nations, Inuit and Métis

The following section elaborates the distinction between the three primary Indigenous groups in Canada; the First Nations, the Inuit, and the Métis, as well as the status of their languages. Canada's Indigenous peoples are descended from those who came over the Bering land bridge between 7,000 and 12,000 years ago (Walker, 2015). When Europeans arrived, there were an estimated 15 million people living in North America (Mackey, 1998). Collectively they may have spoken as many as 300 languages (Cook, 1998). Since contact with Europeans, Indigenous peoples have experienced significant cultural disruption, and continued attacks on their fundamental identity (Berry, 1999). As of the 2016 Census, more than 1.67 million people in Canada identify as Indigenous or Aboriginal person, about 4.9% of the Canadian population (INAC, 2017). The Indigenous population has increased 32% from 1971 and 2001, compared to a 37% increase in non-Indigenous peoples (The Standing Commitee on Aboriginal Development, 2016). Over 1.4 million people in Canada currently claim Aboriginal or Indigenous identity (StatsCan, 2016). It is possible in Canada for a person to be registered as a Treaty or Status Indian, as well as being, or not being, a registered member of an Indian Band (Turner, et al., 2016). Indian status is usually inherited through ancestry, although nearly a quarter of the First Nations population in Canada are not Registered Indians (Turner, et al., 2016).

2.2.1 First Nations

Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada lists more than 630 First Nations communities in Canada, which represent more than fifty separate Nations and speak around fifty Indigenous languages (INAC, 2017). First Nations peoples comprise 60% of Indigenous peoples and live mostly across Western Canada (StatsCan, 2016). They include many well known and prominent groups, like the Haida and Tsimshian of the West Coast, Britain and France's historical allies the Huron and Mohawks, and groups who migrated to Canada to escape persecution in the United States, like the Blackfoot. This also includes the ten First Nations groups in Quebec, who have adopted either English or French as their L2 (Gatti, 2009). It is the First Nations Bands who have negotiated the Numbered Treaties with the Canadian government, giving up land title in exchange for the security of reserves, money transfers, and funding for various programs. From 1871 onwards, the Canadian government pushed forward with the treaties and reserve system to gain control of First Nations land title and begin a process whereby First Nations people would live as wards of the state, become

civilized and eventually transition to enfranchised and assimilated citizens of Canadian society (Drapeau, 1998). When the policy of progressive assimilation was revised at the beginning of the 19th century, it began a more aggressive attack on First Nations cultures and languages, working to remove agency and supress economic and political advancement of First Nations peoples (Drapeau, 1998). These policies reached their zenith in the 1950s and 1960s, when the government began forcibly removing children from their homes to be placed in residential schools and Euro-Canadian foster homes. At this time, Indigenous political organizations began to campaign for self government, and for the right to control the on-reserve schools (Drapeau, 1998).

First Nations groups speak a variety of languages, although the number varies according to the source, accounting for differences in language and dialect classification. When Europeans began to appear on the coasts in the 16th and 17th centuries, there were a tremendous number of languages spoken across the continent. Bakker and Papen (2008) put the number between fifty-three and seventy. They are divided into several groups: Eskimo-Aleut, Na-Dene (Athabaskan and Tlingit), Algonquian-Ritwan, Siouan family, Iroquoian family, Tsimshian isolate, Beothuk isolate, Kutenai isolate, Salish family, Wakashan family and Haida (Cook, 1998). More than sixty languages were reported in the 2011 Canadian census, with Cree, Ojibway, Innu/Montagnais, Dene, Oji-Cree accounting for 75% of the First Nations speakers (Statistics Canada, 2016). While Canada is internationally known as a bilingual nation, where citizens speak both English and French, the actual truth is more complicated. It is a country with two official languages, not a country in which most individuals can actually speak two languages (Boberg, 2010). Although bilingualism is enshrined in Canada's laws, there are few truly bilingual English/French speakers in Canada. Only about 17% of the population is fully bilingual in English and French, 10% of these are Anglophones (Statistics Canada, 2016). Moreover, the relationship between English and French speaking populations in Canada has historically been contentious and antagonistic (Boberg, 2010). About half of Canadians speak English as a "mother tongue." In 2006, Canadian English mother-tongue speakers numbered 17, 882, 775 and accounted for 5% of the world's English-speaking population (Boberg, 2010).

Indigenous self-government is negotiated locally between local governments and bands, and sometimes measures are adopted on a provincial level (Drapeau, 1998). In 1989, Quebec adopted new policies on Aboriginal peoples that allow for explicit support of First Nations languages, although bands are themselves responsible for this, the act only allows them to receive public funding for such activities (Drapeau, 1998). Canada's three most Northern territories, having mostly Indigenous people living in them, all have policies that promote Ancestral languages. In the Northwest Territories, Chipewyan, Cree, Dogrib, Kutchin and North and South Slavey all hold equal status to English and French. The Yukon also has strong support for the Indigenous languages spoken there. Nunavut, Canada's newest territory, has explicit support for the

Inuit languages spoken there. The Assembly of First Nations has demanded self-government, along with official status for Indigenous languages, and support for their maintenance on a provincial and federal level.

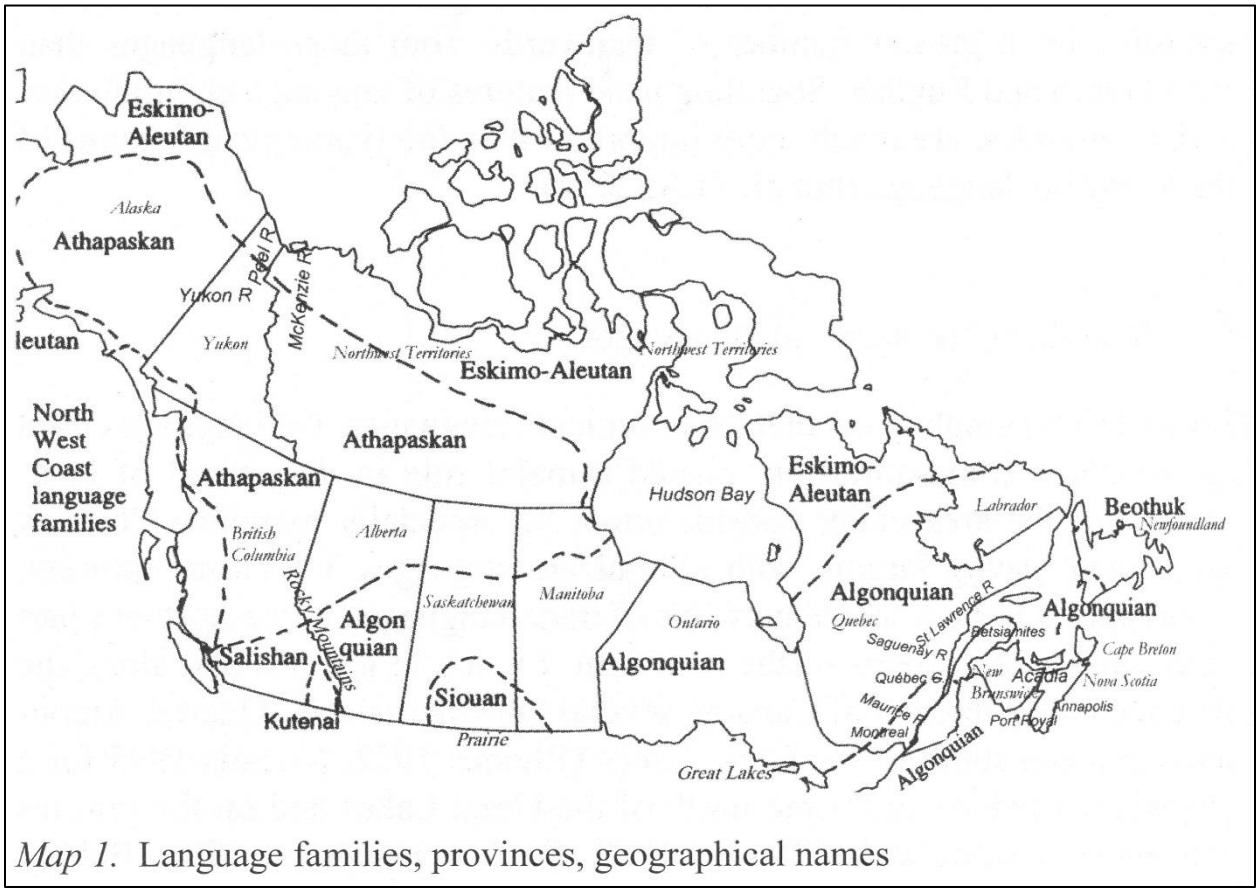

Figure 1: First Nations language groups across Canada (From Bakker and Papen, 2008)

First Nations languages have suffered severely under colonialism. Many languages have seen extremely sharp drops in speaker population in only a single generation (Cook, 1998). According to the official 2011 census, 17.2 % of the Indigenous population can converse in an Indigenous language, down from 21.0 % in the 2006 census (Statistics Canada, 2016) and only 22.4% of First Nations people reported being able to speak an Indigenous language (Statistics Canada, 2016). Having registered Indian status and living on reserve increases the likelihood that a person will speak an Indigenous language (Statistics Canada, 2016). Other factors that support language continuity include having a large speaker base, and the speaker base being younger in age (Norris, 2004). A high number of people are also apparently acquiring Indigenous languages as second languages, for instance, only 78.3% of census participants who reported being able to conduct a conversation in an AL also listed it as their mother tongue (Statistics Canada, 2016). Many of speakers learning an AL as an L2 learners live off-reserve (Norris, 2004). Otherwise, Indigenous populations have shifted to English or French (Walker, 2015). First Nations communities in Quebec,

including the Algonquin, Mik'maq, Huron-Wendat, Abenaki and Quebec Maliseet, have almost all shifted to French as an L1 (Bakker & Papen, 2008). Some of the First Nations groups in Quebec, such as the Mohawk, Cree, Naskapi and Inuit, were historically aligned with the British, and as a result learned English rather than French (Bakker & Papen, 2008).

2.2.2 The Inuit

The Inuit are the dominant population of the Northwest Territories, the Yukon and Nunavut (Turner, et al., 2016) although they reside in other provinces as well. They live in Canada's Subarctic, known to them by the name of their homeland Inuit Nunangat. This area includes Nunatsiavut (Northern Coastal Labrador), Nunavik (Northern Quebec), the territory of Nunavut and the Inuvialuit region of the Northwest Territories. About 63.7 % of Inuit people report being able to speak in an Ancestral language, the dominant language being Inuktitut (Statistics Canada, 2016). Over 36,000 Inuit people speak Inukitut, while the other two main languages, Inuinnaqtun and Inuvialuktun, report less than 700 speakers each (Statistics Canada, 2016). In the Inuit territory of Nunavik virtually everyone can converse in an Inuit language, while in the other three territories, the number is only as high as 24.9% and as low as one in ten (Statistics Canada, 2016).

2.2.3 The Métis

Finally, there are the Métis, the descendants of Scots and French fur traders and their First Nations wives. The Métis people and culture were created during the early era of the fur trade, when the lonely European men manning fur trade posts began to live and make families with local women (Van Kirk, 2007). These marriages were encouraged by local First Nations groups, who insisted on local marriage protocols being followed (Van Kirk, 2007) and by even briefly encouraged by the church and leaders, with financial subsidies being provided for mixed marriages (Bakker & Papen, 1997). While local tribes valued the marriages for the trade opportunities they offered, traders and trappers valued the skills the women possessed, as they not only acted as intermediaries between the traders and the First Nations, but also "tanned hides, repaired canoes, prepared sinews for snowshoes, planted and harvested corn and potatoes picked berries, and prepared sagamite and pemmican" (Van Kirk, 2007). When the men brought European women over to marry or were forced to return to England without their families, the women and their children would often return home to their Indigenous families. Mixed-blood women would also marry the traders (Van Kirk, 2007). The descendants of the unions were not considered a separate group, until around the 1780s, when the population become large enough to develop as an employee base for the North West Company, which fostered the idea of a separate Métis nation to oppose incoming Scottish and Irish employees and colonists arrived under the banner of the HBC (Bakker & Papen, 1997). The merger of the HBC and the NWC also increased the rapid pace of Métis crystallization. As the women, their children and sometimes their husbands began to create their own settlements in Rupert's Land, the Métis formed their

own distinct culture, centred around the buffalo hunt, which fed HBC employees (Bakker & Papen, 1997) and were known as excellent guides, hunters and trappers, voyageurs couriers of the first postal services and drove the Red River Cart teams and York Boats (Barkwell, et al., 2006). The Métis have a long history of confrontations with the Hudson Bay Company, the Northwest Company, Indigenous tribes, and the British colonial and the Canadian government for their hunting and land rights (Préfontaine, 2007). After Confederation and the merging of HBC lands into Canada, the Métis found themselves fighting for their land and rights. The most famous of these was the unsuccessful Métis Rebellion led by Louis Riel in 1885. Originally based in Manitoba, many Métis migrated west to Saskatchewan, and founded settlements there, or went south to the US (Bakker & Papen, 1997). They have been subject to the same marginalization and racism as First Nations peoples but have made a similar rally towards empowerment and self-government in recent decades (Préfontaine, 2007).

Today the majority of Métis in Canada live in the Western provinces and Ontario, with Winnipeg as the city with the highest number of resident Métis (Turner, et al., 2016). Other Métis populations are found in the United States, in states which border Canada, especially Minnesota, North Dakota and Montana. Just as the Métis fused Cree, Saulteaux, Dene, Dakota, Canadien and Scots/Orkney culture to create their own (Préfontaine, 2007), they also fused the languages of these cultures to create Michif-Cree, one of the few genuine mixed languages to exist and continue to thrive. This language uses Cree and Salteaux verb structures, and French nouns. It was first mentioned in print in 1947, referring to the 1930s, and is surmised to have been in use even in the early decades of the 1800s (Bakker & Papen, 1997). Other mixed varieties included Michif-French (Algonquian syntax and Canadian French), and Bungee (Cree and Scots-Gaelic) (Préfontaine, 2007). The Métis were collectively the most multilingual people ever to live in Canada, their mixed heritage giving them access to a wide variety of mother tongues (Préfontaine, 2007). However, only 2.5% of Métis respondents reported being able to speak an Indigenous language in the last census (Statistics Canada, 2016). Over twenty different Indigenous languages were reported being spoken by the Metis, with Cree having over 7000 speakers, Dene over 2000 and Michif only 940 (Statistics Canada, 2016). Additionally, the Métis have the highest rate of European language bilingualism of the Indigenous population, with 17.3% being able to conduct a conversation in English or French (Statistics Canada, 2016).

2.3 First Nations in Canada: History and recent developments

The history of Indigenous and First Nations peoples in Canada is the subject of much discussion and frequent revision. For our purposes, a summary of the history of contact is needed, as is a summation of important recent developments and events for First Nations people in the 21rst century (INAC 2017). Contact with certain linguistic effects began with the Basque and Portuguese fishermen who had been working along the coast of eastern Canada for some time and were known to have had contact and trade

relationships with local Indigenous people in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Research by Bakker (1989) has shown that a Basque-Algonquian pidgin existed. After John Cabot made landfall in Canada in 1497, it took another seventy years for French to establish a colony, which was disbanded after only one year and moved inland, where French likely had contact with the Masliseet-Passamaquoddy and Mik'maq (Bakker & Papen, 2008). In 1608, Samuel de Champlain established a colony at Stadacona that would eventually become Quebec City, and this brought French vernacular speakers into contact with Huron (language now extinct) and Mohawk (Bakker & Papen, 2008). Close contact between First Nations peoples and Europeans continued as the French pressed inland to meet the European markets demand for furs, meeting Algonquian and Iroquoian speakers. By the 1670s both the British and French had established colonies throughout the Great Lakes region and were in fierce competition for furs (Bakker & Papen, 2008). As the European presence increased over time, new conflicts erupted between the British, French and Indigenous groups over issues of resource use and trade agreements (INAC, 2017). In 1701, the Great Peace of Montreal ended conflict between forty First Nations groups and the French. The British created their own Indian Department in 1755 to address ongoing concerns. In the wake of the British victory over the French in in 1759, and the following succession of all French New World territories to the British, they continued to make new treaties of "Peace and Friendship" with First Nations across Canada, culminating in the Treaty of Paris and the Royal Proclamation in 1763 (for full text, see Appendix). This proclamation was meant to publicly recognize the rights of Aboriginal land title and would become an essential part of later legal battles between First Nations people and the Canadian government (INAC, 2017). It makes the following promise (Royal Proclamation 1973):

> And whereas it is just and reasonable, and essential to our Interest, and the Security of our Colonies, that the several Nations or Tribes of Indians with whom We are connected, and who live under our Protection, should not be molested or disturbed in the Possession of such Parts of Our Dominions and Territories as, not having been ceded to or purchased by Us, are reserved to them. or any of them, as their Hunting Grounds.

After the United States won the American War of Independence, both American loyalists and First Nations groups who had been British allies, such as the Iroquois, came to Canada as refugees and were given reserves to live on (INAC, 2017). As the pace of settlement increased and colonists began to demand more land, land surrender treaties disposed more and more peoples, and the attitude of the colonial government began to change. The belief in the superiority of British and European culture began to emerge and crystallized in the policies of "civilizing" indigenous peoples in British colonies (INAC, 2017). First Nations groups were seen not as valuable military allies, but as impediments to settlers developing land for farming and industry. As British Imperialism with a capital I was fully realized, a process was begun that

would transfer the responsibility of managing First Nations land and peoples to the colonies directly, and eventually led to the creation of the Numbered Treaties between 1871 and 1921 and the Indian Act in 1876 (INAC, 2017).

2.3.1 The Indian Act

The Indian Act was by far the most damaging policy ever enacted against Indigenous people in Canada. Via constant amendments, the Indian Act imposed greater and greater restrictions on the lives of First Nations peoples, controlling their system of band governance, pushing communities to abandon traditional lifestyles and banning many important ceremonial events. Among the Indian Act's most notorious policies are the following (from Morin 2011, Sinclair 2005):

- Forcing individuals who became Canadian citizens to give up band membership and Aboriginal status.
- Forcing women who married non-Aboriginal men to give up band membership and Aboriginal status, without being able to pass it on to their children.
- Discouraging enfranchisement and career training by forcing Indigenous people who entered the military, university or received any professional training to give up band membership, which meant having to leave the reserve.
- Preventing band members from operating businesses off-reserve.
- Forcing band members to carry passes allowing them to travel off-reserve.
- Preventing band members or anyone else from fundraising to pay for lawyers without a licence, thus preventing Indigenous from pursuing land claims.
- Granting permission to police and child welfare services to seize children from their parents for adoption, fostering or residential schools.
- Outlawing and suppressing Indigenous languages, ceremonies, and regalia, with seized regalia and other materials being either sent to museums or burnt.

Overall, the goal of the Indian Act was to regulate every possible aspect of the lives of First Nations peoples and to prevent them from gaining any agency or legal power, while paradoxically forcing their segregation *from* and their assimilation *into* Canadian colonial society. Increased legislation was meant to speed up this assimilation, draining First Nations people of their resources and forcing anyone who might cause dissent off-reserve and away from their family and support system. Although the Act has been amended more times than any other government document in Canadian history, it remains a serious point of contention for Indigenous advocates.

2.3.2 Residential schools

The most aggressive method of assimilation was the residential school system, with its goal of "civilizing" Aboriginals by separating children from their families and then eradicating their cultural and languages, their very identity as Indigenous people (Sinclair, 2015, p. 4). Bill 14, an amendment to the Indian Act in 1920, made attendance of residential schools mandatory, and was vigorously protested in the House of Commons by First Nations representatives (Henderson & Wakeham, 2009). Funded by the government and run by Catholic, United, Anglican, and Presbyterian churches, 132 of these schools were filled with children taken from their homes. Between 1857 and 1996 more than 150,000 children were put through residential schools, and at the height of the implementation in 1953, over 11,000 children were living full or part time in the system (Sinclair, 2015, p. 11). The official reason many of the children were taken was "neglect" (Sinclair, 2015, p. 11). More children were simply taken from their home and placed in non-Indigenous adoptive or foster homes, especially during the so-called Sixties Scoop. These residential schools perpetuated tremendous physical, psychological, and sexual abuse against these children. Entire generations of children grew up in strict, harsh institutions, without love or affection. Children attending these schools also suffered from maltreatment, poor health, and lack of nutrition. They worked on school farms and dairies for the economic benefit of the institutions running the schools, while being starved themselves. Throughout the 1970's, more and more Bands took control of their own educational systems, and the last residential school closed in Saskatchewan in 1996. The effect of residential schools has been to create a legacy of abuse and trauma for those who attended ((TRC), 2012).

The assumption that these children were unfit for anything, but rudimentary training left them without the skills needed to find jobs in the Canadian economy and perpetuated racist stereotypes and furthered income gaps (Sinclair, 2015, p. 68). Tuberculosis also gained its foothold in residential schools, creating high death rates there (Sinclair, 2015, p. 141). Children who survived the schools died later after, spreading the disease to many other communities and if they survived, were often left with lifelong health problems. The prevalence of obesity and Type 2 diabetes among First Nations has also been linked to malnutrition at residential schools (Mosby & Galloway, 2017). The Bryce Report in 1906 revealed the conditions at these schools but was dismissed by the government and the churches (Sinclair, 2015; Woods, 2016). Repeated reports on unsafe buildings, poor sanitary conditions and nutrition but were often ignored (Sinclair, 2015, p. 142). Children returned to their homes alienated from their families and cultures (Berry, 1999; Juutilainen, et al., 2014). Students who were treated as failures and as prisoners "sometimes graduated to real prisons" (Sinclair, 2015, p. 3).

As has been and will be discussed in this book, these schools also had a devastating effect on Indigenous languages, attacking their youngest speakers and preventing language transmission later. This was a striking

departure from the previous language policies in many British colonies, which allowed bilingualism in Indigenous languages in the classrooms, at least at the level of primary school (Howatt & Widdowson, 1984). Children were taught to be ashamed of their languages and those who spoke them (Atleo & Fitznor, 2010; Berry, 1999; Juutilainen, et al., 2014) It was standard policy for Indigenous languages to be banned in boarding and residential schools, with sever punishments meted out to children for infractions (Juutilainen, et al., 2014; Sinclair, 2015). For many, the loss of their language was equivalent to the loss of their culture (Juutilainen, et al., 2014) and led many children to feel that they were neither Indigenous nor white (Berry, 1999).

2.3.3 The 1950's to the present

In the wake of the First and Second World Wars, a wide-spread First Nations leadership began to develop and began to resist the restrictions imposed on them by the Indian Act. In 1951, the potlach ban was lifted, and Indigenous people regained the right to use their traditional dances and regalia without fear of reprisal (Morin, 2011). Indigenous resistance to colonialism continued to gain ground, as the Indian Power Movement gained traction in North America. The Canadian government tabled the White Paper in 1969, proposing the eradication of the Indian Act and the legal distinction between Indigenous people and other Canadian citizens (INAC, 2017). This would have led to the loss of any distinct Indigenous rights and total assimilation into Euro-Canadian society, creating a "historical amnesia that foreclosed consideration of how Canadian sovereignty was founded on the suppression of Indigenous politics" (McCreary, 2013, p. 82). The response was a nation-wide rebuke from First Nations and Indigenous leaders and the report was withdrawn in 1970 in the face of massive criticism and the assertion that First Nations people were not mere Canadian citizens, but "citizens plus" (McCreary, 2013). The fight against the White Paper stimulated the pan-Canadian Indigenous political movement and First Nations leaders began to fight for more control of band issues and funding (McCreary, 2013). This led to the founding of the Assembly of First Nations in 1982 and the of First Nations rights. In 1983 the Penner Committee answered the growing call for Indigenous self-government, confirming the right to self-government as an inherent right, enshrined in Canada's Constitution. Since then, seventeen self-government agreements have been successfully completed. In 1985, in response to widespread criticism of the policy that automatically took away the "Indian Status" of Indigenous women who married non-Indigenous men, Bill C-31 was passed (INAC, 2017). Created through consultations with Indigenous leaders, this bill amended the Indian Act and restored the Indian Status of some 60,000 persons.

The 1980s also saw the first allegations of abuse in residential schools made public. As more and more survivors came forward, the government and the churches were forced to address their actions. This included the Anglican Church's official apology in 1993, which led the appointment of the first Indigenous

Bishop and put pressure on the government to also apology (Woods, 2016). The opening of this wound in of Canadian society has created a public "trauma drama" which continues to develop and unfold even today (Woods, 2016). In 1990, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs leader Phil Fontaine led the call for the government and churches to acknowledge the abuse and mistreatment that occurs in the institutions. In that same year, a standoff between the RCMP and a group of Mohawk warriors at Oka, Quebec. When the police attempted to dismantle a roadblock, the ensuing confrontation led to the death of one police officer and the eventual deployment of the military for a seventy-eight-day standoff (INAC, 2017). This led to the creation of one of the most important documents in Canadian history, the 1996 report by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People (INAC, 2017). The Commission addressed many problems and eventually investigated residential schools. This in turn lead to a two-billion-dollar CAD settlement and to the creation of the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission (INAC, 2017). The first formal apology was offered by former Prime Minister Stephen Harper on June 11, 2008, wherein the negative impact of colonization and residential schooling on Indigenous people and cultures was recognized. However, this apology was severely criticized by Indigenous activists and academics, who felt the apology was incomplete and did not take full responsibility for what was done (Chrisjohn & Wasacase, 2008; Henderson & Wakeham, 2009).

The current state of Canada's Indigenous peoples is a mixed one. Research has shown that although there has been some reduction in the income gap between Aboriginal-identity and First Nations persons and settler populations, those claiming Aboriginal or Indigenous identity face lower employment prospects and lower total incomes (Pendakur & Pendakur, 2011). While Canadian schools and post-high school job training and qualification programs have worked to be more accommodating to Indigenous students, and new programs continue to be developed and implemented in schools and governments (The Standing Commitee on Aboriginal Development, 2016), a number of events over the past several years give an indication of the problems faced by Indigenous peoples in Canada. Although the UN adopted a Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People in 2007, Canada became a permanent objector, and only reversed this decision and accepted the declaration in July 2016 (CBC News, 2016). In 2011 an increasing amount of attention was given to the lack of housing and infrastructure on some reserves in Canada, especially some in Northern Ontario (Stastna, 2011). Throughout 2015, media coverage in Canada gave precedence to the high number of missing or murdered Aboriginal women in Canada (CBC News, 2016). An official inquiry was set up, and remains ongoing, as families have begun to meet with officials (Government of Canada, 2016). The issue became the subject of international attention, and caused a public debate in Canada, addressing racism, the police, the states of reserves and other issues concerning Indigenous peoples. Other news stories have highlighted the incredibly high proportion of Indigenous men and women in Canada's federal prison system, which has been called the new residential school system (Macdonald, 2016). These

problems exist because not only the legacy of colonialism and the residential school system, but because of the racism structured into Canadian society at every institution and level. Many researchers cited in this book have discussed this specifically in their work, including Andreas Sterzuk (2010, 2011), Murray Sinclair (2015), Eric Woods (2018) and Sandra A. Juutilainen, et al (2014). The prevalence of racism towards Indigenous people in Canadian society should not be underestimated. In November 2015, CBC News temporarily closed all comment sections on news stories concerning Indigenous peoples, due to the onslaught of racist comments (McGuire, 2015).

The above paragraph should not be read as attempting to portray the circumstances of Indigenous people as wholly degrading or negative. News organizations in Canada often focus on shocking and rather depressing news stories about the state of life on reserves, the high rates of drug use and suicides, and so on. Even media that is meant to provide a sympathetic viewpoint on First Nations peoples often perpetuates specific colonial attitudes about them (Krebs, 2011). Nevertheless, the Canadian media is gradually switching from a venue that simply reports stories about Indigenous people to providing a space where they can speak for themselves. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has worked to address the impact of residential schools and published a series of recommendations for the government to act on although it remains to be seen if all of these recommendations will be acted upon. Many First Nations groups have actively seized on the opportunity for self-government and worked hard to improve their situations and prospects. High school and post secondary graduation rates for Indigenous are on the rise, as are employment rates (The Standing Commitee on Aboriginal Development, 2016). According to the 2016 Census, almost seven in ten Indigenous people overall aged twenty-five to sixty-four had completed a high school diploma or equivalency certificate in 2016, up from six in ten in the last census in 2006 (Canada, 2017). 10.9% of Indigenous people now have a bachelor's degree or higher, an increase from 7.7% in 2006 (Canada, 2017). The proportion of Indigenous people with a college diploma also rose from 18.7% to 23.0% in the ten-year interval (Canada, 2017). Accordingly, Indigenous people have also become very active in Canada's own academic landscape. They have led calls to decolonize research and substantially rework the methodologies of Western education to be inclusive of Indigenous perspective and ideas, and the topic has been extensively addressed in publications (St. Denis, 2007; Iwama, et al., 2009; Zinga, et al., 2009; Friesen, 2009; Villagas, 2009)

Canada's celebration of 150 years since Confederation has prompted discussion across the country as well as a push to change the names of universities, buildings and street names to reflect Indigenous land title and colonial history (Zimonjic, 2017). Langevin Block on Parliament Hill, named for the man responsible for Confederation and considered the architect of the residential school system, was renamed as the Office of the Prime Minister and the Privy Council in in June 2017 (Harris, 2017). Shorty before this dissertation's

publication, the statue of John. A. MacDonald was removed from in front of Victoria City Hall after continuous protests from local First Nations groups (CBC News, 2018). The Canadian government is in the process of working together with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis leaders to create an Indigenous Languages Revitalizations Act that will see Ottawa take responsibility for supporting Indigenous languages and preventing them from dying out (Bird, 2018).

2.4 The Witsuwit'en and Witset

Witsuwit'en means 'people of the lower drainage' referring to the watershed, *Widzin Kwah* (Morin, 2011). The entire valley was *Yin Tah*, the territory of the Witsuwit'en. The Witsuwit'en have inhabited the immediate region for over 5000 years (Hargus, 2007). Being part of the large cultural and linguistic network of Dene-Athapaskan and also partaking in an extensive coastal-inland trade network, they were never completely isolated.

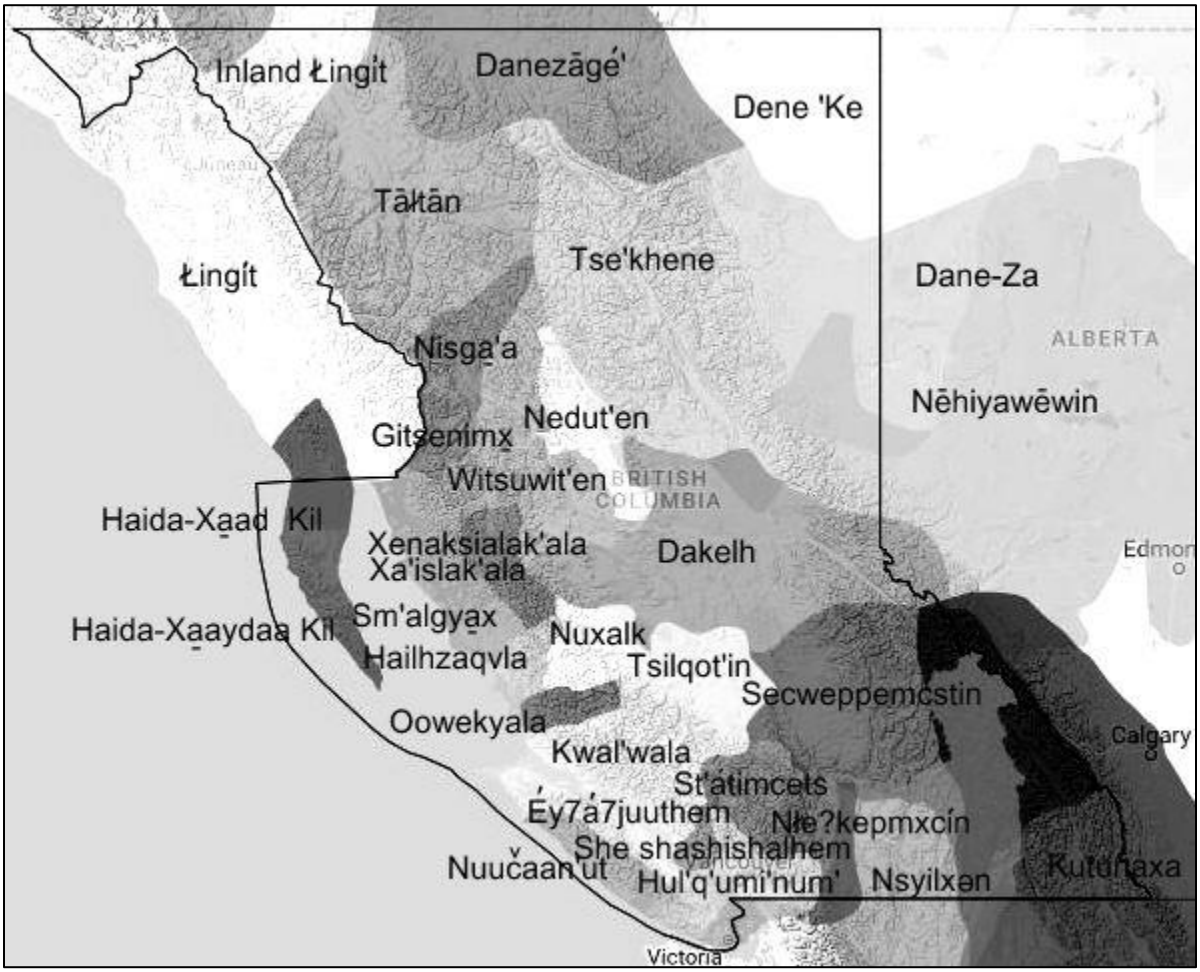

Figure 2: First Nations and First Nations language groups of British Columbia (Topographic map source: First Voices)

The Witsuwit'en, like many other First Nations groups in Canada, have taken strides to ensure their survival as a culture and people. This has included producing a textbook, *Niwhts'ide'nï Hibi'it'ën: The Ways of Our Ancestors*. This book is the primary source for historical information about the Witsuwit'en. It contains material collected by the Witsuwit'en themselves, and from the various researchers who have visited the community over time. While much of this work does fall under the heading of salvage anthropology, it has preserved a great deal of information. One of the earliest outside researchers was the anthropologist Diamond Jenness, who in 1923-4 worked with chiefs and Elders, eventually publishing *The Ancient Education of a Carrier Indian* (1929), *The Myths of The Carrier Indians of British Columbia* (1934) and *The Carrier Indians of the Bulkley River: Their Social and Religious Life* (1943). The language itself was studied periodically through the 20th century, with the definitive grammar being published by Sharon Hargus. She has worked closely with the Witsuwit'en for several decades and published the grammar of the language in 2005. Her book, *Witsuwit'en Grammar: phonetics, phonology, morphology*, serves as the primary reference on the Witsuwit'en language.

The Witsuwit'en are part of a group of Dene-Athabaskan people, the Dakalh-ne (this group was formerly known as Carrier). Their territory is bordered to the west by the Gitxsan people, whose language *Gitxsanimaax*, is a Tsimshianic language. The Witsuwit'en adopted much of their cultural framework from the neighbouring Gitxsan (Morin, 2011, p. 13). This includes the three-tiered social system of aristocrats, commoners and slaves, the usage of crests and totem poles to represent families and clans, and the feast system (Hargus, 2007). The groups lived a semi-nomadic lifestyle, based on the seasonal availability of vital food sources like sockeye, steelhead and Chinook salmon (Gottesfeld, 1994). Spring and summer were spent at the riverside and the canyon, to harvest the bounty of the returning salmon up the Widzin Kwah (the Bulkley River). People also worked throughout the valley to fish in lakes, harvest berries and other plants and herbs. In the autumn, hunters brought in black bear, and caribou (now locally rare), moose (frequent in the region since the 1920s) and trapped beaver, marmot and later in the winter, snowshoe hare, as families prepared to return to the mountains for the winter (Gottesfeld, 1994). There small groups lived in small family huts, supplied by stores of food and running traplines.

Throughout the summer, whole clans gathered to host and partake in *balhats* (Morin, 2011, p. 20). These were feasts given to celebrate marriages, funerals, baby naming and other important events. Hosting families provided guests with food, and gifts of clothes, more food, and tools. There are numerous types of balhats, such as *Hibighec'ëlt'igh* or marriage feasts, and *yin'sde*, feasts to mark the succession of a chief. They were also used to settle *it'ën*, or "business" such as disputes and debts. Balhats not only involved large quantities of food and gifts, but also elaborate dances in regalia and hand carved masks. The balhats continue to be an integral part of Witsuwit'en society today.

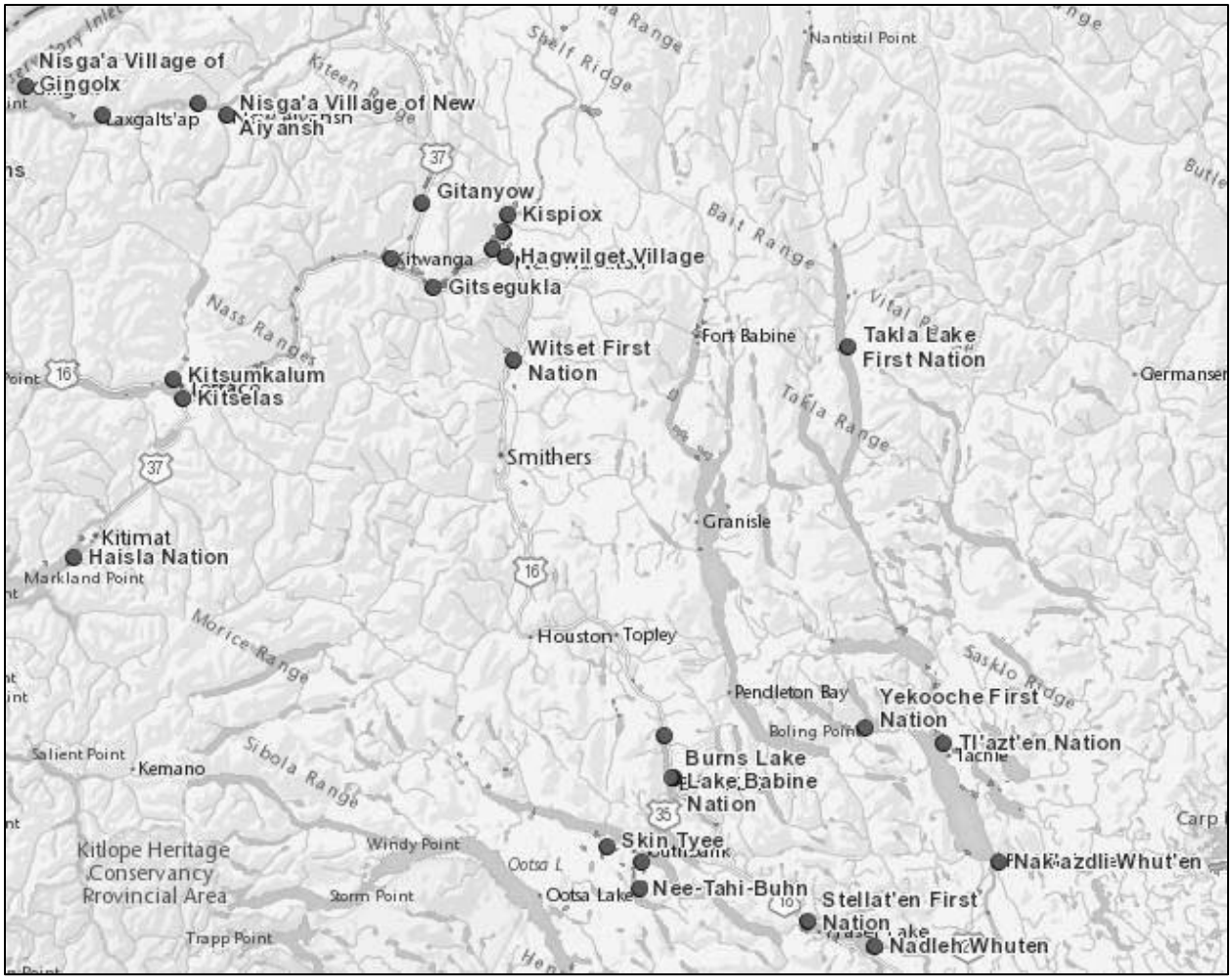

Figure 3: Map of the Widzin Kwah or Bulkey Valley-Nechanko region today (Map source: INAC)

The Witsuwit'en adapted the coastal clan and feast system of the Gitxsan to their matriarchal culture. Children belong to their mother's clan, and men live with their wives and their families. Families are organized into *dïdikhnï*, or clans, and then *yikh*, or houses. Each clan and house have their own *nitsiy*, or crest. The Witsuwit'en clans are *Gidimt'en*, the Bear/Wolf Clan, *C'ilhts'ëkhyu*, the Big Frog Clan, *Tsayu*, or the Beaver Clan, *Likhsilyu*, The Small Frog/ Caribou Clan and the *Likhts'amisyu* or Fireweed/ Killerwhale Clan. Houses are overseen by *Dinï'ze* or *Ts'akëze'*, male and female chiefs and assisted by wing chiefs. Chief names are passed on from one chief to a new candidate who has had years of training. These individuals were often *Skiy ze'*, children of chiefs. The matriarchal nature of Witsuwit'en culture plays an important part of this. For instance, chief names may be passed from mother to child, but not father to child. A man's chief name is instead passed on to younger sibling or a sister's children (Morin, 2011, p. 16).

Figure 4: Witsuwit'en dancers in regalia at a summer fair (Source: Bulkley Valley Museum, date unknown)

Witsuwit'en oral history falls into two types: *cin k'ikh* or 'trails of songs' are the oral history of clans and houses. *c'iidede*, translated as "stories from long ago", are used to teach lessons and explain the order and origin of the natural world (Morin, 2011, p. 4). Many of these stories appear in the interviews I recorded. The Witsuwit'en tell that they originally lived in another place, a village called *Diz Dlegh*, on the Widzin Kwah (later called the Bulkley River), where they lived with the Carrier, Gitxsan and Sekani people. According to Witsuwit'en oral history, the people living in the region were originally one group, until an ill omen occurred at the bridge over the canyon. This story appears in Diamond Jenness's collection (1934, p. 240):

> One midsummer's day, during the salmon run, when many people were standing on the weir, two squirrels wandered over it, quite fearless, and examined the structure above and below. The people were terrified, believing that their visit portended a great sickness or other calamity at the hands of the sky-god Utakke. So they abandoned the village and scattered in all directions. The Gitksan moved down the river to Hazelton, the Carriers to Babine Lake, Moricetown and other places, and the Sekani fled northward. But even today there are many places between the Bulkley river and Babine Lake that bear Sekani names, proving that the Sekani once inhabited this area.

The story was also related by Witsuwit'en band members:

> (1) Wanda: This was just our fishing area Moricetown was just our fishing area and everybody lived on their own separate like around their territories and Saskwa is where the village used to be, that's where they all lived, in the late eighteen hundreds I think it was, they saw a squirrel running across the bridge and the squirrel mean the sign of bad luck and they scattered from Hagwilget to Moricetown to Fort Babine.

After this split, the Witsuwit'en are said to have found their way to the canyon. The canyon itself shows signs of continuous habitation for around 5,500 years (Morin, 2011). The Witsuwit'en owned and controlled the entire Widzin Kwah, or Bulkley River Basin, and the western half of Nïtagh Bin (Francois Lake). The village around which the fishing was based is named *Kyah Wiget* and was connected on both sides of the canyon over the river by a wooden bridge. The fishing village was situated so as to take advantage of the returning salmon, and is the site of highly productive fishing sites, where smokehouses were built, and summer feasts were held (Gottesfeld, 1994). The Witsuwit'en have always gone to great lengths to avoid wasting fish, and to process caught fish immediately to avoid spoilage (Gottesfeld, 1994).

The proximity of the Gitxsan not only resulted in cultural sharing and intermarriage, but also close trade relationships (Morin, 2011). A great deal of trade was conducted at Tsë Cakh. Witsuwit'en traders traveled all over the "grease trails." Named for the grease from eulachon, (or oolichan, or candle fish), this intricate network of paths led First Nations people all over the region (Morin, 2011, pp. 64-66). When the Northwest Company set up the Fort St. James trading post in 1806 on Nak'albun (Stuart Lake), the Witsuwit'en were able to trade directly for European goods (Morin, 2011).

2.4.1 The fur trade and the Hudson's Bay Company

Fur trading was an extremely profitable business for both Europeans and First Nations peoples, since exchanges had to be made to the satisfaction of both parties (Morin, 2011, p. 210). Due to the English propensity to acquire land for the Thirteen Colonies, and the willingness on the French side to view First Nations peoples as trade partners, learn from them, and intermarry, it was the French who worked throughout the deepest parts of North America (Eccles, 2013). In 1821, the HBC and the NWC came to an agreement and then merged. The enlarged HBC relied heavily on the previously established trade contacts and experience of the French voyagers, who now worked under contract (Eccles, 2013). Importantly, the trading companies had served as buffers against settlement in Indigenous lands, to preserve the forests where animals lived and to maintain good relationships with the First Nations who controlled access to the animals to traplines (Eccles, 2013).

In 1822, after the merger, Fort Kilmaurs was built on Babine Lake to capitalize on both the fur trade and the abundance of salmon, with the further intention of circumventing the Tsimshian to trade directly with the Witsuwit'en, Gitxsan, and Nedu'ten (Babine). The Hudson's Bay Company gradually took control of the fur trade, forcing the Witsuwit'en to accept low prices for furs and to take on debt (Morin, 2011). The fur trade became increasingly important, as newly rich trappers gained status in Witsuwit'en society, and others became mired in debt to the HBC. As indebted families had to spend more time trapping to pay off debts, they were then later forced to buy food from the fort stores. Conservation laws in 1916 forced the Witsuwit'en to register traplines, changing to the Western system of passing them from father to son, instead of through the mother's side (Morin, 2011, p. 215). The reliance on trapping created conflicts with incoming European trappers and settlers and left the whole community vulnerable to shifts in the global economy. When fur prices crashed in the 1980s, the livelihood that many families had relied upon vanished. Although many First Nations and Inuit people continue to trap for meat and pelts, the returns today are far less lucrative.

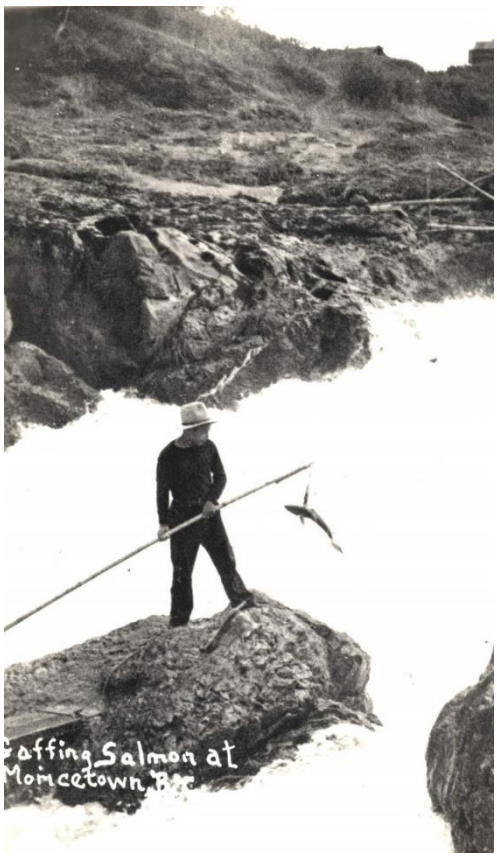

Figure 5: Witsuwit'en man gaffing fish at Kyah Wiget (Source: Bulkley Valley Museum, date unknown)

Figure 6: The HBC building at Lake Babine (Source: Bulkley Valley Museum, dates unknown)

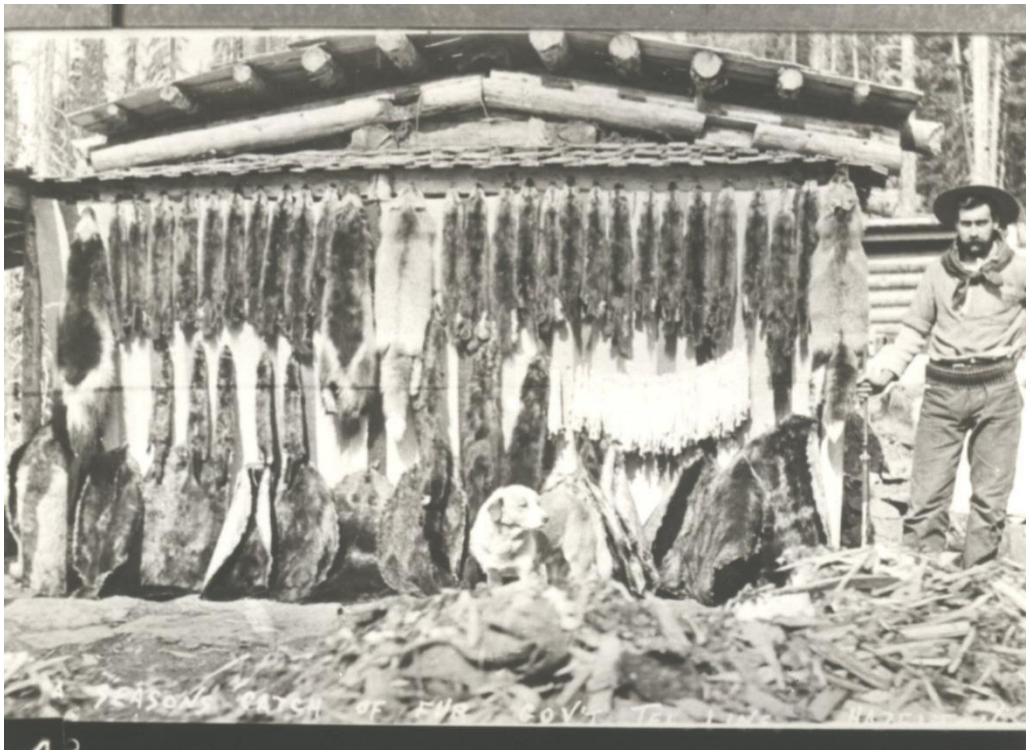

Figure 7: HBC trapper with a season's catch (Source: Bulkley Valley Museum, dates unknown)

2.4.2 The Oblate priests and missionaries

The missionaries had completely different goals from that of fur trade companies, who wanted Indigenous people to live out on the land and trap furs. The goal of the missionaries was twofold: firstly, to convert and save souls, secondly to "civilize" Indigenous people. This translated to missionaries specifically seeking out intensive contact with Indigenous bands and trying to convince Indigenous people to live in permanent settlements for easier access and control (Morin, 2011). They were generally quite displeased with the fur traders for introducing alcohol, and therefore drunkenness, to any local Indigenous population. Various missions sprouted throughout British Columbia as different religious organizations attempted to establish themselves among the towering redwoods and frosty mountains. Rather than a gold rush, they came for a "soul rush", an opportunity to collect on the unsaved, uncivilized and unsuspecting Indigenous peoples of the west. The impact of the Oblate French Roman Catholic missionaries goes well beyond language contact. The Oblates relied on the "Durieu system", terrorizing and brutalizing communities to bring them under control. Tactics included community police forces, public whippings and humiliations and threats of hellfire (Morin, 2011, p. 236). The missionaries were instrumental in translating and negotiating for the Witsuwit'en and later in assisting the colonial government in maintaining control of the Witsuwit'en (Morin, 2011). They tried to suppress traditional Witsuwit'en practices associated with the clan and feast systems and attacked traditional shamans and medicine (Morin, 2011).

Missionaries arrived in northern B.C. in the 1840's and a permanent mission was established in 1873 in Fort St. James. A church was built in Hagwilget by 1875, attended by a few converts. Additionally, the Witsuwit'en seasonal migration from the mountain territories to the river and back again, seems to have initially frustrated the efforts of missionaries to convert people *en mass* (Morin, 2011). Numerous Oblate priests and nuns from another order worked in the region, with none being more influential than Father Morice. Father Morice's legacy is very problematic. His first efforts with the Nedut'en (Babine) people failed and so did early efforts with the Witsuwit'en (Mulhall, 1986). Father Morice used the fear and devastation of the 1894 epidemic to gain a foothold and convince his Witsuwit'en converts to move to a new village site, Moricetown. Father Morice claimed his congregation had insisted on naming the village in his honour (Morin, 2011, p. 246). This "model village" was to serve as template for missionary efforts to civilize the Indigenous people of the Northern interior and moved converts away from their family and clan support structures. After a flood in spring 1889, the village was moved and refounded in its current location of Witset, known in that time as *Keyikh Wigit*, overlooking the Wizdin Kwah canyon (Morin, 2011, p. 246). Father Morice worked for nineteen years in the B.C. interior, learning the language fluently and even inventing a new alphabet for the language to be read and written (Mulhall, 1986). He was apparently the main intermediary between the Witsuwit'en and Europeans on many matters and used this position to his own advantage (Mulhall, 1986). His ambitions didn't end with mere academic publications and

controlling the Witsuwit'en. Father Morice renamed the *Widzin Bin* and *Widzin Kwah* after himself, as Morice Lake and Morice River. His behavior became so egocentric and erratic that in 1903, a senior priest was sent to observe him, and shortly afterwards he was removed from authority and sent to Manitoba (Mulhall, 1986).

2.4.3 Prospectors and Settlers: The opening of Yin Tah

The watershed was finally opened to the world by the laying of the Collins Overland Telegraph Line in 1865-66, bringing with its construction surveyors and construction crews (Kruisselbrink, 2012, p. 24). Although the Collins Overland Telegraph line soon was soon abandoned after the trans-Atlantic cable was completed first, the roads created for its construction remained, and are still in use today, as the Telkwa High Road and the Yellowhead Highway. The man who came to run the project to lay the telegraph cable also gave the area its name. Thanks to Colonel Charles Bulkley, the Widzin Kwah became the Bulkley River (Kruisselbrink, 2012, p. 25). According to letters written by the province's Chief Commissioner of Land and Works, Thomas Elwyn, relationships with the local First Nations are described as mostly peaceable and friendly (Kruisselbrink, 2012, p. 26). Some of the crew from the construction of the line stayed in the region and founded Hazelton in 1868 (Kruisselbrink, 2012, p. 32). It was at this time that the valley *Widzin Kwah* was renamed *Bulkley Valley* (Morin, 2011). Hazelton was the first permanent European settlement in the region and was the major supply centre for the Omineca Gold Rush of 1869-1872. Approximately 5000 people flooded the region to search for gold. Canadians of European ancestry and Chinese prospectors were based around Hazelton and made use of local trails (Morin, 2011, p. 218). The Klondike Gold Rush, beginning in 1897, attracted massive numbers of men, especially Americans, to Alaska. Those who could not afford to travel the Klondike by steamer boat used the old telegraph trial to make their way (Kruisselbrink, 2012, p. 40).

First Nations groups were relied on to bring supplies into the region. Large Haida-built canoes, often manned by Tsimshian men who knew the river, where used to transport up to two tons of freight and people (Kruisselbrink, 2012, pp. 37-36). Witsuwit'en, men and women alike, were often employed as packers. As the trails improved and horse and mule trains were used, many Witsuwit'en worked with pack trains as well. Some of pack train owners, such as Jean Caux, known locally in the region as Cataline, are mentioned as having a good reputation when it came to working with Indigenous peoples (Morin, 2011, p. 218). The miners who entered the region where a decidedly mixed lot, and often had contentious relationships with the Witsuwit'en and Gitxsan. There are reports of accounts of unpaid wages, drunken behavior, rape, stealing from traplines and an often-poor relationship between the Witsuwit'en, the Gitxsan and the miners (Morin, 2011, pp. 221-225).

Between 1890 and 1892 two surveys of the Bulkley Valley were completed, and by 1900, the above-mentioned influx of prospectors had forced the re-establishment of the telegraph line, now renamed Yukon Telegraph Line, has created new roads and access to the region. Many of the Gold Rush prospectors, having taken note of the lush and beautiful area as they passed through, returned after the Gold Rush to stake claims. Houston was founded in 1898 as the government-run Pleasant Ranch, along with the HBC's Ranch for overwintering horses. Interest in the region continued to grow until, in 1906, there where seventy-four permanent settlers and the village of Telkwa had been surveyed (Kruisselbrink, 2012). The next major step was to establish a railway line, which was underway by 1913. This led to the establishment of the town of Smithers, which was incorporated as a municipality in the early 1920's. Smithers grew in fits and starts, with the population diminished by the advent of the First World War and the Depression. In 1925 the population numbered around 1000. The population seems to have been primarily English, or at least English speaking, since it wasn't until in 1936-37 that a large number of Swiss immigrated into the region, followed by the arrival of more Swiss, Dutch, German and Italian settlers (Kruisselbrink, 2012, pp. 110-111).

Figure 8: Fishing at the spring salmon run (Source Bulkley Valley Museum, date unknown)

2.4.4 Epidemics and the reserves

By the 1780s European diseases had appeared on the BC coast and had begun to make their way into the BC interior (Morin, 2011, pp. 222-223). Pockets of smallpox began flare up throughout the interior. In the 1840s measles began to move from the coast to the interior. In 1862, smallpox arrived in full force, in an epidemic that started in Victoria and moved north, proving catastrophic for the entire Indigenous population of British Columbia. In the next three years, smallpox killed one third of the Indigenous population in the province, approximately 20,000 people. In the case of the Witsuwit'en, it is not known exactly how many died, but by 1865 one entire clan, the Tsayu, almost disappeared, and was forced to merge with the Likhts'amisyu clan to continue (Morin, 2011, p. 191). By the end of another severe smallpox outbreak in the north in 1876, it is estimated that 16,000 Dakelh people had been reduced to 1600 and the Babine and Witsuwit'en were left with about 600 people (Morin, 2011, p. 222).

Indian Affairs established the Babine Indian Agency in 1890, and two years later began laying out the reserves, lumping the Nedut'en and Witsuwit'en together as "Hagwilget Indians" (Morin, 2011, p. 272). Unfortunately for the Witsuwit'en, the reserves they were assigned did not consider their seasonal migration, traditional clan and family lands, nor did it provide enough living space and quality land. It may be worth noting that the man who did this, Peter O'Reilly, is remembered even to this day for "always trying to leave the Indians with as little land as possible" (Cassidy & Cassidy, 1980). The Witsuwit'en were left with three large and disconnected pieces of land, on which they were expected to live, hunt and farm. These were collectively known as Moricetown, and individually called Lachalsap, Coryatsaqua, and Oschiwinna, and consisted of a total of 1,853 acres (Morin, 2011, p. 272).

This division led to several serious problems for the community. As noted above, O'Reilly and his associates did not take into account the Witsuwit'en people's seasonal migration, but simply assumed the village at the canyon was their year-round residence. As was typical of the time, he did not bother to ask and gave only two days notice for the meeting on the issue (Morin, 2011, p. 272). As a result, traditional fishing, hunting and trapping territories were lost, along with homes, burial sites and even barns and fields. Salmon fishing at the canyon, which provided valuable food source for the winter and was central to social customs, such as potlatch feasts, became increasingly regulated and was at times even banned. Important fishing sites at the Tsë Cakh were lost and not regained until 1924.

In addition, because European settlers had already moved into the area, the three reserves where now separated by farms, which led to tension when the Witsuwit'en were forced to crossed settled land (Morin, 2011, p. 275). Lastly, and paradoxically, the very people who had eagerly embracing farming and ranching were now left with often poor and totally insufficient land for cattle grazing and haying. The building of the railway in 1908 exacerbated the problem, when the Coryatsaqua reserve lost forty acres to the Grand

Trunk Pacific Railway project (Morin, 2011, p. 286). The railway also accelerated the arrival of Europeans to the region. Farmers, prospectors, and government employees flooded the Bulkley Valley. As much as the Witsuwit'en tried to adapt by finding work, opening businesses, and trading, the Indian Act and continued loss of land eroded their success and independence. By the time a Royal Commission arrived in the area in 1913, to address the issue of Aboriginal land claims, so much land in the region had been settled that even the addition of 1,391 acres was grudgingly given (Morin, 2011).

The Witsuwit'en also faced the loss of traditional fishing rights, being forced to purchase expensive licenses to fish, and after 1904, having to give up Indian status in order to obtain a license. After the continued loss of salmon in the 1900's, Witsuwit'en fishing traps were banned and the weirs destroyed. After warnings from the Oblate priests about possible starvation, the Witsuwit'en were allowed to gaff at the canyon. However, the government continued to try to restrict the Witsuwit'en right to fish, leading to several confrontations with officials and police (Morin, 2011, p. 273). The Witsuwit'en remained active in trying to reclaim their land and rights. They secured more land for the Moricetown reserve in 1912. They actively petitioned against the dynamiting that destroyed the traditional fishing sites at the canyon in 1928 and 1959.

Many Witsuwit'en continued to work in canneries and for the railroad (Morin, 2011, pp. 286-289). Cutting poles to make ties for the train track was a major source of employment for both men and women. After the Great Depression, the Second World War boosted the local economy. Some Witsuwit'en enrolled in the Canadian military. After returning, the Indian Act was used to deny them and many other Indigenous veterans the same compensation non-Aboriginal veterans received. In 1952 and 1956, Alcan, an aluminium mining and smelting company, built a hydroelectric dam on the Nechako River, displacing entire reserves on short notice and leaving the people who had been living there without homes or compensation. Several Witsuwit'en living along Ootsa Lake were displaced, as was the entire Cheslatta'ten Band.

The cycle of gaining and losing parcels of land has continued in the area into the last part of the 20th century and resulted in the Witsuwit'en eventually forming The Office of the Hereditary Chiefs to make formal land claims. The Delgamuukw & Gisdaywa Land Claims Trial began in 1984. After a considerable amount of hard work and a great deal of money, the Witsuwit'en and Gitxsan lost their case in 1991 when the judge in the BC provincial court decided they did not have the title to their own land, based on British Columbia joining Canada, dismissing Witsuwit'en oral history and the support of numerous researchers. The Witsuwit'en took their case to the BC Court of Appeal in 1993, and had the ruling overturned in the Supreme Court in 1997, upholding the Royal Proclamation of 1793. This case has been extensively written about in the context of colonialism and Indigenous territoriality and sovereignty (McCreary, 2013). Fishing rights, and land use for forestry and mining continue to be major issues. The Witsuwit'en have used

blockades to protect their lands from logging since the 1980s. Witsuwit'en Fisheries was founded in 1992 to support spawning salmon and develop the fishing industry.

2.4.5 The Witsuwit'en and Residential schools

Before the establishment of residential schools, the nomadic lifestyle and remoteness of the Witsuwit'en prevented missionaries and the Indian Act from exerting too much pressure on them. However, in the 1917 the Obate priests and the Canadian government founded the Lejac Residential School at Fort St. James. The school was moved to Fraser Lake in 1922. Missionaries, with the police to back them up, were able to confiscate children and send them away. In 1940, there were almost 200 children attending Lejac (Morin, 2011, p. 262). The Lejac school was no different than any other residential school when it came to gross neglect. Boys worked on the farm, while girls were taught housekeeping and sewing and worked in the dairy, but the school dairy shipped cream out daily while giving the children the skimmed milk. Tuberculosis, influenza and measles killed children regularly. Children often tried to run away and were punished severely if caught. Other children died in escape attempts. Parents routinely complained about the conditions. In 1943 some parents refused to allow their children to return after visits home. The Lejac school closed down after fire in 1976. Witsuwit'en children then attended public and private Catholic schools in the area.

2.4.6 Witset today

Today the Witsuwit'en population is based in six communities: Witset, Hagwilget Village, Broman Lake, Burns Lake, Nee-Tahi-Buhn and Skin Tyee. There are many other individual Witsuwit'en living throughout the Bulkley Valley, in the towns of Smithers, Houston and Telkwa. In 2018 the six reserves hold around one thousand registered band members. Witset has been a population centre for the Witsuwit'en, as well as hosting many cultural events, like feasts, Sports Days and rodeos. In mid-2017, Wanda Nikal began a petition to change Moricetown's name back to the original, and the village as renamed Witset (Moricetwon Band, 2017).

Witset itself sits at 55 02' North and 127 20' West, directly North of the town of regions largest population centre, Smithers. It is about forty minutes to an hour's drive between them, depending on speed and weather conditions. Witset itself is composed of two reserves, Moricetown 1 and Coryaatsaqua Moricetown 2. In the 1970's, a group known as the Beavers arrived in the community to assist with housing projects. They were a mix of various nationalities, including many from the Caribbean. Several of them married local Witsuwit'en band members and they live on the reserve to this day in the area known as Two-Mile. In 2018 the Office of the Wet'suwet'en website listed the community as having 661 on-reserve members, and 1129 off-reserve members, for a total of 1790 people. In 2017, INAC listed the population of Witset as 2046.

Moricetown 1 and 2 are listed by Statistics Canada as having 306 and 86 residents together. The 2016 census provides a breakdown of language use in Witset (Moricetown 1 and 2) and Smithers.

Table 1: Population by age (Moricetown reserves 1 and 2) (Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census)

	Total Pop	**Ages 0-14 years**	**15-64 years**	**65-Years and over**
Moricetown 1	306	65	220	25
Moricetown 2	86	10	60	15
Sum	392	75	280	40

Table 2: Knowledge and use of languages in Witset (Moricetown reserves 1 and 2) (Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census)

	Knowledge of official/Ab languages		**Languages spoken most often at home**		**Mother tongue**	
	English only	English + Ab	English	Ab (Carrier/ Wit)	English	Non-official language
Moricetown 1	305	35	305	5	260	35
Moricetown 2	85	10	75	10	70	10

Table 3: Knowledge of Ab languages in Witset (Moricetown reserves 1 and 2) (Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census)

Knowledge of Ab languages	**Athabaskan**	**Carrier**	**Babine-Wet**	**Algonquian languages**
Moricetown 1	35	5	30	5
Moricetown 2	10	5	5	0

Smithers' population is almost completely English speaking. Out of 5,351 residents in the 2016 Census, very few speak French or any other language besides English. Other languages listed on the census include Japanese, Vietnamese, Polish Czech and Finnish, Cantonese and Mandarin (Statistics Canada, 2017). Most of these languages have less than ten speakers each in Smithers. It should be clear from these tables how completely English dominates the region.

Table 4: Knowledge of official language in Smithers (Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census)

English only	4,890
French only	5
French and English	360
Neither English or French	15
Official lang minority	65

Table 5: Mother tongue in Smithers (Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census)

Mother tongue		Number of speakers
English		4,605
French		70
Ab language	(Athabaskan) Babine (Wit)	5
	Athabaskan Carrier	10
	Gitxsan	5
Non-Ab language		510
Non-official language (535)	Germanic lang (Afrikaans, Danish, Frisian, German, Dutch, Swedish)	230
	Romance lang: Italian, Portuguese, Spanish	65
	Austronesian lang: Cebuano, Tagalog	55

Witset's layout runs in a North-South direction, with Highway 16 running through it. On the south end, driving up from Smithers, is the Widzin Kwah, the canyon with its traditional the fishing sites. Sitting above it is a small museum and an RV campground. Right at the edge of town is a gas station, owned and operated by the Band. Directly behind it sits the Multiplex that houses the Witset Band administration, a large feast hall and several small businesses. The new Multiplex was built after the old band office building burnt down. The main building connects to the elementary school, grades 1-8, with the day care right next to it. The band has recently built a new health centre, to replace the old building that sits in the middle of town. It sits across from the fire station. The Day School has now become the ICount High School, and houses not only a local high school program but also other events and courses. The town also has a baseball diamond and a skatepark. The residences sit behind the Multiplex and towards the north end, expanding out as the Band built more houses.

Much of the work available on-reserve is seasonal. At the time of my fieldwork, both Kyahwood Forest Products JV and Kyah Resources Inc. offered some jobs. A few positions are available at the Esso Gas Bar. Some people work at the health centre, or as caregivers for Elders. The latter job required home visits. The elementary school also employees both teachers and staff. Job training was also underway for those who would be employed to build the new health centre. Many residents continue to support themselves with seasonally based traditional practices, including hunting and fishing, and berry-gathering. People still harvest plants such as *niwis* (soap berries) and *digï* (huckleberries), and other food and medicinal plants in the woods, like *ggus* (wild parsnip) and *khast'an* (fireweed). Hunting in "the bush" or up in clan territories continues to be an important source of sustenance. Moose, bear, beaver and other animals are valued for both their meat and hides. Salmon fishing remains central to the community, both culturally and in terms of food supply. While some salmon are sold as part of a small commercial fishery, or sold to tourists, most of it remains with the Witsuwit'en for their own use. Salmon processing is still a family affair, with many families having an area near their house set up for fish processing and smoking. While the salmon is today

canned or kept in freezers, rather than raised wooden shacks, it remains a central and vital component of Witsuwit'en culture. The Witsuwit'en also continue to transmit knowledge and cultural practices through seasonal culture camps (Morin, 2011). These camps take band members of all ages out into the territories, where they learn from Elders about traditional practices and beliefs.

Witset, like many other reserves, suffers from remoteness.[1] Despite the Yellowhead Highway running directly through it, many residents remain isolated. There is a school bus to take children into Smithers for school, but there is no bus or train service to connect Witset, other Witsuwit'en communities and Smithers to each other and the wider world. Many Witsuwit'en have difficulty getting into Smithers to shop. Many Witsuwit'en also find shops in Smithers too expensive. Smithers' economy focuses heavily on tourism, with many shops catering to skiers, hunters, and campers from the US and Europe. As a result, many Witsuwit'en feel "priced out" of Smithers Mainstreet and prefer to go to Prince George, where there is a Walmart, a Costco, and several malls or shopping centres. This is even though Prince George, or "PG", is a further four hours away from Witset.

The lack of public transportation and private vehicle ownership means that many community members have been relying on carsharing and hitchhiking to get to Smithers or Prince George to shop. The later is of serious concern, as Witset is situated on the segment of the Yellowhead Highway referred to as the 'Highway of Tears'. The name refers to the girls and young women who have gone missing while in the area, often while hitchhiking. In the last two years it has received attention from the inquiry on Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women. In response to this, a shuttle bus line has been started, that takes people from Witset, through Smithers and other small communities, down to Prince George, and back. This service has been warmly received and there is hope that as more people know about it, its reach and capacity will be expanded. Witset also offers many opportunities for people to socialize. There is a weekly Mother and Child group, and weekly meetings for Elders, where food is prepared, or birthdays are celebrated. Feasts also take place on a regular basis, including small ones for children, to help them learn the appropriate customs and protocols. I attended two feasts during my fieldwork, the first a "mini-feast" for children at the elementary school, and the second, a headstone feast.

2.5 The Witsuwit'en language

Witsuwit'en-Babine has been extensively researched. Some material was produced in the 1880s by Father Morice, as he researched the various Indigenous languages in North-Central B.C (Morice, 1932). Diamond Jenness also provided some lexical information in his ethnographic work (1943). More research was

[1] It should be made clear how close the houses in Witset are to 'the bush.' During my fieldwork, we often discussed the bear problem. Wanda Nikal had to chase bears away from the front of her house in the morning, and Fish and Wildlife officers had to put a bear trap next to the elementary school.

conducted on U'in Wit'en segmental phonology, addressing an Athabaskan vowel shift that helps to distinguish Witsuwit'en from Carrier (Hildebrandt & Story, 1974), The structure and phonology were reviewed by Kari 1975, Story 1984, Kari, James and Hargus 1989, Hargus 1997, Denham 2000, Gunlogson 2001, Wright, Hargus and in Davis 2002. James Kari's work in the 1970s on segmental phonology was followed by Cook's further work published in 1966, 1973, 1990, and 1998. Hargus's 2007 book is the most complete account of the language, the result of several decades work and effectively covering phonetics, grammar and morphology.

Various researchers have provided a variety of names and classifications for Witsuwit'en. Its speakers refer to language itself is referred to as *niwhkinic*, or "our language." The term Carrier was broadly applied to not only the neighbours of the Witsuwit'en, the Dakelhne, but to everyone in the region who also spoke a similar language. Later, Witsuwit'en and its sister dialect Nedut'en (Babine) were classified as their own family. Today, Witsuwit'en is considered a dialect of the Babine-Witsuwit'en language family, and part of the Northern Athabaskan or Na-Dene language group. Its sister dialect referred to as is Babine-Takla or U'in Wit'en. The two dialects are differentiated by phonological and lexical features with Dakelh/Carrier being considered the closest related language in the region. Witsuwit'en is spoken in western central British Columbia between 53-56 degrees N and 125-128 degrees W, along the Bulkley and Morice Rivers, and along some major lakes in the area, Francois Lake, Ootsa Lake, Babine Lake and Takla Lake (Hargus, 2007).

Table 6: Distribution of Witsuwit'en speakers (Source: First Peoples' Language Map of British Columbia, last updated 2013)

First Nation	Population	Fluent Speakers	Understand or Speak Somewhat	Learning Speakers
Hagwilget Village	235	unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Witset	2069	118	24	30
Nee-Tahi-Buhn Indian Band	130	7	10	0
Skin Tyee Nation	164	8	16	0
Ts'il Kaz Koh (Burns Lake)	106	3	5	0
Wet'suwet'en First Nation	1700	126	25	4
Total	4404	262	80	34

Table 6 shows the low numbers of Witsuwit'en speakers, despite efforts at language maintenance. The 2014 report by the B.C. First People's Language Council list a total of 434 fluent speakers, and 295 semi-fluent speakers (First Peoples' Cultural Council, 2014). The numbers may fluctuate somewhat according to the source and to how respondents rate their fluency.

The term *Witsuwit'en* has further been subject to various spellings incarnations, and some of the materials referenced in this work reflect that. In the 1800s the spelling was *Hotsoten,* while Father Morice used *Hwotso'tin, Hwotso'tenne* and *Hwotsu'tinni*. Diamond Jenness used *Hwitsowwitenne*. The spelling *Wet'suwet'en* emerged in the 1980s and still used by some organizations today. The form *Witsuwit'en* was chosen by Sharon Hargus, who after extensively studying Witsuwit'en phonology, decided that this orthography more accurately reflected the pronunciation. It has been supported by the Witsuwit'en chiefs and is being used all current academic publications and in the band's textbook.

2.5.1 Witsuwit'en phonology

Witsuwit'en has six vowels: high front /i/, mid front /e/, central vowels /ə/ and low /a/, and two back vowels, high back /u/ and mid back /o/. There are thirty-five consonants in Witsuwit'en.

Table 7: Witsuwit'en vowels (Table from Hargus, 2007)

	Front	Central	Back
High	I		u
Mid	E	ə	o
Low		a	

Table 8: Witsuwit'en consonants (Table from Hargus, 2007, p. 19)

	labial	coronal			dorsal			laryngeal
voiceless unaspirated	b [p]	d [t]	dz [ts]	dl [dɬ]	g [c]	g [k]	G [q]	
voiceless aspirated	p [p']	t [t]	ts [ts]	tɬ [tɬ]	c'	k'	q'	
Ejective	p'	t'	ts'	ɬ	ç	x'	χ	ʔ
Voiceless			s	l	y [j]	w	ɣ	H
Voiced			z					
voiced nasals	m	n						

Other consonants have been introduced to Witsuwit'en through contact with other languages, including French [ʤ]. Witsuwit'en has important contrasts between voiceless unaspirated and ejective

stops/affricates. Ejective and aspirated supralaryngeal consonants cannot be codas. With one exception in the lexicon, onset clusters are limited to word initial position and must contain nasals or voiceless coronal fricatives as the first consonant. Coda clusters also occur word internally and finally. Importantly, voiceless aspirated or glottalized supralaryngeal stops in coda position are not allowed. Certain clusters are found only in French loan words. In her study of Witsuwit'en phonetics, Hargus reports significant differences in gender with regards to pitch and ejectives (Hargus, 2007). All female speakers in the study produced ejectives with the pitch lowering at the onset of the vowel, while five male speakers showed three types of variation. Stress falls in the initial syllable if the word contains a full vowel otherwise falls on the final syllable, /ə/ remains unstressed. Syllables that contain long full vowels (open or closed) have the heaviest stress weight, followed by full vowels, closed syllables containing [ə] are heavier than open syllables containing [e]. "Stress is attracted to word initial syllables, all other things being equal" (Hargus, 2007, p. 1).

2.5.2 Witsuwit'en grammar and lexis

Witsuwit'en, like other Athabaskan languages, is highly agglutinative. It is an SOV language, with nouns, verbs, adjectives, and postpositions. Directional terms correspond with a separate category, with each term having a directional root, prefixed with morpheme to describe distance and a suffix which indicated motions or rest. Verbs and nouns must be obligatory marked with first and second person subjects, objects and possessors. Nouns consist of a root with stems and suffixes, compounding is "extremely productive" (Hargus, 2007). Compounds are usually left branching. Most nouns have a plural form, often with suffixes. There are four plural suffixes used to form plurals with people and especially for kinship terms, *-qɛ*, *-(y)u*, *-qu*, and *-ni*. In addition to compounding, nouns can be derived from other classes, including postpositions, directional adverbs, numbers, adjectives, and verbs. Witsuwit'en has a deverbal nominalizing suffix, *-ni*. As in many Athabaskan languages, nouns are further divided in classes, based on properties such as animacy, shape and number. Personal pronouns are used only for focus or emphasis. Third person pronouns are related to a larger system of inflection that denotes distance, as well as plurals, place and time.

Postpositions form a closed class of seventy morphemes, and indicate locative, temporal, causal and interpersonal relations. Postpositions rarely occur in isolation and share some features with nouns, for example, both possessed nouns and postpositions require a pronominal prefix or are preceded by a nominal object of postposition. Hargus notes that when a Witsuwit'en sentence contains no postpositions, an English translation will likely require them (Hargus, 2007).

Directional terms in Witsuwit'en consist of a root, prefixes indicating distance, and suffixes that indicate motion vs. rest. Like many Na-Dene directional terms, the primary point of reference is a waterway. The suffixes can be used to indicate diffuseness vs. compactness of location, direction of motion to or from

location, and distance to location. Verbal prefixes can also encode directional meaning and may be used simultaneously with directional terms. As in other Athabaskan languages, Witsuwit'en has very few adjectives. They fall into three categories: predicate adjectives, nominal adjectives, with a possible sub-class, and post-nominal adjectives.

A large portion of Sharon Hargus's grammar is devoted to verbs. In Athabaskan languages, the basic verbal unit is referred to as the 'verbal theme' and consists of a root and a mandatory prefix. The verb system of Witsuwit'en is very complex, morphologically and phonologically. The obligatory tense prefix order restrictions of Witsuwit'en lead to morphological surface discontinuity. Many of the phonological phenomena are closely connected to particular morphemes. Tenses in Witsuwit'en, again like those in other Athabaskan languages, do not entirely correspond to the English tense system. These are imperfective "proper" progressive, progressive semelfactive, perfective, future and optative. Hargus notes the term "tense" should be used loosely here, as the first two categories are aspectual, not temporal, and the last is a mood (Hargus, 2007, p. 357). Inactive verbs, the imperfective and perfect aspects denote whether an action is completed or not, with the perfect being "associated with the past tense" (Hargus, 2007, p. 358). Both the future and optative tense can refer to events that can or will take place in the future, and it 'more or less covers the same ground' as the future construction in English (Hargus, 2007, p. 361). The progressive marks actions occurring "here and now" and does not appear in combination with other tenses or in subordinate clauses. Negation is morphologically marked, although this is unusual in Athabaskan languages. The prefix we#, and s- or i-, occurs in the tense zone. Verbs also follow the Athabaskan classifications of careful handling, rough handling, independent movement and stative location.

Like many other First Nations languages, Witsuwit'en has had extensive contact with French. Almost all of the Ancestral Indigenous languages in North America have loans from French. In the northeast of the continent, only three of twenty-six languages are free of French loans (Bakker & Papen, 2008). All of the Indigenous languages on the Northwest coast have French borrowings, as do numerous Athabaskan languages (Bakker & Papen, 2008). Much of the language contact was driven by French fur traders, voyagers and missionaries, while on the northwest coast, researchers have determined that Chinook Jargon helped to spread French loans throughout the region. However, for the Carrier family of languages in the interior, Chinook Jargon has been contested as the main source (Bakker and Papen 2008, citing Prunet 1990). The above discussed presence of the Oblate Catholic order is likely main source for many of these loans. As in other Indigenous languages, French loans into Witsuwit'en are predominantly nouns and are concentrated on the domains of religion and household nouns. Prunet claims that Chinook Jargon is not a possible source for these loans, and that they must have resulted from direct contact with fur fort employees and Catholic missionaries (Prunet 1990, p. 490). Métis French is another possible source for some terms.

Table 9: Sample of French loans in Witsuwit'en (Table from Hargus, 2007)

Lexical item	**Witsuwit'en**	**French**	**Lexical item**	**Witsuwit'en**	**French**
'bottle'	ləbuday	la bouteille	'tea'	lədi	le thé
'table'	lədap	la table	'cup'	ləbot	le pot
'tablecloth'	lənap	la nappe	'sin'	ləbise, ləbisəy	le péché
'sugar'	ləsuc	le sucre	'angel'	Lizas	les anges
'priest'	ləblet	l'Oblate, le prətre	'bed'	Lili	les lits
'marriage'	ləmalyas	le marriage	'chicken'	liGoc	les coqs
'salt'	ləsɛl	le sel	'potato'	ləmədec	les pétaques

3 An overview of First Nations Englishes and other Indigenous English Varieties

This chapter discusses what is meant by the term *First Nations English* and presents the prior research on FNEs and other Indigenous language varieties in Canada, the USA, and Australia. The materials from the US and Australia are each treated as their own bodies of work. In the first two cases, I review each body of research, then discuss the speech communities that have been described. For AusAbE I review only the arenas to which this research has been applied, as other similarities are covered in the eWAVE Atlas.

First Nations Englishes in Canada, despite being under-researched, are ubiquitous. After over 200 years of colonization, almost all Indigenous people in Canada speak either English or French. This rarely equates to bilingualism in an Indigenous language and English or French. As of the 2011 census, the census reports that fewer than 15% of the Aboriginal population reported an Ancestral language as their mother tongue and about the same number report using Aboriginal languages at home (Statistics Canada, 2016). Again, the number of languages is variable depending on how they are classified. Canada's 2011 census reported sixty Indigenous languages divided into twelve main groups (Langlios & Turner, 2016). First Voices, a website dedicated to supporting Indigenous language learning and revitalization throughout Canada, lists forty languages, many with additional dialects (Moris, 2016). The INAC website states that there are over fifty First Nations and respective languages. The largest family is listed as Algonquian, with Inuit and Athapaskan languages the next most frequently spoken (Langlios & Turner, 2016). British Columbia is listed in the report as having the greatest diversity, but these languages are mostly spoken by less than 1000 people each.

The English of First Nations dialects are affected by phenomena associated with language contact (Thorburn, 2014), and by the linguistic features of Indigenous languages (Ball & Bernhardt, 2008). Other aspects include use of silence, so called "creaky voice" and low, soft tones (Genee & Stigter, 2010). Moreover, speaking an Indigenous language does not automatically equate with lower proficiency in English, as has been previously assumed (Leap, 1993). Unfortunately, the lack of research on FNEs has led to some generalizations of the features and development of FNEs, and pejorative assumptions remain prevalent among educators.

First Nations Englishes are frequently referred to as *dialects*, which can have negative and exclusionary connotations (Blundon, 2016). Some researchers feel it demeans the English varieties it refers too, making "assumptions about the place of speakers in the world" (Sterzuk, 2011, p. 6). I think however, *dialect* can be a useful and valid term. Sociolinguistics owes a great deal to dialectology, and to the work of those who felt that non-standard dialects were worth studying, especially the early work in rural Germany and England. The terms *variety* and *dialect* both appear, and it should be clear that within the boundaries of this

research, the term *dialect* has no derogatory meaning. Standard Canadian English (SCE), or General Canadian English (GCE) are themselves dialects that were once seen as lesser offshoots of British English. FNEs are part of a continuum of Englishes, in which like all languages has boundaries that are inherently fuzzy (Thomason, 1997).

To approach it from one angle, Standard Canadian English is an ideal variety for comparison, since it is so homogenous. Walker (2015) uses the term General Canadian English (GCE), but other researchers, including those outside of Canada, preface it with "standard." The current definition of SCE by Boberg is "the variety spoken with subtle regional variations by most middle-class and indeed by many working-class people across the country" (Boberg, 2010, p. 1) and "it is the variety of English spoken by most people who acquired their knowledge of English exclusively or mostly as children in Canada" (Boberg, 2010, p. 25). The Canadian population is overwhelmingly anglophone and urban, with a high level of social mobility (Chambers, 1998), although this has changed to some degree in recent years. Compared to other varieties of English in New World societies, Standard English in Canada is very conservative and shows much less regionality than the in the US or Australia (Chambers, 1998). Canadian English does have variation and regional accents. A study conducted at McGill University found that students believed the best type of Canadian English was to be found in cities, and in Eastern or Western Canada (Boberg, 2010). The worst were identified as "Newfoundland" and "Quebec," followed by other Maritime varieties and some in Ontario (Boberg, 2010). So "Canadians themselves do have some sense of regional diversity and are prepared to evaluate it" (Boberg, 2010, p. 29). The above judgements reflect the pervasive prescriptivism towards language in Canada. Whether First Nations speakers are in a government office, a school, or a university classroom, they are likely to encounter the same or very similar varieties of English.

3.1 First Nations English research in Canada

Writings and publications dealing with First Nations English in Canada have been more frequent in the last decade, but are still relatively sparse, especially when compared to the amount of material available in the United States or Australia. As mentioned above, there are, based on the number of First Nations bands, collectively over 200 FNE dialects being spoken in Canada, and yet only a handful of these have been studied. When Jessica Ball and Jenna Bernhardt published their article in *Clinical Linguistics and Phonetics* in 2008, they sourced only two articles on FNE varieties in Canada, these being Mulder's and Tarpent's papers on Tshimshamic English, both published in 1982, and report there being "virtually no research" on First Nations English dialects in Canada (Ball & Bernhardt, 2008, p. 571).

Since then, the situation has improved only slightly. *The Journal of Native Education's* 2010 Special Issue on Indigenous English included Inge Genee and Shelley Stigter's description of Blackfoot English, and Susan Gingell's description of Cree English. These were the only articles in the three-volume publication

to focus on describing specific FNEs and their societal contexts in any detail. In most of the publications concerning Indigenous Englishes in the last two decades, varieties are usually mentioned in the context of discussion on post-colonialism, decolonization and language rights (Sterzuk, 2011; Peltier, 2010; Atleo & Fitznor, 2010). A resource kit for speech language pathologists working with First Nations, Inuit and Métis has recently been published (Kay-Raining Bird, 2014) and in the same year Alice Eriks-Brophy published a paper on culturally valid language assessment strategies for Indigenous children (Eriks-Brophy, 2014). Another research summary from the speech pathology perspective was published by Patricia Blundon in 2016. Other publications mention FNEs and other Indigenous language varieties in a very general sense. Charles Boberg mentions the Aboriginal people of Northern Canada speaking a "variety of English nonetheless influenced by an Aboriginal substrate" (Boberg, 2010, p. 27).

Some of the earliest published research on Indigenous English does in fact date back to the 1950s, with a description of Métis dialect features by Scott and Mulligan (1951). Work on Métis speech has continued to develop, with Stobie (1968, 1971), Blain (1989), and Gold (2009). Métis speech communities have continued to attract attention for not only their dialects of English, but also Michif Cree, a mixed language formed with Cree verb phrases and French noun phrases (Bakker & Papen, 1997). Bakker and Pappen have also examined evidence for two northern jargon varieties, Broken Slavey and Jargon Loucheaux (Bakker & Grant, 1996; Bakker & Grant, 1996). Other research involving the Métis included work in Alberta on Cree FNEs by Scollon and Scollon (1979), and Darnell (1979, 1985). The variety of English used by Blackfoot speakers in Alberta was investigated by Genee and Stigter (2010). Spielman (1998) studied discourse in Ojibway. Features of First Nations and Métis English in Saskatchewan was reviewed by Heit and Blair (1993). Heit and Blair's work in Saskatchewan classrooms, published in *Aboriginal language needs and education: the Canadian experience* in 1993, discusses the English dialects of several groups, including Cree, and Salteaux, Dene and Métis speakers. Valentine's work (1995) studies Severn Ojibwe in several communities in Northern Ontario, reporting on the phonology, morphology, syntax, and discourse of several communities. Matsuno (1991) and Peltier (2009, 2010) have researched Ojibwe and other FNEs in Ontario. Given the high number of First Nations communities and languages found in British Columbia, it should not be surprising that some of the most detailed research is based there. This includes Mulder (1982) and Tarpent's (1982) work on Tshimshian English, Lanoue's work with the Sekani in 1991, and a brief survey of Witsuwit'en English in Kinsey 2012. Jennifer Thorburn's thesis, *Dialect Development in Nain, Nunatsiavut: Emerging English in a Canadian Aboriginal community* was the first thorough sociolinguistic analysis of a single variety in some time. Her work describes the emergence of an English Indigenous dialect in Nain, Nunatsiavut. She identifies sociolinguistic features that typify this variety and offers some reasons as to why Nain English has developed. Otherwise, sociolinguistics research that takes both a diachronic and synchronic approach with this topic has been very rare.

A major review was conducted by Ruth Epstein and Lily Xu in 2003. Their article, *Roots and Wings*, addresses the need for bidialectal approach to education that supports Indigenous vernacular English dialects in classrooms (Epstein & Xu, 2003). Much of the other material, such as Bernhardt et al. 2007, Ball and Bernhardt 2008, Fadden and LaFrance 2010, Wiltse 2011, deals with FNEs, but is not specific to any one variety. Sharla Peltier reviews some material on specific varieties in one of her publications (Peltier, 2009). Andreas Sterzuk has also written extensively on FNEs in the classroom and in colonial spaces (2003, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2011). A few researchers have provided lists of FNE features, some of which seem to be pan-Canadian. These include phonological, morpho-syntactic, vocabulary, and pragmatic features. Table 10 lists the varieties that have been studies; in some cases, the information about the communities provided in the publications is not exact.

Table 10: A list of studied varieties First Nations English in Canada

Variety	**Band**	**Location**	**Ancestral language base and family**
Witsuwit'en English	Witset (formerly Moricetown), Witsuwit'en First Nations Bands	Witset, Hagwilget Village, Nee-Tahi-Buhn Indian Band, Skin Tyee Nation, Ts'il Kaz Koh (Burns Lake), Wet'suwet'en First Nations, Northern B.C.	Witsuwit'en-Dene Athabaskan language family
Tsimshian English	Nishga, Gitxsan, Coast Tsimshian, Southern Tsimshian	Prince Rupert, Hazelton in Northern interior and coastal B.C.	Coast Tsimshian, Southern Tsimshian-Tsimshian, and Nisga'a and Gitksan-Nass-Gitksan languages family
Sekani English	Carrier Sekani Tribal Council; Burns Lake, Nadleh Whut'en, Nak'azdli, Saik'uz, Stellat'en, Takla Lake, Tl'azt'en	Burns Lake, Prince George, Fort Saint James area in Northern B.C.	Sekani-Na-Dené-Northern Athabaskan language family
Blackfoot English	Niitsitapi/Siksika/ Blackfoot	Calgary area, Alberta	Siksiká- Algonquian language family
Cree English	Plains Cree	Alberta, Saskatchewan	Plains Cree, Cree-Montagnais-Naskapi, Algonquian language family
Métis English	Métis	Prairies-Canada, U.S.A.	Cree-French
Siouan English	Dakota, Assiniboine	Wahpeton reserve, Mosquito reserve, south-eastern Saskatchewan	Dakota-Assiniboine language family
Chipewyan English	Chipywyan peoples	Saskatchewan	Athapaskan language family

Ojibwe English	Saulteaux, Severn	Sault Ste. Marie area, Severn Ojibwe Northern Ontario	Obijwe-Algonquian language family
Nain English	Inuit	Nunatsiavut/Labrador, Newfoundland	Inuttut-Inuit-Yupik-Unangan language family

While Witsuwit'en, Tsimshian, Sekani, Severn and Nain English are spoken in smaller communities, research on the other varieties has rarely focused on specific speaker populations. Much of the data gathered on FNE speakers from the Prairie provinces, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba, was collected in universities or research symposiums (Ball & Bernhardt, 2008; Ball, et al., 2006). Research on FNEs from the speech pathology perspective often addresses children in the classroom, often in urban settings (Sterzuk, 2011). The material on Blackfoot English comes from a mixture of essays and personal materials (Genee & Stigter, 2010). The map below shows the locations of FNE research in Canada. While projects in British Columbia and in Nain have taken place in smaller territories and in one town, many of the locations are simply not specific.

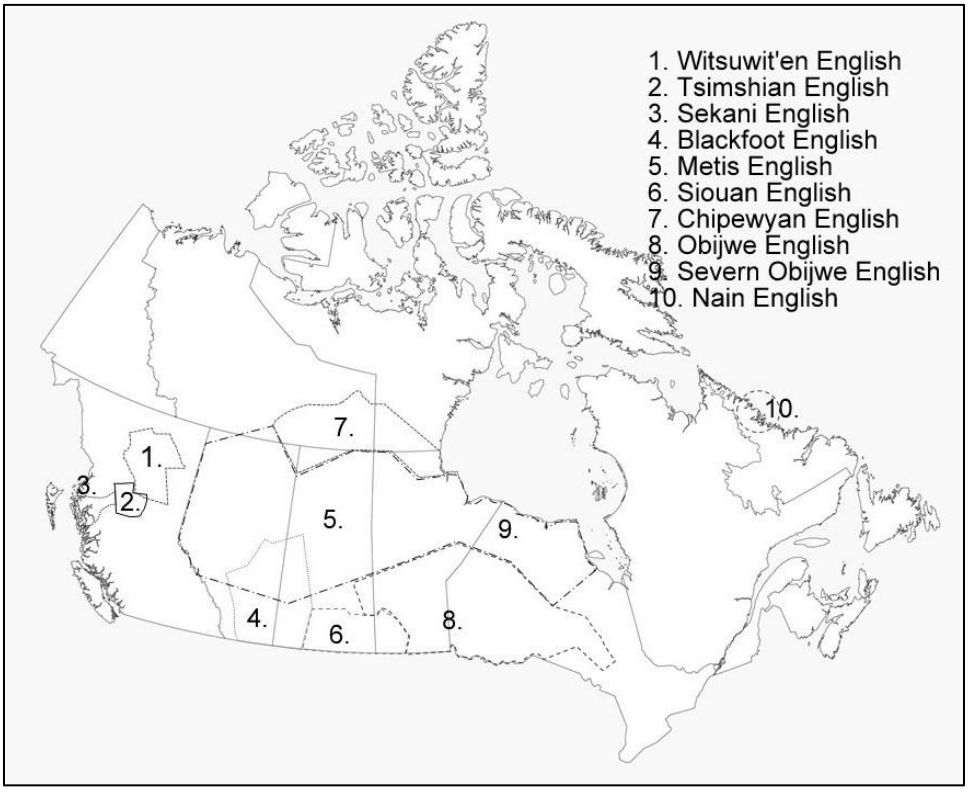

Figure 9: Map of site specific FNE research locations in Canada

3.1.1 FNE Morpho-syntactic features

Ball and Bernhardt have noted numerous morphosyntactic features that typify FNEs. These include a lack of nominal and verbal inflection, deletion of copula be, pronouns, prepositions, non-standard uses of tense, and multiple negation. First Nations children have been observed to use English pronouns in a variety of ways. Nominative pronouns *he* and *she* and accusative pronouns *her* and *him* may be used as possessive pronouns, for example: *him bouncing that ball on him nose* (Ball & Bernhardt, 2008, p. 578). They also note the forms *theirself* and *theirselves* (Ball & Bernhardt, 2008, p. 578). At the forum from which many of Ball and Bernhardt's examples come, they note that one forum participant mentioned the use of tag question *init,* although, again, we are not told which FNE variety the speaker used. They claim that rather than *init* referring back to the subject of the main clause, as here, sentences like *I'm hungry, init*, seem to function more like the French phrase *n'est-ce-past* (Ball & Bernhardt, 2008, p. 578). Another forum participant mentioned that children in her community string together phrases without conjunctions, instead relying on gestures and vocal emphasis to highlight new information. Unfortunately, Ball and Bernhardt's articles do not identify the FNE source dialects individually or make wider comparisons to other English varieties. *Theirself* and and *thierselves* are not unique to FNEs, being found in varieties in England, and the tag *init* is well known in many varieties of English around the world, and is listed in the eWAVE Atlas, being prominent many in the U.K. dialects and in Newfoundland English (Kortmann & Lunkenheimer, 2013).

Heit and Blair give a brief list of Cree English grammatical features (Heit & Blair, 1993). This includes the information that Cree English speakers may classify objects according to animacy. Students may use *he* instead of *she*, and Heit and Blair provide a most interesting explanation, since Cree has no word for *husband* and *wife*. Instead, Cree uses a term that would translate as *spouse*. Since *spouse* occurs less in English than *husband* and *wife*, speakers may use the latter interchangeably for the same referent. Mass nouns that are usually described as a pair or change their form may also be assigned an article and *-s*, *a pants*, *womans*, *this scissors is dull*, and so on. Speakers may also use constructions such as *I seen, I done, I been*, or *I gots*. These three features are also found in eWAVE, (F. 10) no gender distinction in third person singular, (F. 55) with speakers using different count/mass distinctions than StE speakers, and based on the last set of examples, using past participle verbs forms for past tense forms (Feature. 130) or regularizing them (F. 48).

Jean Mulder (1982) and Marie-Lucie Tarpent (1982) have also observed constructions with *them* in Tsimshian English. Sentences like "Don't play with *them* John" (Tarpent, 1982, p. 118) seem to be the result of sourcing the pronoun, used to specify and individualize their associates, from the Tsimshian plural marker *dim*. Younger speakers in Tarpent's study, who did not speak their Ancestral language, considered

these references to have singular references, rather than plural. Mulder, writing in the same year, also attributes the differing spatial categories of prepositions to the Ancestral language, Sm'algyax. Sentences like *Jack is on the table*, *Jack is over Johnny's* and *Jack is by Johnny's* do not follow the obvious surface readings, but rather mean that the individual is *at* the location.

Genee and Stigter's 2010 paper analyzing the grammatical characteristics of Blackfoot English in Alberta is based on three written and oral sources; a manuscript dating from the 1950s, written by a Blackfoot Chief who spent about ten years in a residential school, a set of essays from Blackfoot students, written in the 2008-2009 academic year, and the author's own contemporary observations. As such, their article provides a diachronic overview of Blackfoot English, and focuses on features that are unique to FNEs, and have a likely source in Blackfoot grammar. Verbs in Blackfoot grammar can have variable characteristics. Verbs and verb participle forms may be uninflected for tense, with either bare and uninflected verbs being used, although Genee and Stigter point out that the appearance of uninflected verbs does not mean that speakers do not know how to inflect verbs. Their article gives many examples. Examples with an M- come from a text written by a Blackfoot English speaker Joe (Joseph) Little Chief (Blackfoot name Pe-ta-kis-kisna-ma, White Eagle) living on the Siksika reserve East of Calgary, Alberta, dating from the mid-1950s. Other examples are from essays and writing samples collected in university, written mostly Kainai and Piikani Blackfoot speakers coming from reserves in southern Alberta, near Lethbridge and Fort Macleod. They vary in age from early twenties to mid fifties. They are listed with the year and a reference number. The following examples show bare verbs, use of a progressive inflection for the far past and a bare verb in an adjective phrase (Genee & Stigter, 2010, p. 65):

(2) they camped from one place to another findly they camp in a place. (M-4394-1:t1)

(3) …when she was **taking** away from her parents… (2009.17)

(4) We are living in **a fast pace** world. (2009.6)

Genee and Stigter note that uninflected forms occur only when the time reference is clear from either the context, from time adverbials, or from preceding or following inflected verbs. Blackfoot has no comparable word class for uninflected participles, so they reason that Blackfoot cannot be the source for these uninflected forms. Although Consonant Cluster Reduction could be the result of influence from Blackfoot, which does not allow consonant clusters at the beginning and end of words (see below), the absence of these forms in written sources suggests the deletion of [t] and [d] is not purely phonological. Blackfoot also has no equivalent to the English infinitive construction, and speakers may omit *to* in infinitive constructions (Genee & Stigter, 2010, p. 68):

(5) Ex. 3.4 they started **[to]** dig under their bed (M-4394-1:t1)

Blackfoot English speakers may also omit various forms of "to be" as a copula, an auxiliary, or as an existential verb, again noting that while Blackfoot has a verb that translates as "to be" it is not used to create copula construction. Verbs are instead fully inflected, or take an aspectual affix that corresponds to the English progressive and immediate future construction (deleted verbs are in square brackets) (Genee & Stigter, 2010, p. 69):

(6) Ex 3.5 you will live to [**to be**] an old man like me (M4394-6:t1)

(7) Ex 3.6 just when they [were] cutting the ropes of the two horses the Cree woman went out of her tent (M4394-4:t2)

(8) Ex 3.7 they [**are**] gonna say no (oral: fall 2009)

Blackfoot English uses non-standard markings for nouns, including the singular for the plural, plural for singular. Plural -s is noted as being absent when the noun phrase includes a numeral or another quantifier, a redundant plural -s may appear on words that are semantically plural or mass nouns in standard English. Blackfoot also has singular and plural marking on the noun phrase, but nonspecific nouns are not marked for number, while intransitive verbs use a quantifying set of verbal prefixes. It is suggested that this system, while not a direct parallel, could contribute to difficulties in the Blackfoot speakers acquiring the English system (Genee & Stigter, 2010, p. 71):

(9) I will tell <u>one more</u> **things** (M-4394-16:t2)

(10) <u>One of their</u> **child** (oral; fall 2009)

(11) If it's at **nights**… (oral; fall 2009)

Blackfoot English also omits personal pronouns, in both subject and object positions. Genee and Stigter attribute this to Blackfoot verbs being marked for person, with independent subject and object pronouns being optional. Characters are introduced, and then referred back to in later texts by cross-referencing morphology on the verb only. This means that in Blackfoot English, speakers may use a name or pronoun once, and drop pronouns in the following text (Genee & Stigter, 2010, p. 74):

(12) the sun told [**him**] do not kill yourself (M-4394-23:t2)

(13) [**She**] Talks about the years in her life… (2009.16)

BE speakers themselves apparently recognize this feature as being transferred from Blackfoot. Gender distinctions in Blackfoot are based on animate (living or significant) and inanimate (not living or significant) distinctions. The distinction is described as "permeating the entire grammar of Blackfoot, determining not only the inflection of nouns, but also the form of verbs" (Genee & Stigter, 2010, p. 74):

(14) **His** great great grandfather was Chief Old Sun (referring to a woman) (oral, winter 2009).

Possessive constructions may also use nonstandard possessive determiners, or omit genitive -s. Again, this seems traceable to Blackfoot grammar. Not only does Blackfoot have no equivalent for genitive -s, instead the morphemes that mark possessors are non-gender specific and are attached to the possessed object, not the possessor (Genee & Stigter, 2010, p. 75):

(15) you do not belong to **us** tribe (M-4394-16:t1).

Finally, Genee and Stigter address articles in BE. They note the omission of indefinite and definite articles, redundant indefinite and definite articles and substitution of definite for indefinite articles and vice versa. Blackfoot does not have articles, rather the grammar denotes specificity (referentiality) rather than definiteness. Since non-specific nouns in Blackfoot cannot be marked for animacy, number or obviation, the verb cannot show agreement with a grammatically nonspecific subject or object (Genee & Stigter 2010, citing Frantz 2009). This means BE speakers must express both an English word class and an English semantic distinction that is not present in their Ancestral language (Genee & Stigter, 2010, p. 76):

(16) they saw [**a**] rider on top of this hill (M-4392-7:t2)

(17) the origin is from [**the**] 18th century (2009.6)

(18) The theme to this story is **the** colonialism (2009.17)

Genee and Stigter conclude with the assertion that the characteristics of BE arise not from errors, but from "a rule-governed grammatical behaviour that that simply differs from the grammatical rules of SE" (Genee & Stigter, 2010, p. 77). As their sources cover a considerable time period, they conclude that Blackfoot English is a stable ethnolect, based or strongly influenced by Blackfoot grammar.

Jennifer Thorburn investigates verbal -s in Nain English (Thorburn, 2014). She finds a curvilinear pattern of distribution, showing a decline from the oldest group of speakers to the middle group, followed by an increase in use by the youngest group of speakers. Women show both the highest and lowest points of the distribution. This contrasts with the rest of Newfoundland where research has shown non-standard verbal -s to be in decline. Nonstandard verbal -s favours plural NPs, subjects of subordinate clauses, they and quantifier + plural NP constructions (Thorburn, 2014). However, Thorburn concludes that verbal -s does not show any strong social meaning, the feature shows instability for both men and women, and are not used consistently within gender groups. She hypothesises that this feature demonstrates that Nain English speakers are following the general trend of NfndE speakers, but at a slower pace. Nonstandard verbal *-s* is well established as a feature of Newfoundland English and of many other nonstandard dialects but is slowly disappearing in NfndE. Nain English speakers also use well studied English adjectival intensifiers, such as *really*, *very*, *so* and *right*. While men have lower rates of intensification, the same curvilinear pattern as verbal *-s* is seen. Speakers favour *right*, *real*, *really*, *very* and *pretty* and Nain English again seems to be

following Newfoundland English in favouring *right* over other intensifiers. *right* is preferred by older and younger women and is semantically broader than in other Newfoundland communities.

So far, FNE varieties in Canada share features with varieties in the eWAVE atlas. (F. 165) the use invariant non-concord tags, while not widespread across Canada, is listed in eWAVE as obligatory in twenty-six of its seventy-nine varieties. Variation of gender pronouns is known throughout FNEs and (F. 10) no gender distinction in third person singular is found in varieties in Central and South America, Africa and Australia and the Pacific, but not in the traditional varieties in the United Kingdom.

Plural forms show similar trends as other varieties with (F. 55) where speakers use different count/mass distinctions than StE speakers. This feature is attested in some contact varieties in the Southern US and the Caribbean, in Africa and Asia, and in Australia. BE uses feature (F. 56) where plural markings may be absent after a quantifier or a phrase that indicated amounts. BE also uses zero articles (F. 62, F. 63) and adding articles where StE has none (F 64). The associative plural marked with them/them all/dem (F. 52) is found throughout the world and is obligatory in many varieties in the Americas, Africa and Australia.

Nonstandard verb forms seem to be comparable as well. Some FNE varieties use (F. 130) past participle verbs forms for past tense forms or (F. 48) regularizing irregular verb forms. BE apparently shares many features with varieties listed in eWAVE. This includes many variations on the verb phrase, such as (F. 88) a wider range of use of the progressive be+ Ving and (F. 132) zero past tense forms of regular verbs, deletion of copula be (F. 174) before the progressive (F. 175) before *gonna*, and (F. 177) before an adjective phrase and (F. 208) deletion of *to* before infinitives.

3.1.2 FNE Phonology

Heit and Blair discuss Cree and Dene English phonology, noting the possibility of difference in intonation, emphasis, and stress patterns (Heit & Blair, 1993). They note the lack of a /v/ or /ʃ/ in Cree will result in children saying *ballentine* for *valentine* or *sue* for *shoe*. The further lack of /j/ and /tʃ/ in Cree results in *jam* being pronounced as *dzam*, and *church* as *tsurts*. Cree also lacks a distinction between voiced and unvoiced stops /p/ and /b/, /t/, /g/ and /k/. Cree English speakers may also not distinguish between English vowel contrasts that do not exist in Cree, pronouncing *milk* as *melk*. This neutralization of contrasts between certain phonemic pairs or deletion of consonants that are not present in the Ancestral language is also noted by Ball and Bernhardt, who suggest that the contrasting consonant inventories of Plains Cree and Dene Suline may affect their speakers' use of English. Plains Cree has fewer phonological contrasts with English, including no voicing contrast: the stops /p/, /t/, and /k/ are generally voiceless, lenis and unaspirated (Ball & Bernhardt 2008, citing Wolfhart, 1996). Further developing Heit and Blair's examples, Plains Cree also

lacks some of the liquids and fricatives found in English, including /f/, /v/, /θ/, /ð/, /z/, /ʃ/ and /ʒ/. This can lead to the following changes:

1. /f/ and/v/ as stops [p] and [b]
2. /θ/ and /ð/ as [t] and [d]
3. Alveolar and post-alveolar fricatives like /z/, /ʃ/ and /ʒ/ neutralized to [s]

Dene Suline has thirty-nine phonemic consonants, which include contrasts between unaspirated, aspirated, and glottalized stops and affricates (Ball & Bernhardt 2008, citing Cook, p. 204). Ball and Bernhardt suggest two particular features which may lead to speakers' English being considered "disordered" (Ball & Bernhardt, 2008, p. 574). Dene Suline speakers may lateralize English sibilants and produce a higher number of glottalized consonants than standard English speakers, and they suggest this may lead to the perception of "creaky voice" (Ball & Bernhardt, 2008, p. 577). Kwak'wala, which is part of the Wakashan language family, and spoken by about two hundred Kwakwaka'wakw along the coast of B.C, has no rhotic consonants or vowels and no /θ/ and speakers may pronounce /ɹ/ as [l] and omit /θ/ (Ball, et al., 2006). Haida speakers using English may realize /ʃ/ as [s], as /ʃ/ is not part of Haida's consonant inventory. This substitution is mirrored in the substitution of /tʃ/ with [ts] (Ball, et al., 2006).

Tsimshian English, spoken on the northern coast of B.C., has been studied by both Marie-Lucie Tarpent (1982) and Jean Mulder (1982). Speakers lengthen vowel segments before voiced consonants, as in Standard English, but also before voiceless consonants (Mulder, 1982). Mulder describes several features of Tsimshian English speakers (Mulder, 1982, pp. 100-101):

4. Labial dental fricatives /f/ and /v/ are realized as [b]. This seemed to be more frequent in personal names.
5. The interdental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ often occur as alveolar stops being realized as [t] and [d].
6. The voiced [z] is sometimes devoiced as /s/.
7. The liquid /ɹ/ is pronounced as lateral liquid /l/ or deleted, this is also more frequent in personal names.
8. The affricates [č] and [ǰ] are realized as [ts] and [dz].
9. The voiceless alveopalatal fricative [š] is almost always pronounced as /s/.
10. The voiced alveopalatal fricative [z] sometimes occurs as /s//
11. Word final /ŋ/ realized as [n], generally at the syllable boundary.

Mulder suggests that these substitutions are the result of a restructuring to account for the differing consonant inventory of Sm'algyax as speakers pull a consonant from their Ancestral language to fill in the gaps. Mohawk and Cayuga languages lack bilabials, and have nasality in their vowel systems, this can lead

to phones replacing bilabials in English and/or nasal variants of vowels (Ball, et al., 2006). Restrictions on word final consonant clusters in many IndEng and non-standard English dialects are mentioned by Genee and Stigter 2010 and Leap 1993. The replacement of /ŋ/ with [n] is also mentioned by Heit and Blair (1993), and Ball and Bernhardt (2008) who both note that this is frequent in other varieties on non-standard English. Blackfoot does not allow consonant clusters at the beginning and end of words, with some exceptions involving /s/ and Blackfoot lacks sounds like /l/, /r/ and /v/, so we find words like *cold wind, old lady* and *twelve* realized as [ko:w wɪn], [o:w leɪdi] and [twɛw] (Genee & Stigter, 2010, p. 67).

Thorburn's research examines interdental fricatives in Nain English (Thorburn, 2014). Labrador Inuttitut has only fourteen consonants in its inventory and lacks /θ/ and / ð /. Nain English has a lower rate of interdental stopping than elsewhere in Newfoundland but mirrors a lower rate of stopping for women found across the province. Rates for women have increased as participants get younger. Her data also indicates a difference in influence for stopping across generations, with older women being influenced by suprasegmental patterns (stress) and younger women by phonological factors (word/syllable position and preceding phonological environments) (Thorburn, 2014, p. 133). However, she is unable to make a substantial claim as to the validity of transfer from Inuttitut.

Indigenous English speakers are often described as having a slow, halting speech or a sing-song, rhythmic quality to their speech and "non-Indians" often find Indian English to have a monotonous melodic quality (Leap, 1993, p. 52). Despite being a rather subjective judgment, this seems to be an extremely salient feature when it comes to non-Indigenous listeners identifying accent in North America (Leap, 1993). It is typically mentioned and imitated by Euro-Canadians when discussing Indigenous peoples (Ball & Janyst, 2008). It is closely associated with living on a reserve. Similar opinions were also observed in the initial fieldwork in WitEng in the Bulkley Valley (Kinsey, 2013) and this accent was even mimicked by one informant in the pilot study. He described to me how an Indigenous speaker might sound on the phone and stated that this accent would let immediately let him know he was speaking to an Indigenous person.

3.1.3 FNE vocabulary and usage

Heit and Blair offer a short list of variations regarding vocabulary and discourse structure in Cree (Heit & Blair, 1993). In Cree English, colour terms may not match; the example given is of Cree terms for brown or green which in English would be literally "ear-coloured." A list of expressions from "Indigenous English" include (Heit & Blair 1993, p.118-120):

(19) "Close the lights" for "Shut off" or "put off the lights."

(20) "Get off the way" for "get out of the way."

(21) "We really suffered him" for "we really made him suffer."

(22) "Look at her little, small feet!" with *little, small* meaning cute.

Heit and Blair mention that "there are differences at the discourse level" (Heit & Blair, 1993, p. 120). They note that IndEng speaker may organize their narrative structure into twos and fours instead of into threes (beginning, middle and end) and that the narrative structures of the speakers may come across as incoherent or poorly stated (Heit & Blair, 1993).

In his article on social change and adaptation among the Sekani people, Guy Lanoue (1991) writes that the Sekani, who have almost completely lost their Ancestral language, adjust the meaning of English kinship terms to reflect their Sekani familial bonds. These are traditionally centred around marriage relationships, for instance, a man will usually choose his wife's brothers as hunting partners. The terms blur the boundaries between patrilineal and matrilineal kin and reflect a social organization that is more confederative that incorporative in its nature (Lanoue, 1991). Speakers may use *cousin* to refer to first cousins, while second cousins are *friend*, and using *brother* and *cousin* to refer to parallel cousins and cross-cousins (Lanoue, 1991, p. 104). Older members of the community are universally addressed as *grandfather/mother*, or *auntie/uncle*, regardless of their link to the speaker (Lanoue, 1991, p. 104). Conversely, the original Sekani terms for a woman's husband's niece or nephew, *esdje* and *asidle*, also used for the woman's own siblings, have now been subsumed under English *niece* or *nephew* (Lanoue, 1991, p. 104). Lanoue notes that the English words "camouflage" the true meaning of the sentiments (Lanoue 1991, p. 105):

> In the south, "cousin" tends to be restricted to first cousins (with the two exceptions already noted), whereas nearly everyone else is "friend." In the north, people do not distinguish parallel and cross-cousins and tend to include second cousins in the generic term "cousin." "Friend" is applied to a small circle with whom the speaker has limited contact and, hence, few opportunities for developing a partnership tie.

Lanoue also notes the northern Sekani are considerably more proficient at English bureaucratic jargon, while the southern group prefers to keep their speech informal, even in meetings (Lanoue, 1991, p. 105). He ties this to the more active pan-Indian sentiment of the northern community, which is more tolerant to diverse viewpoints and more inclined to address the community's issues forthrightly, especially regarding political problems and dealing with the outside world, adopting and mastering it to maintain their own cohesive identity in the face of hostile colonialism.

FNE speakers may use alternative narrative and discourse strategies, preferring thematic sequencing, implicit connections between ideas, and brevity, as compared to standard Englishes chronological sequencing, explicit connections between ideas, and elaboration (Ball, 2005). Ball and Bernhardt report

that some participants noted a lack of terms for spatial location in some children's vocabulary, while other forum participants noted that explicit locations and times are subordinate to the events being described (Ball, et al., 2006). First Nations children are also described as being reluctant to engage in small talk, or taking a longer time than would be normal in mainstream Canadian society to answer questions (Ball & Bernhardt, 2008, p. 581). This lag in answering was also noted in his work with Cree students (Damico, 1983). Fadden and LeFrance (2010) also noted many differences from the expected standard English classroom discourse in their paper. Participants often took more time to answer a question than would be expected if they had been non-Aboriginal speakers and there were frequent pauses between clauses in the sentences (Fadden & Jenna, 2010). Certain questioning routines are common in middle class Canadian society and school, and these may clash with First Nations language practices (Ball & Bernhardt, 2008, p. 581). Questions asked of children to have them demonstrate knowledge, for example *What colour is the sky?* are likely to be met with silence and/or confusion by First Nations children, as they are more comfortable speaking with a single person or in a small group, or speaking with peers when adults are not present, and decide for themselves when they want to display new knowledge. They list other possible features as prosody, humour, and paralinguistic factors, such as body language and facial expression. Unfortunately, Ball and Bernhardt's paper never names the individual FNE varieties that use these features.

3.1.4 Attitudes towards FNEs in the Canadian education system

In communities where the Ancestral languages are no longer being transmitted, Indigenous Englishes are learned as a first language and are, from a linguistic standpoint, valid, natively learned dialects (Fadden & Jenna, 2010). While linguists hold that these dialects should not be discriminated against, the education system in general is not as welcoming. More Indigenous people are entering Canada's educational system than ever before, and at every level, this ideologically colonialist system is unprepared to accept and negotiate space with the vernaculars they speak. Students face continued discrimination for many reasons, including the prescriptive and rigid attitudes towards language that perpetuate at the highest levels of education (Sterzuk, 2010). Teachers and other educators often find FNE varieties to be in sharp contrast with the expected, standard, middle class-oriented speech patterns of school children (Sterzuk, 2010). First Nations leaders and speech pathology practitioners have voiced concerns that First Nations children are being misdiagnosed as having speech impairments and delays and that these differences can be significant enough to cause the children to be singled out for speech therapy or other supplemental courses (Ball & Bernhardt, 2008, p. 571). Many teachers and speech pathologists mistakenly continue to believe that these children are speaking a defective form of English, caused by a linguistically impoverished environment or pathological problem, leading to First Nations English dialects not being recognized and supported in classrooms (Sterzuk, 2011).

Education is seen today as the key to success for Indigenous peoples in Canada (Wotherspoon, 2006; Epstein & Xu, 2003). This represents a complete paradigm shift from the previous policies of the Canadian government, which intended educational institutions to stifle First Nations culture and assimilate them into colonial, British-European settler society (Sinclair, 2015). Education was not meant to empower Indigenous people but to control them and destroy their capacity for resistance. The current educational system in Canada, while beginning to officially recognize First Nations people as having distinct cultural backgrounds and worldviews that need support in the classroom (Battisti, et al., 2014), is nonetheless the successor to colonial, imperialist policies that teach from an "decidedly" Eurocentric pedagogy (Sterzuk, 2011, p. 68). While new policies and programs recognize English as a Second Dialect (Battisti, et al., 2014), non-standard English varieties are not themselves regarded as legitimate within the Canadian educational system. Since one of the overarching goals of colonial educational policies is to help control new colonies and exploit them, prescriptivism is inherent to the system (Sterzuk, 2011). This means that although education and a successful navigation of the Canadian school system is seen as essential, doing so automatically places FNE speakers in contexts where there are almost always unequal power relationships between them and SCE speakers. While the goal of the educational process has shifted, the actual experience of being in a grade school classroom, or a university lecture hall, has not changed very much, especially pertaining to language use. SCE speakers function as "gatekeepers." That is, only by mastering the standard variety to their teachers' satisfaction with students be allowed to progress through Canada's education system and reap it benefits. In Canada's Euro-centric education system, a system that places high value on the standard variety, knowing SCE is considered essential to the future success of First Nations people (Epstein & Xu, 2003). So, understandably, it is often viewed with ambivalence by speakers of FNEs.

As a result of both colonial dogma and lack of research, and while many teachers are proponents of using Indigenous heritage languages in classrooms to support cultural education especially in reserve schools, the presence of FNEs in classrooms is often more problematic (Wotherspoon, 2006; Epstein & Xu, 2003). Teachers who want to engage in bidialectal teaching encounter both resistance from SCE and to some extent, Ancestral language teaching policies. There are numerous obstacles to using FNEs in classrooms. Parents may feel that their students will be held back if their dialect is used in classrooms (Epstein & Xu, 2003, p. 11). As well, students do not have easily classifiable linguistic backgrounds. In their 1993 article, Heit and Blair describe the issue from two angles. Firstly, they distinguish the continuum of linguistic backgrounds that FNE speakers may have (Heit & Blair, 1993). On one end, a speaker could be completely or almost completely monolingual in an Indigenous language or in English. Speakers could also be fluent in one or more dialects of English, beyond SCE. They could be bilingual in an Indigenous language and English, speak an Indigenous language and some degree of English, or finally speak English or a dialect of English and some degree of an Indigenous language. Secondly, Heit and Blair's article addresses the

problematic one-size-fits-all solution that has been applied to language learning and immersion approaches, based on the idea that First Nations and Métis children are in the same situation as English-speaking, Euro-Canadian children in French immersion programs. They describe what the First Nations and Métis students experience as English *submersion* (Heit & Blair, 1993). They explain significant differences between the experiences and practices of English or French immersion and English submersion (I have condensed their fourteen-point list) (Heit & Blair 1993, p. 110-111):

- French immersion teachers are bilingual, while teachers in English speaking classrooms are usually not, and are very unlikely to speak an Indigenous language.
- French immersion classes are more tolerant of errors, full immersion is gradual, over several years, and accompanied by suitable teaching materials. Teachers are trained in L2 theory.
- The English language is a prestige language, as is French in some places, and both have economic value within and outside of Canada and are seen as educational extras that parents select on behalf of their children. For Indigenous children, learning English is a necessity, imposed by colonial institutions, and is assimilative.
- French immersion programs benefit from considerable research in second language acquisition. Children within a classroom are all at the same level. They may opt out of the program and switch back to a mother-tongue program. Indigenous children may not leave the English educational stream, and they may be penalized or misdiagnosed if they do not acquire English to the satisfaction of their teachers and testers.

This list should make clear that FNE or Ancestral language speakers do not enter school on a level playing field with other children. Cultural differences between Indigenous children and those who are prepare a standard curriculum for teaching and assessment may lead to children being unable to correctly interpret questions and assignment goals (Eriks-Brophy, 2014). As mentioned above, attitudes towards Canadian English remain very prescriptive, and the teaching of "proper" English is still seen as an important part of schooling and FNEs, as non-standard dialects, are seen as detrimental and a barrier to learning (Babae, 2011; Sterzuk, 2011). This prescriptivism has inevitably led to FNEs clashing with and struggling against so-called standard English. Problems arise when well-meaning teachers are confronted with lukewarm support for programs that are meant incorporate Indigenous culture into classroom content, a lack of teaching resources, and the openly racist attitudes of some teachers and staff (Deer, 2013; Riley & Ungerleider, 2012). Texts and curriculum do not accommodate undervalued language varieties, speech and language testing does not account for cultural differences, and teachers may have lowered expectations and become focused on correcting pronunciation at the expense of other skills (Sterzuk, 2010). Teachers may also assume that teaching in an Indigenous language or a non-standard dialect may impede students' skills

to learn standard English varieties and succeed in school, even though several studies have proven this is not the case, but rather, continued maintenance of both languages or language varieties helps students succeed (Battisti, et al., 2014; Babae, 2011; Usborne, et al., 2011; Heit & Blair, 1993).

Of further note, some material has been published on the validity of Indigenous oral histories in the Canadian court system. This includes Etinson 2008, and McNeil & Roness 2000, who wrote specifically on the Witsuwit'en claims in court. In 2011, there were two books published that further tackled the issues surrounding having Indigenous oral testimony recognized in court. *Telling it to the Judge* (Ray, 2011) and *Oral History on Trial* (Miller, 2011) both discuss the problems faced by those using First Nations oral testimony in courts, with personal accounts of several cases and the difficulties of dealing with judges who are themselves unprepared to take oral histories seriously as evidence. However, the focus of this research has been on the weight of oral history vs. written evidence, and on the treatment of oral histories as hearsay rather than fact. They do not deal with the semantics or discourse structures of FNEs, in the same way that research in Australia has addressed the structures of AusAbE.

3.2 Research on Native American Englishes in the USA

Researchers began to notice distinct differences in the speech of Native Americans as early as 19th century (Schuchardt, 1980, orginal 1889) and descriptive work has been published frequently since Leechman and Hall's work in 1955, on what they refer to as *American Indian Pidgin English*. They and Schuchardt approached these Englishes from the perspective of pidgins and creole studies. This theme was continued in articles by Ives Goddard (1977) and Beth Craig (1991). A great deal of the American research has been concentrated in the Southwest. Hugo Schuchardt investigated the origin of American Indian Englishes in 1889, already comparing the examples he gleaned from written texts to the creoles he was studying. The work of Miller (1967, 1977), Mathiot and Mathiot and Ohannessian (1969, 1973) and Neslon-Barber (1982) focuses on the Pima. Much of William Leap's work focused on the Iseltan (1973, 1974, 1977a, 1977b, 1982). Work on Navajo English has been extensive, including Young (1968), Holmes (et al.1971), Harvey (1974), and Canfield (1980). Bilingualism in Navajo, and elements of their English, was addressed by Charlotte Schaengold in 2004. Bartelt has published on English spoken by the Apache in Arizona (1981, 1982, 1986) as has Leibe-Harkort (1983). Mohave English was studied by Penfield-Jasper (1980, 1982) and Santa Ana Pueblo English dialect has been examined by Davis (1964). Flanigan worked on Lakota English, (1985, 1987). Lumbee English, which has been subject to comment since at least the 19th has since been extensively studied by Walt Wolfram (Wolfram and Leap, 1979, Wolfram 1980, Wolfram 1996), as well as Brewer and Reising (1997), Schilling-Estes (2000), Torbert (2001), Danneberg (2002) and Hammonds (2006). Cheyenne English was studied by Alford (1974) and Anderson (1999). The Yakima English dialect was reviewed by Thelma Weeks (1975) and the Warm Springs dialect by Susanne Philips,

(1972). Further north, Vandergriff has studied Kotzebue English in Alaska (1982). The issue of NAE in the classroom was investigated by Potter (1981) and Phillips (1972). Quinault English was reviewed by Rowicka, in 2005. Cherokee English was reviewed by Anderson in 1999 and Coggshall investigated prosody in Cherokee and Lumbee English in 2006 and 2008. Representations of American Indian English speech and stereotypes in white culture, particularly in Hollywood representations, were examined in Meek (2006).

Table 11: Studied varieties of Native American English in the United States

Variety	**Tribe**	**Location**	**Ancestral language base/family**
Lumbee English	The Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina	North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Tennessee	Mixed unknown/English
Cherokee English	The Cherokee Nation, United Keetoowah band of Cherokee Indians	North Carolina, Oklahoma	Cherokee, Iroquoian language family
Navajo English	Navajo Nation	Four Corners-Arizona, New Mexico, Utah	*Diné bizaad* (lit. Peoples' language)/Navajo- Na-Dené Southern Athapaskan language family
Ute English	Uintah-Ouray, Southern Ute, Ute Mountain	Arizona, Utah, Colorado, Nevada	Ute- Uto-Aztecan language family
Iseltan English	Tiwa/Tigua, part of the Tanoan Puebloans	New Mexico	Tiwa- Tanoan language family
Apache English	Chiricahua, Jicarilla, Lipan, Mescalero, Plains Apache, and Western Apache	Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Texas, Oklahoma, Mexico	Jicarilla, Plains Apache, Lipan Apache, Mescalero-Chiricahua, Western Apache-Eyak-Athbaskan language family
Mohave English	Colorado River Indian Tribes	Arizona	Mojave-Yuman language family
Santa Ana Pueblo	Keresan-Keres Pueblo People	New Mexico	Keresan languages
Lakota English	Lakota/Teton, Teton Sioux	North Dakota, South Dakota	Lakota-Siouan language family
Cheyenne English	Cheyenne-Southern Cheyenne/Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes, Northern Cheyenne Tribe of the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation	Montana, Oklahoma	*Tsisinstsistots*/Cheyenne-Algonquian language family
Yakima English	Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama	Washington	Ichishkíin Sínwit-Plateau Penutian language family
Warm Springs English	Wasco, Tenino (Warm Springs), Paiute- Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs	Oregon	Kiksht, Numu, Ichishkíin Sínwit-Chinookan language family Chinook Jargon

Kotzebue English	Inupiat	Alaska	Inupiat-Inuit-Yupik-Unangan language family
Quinault English	Quinault Tribe of the Quinault Reservation	Washington	Quinault-Tsamosan-Coast Salish, Salishan language family
Pima English	Pima/ Akimel O'odham	Arizona	O'odham-Uto-Aztecan language family

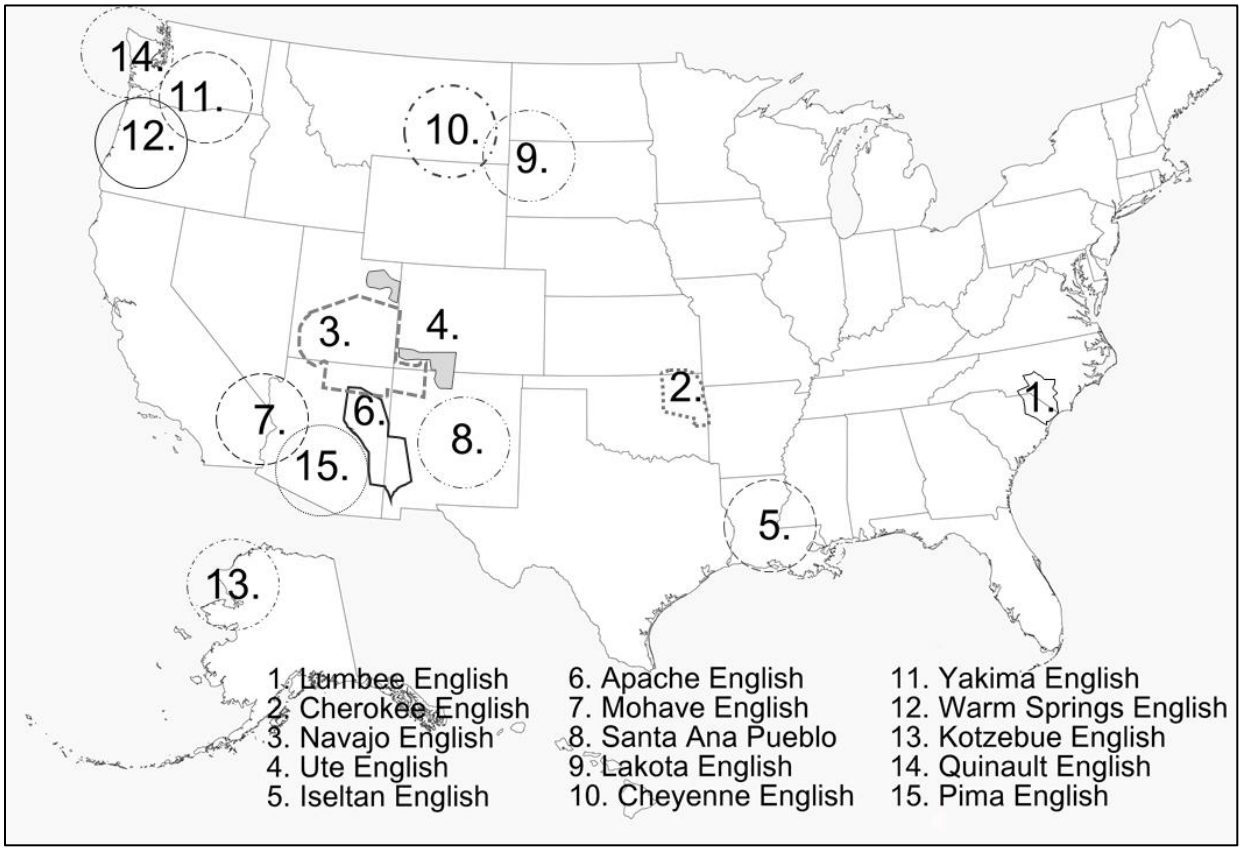

Figure 10: Map of locations of studied varieties of Native American Englishes – The circles indicate small communities, the irregular shapes follow territories

We can see from the map (Figure 10) that the research has been very concentrated in the west and southwest of the country, especially around the Four Corners region where many Native American groups have their reservations. Most of the research has taken place in specific communities on reserves. Other research locations are less distinct and may be based on towns or spread-out populations. Much of the material has covered phonological differences and sociological aspects of language use. Many of these publications are compiled in two sources, *Essays in Native American English* (1982) and *American Indian English* (Leap 1993). In his publications, William Leap notes four distinctive features of Native American Englishes: unmarked past tense, copula deletion, multiple negation, and phonological restrictions on the ends of words, showing as consonant deletion, and discusses the possible origins of NAEs (Leap, 1993). His research is

supported by his review of material published on Native American English through the Unites States. It has been noted that NAE speakers in the United States share similarities with other "non-mainstream" English speaking groups (Wolfram 1980, 1984).

3.2.1 Features of Native American English grammar

Native American English speakers are almost universally noted to use a lower frequency of plural and possessive suffix markings and to indicate plural and possessive references through word combinations and other constructions (Leap, 1993, p. 53). This includes deleting the plural marker *-s* and the regularization of mass nouns and plural forms like *women* and *children*. NAE speakers "regardless of background" will add plural markers to mass nouns (Leap, 1993, p. 54). Miller (1977), reports that eleven-year-old Pima Indian school children use plural allomorphs less than 50% of the time and that /z/ appears only 13% of the time. Lakota English speakers may drop the plural marker or the plural demonstrative (Flanigan, 1987, p. 183):

(23) There's two way of talking.

(24) They don't have this modern sound systems.

Flannigen writes that since Lakota marks the plural on the verb and pronoun, not on the noun, the source of this feature cannot be Ancestral language transfer but must be creolization (Flannigan 1987, p. 186). She does not seem to consider that the lack of plural marking on the noun can carry over to English, without plural makers appearing on the pronoun and verb and instead attributes this directly to depidginization. Leap suggests that while these nonstandard plural forms are found in non-native English speaker errors and other non-standard varieties of English, there is also strong evidence that Ancestral languages are the cause here. The combinations of word-final consonants that mark plural and possession on English nouns do not always occur in Native American languages (Leap, 1993, p. 113). Leap's work on Iseltan English reveals the effect of restrictions on final-position consonant clusters in Iseltan Tiwa grammar. Leap also writes that the process of noun inflection in American Indian languages differs greatly from English. Many Native American languages are highly agglutinative and synthetic. This may explain the above examples from Lakota English. Wolfram (et al. 1979, p. 283) explains that San Juan Pueblo English removes the plural *-s* on nouns preceded by a quantifier, such as *four books*, but that this deletion is less frequent with measure nouns, such as *dollars*, *weeks* or *inches*. Number markings in San Juan Tewa grammar are closely tied to a noun-class system that distinguishes between nouns of a similar composition from nouns that are differently composed, so the marking in San Juan English appear to classify nouns along similar lines (Wolfram & Dannenberg, 1999). This tendency has been observed in Koyukon English speakers (Kwachka 1988), who recognize the difference between mass and count nouns, and mark around 9% of mass nouns, although Kwachka notes that these are mass nouns that are a part of "everyday vocabulary (e.g. furniture/furnitures,

homework/homeworks)" and so their appearance is frequently and therefore "perceptually salient" (Kwachka 1988, p. 28). Kwachka suggests that this core group of mass nouns are being reclassified as count nouns.

Articles and demonstratives also differ in NAE. Cook and Sharp (1966) find that Navajo speakers may drop them entirely. Flannigan also provides an example of article deletion in Lakota English (Flannigan 1987, p. 184):

(25) We have bacon in morning.

Leap finds that speakers of Ute English delete articles from constructions if the nouns occur in a sentence predicate and are less likely to do so if the noun is in subject position and identifies the sentence's primary actor or agent (Leap, 1993, p. 55). Ute English does not have articles, instead using topicalization, the movement of the item under focus, to the front of the sentence, while affixes and other support items may also be added to indicate its special function (Leap, 1993, p. 56). These markers occur at the end of the construction being topicalized and may move with them to the beginning of the sentence. The Ute English contrast between the subject article retention and the predicate article deletion allows speakers to retain the Ute language preference for subject-topic over object-topic constructions. Demonstratives in NAE may also reflect aspects of Native American languages, especially when the Ancestral language necessitates the usage of specific spatial, temporal, or social distance between speakers and persons, between objects, and actions that they are discussing (Leap, 1993, p. 56). In Iseltan English, speakers may intensify stress or pitch assigned to the demonstrative, to indicate particularly close (*this*) or (*that*) relationship to the topic reference to fill in the role of the specific Ancestral language items (Leap, 1993, p. 56). English speakers in San Juan Pueblo also use *this* in a way similar to FNE (Tsimshian) speakers in Canada, using constructions such as "*It's about this Indians*" (Wolfram and Christian 1969a: 156). Leap, who also refers to Tarpent's and Mulder's research, concurs with them that this usage is meant to refer to items that are not only plural, but part of a "structured set" (Leap, 1993, p. 57).

Many of the pronoun forms of standard English are also deleted by NAE speakers. Leap states that "evidence of deletion shows up in every variety of Indian English for which documentation is now available" (Leap, 1993, p. 58). Beyond simple pronoun deletion, NAE speakers do not always distinguish between third person gender in English. Penfield-Jasper conducted a special test on this to determine the pattern of Mohave English speakers, and determined that the greater the overall ambiguity, the more likely the pronoun was to be switched. Deletion was most likely to occur with subject pronouns or the head of dependent clauses (Leap 1993, citing Penfield-Jasper 1980, p. 86):

(26) […] shot himself.

(27) But then […] woke him up.

(28) There's not that many girl […] are playing.

These deletions may continue if the contextual details make it clear who the referent is. This deletion pattern is supported by a Mohave grammatical rule, which forms "headless" subordinate clauses when contextual details specify the subject, and the verb affix links the subject to the specifics of the sentence action (Penfield-Jasper 1980). Leap suggests that case marking has the greatest influence, as it renders the more "marked" subject pronouns more vulnerable to deletion (Leap, 1993, p. 61). Ute English also has a pattern of frequent deletion of the subject pronoun, while leaving the object pronoun construction intact, and Leap notes three constraints that operate here (Leap, 1993, pp. 61-62):

1. That the pronoun must preceded an auxiliary main verb sequence, not just a main verb with an auxiliary suffix.
2. The auxiliary must identify aspect of verb action, not just serve a tense marking function, for example, modal-main verb sequences.
3. And finally, the auxiliary must be eligible for contraction or deletion.

If all these conditions are met, then the auxiliary deletion will trigger pronoun deletion. Alford (1974, pp. 6-7) states that Cheyenne speakers who mix-up pronouns are not confused, but rather are highlighting other things in the sentence, such as references to living things, sacred things, or things to which their culture assigns special properties. Alford also suggests a second source for "errors" that pronoun markers in Cheyenne are verb-related, verb-dominated syntactic categories. This conflicts with the more nominal construction focus of English, and it may be that speakers are attempting to integrate the Cheyenne system into English (Alford 1974, Leap 1993).

This leads us into the next section, tense and aspect. Tense and aspect markings in NAE also may have sources in speaker "error" and Ancestral language influence. Leap's list includes (Leap 1993, pp. 62):

- The absence of inflectional endings on simple verbs, verbal participles, and auxiliaries.
- Verb constructions with past with past tense inflections in contexts where present tense reference can otherwise be inferred.
- Absence of third person present tense suffix (-z) in present tense contexts; or an extension of -Z to include all present tense form.
- Extension of past tense suffix (-d) to mark the past tense references for irregular as well as regular verbs.
- Deletion of AUX in complete/periphrastic verb constructions.

In Isletan English, the tense/aspect marking is situated around a contrast between *delimited*, *distributive* and *continuous* references (Leap, 1993, p. 62). Delimited references occur only in a particular time frame and will not be repeated. Distributive references identify activities that occur only during particular periods of time but can occur within any number of such periods (Leap 1993, p. 63). Distributive verbs, which contain no tense/suffixes in their structures, are more opaque as they use either uninflected main verbs, with an optional focused temporal adverb, to designate actions that having duration from "recent 'past' into 'present' or from 'present' into' immediate future' (Leap 1993, p. 63). Continuous verbs references use a verb base with the *-ing* suffix, and any appropriate helping verb or temporal adverb.

The use of uninflected verbs can cause confusion for listeners who are unfamiliar with the system of reference. Leap notes that both the distributive and continuous verb references, including deletion of inflected forms of BE are also features of African American English (Leap 1993, citing Fasold 1969). Cheyenne English focuses on a distinction between manifest and nonmanifest actions, which parallels the animate/inanimate contrasts associates with the noun reference and pronoun-based gender marking (Alford 1974). The system reworks the standard English contrast between past and non-past references into a real and irrealis distinction. All past, present and future references that the speaker knows have happened, or considers to be concrete, fall into the first category, and are marked with a *-d* suffix. Any past, present, and future references that are speculative or hypothetical are designated with an uninflected verb. Kotzebue English (Vandergriff 1982, p. 130-138) organizes tense/aspect references by measuring the completeness of any given activity. The system distinguishes between actions that are ongoing over a long period of time, or an open-ended period of time, and actions that are time-restricted. Speakers reinforce distinctions with adverbial phrases, or modals, which are needed to support the uninflected verbs. Vandergriff attributes these to a creole language base with influence from Inupiaq verb semantics (Leaping 1993, citing Vandergriff 1982). Lakota English may also use tense shifts, uninflected or deleted copula, or the deletion of function words (Flanigan, 1987, p. 184):

(29) So I came back and I stick with the elementary.

(30) This room be too small to do reading and writing in.

Apachean English's system operates on a three-way distinction (Bartelt, 1986):

- An action that does not occur before other activities described in the discourse.
- An action with duration, occurring before or after the time of the main discourse event.
- An action that has not begun, including all references to irrealis conditions.

Ute English speakers usually follow the tense and aspect reference systems of standard English speakers, with the exception of two contexts (Leap, 1993, p. 66). When speakers are referring to actions not restricted

to single points in time, they use a base verb without any inflection or auxiliary support. The other context is closely associated with the constraints of Ute grammar. Tense/aspect markers in Ute are suffixed to the verb and or combined with pronominal prefixes and other material, creating a syntactically independent auxiliary construction. However, only one of these are used in a clause. In Ute English, this leads to verbs in perfective constructions and other constructions with helping verbs to have tense inflections on the auxiliary or the main verb. Negated verbs are also uninflected for any property beyond negation, which is supported by both the above constraints and the fact that in Ute negation is independent of the verb. This creates constructions which do not identify references to distributive action or duration in time and space.

As the previous section indicates, adverbs may be needed to clarify tense and aspect in contexts where uninflected verbs are used. How these are used can vary across different NAEs. Adverbs may also provide additional information on the sentence referent, as the following two examples from in Isletan English show (Isletan English, Leap 1993, p. 67):

(31) He went out on a hunt and when night came he howl again.

(32) It had been four years in-between, **already**.

Adverbs elaborate on the timing of the actions and their position relative to the speakers. In Isletan English, the adverbs sit in two positions, sentence final or sentence medial, adjacent to the main verb (Leap, 1993, p. 68). Sentence final adverbs indicate factual comments, or rather comments that are factual from the speaker's point of view, and adverbs in the medial position indicate statements that while generally true from the speaker's point of view, may not be accurate under other circumstances. Northern Ute English speakers, according to Leap, use *still*, but not *already* or *yet*, to indicate close connections between the events being discussed and the space/time position of the discussion (Leap, 1993, p. 68).

Some NAEs also use *get* rather than *be* as a verbal auxiliary. Miller (1977) has investigated this feature in the context of Pima English. She notes that eight-year-old Pima students are unable to form passives with *be* correctly more than 2% of the time, with that rising to 28% at age nine, and to 40% at age ten, before declining to 27% with eleven-year-olds. This corresponded to the appearance of the *get* passive, such as *The fly got eaten by the spider* (Miller 1977, pp. 79). In children, 23% of the passive constructions used by eleven-year-old used inflected *get*, instead of *be*. By comparison, non-Pima, non-Indian students used it very little, with no occurrences by age twelve or thirteen. The *get* construction also appears in Isletan English and Leap notes that the use of the *get* passive construction is widespread in vernacular Englishes (Leap, 1993, p. 69). *Be*, *have* and *get* are all subject to deletion in NAEs, including Isletan English, Mohave English and Ute English. This is similar to the AAEV rule that allows the deletion of the auxiliary when it can be contracted, is preceded by a pronoun and when the sounds segments that are not affected by

contraction are similar to in pronunciation to the sound segments that now surround them (Leap, 1993, p. 70). In his comparison of NAE to African American Englishes, Leap writes that NAEs "broaden the scope of AAEV vernacular rules and apply that process to items in verb constructions in other ways" (Leap, 1993, p. 70). However, the remaining section does not elaborate much more on the subject, except to comment that deletion of linking verbs and helping verbs is very common in Isletan English, and that only one instance was observed in Penfield-Jasper's work on Mohave English (1980). Ute English allows for only one tense bearing element in any clause (Leap, 1993, p. 71). Lumbee English is also reported to follow similar rules for *be* as in AAEV. Dannenberg and Wolfram (1998) write that *be* is treated as a regularized, finite verb that mirrors the verb concord of other verbs in Lumbee English, that is, it takes -s third person singular objects and, although less often, on third person plural subjects. In the case of non-first-person subjects, *be* is usually uninflected, but may be inflected with first person singular forms (Examples from Dannenberg and Wolfram 1998, p.141):

(33) And that's when the blessed train bes running, every time we get out of class. (f/23)

(34) When I be at the doctor's office, he bes at the courthouse. (f/23)

The *be* form also takes on other functions. It negates with do-support, and takes on the duties of auxiliary and main verbs and occurs with an "variety of verb phrase complements, such as predicate adjectives, predicate nominatives, predicate locatives" and VERB+ing and VERB+en, and infrequently, *be* as a perfect (Dannenberg & Wolfram, 1998) (Examples from Dannenberg and Wolfram 1998, pp. 144-145):

(35) We don't be crawling under the Amtrak. (m/21)

(36) It just bes so hot out there, you about to pass out, but you got water. (m/42)

(37) They be ten thousand or more people there (m/22)

(38) When I be at the doctor's office, he bes at the courthouse. (f/22)

(39) A lot of women bes coming up there to see it (f/23)

(40) That gun bes blown to pieces (m/45)

(41) I told her don't get it cause Momma be got it. (f/42)

(42) I'll be went to the post office (m/73)

Dannenberg and Wolfram posit that continuous contact with African American speakers had led the Lumbee to adopt a "fairly robust pattern" in present tense forms of *be*, which may be used as perfects, particularly with *I'm*:

(43) If I'm got a dollar I'm got it.

(44) I says, I'm Indian, I says, I'm been nothing, I says, but a Indian, I says here.

(45) I'm had two heart attacks so I'ma take care of myself.

(46) I'm told you all that I know.

Flanigan (1984) reports that at the time of her writing, many of the school children she worked with were still "receptively bilingual", being influenced by their grandparents, while they and their parents spoke what was described as a "broken or pidgin Lakota" (Flanigan 1987: 183). She reports that speech of Lakota children is marked by the same non-standard features as adults, but is more frequent, and compares it to the casual speech of children and teenagers across the country. These patterns include generalization of *don't* auxiliary across persons, noninverted word order and omission of *do* in questions, multiple negation, use of *gonna* and *ain't*, *-in* for verbal suffix *-ing*, the alveolar stop /t/ and /d/ for the interdental fricatives and the use of conversational markers such as *like* and *y'know* (Flanigan 1987, p. 184).

Subject verb concord in NAE is affected by features of pronunciation, differences between concord rules in English and Ancestral language grammars, among other factors (Leap 1993). For example, Cook and Sharp (1966) write that there are two problems for Navajo English speakers, that Navajo shows number on the verb, not the noun, and the final -s of the regular English plural is often unheard. Thus, forms of *be*, *have* and *do* that indicate subject-verb agreement in English cause problems. Stout (1979, pp. 180-81), writes that elementary school students speaking Laguna English in New Mexico follow two constraints; that the singular verb form is extended variably to plural subjects when the verb was *be*, past or present, and the plural verb form is extended to the singular subject when the verb non-*be* is present. Stout also found that Laguna students favoured vernacular concord, that is, non-agreement, when they were native English speakers, and lacked exposure and support for their Ancestral language, were male, lived on-reserve and were receiving support services in language arts development. Isletan English speakers of all ages are observed to regularly rework English subject-verb concord, to more precisely detail the relationship (Leap, 1993, p. 72). Speakers inflect the verb as singular when the sentence subject has a plural reference and leave singular nouns similarly uninflected. This results in sentences like (Leap, 1993, p. 73):

(47) Some **peoples** from the outside **comes** in.

(48) The **governor don't** take the case.

However, when Isletan English speakers use the distributive aspect, then the subject remains uninflected, regardless of their being singular or plural:

(49) When the **woman get** together, they have a lot of influence.

These rules are variable, and are influenced by speaker age, the degree of formality of the speech setting, and by the "Indianness" of the topic being discussed (Leap, 1993, p. 73). Flanigan also provides examples of subject-verb non-agreement (Flanigan, 1987, p. 183):

(50) My brother, he do that every day, painting.

Prepositional phrases may also be deleted or altered to specify the syntax of sentence-level noun-verb relationships (Leap 1993). Examples from research in the USA include constructions in which the prepositions have been changed from their standard English counterparts, have been reordered, and have been deleted (Examples, except the last quoted in Leap 1993, pp. 74-75):

Navajo:

(51) go **to** downtown

(52) **at** store

(53) all kinds **from** birds

(54) the chalkboard **under** (Cook & Sharp 1966, p. 28)

Mohave English:

(55) He go fired **of** the church

(56) I get **in on** Head Start.

(57) **During at** that time…

(58) He lives […] that second house.

(59) I was […] California.

(60) They go out […] night time to shallow waters. (Penfield-Jasper 1980, p. 145)

Papago English:

(61) They were **at** fishing.

(62) Ricky got in such a hurray **on** his zipper (Bayles and Harris 1982, p. 17)

(63) They live New York. (Flannigan 1987, p. 183)

As in Canada, the general assumption in the USA is that the Ancestral language influences preposition usage. In some cases, this may be an attempt to distinguish finely graded spatial references and expand on the English prepositional system. This is not the case for other Native American languages. This includes Mohave, which has only a single location marker, *ly*. This marker can be translated into a variety of English prepositions (Penfield-Jasper 1980, p. 145, citing Munro 1974, p. 20). Other explanations have been given for other varieties. Flanigan (1984b, p. 92) writes that the deletion of prepositions in Lakota English can be traced back to French-speaking traders and Plains Indian trading partners, and their eighteenth and nineteenth-century creoles, as creoles characteristically delete prepositions. Leap also suggests that developmental factors may be at work, if these constructions are being used by primarily younger speakers, as Flanigan's examples seem to suggest (Leap 1993). Leap explains that sentences like "He go […] town"

and “her make fire […] cook,” in which the primary recipient of the action is not specified in the sentence predicate, and the deletion in the second clause applies to a verbal construction, lend support to this feature being based in case-marking (Leap, 1993, p. 76). Alford finds that Cheyenne Englishes use of phrases like “*Put it **on** the car”* and “*Hop **on***”, referring to using cars, reflects a “semantic freezing” from a time when the speech community was adjusting to the new arrival and usage of automobiles (Alford 1974, p. 8). Northern Ute phrases such as “let’s ride **on** your car to Pizza Hut” suggest a similar origin (Leap 1993, p. 76).

Some researchers have suggested that sentences in NAE grammars may be left-branching instead of right-branching. Penfield-Jasper (1980, p. 86) comments that personal and possessive pronouns in Mohave English show a higher incidence of gender variation when the pronoun occurs at the left side of the clause. In Tewa English, Mescalero Apache English, and Lakota English, the standard English equi-deletion rules regularly eliminate the left-hand, rather than the right-hand pair (Leap 1993). In these varieties, the main clause occurs at the right-hand of the sentence, and object noun phrases and other modifiers are moved into sentence final and leftward positions in the clause (Leap, 1993, p. 77):

(64) They ride bikes is what I see them do. (San Juan Tewa)

(65) There are circle dance songs that we have. (Mescalero Apache)

This feature appears in Lakota English, and is possibly attributed to the discourse patterns of the Ancestral language, which topicalizes, and then comments on and elaborates the subject at considerable length (Flannigan 1987, p. 184/188):

(66) English person, they don’t know guttural.

(67) I wonder which language is reversed, the English or the Lakota? Our words are always, the subject always comes first.

In Arapaho English and Yavapai English, speakers may reverse the standard English-based word order, with supporting/modifying materials at the front, instead of behind the subject-verb sequence or even switch the main verb with the subject pronouns (Leap 1993, p. 77):

(68) From the family is where we learn to be good. (Arapaho)

(69) Where going you? (Yavapai)

Overall, NAEs show feature patterns reminiscent of several eWAVE varieties, especially the non-traditional varieties outside of the British Isles and standard North American varieties. Some NAE dialects also have no gender distinction for third person singular (F. 10) a feature found only in varieties, in Central and South America, the West Coast of Africa, Asia and Australia and the Pacific. Speakers may also use

regularized reflexive paradigms (F. 11), such as *theirselves/theirself*. This feature is extremely widespread, including in the non-standard dialects of English, Scotland and Wales. It is also found in the non-standard dialects of the Americas listed in eWAVE such as Gullah English, Ozark English and in Canada in Newfoundland English. Deletion of the subject pronoun, listed in eWAVE as subject pronoun drop for referential (F. 43) and dummy pronouns (F. 44) is common, and widespread through the eWAVE varieties in the Caribbean, the UK, Asia and Australia, but less common in varieties in the continental USA. Plural forms are highly variable. Mass nouns may have a plural -s (F. 55). NAEs also often show the absence of plural marking after quantifiers (F. 56), and plurals marking being optional for human and non-human referents (F. 57 and F. 58). NAEs also show changes to the article, especially with the use of zero articles where StE speakers would have a definite or indefinite article before the noun (F. 62) and (F. 63). These two features are found through World English varieties and are listed as "pervasive or obligatory" in twelve varieties in Africa, Asia, Australia and the Pacific.

NAEs also show patterns of non-standard negation, such as multiple negation and negative concord (F. 154), and *ain't* as the negated form of be (F. 155). These patterns are found in almost all varieties of English world-wide and are contrasted with "correct" standard English varieties. NAE also have extensive patterns of deletion in verb phrases, with verbal endings being deleted. Tenses maybe levelled and verbal endings deleted. This includes the deletion of auxiliary *be* before progressive (F. 174), deletion of verbal auxiliaries occurs including deletion of auxiliary have (F. 179). NAE speakers may also use existential/presentational there's/there is/there with plural subjects (eWAVE F.172.) NAE speakers may omit prepositions (F. 216) a feature which is also extremely widespread across World English varieties, including non-StE varieties in the U.K. Another widespread feature found here is the use of conversational markers such as *like* (F. 234 and F. 235).

3.2.2 Native American English phonology

Leap's review notes both vowel and vowel sequences differ in NAE. Standard English contrasts between front unrounded vowels and between some front and central unrounded vowels are not clearly maintained in NAE. Fletcher (1983, p. 5) writes that the four vowel segments in standard English [ə] "c*u*t", [æ] "c*a*t", [e] "b*e*t", and [a] "f*a*ther" are pronounced differently in NAEs, since the six pairwise combinations fail to contrast in speakers' respective Ancestral languages (Leap, p. 45, quoting Fletcher 1983). Cook and Sharp (1966) write that, Navajo students exchange [i], and [e], [i:] and [ɪ], and [e] for [ɛ]. Despite this, the Navajo language has segments similar to English [i] and [e] and having a contrast similar to English [i:] and [ɪ], so Cook and Sharp conclude the reason cannot be that speakers are unfamiliar with these phonemes (Leap 1993, p. 45). Leap, in his own work on Iseltan English (1973), notes a different set of contrasts and suggests

that Iseltan English speakers' habit of assigning the same value to tense and lax vowels leads to *his* and *he's* being pronounced the same way (Leap, 1993, p. 46).

Penfield-Jasper, writing on the varieties of English spoken by the Colorado River Tribes, the Mohave, Hopi, and Navajo students in Parker, Arizona, sees the speakers shifting the vowels one degree lower (Penfield-Jasper, 1977). These shifts do not always occur, but they happen often enough to make any of these varieties "audibly distinct" from more standardized English varieties (Penfield-Jasper, 1977, p. 32). Penfield further argues that these shifts are not always from one phone to another, but rather seem to "vary along a gradual scale between to positionally related to vowel sounds" (Penfield-Jasper, 1977, p. 32). Kotzebue English (Vandergriff 1982) replaces some English diphthongs with short vowels. Vandergriff believes that the close relationship between vowel length and stress in Kotzebue Inupiaq causes speakers to shift [eɪ] to [ɛ] in *place* and [ɑ] to [aɪ] in *I'll* (Vandergriff 1982, pg. 143-147). Leap suggests that this is also a case of "shift by degree" (Leap, 1993, p. 47).

Leap writes that the nasals, resonants, and laterals may be interchanged with one another, or one nasal may be selected as a "cover segment" for all environments, eliminating the three-way contrast altogether, and may extend that segment to replace [r] and [l] (Leap, 1993, p. 49). Ute English speakers may substitute [n] for [l] (Leap, 1993). Cook and Sharp (1966) and Alford (1974) also note this exchange in Navajo English and Cheyenne English. In the case of Navajo, this results in a lengthened, tensed vowel rather than a vowel-semivowel sequence to account for the diminished consonant cluster, leading to "brin" as *briin*, for example (Cook & Sharp, 1966, p. 23). Cheyenne English speakers also are reported to intensify contrasts in vowel quality, so that words like *singer*, with nasal [n] exchanged [ŋ] and *sinner* are still distinguishable.

Like in Canada, several researchers in the USA have also noted the restrictions on consonants in word-final position, and on the deletion of the contrasts between voiced and voiceless stops and voiced and voiceless alveodental spirants (**th**e vs. **th**ought). Cheyenne English also substitutes stops for spirants (Alford, 1974) however the source of the substitution is in question, as although Cheyenne speakers change "them" to "dem" and "thin" to "tin" Cheyenne's consonant inventory contains [t] but not [d]. It is unclear to Alford and Leap where the substituting [d] has come from. Flanigan reports similar patterns for Lakota English and provides several examples (Flanigan, 1987, p. 183):

(70) So it's real in'estin'-tings dat dose kids should know about.

(71) When I firs' start' workin' here.

(72) Ol'est might be 'bout five years ol', the younges' t'ree years ol'.

Leap also discusses glottal stops, which in some varieties of Native American English, may replace [t] or [d] in word-medial position (Leap 1993, pp. 49-50, quoting Cook and Sharp 1966, p. 25, and Alford 1974, p. 6). Speakers of Navajo and Cheyenne English use glottal segments in the following environments:

- When the corresponding standard English word or phrase has word-medial [t] or [d].
- In syllable-final position before and internal juncture; or
- As an onset or argument before a word-initial vowel.

As in Canada, suprasegmental features appear to "contribute substantially to contrasts with standard English" (Leap 1993, p. 50). Overall, there is a general observation of a monotone or sing-song quality to speakers' voices. Leap notes that non-Indians may observe that Indian English speakers "speak in subdued tones, show little expression or emotion in their voices, speak in a monotone, or speak in a singsong voice" (Leap 1993, p. 52). He further notes that these observations are frequently made by those who interact with Indian English speakers in contexts characterized by unequal power relationships. According to Penfield-Jasper (1977), comparisons of Mohave, Hopi, and Navajo English speakers use different sets of rules governing stress placement to identify speakers of different tribal backgrounds. She attributes this to the influence of Ancestral languages. However, her source for this appears to be anecdotal, as she herself finds the strongest contrast to be between all the varieties and standard English (Penfield-Jasper 1977, pp. 34-45). As a counter-argument, Stout's study of Keres, or Santa Ana English (1977), attributes the difference in stress to two stress qualities; that primary stress occurs on the first vowel following major junctures, and that stress in that position may then be back-copied to the last vowel preceding that juncture, if at least one weak-stressed vowel separates that vowel from any other preceding vowel with primary stress. After this rule is in operation, stress quality then conditions other features. Pitch is then assigned to pattern created by the stress contrasts, with "high" pitch attaching to primary stress, and "low" pitch to weak stress. Pitch contours are briefer but more frequent in Santa Ana English. There is also a stress-governed alternation between vowel segments, where one segment occurs under primary stress and related segment, lower in tongue height with than its counterpart, occurs in places where weak stress is assigned. This leads to considerable variation in the pronunciation of the same word from one time to the next. The Santa Ana pattern of stress placement can also result in the insertion of an unneeded phonemes into a sentence such as the [ə] in the example sentence:

(73) Yes, Steve we do. [… #yɛys+ə+stív / wíy/ dU#...] (Leap 1993, p. 50, quoting Stout 1977)

Stout is unable to attribute this entire system to the Ancestral language base. Flannigan writes that Lakota English has an "Indian English" sound, created by the following factors (Flannigan 1987, p. 187):

- The frequent deletion of function words alters the stress patterns of the Standard English sentence.

- The switch from Lakota, a tone language, to English, leads to hypercorrection, which flattens the intonation contours.

Reduction of syllable length, stemming from vowel glide reduction, reduces the pattern of alternating monophthongs and diphthongs. This may connect to Lakota having pure vowels.

Coggshall, in her study of prosody in Eastern Cherokee English and Lumbee English, compares Eastern Cherokee English speakers to Spanish speakers, noting that both this dialect of NAE and Spanish are syllable-timed (Coggshall 2008, p. 4). While most Cherokee and older Lumbee speakers maintain English stress-timing, younger speakers have adopted a syllable-time rhythm. Lumbee English is unusual in that it is much older than other NAE dialects. While their origins are not entirely clear, the Lumbee are believed be the descendants of several Native American groups that came together in the wake of devastating European diseases and were already speaking English when they encountered European settlers (Coggshall, 2008). Coggshall suggests that Ancestral language effects on prosody may be long gone, and if the Lumbee were in fact already a mixed tribe at their formation, then there is certainly reason to suggest that any substrate influence has been long mitigated through time and close contact with the European speaking settlers. Instead, Coggshall supports the idea that the pan-Indian, Red Power movement of the 1970s, along with desegregation of Lumbee schools and their subsequent contact with other Native American communities, may have triggered the younger generations to adopt pan-Native American features.

However, these features contribute substantially to contrasts with Standard English (Leap, 1993) but have not been extensively investigated in laboratory settings (owing to the issues around logistics and other general difficulties, no doubt). Different varieties have been shown to have a range of stress patterns. Mohave, Hopi, and Navajo speakers have been noted to use differences in stress patterns to identify tribal backgrounds (Penfield-Jasper, 1977). These variety specific stress placements are linked to the stress assignment rules in the speaker's ancestral languages (Penfield-Jasper, 1977). Work on Keres English in Santa Ana Mexico has shown a link between placement of primary stress and the location of an internal juncture (Davies, 1964). Stress quality is then further conditioned by stress contrasts "high" pitch coincides with primary stress, "lower" pitch with weak stress. Further alternation of stress patterns according to vowel segments may lead to a speaker's pronunciation of the same word showing considerable variation in vowel quality and in other areas. The stress placement of SAE English affects [ə], and its prevalence causes Santa Ana English speakers to sound unsure or hesitant in their speaking to non-Indian members. Evidence of transfer from the ancestral language, Keres, is doubtful (Leap, 1993). Penfield-Jasper especially notes the lack of standard English intonation patterns, with speakers answering questions in a level or dropping pitch, not with the rising intonation common to questions (Penfield-Jasper, 1977). Leap infers that many of these

differences have been noted by non-Indian school teachers and other non-Indians about Indian English speakers in contexts characterized by unequal distributions of power (Leap, 1993).

3.2.3 Native American Englishes vocabulary and pragmatics

Finally, we note that there are numerous observed differences in the usage of language between NAE speakers and non-Indigenous speakers. Leap's 1993 compilation does not discuss Native American language loan words in NAEs, but he does discuss the semantic divergences between NAEs and varieties spoken by non-Indigenous speakers. He notes the difficulty in studying this particular area of usage, as researchers many not be culturally aware enough to identify Native American semantic meanings in English speech (Leap, 1993). The prevailing viewpoint, that those speaking English are automatically using English semantic models as reference, masks the Indigenous speakers' non-Western viewpoints, which are in fact being reflected in their word-choice and sentence structure (Leap, 1993). Research on this topic has been carried much further in the Australian literature on Aboriginal Australian English (see below). However, Leap provides individual examples of English phrases and sentence structures, from his own and other research, that reflect Native American viewpoints (From Leap 1993, p. 79):

- In Northern Cheyenne, a man will say that he has received a new shirt, but will follow with "I don't fit it" rather than "It doesn't fit me." According to Alford (1974, p. 8) this reflects the need for hand-me-down clothing in Cheyenne society.
- An Iseltan English speaker is reported as saying, regarding the leader of a group of hippies, "Hair sure was hairy." The speaker submerged the English distinction between *head* and *scalp* under the Ancestral languages equivalent, *hair*.
- Navajo speakers may use a statement like "I'm eatin' til six o'clock" to indicate a general time, as the items on the menu, the number of participants and guests and other factors can influence the actual start and end times of meals. Navajo speakers may also alter the means of English verbs that involve implicit speaker power and control, such as *have to*, *make* or *must*. Robert Young, (cited in Fletcher 1983, p. 9) reports that Navajo speakers would not say 'I must go there', but something more like "It is only good that I shall go there." Rather than a phrase that implies force, like "I make the horse run, "a Navajo speaker would say "The horse is running for me."

Pragmatics, by contrast, offers a much clearer distinction for observers, and for researchers who are themselves working firsthand in Indigenous communities. Phillips (1983) also describes differences in speaker interaction. Basso (1970) notes that Western Apache communities use silence to deal with uncertain situations, such as courtships, children returning home from boarding school and with people who are drunk, angry or in mourning. Important differences in discourse patterns have also been noted in Philips (1972), Weeks (1975) and Scollon and Scollon (1979) and Flanigan (1987).

Some of these features have never been closely studied or are very difficult to conduct precise laboratory analysis on. They are regularly noted by researchers in the field and reported by other non-Indigenous individuals who interact with FNE speakers. One of these is patterns of discourse. FNE discourse and pragmatics are similar to those found in other Indigenous groups in North America. Many of these features are directly embedded in Native American and First Nations cultural norms. Discourse in these varieties is cooperative in nature, and makes use of silence, turn-taking, and may be strongly influenced by power dynamics within the setting. Studies have shown wide differences between the expectations placed on students in an English-speaking classroom controlled by non-Indigenous English speakers and those in a culturally Indigenous context, controlled, accordingly, by Indigenous speakers (Leap, 1993). The following list shows some of the differences found in IndEng discourse, observed in Canada and the USA (Ball & Bernhardt, 2008; Leap, 1993; McLaughlin, 1991; Liebe-Harkort, 1983):

- Face-to-face communication is valued, as opposed to impersonal communication such as telephone and email.
- Precedence is given to older speakers and oratory skills are closely linked to a person's age. Younger individuals are expected to listen to their elders.
- Listening is often a passive activity, without overt markers of comprehension or agreement.
- Speakers address all members of the audience.
- Direct requests, questioning and argumentation are considered impolite.
- Direct refusals are not given as they are considered rude. Agreements, evasive answers or silence may instead replace the word "no."
- There may an appropriate "wait time" for a respondent to observe before answering a question.
- Silence is often the appropriate response in some social contexts and frames of discourse.
- Sentences may be framed in such a way as to allow the respondent to save face and even avoid answering entirely.

Liebe-Harkort notes the avoidance of direct personal questions by the White-Mountain Apache people. Speakers may answer such impoliteness with *I don't know* (Liebe-Harkort, 1983). Leap reports the same preference for non-direct requests in Northern Ute and Lakota English (Leap, 1993, pp. 85-87). Both speaker groups regularly begin questions sentences with *I wonder why…*, however there are two different reasons for this. Northern Ute English speakers apparently prefer to use this strategy to shift emphasis to the speaker, thus avoiding the trap of talking about someone who is not there, or that of commenting on a topic with which one is not familiar. Lakota English speakers use the open-ended nature of the question to make broad arguments, and a common answer is silence (Leap, 1993, p. 86). By contrast, other requests may be more abrupt, mimicking an "imperative verb" construction in the Lakota language that is used when

addressing kinspeople, close friends, or as in Leap's example, teachers. Vandergriff (Vandergriff 1982, cited in Leap 1993, p. 87) explains that Kotzebue English speakers begin content-oriented questions with *how come* in stead of *why*. He explains this as originating from two features of Kotzubue English grammar. One, that in the Ancestral language grammar, questions are created by placing a question marker at the front of a declarative sentence. Two, that verb constructions that use inflected *do, have* or progressive *be* occur very rarely in Kotzebue English, so speakers have difficulty applying the rules of English question formation, which frequently use *do*.

3.2.4 Native American Englishes in classrooms and other "white spaces"

Native Americans face many of the same problems as First Nations peoples in Canada, having a long history of displacement and conflict with American settlers and the government. Many tribes have suffered both population and language attrition and have come to use English as their main language. These differences may lead to the following occurrences when non-Indigenous speakers interact with Indigenous English speakers, especially in classrooms and other official settings such as hospitals and government services. NAE speakers may be misinterpreted as being inattentive, distant, or as not understanding the question or as having hearing or speech impairment or other pathological speech problems. McLaughlin recounts (in Leap 1993, pp. 82-85) the example of a phone conversation between a Navajo man and a Workers' Compensation office, regarding a letter from the state office. The letter's use of the agentless passive was extremely confusing for the Navajo man and the phone call intended to resolve the issue, despite two weeks of preparation and rehearsals, still ended with the man beckoning for McLaughlin to take over the call. Despite his attempts to communicate over the phone, the nature of the official's bureaucratic, impersonal discourse proved too difficult to navigate. On the other end, Indigenous speakers may try to rebalance the power dynamic through use of silence, hedging, and distractors. Silence as a form of protest is an oft ignored part of discourse, but the refusal to answer a question or engage in conversation can be a powerful, non-confrontational method of resistance.

One publication examines how Native Americans are portrayed in Hollywood addresses many of the stereotypical features of Indigenous speech in white public space (Meek, 2006). Among these stereotyped features, which work together to portray a dysfluent, "othered" English, are frequent use of pauses mid-sentence, deletion or substitution of various sentence elements, lack of tense conjugation, and lack of contractions. Meek's publication explores the juxtaposition of slow, rhythmic speech in a formal oratorical style with a simplified morpho-syntactic structure creates the picture of Native Americans as dignified, and yet also primitive, simple, childlike, and foreign, in effect, perpetuating stereotypes of the "noble savage." Meek traces these stereotypes to early descriptions of Native American Pidgin English, but notes that the early descriptions, at least the trustworthy ones, often differ from "Hollywood Injun Speech."

3.3 Research on Aboriginal Australian English

In many respects, research on the varieties of English spoken by Australia's Aboriginal peoples is ahead of the respective literature in Canada. There is an extensive and continuously growing body of literature that examines Aboriginal Australian English's (AusAbE) structure, usage, origins, and perhaps most importantly, its social context. Its speakers have a similar history of cultural, economic and linguistic contact and then cultural and linguistic suppression with colonial Europeans. Although the founding of each colony occurred under different circumstances, with Australia being a founded as a penal colony in 1788, and the demographics of the original populations differ (Kiesling, 2006), the sequence of events involving the continent's original inhabitants is matched almost beat-for-beat in Canada. This includes the devastation of populations by European diseases, policies of assimilation and cultural and language suppression, culminating in the implementation of the residential school system. As a result, Aboriginals in Australia face the same problems as First Nations people in Canada, with many Ancestral languages having been lost or being severely endangered (Malcolm, 2013). Aboriginal people in Australia are tremendously over-represented in the Australian criminal justice system (Eades, 2004). They remain economically disenfranchised and face persistent and deep running discrimination (Behrendt, 1996). Early research on AusAbE dialects reflects these attitudes (Jernhudd 1971, p. 19, quoting Strehlow in Hymes 1964):

> Northern Territory pidgin English is not English perverted and mangled by the natives; it is English perverted and mangled by ignorant whites, who have in turn taught this ridiculous gibberish to the natives...

Research on AusAbE was published continually throughout the second half of the 20th century, the stream of material has only increased. Therefore, I shall only mention those works most prominent and relevant to my research. Work on the cultural aspects of these varieties includes Jean Harkins (1994) and Gerhard Leitner (2004). Ian Malcom has worked on various aspects of AusAbE, starting in Western Australia in 1973. Since then, he has worked continuously in the topic (1994, 2000a, 2000b, 2001a, 2001b, 2007a, 2007b, 2013, Malcom & Sharifian 2007), including his review of the prior research on AusAbE varieties from 1961 to 2000 (Malcom 2000) and a very thorough review of AusAbE features in the Mouton World Atlas (2012). His most recent book in 2018, *Australian Aboriginal English: Change and Continuity in an Adopted Language*, summarizes the finding of the last sixty years. Diana Eades (1983, 1992, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2013, 2015) and Michael Walsh (1994, 1999) have also worked extensively on AusAbE in the Australian justice system (see below).

AusAbE differ from Standard Australian English in grammar, phonology, lexicon, semantics and pragmatics, with the most-opaque varieties being spoken in the most remote areas, and the varieties that are

closest to SE being used in urban areas. Many researchers have tracked these differences to both depidginization, decreolization and Ancestral language influence, however Kiesling claims that although it is indisputable that contact was involved, AusAbE is unlikely to have a creole ancestor (Kiesling 2006, p. 80). Like other contact varieties, vowel contrasts are reduced, as is morphology, for example copula and possessive -s deletion (Kiesling, 2006). The greatest difference is noted to be in pragmatics and discourse, which rely heavily on Aboriginal cultural norms and conflict greatly with Euro-Australian cultural conventions.

The Mouton World Atlas of Variation in English, which is based on the eWAVE corpus, offers a list of features. In their compilation, AusAbE is most strongly influenced by varieties from the Southeast of England and Irish English, and is closest, feature-wise, to Australian English and Australian Vernacular English, and is very similar to Roper River Creole (Kriol) and Torres Straight Creole. It does not consider AusAbE to have enough features to be considered a variety, but rather has close relationships with the English varieties transported over to Australia by speaker from Southeast England and Ireland. It is these dialects, rather that the creolization process, which lend AusAbE its range of features. Ian Malcom writes that AusAbE is neither Australian English nor a creole but has overlap with both (Malcolm, 2013). Of course, this list covers a tremendous range of speaker communities. There were between 200 and 250 Aboriginal Australian languages and between 500 and 700 dialects across the continent in pre-colonial times (Malcolm, 2018). Therefore, the term Aboriginal Australian English should not be taken to mean uniformity of English varieties cross the continents.

As a former colony of the British Empire, many of the same attitudes towards education found in Canada have also flourished in Australia, namely that only a formal education acquired in schools, colleges and universities count as "real learning" (Hewitt, 2000). The official language policy of Australia acknowledges only Standard Australian English and has been 'put forward as a force which unites all Australians (Malcolm, 2013). Unfortunately, this policy ignores or suppresses AusAbE therefore disenfranchising its speakers from avenues of power and progress. Standard Australian English, if put forward as a representation of mainstream, colonial Australian culture and politics, cannot help but stand in opposition to Aboriginal values and worldviews. In this case Aboriginal English speakers "may well be predisposed to disown the education which is being offered to them" (Malcolm, 2013).

Aboriginal epistemology is often completely contrary to a Western-European viewpoint and children are blamed for not adapting to the Western education system and for failing to take advantage of the benefits it supposedly offers them (Harris, 1990). As Doug Hewitt writes (Hewitt 2000, p. 112):

> Thus the Aboriginal worldview accepts that survival depends on cooperation and coexistence with the forces of nature rather than expecting to manipulate and control them. Social relations are also dependent on harmony and coexistence with strict social codes and mores to dictate relationships. People see themselves as part of the social order, with deep respect for the environment, because of their dependence on the land and its re-sources. The affinity with the land produces a reverence with no concept of private ownership. The land is referred to as "mother," and any desire to buy or sell is anathema.

This non-alignment of worldviews can have serious consequences, for example, when non-Aboriginal teachers view students' attempts to help each other succeed as cheating (Harris 1990). Many Aboriginal former students, working with Doug Hewitt to develop a new more inclusive curriculum at the Australian Catholic University, expressed frustration and anger when discussing their school experience, noting the pervasiveness of the deficit explanation for learning failure, once again that the burden for learning and success, and any shortcomings, rest solely on the student. Doug Hewitt (2000, p. 112) concludes "The systematic structures of formal education in Australian schools have repeatedly failed those students who come from indigenous cultures." There are increasing calls to recognize AusAbE as a legitimate code, to teach it and standardized English varieties as equally valid codes that are used in different situations, and to rework curriculums to incorporate Aboriginal viewpoints (Hewitt, 2000). Other researchers have called for greater support for Aboriginal languages in the classroom (Geary 1996) or for two-way schools (Harris 1990). Malcolm, in his 2013 article on the ownership of Australian Aborigine English dialects, discusses the conflicting messages of colonially imposed standards of English, the methods of resistance against them, and the then recent implementation of a two-way bidialectal education system in Western Australia (Malcolm, 2013).

While some papers address the classroom context, what is notable is the sociolinguistics work on the presence of Aboriginal English dialects in courtroom situations. There is an extensive body of research on the topic, mostly by Diana Eades. She first wrote on AusAbE in 1983 and has since written about numerous individual cases involving testimony from Aboriginal witness (1993, 1995, 1996, 2013), and the role of AusAbE in the court system (1997, 2000, 2004, 2013, 2015) She published a handbook for lawyers dealing with AusAbE in 1992 (see below). Michael Cooke addressed AusAbE in the face of cross examination in 1995. Tom Calma discussed Torres Straight Islander English in the justice system in a 2007 publication, and M. Walsh (1994, 1999) and Randles et al. (2013) have also looked at courtroom interactions involving AusAbE. Their work has noted numerous times that features of AusAbE place their speakers at a serious disadvantage in legal proceedings. AusAbE speakers may not only be accustomed to a dialect of English with non-standard morphology and syntax, as they often have a radically different semantic viewpoint. This

places them at a disadvantage in official, institutional settings, and especially in courtrooms, where they may be interviewed or cross-examined by lawyers who have no understanding of how the Aboriginal worldview influences the defendant's or witness's language use. At worst, non-Aboriginal officials may use this to their advantage and the Aboriginal speakers may be manipulated into misunderstanding questions or giving answers that incriminate themselves (Eades, 2000). Despite the fact that Canada's prison system has been referred to as "the new residential schools" (Macdonald, 2016), this is an area of research that seems to have been overlooked in Canada. While Canadian researchers have written about the use of oral testimony by First Nations and other Indigenous speakers in the Canadian courts (Etinson, 2008; McNeil & Roness, 2000), nothing has specifically addressed how FNE dialects and how their usage may affect the outcome of trials.

It has become apparent to researchers that pragmatic differences exist in AusAbE, even when surface structure might seem similar to SE. The ramifications of this in the context of the Australian court have led to the production of a handbook for lawyers in Queensland, titled The Lawyers Handbook (LH). The book, ninety-seven pages long, covers a great deal of material pertaining to Aboriginal use of English, as well as providing an overview of history and culture (Eades, 2004). It has become widely referenced since its publication in 1992, both by legal professionals and by those promoting language awareness in the education system and the public discourse (Eades, 2004). Several court convictions involving Aboriginal peoples have been overturned in the past decades, as linguistic evidence has shown that they were not afforded complete defences and full rights in court, in some cases because their own lawyers were unable to successfully communicate with them (Eades, 2004).

4 Data collection in theory and practice

This chapter addresses the data collection process against the backdrop of critical theoretical issues in the field, highlighting the importance of ethical research methodology when working with Indigenous communities and persons. In response to these issues, I present and discuss two key notions, those of authenticity and the speech community, and propose the concept of story work as a framework for community research. Finally, I describe how the interview process was conducted on location.

I began by contacting the head of the Witset Band's administration in the summer of 2014 to explain the project in detail and request permission to conduct fieldwork on the Witset reserve. After receiving written permission from the Band administration, I sought ethical oversight from the University of Victoria. Since the University of Freiburg's Philology Faculty has no internal ethics oversite committee to handle such linguistic fieldwork, I sought to ensure that I would have supervision and guidance for this project through a Canadian academic institution. Dr. Alexandra D'Arcy and Dr. Sonia Bird agreed to act as temporary supervisors for my fieldwork and assisted me in preparing the Human Research Ethics Board (HREB) application. My submission was reviewed and approved by the HREB with support from the Witset Band Administration, after a single round of revisions. The project was later approved by the Witsuwit'en Language and Culture Association (WLCS), which was established in 2017. I submitted a project description to them and worked to ensure that I met their new guidelines as much as possible, and that any concerns were addressed. The WLCS was dissolved in 2023, and superseded by the Kyah Wiget Education Society, who continue to use the research protocols developed by the WLCS.

Working with Indigenous peoples requires researchers to take special considerations when carrying out every aspect of their preparation and fieldwork. The need for these requirements stems from the long history of abuse and exploitation by not only simply settlers and colonizers, but also "by non-Indigenous scholars, artists, journalists, and colonial government agencies" (Ball & Janyst, 2008, p. 34). Many non-Indigenous researchers have used access to communities to their own advantage, taking recordings, transcripts and artifacts away with them at the end of their project, leaving the community behind with nothing to show for all their contributions and in the worse cases, outcomes that were misguided and harmful (Castellano, 2004). Anthropologists and linguists of earlier times have become infamous for hoarding their data and contacts and misrepresenting the people who worked with them for personal gain, the previously mentioned Father Morice being a prime example. Indigenous communities and persons have every justification to be suspicious of researchers and their agendas and every right to demand transparency and the sharing of any data and results.

As a result of increased accountability, methodology paradigms have shifted dramatically in the last decades. Researchers have been encouraged to change their viewpoint from one of studying "subjects" or "informants" to that of working with "participants." Researchers are "reframing" Western research ethics to include the Indigenous perspective (Castellano, 2004). This shift is especially radical in that it recognizes the merits of Elders, whose credentials, while recognizable in their own societies, are often invisible to those coming from a formal academic background (Castellano, 2004). While there is no one framework that can be applied universally to research, several themes are recurrent in the literature. Generally, "there is a super-ordinate goal of advancing self-determination, control, and benefit on the parts of Indigenous individuals and communities that participate in research" (Ball & Janyst, 2008, p. 34). Research projects involving Indigenous people should be inclusive of their viewpoints and culture and offer tangible benefits for the community. Research methodologies need to account for Indigenous culture and language use, and for the issues of each individual Indigenous community.

Both Indigenous scholars and organizations and Canadian government and university bodies have presented articles and guidelines for researchers, such as the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples Ethical Guidelines for Research (1993), the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), the Government of Canada's Panel on Research Ethics or Guidelines or the Human Research Ethics Board (HREB) at the University of Victoria. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples states that interactions between non-Aboriginal and Aboriginals be based on Recognition, Respect, Sharing and Responsibility (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996). These tenets must also be applied to research and projects, and a spirit of cooperation must be developed, itself very dependant on the attitudes of researchers and their willingness to share agency with their participants. A "community participation model of research and teaching" is discussed in a 2010 publication concerning a project in Inuit Canada (Iwama, et al., 2009). Marlene Castello, who served as a Co-Director of Research for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People, recommends following principles that safeguard Indigenous rights to participate and partner in research; that they must endorse this research, that the research must protect their interests, and that they maintain control of the materials used in research (Castellano, 2004). The right of Indigenous People to generate and disseminate knowledge for and about themselves must be affirmed (Castellano, 2004). HREB guidelines emphasize the clarification of project parameters and consent from project participants. At the time of application, I was recommended to seek verbal consent, as some older participants might find writing difficult or stressful. The HREB provides a separate document for researchers wishing to work with Indigenous communities. It highlights specific areas of concern and emphasizes collaborations and the protection of identities and cultural properties.

The now defunct Witsuwit'en Language and Culture Association also recently developed their own guidelines in 2017. The WLCS documents emphasised the protection of informants, direct consultation, and collaboration between the WLCS and the Witsuwit'en Hereditary Chiefs and the researcher regarding developing any project and the use of the data. The Witsuwit'en declares ownership of their culture and research materials, and their right to exercise control over its publication and dissemination. I have done my best to accommodate the new guidelines but obviously could not retroactively change the actual fieldwork.

4.1 Storywork, authenticity and oral data

Increasingly, the researchers must question one of the central tenets to sociolinguistic research, the concept of "authenticity." What makes "authentic" speech? How can researchers, and sociolinguists especially, locate and delineate authentic speech communities, identify authentic speakers and conduct interviews that reflect this concept? Both quantitative and qualitative data results are very dependent on this idea that the speech being analyzed it inherently authentic, i.e. legitimate and trustworthy. Sociolinguistics is a field that addresses human behavior and attitudes, treating them as heavily weighted factors in any analysis. "What is meant by real language … has remained for the most part remarkably consistent: real language- authentic language- is language produced in authentic contexts by authentic speakers" (Bucholtz, 2003, p. 394). Authenticity is concerned with the origin of things; an object or speech act is judged as genuine and real in relation to who created it. In this sense, authenticity is always relational (Lacoste, et al., n.d.), always suspended in a web of assumptions and intent. It is through detangling this web that we can understand and even restructure the meaning of authenticity. As Bucholtz further notes, the concept itself, despite being one of the underpinnings of sociolinguistics, is itself rarely discussed (Bucholtz, 2003, p. 398).

Early research in the field of anthropology and linguistics disavowed modernity and industrial civilizations as corrupt and sought out the untouched and primitive to find the authentic. Authenticity was, by definition, exotic in relation to Europeans or isolated from urban centres, in non-industrial, and non-educated populations and heavily connect to Romanticism (Bucholtz, 2003). It is expressed as "a bond to the past" (Bucholtz, 2003, p. 399), a way for the researcher to gaze back to earlier, more primitive, but also more spiritual and honest times. It precipitated the concept of "salvage anthropology" which attempted to rescue and reconstruct disappearing or changing cultures. Salvage anthropology positioned language shift as part of a shift away from an authentic past (Bucholtz, 2003). This definition of authenticity is today associated with racist, imperialist Eurocentric ideologies. It creates a trap that limits a researcher's thinking and perspective when it comes to field work and resources, placing peoples and cultures in a bubble, infantilizing them as pure, but primitive, innocent and unlearned. This concept of total linguistic isolationism, supposing pure speaker communities without monolingualism, or untroubled by the effects of

language contact, is extremely problematic for linguists, even when separated from the racist overtones of early work. One must be wary that the trap of authenticity does not lead researchers to focus on an idealized speaker community, that at best, is long gone and at worst, never really existed.

A similar problem is found in early dialectology. Early dialectologists were often very concerned with describing the pure form of a dialect, and this led to a focus on a certain kind of speaker, the NORM (Milroy & Gordon, 2003). This focus on the conservative, aged, rural, male speakers as the most authentic guardians of dialects led to the neglect of younger and female speakers, as well as the disregard for actual language change over time. Dialectologists and sociolinguists have often also assumed that younger speakers are unworthy of study, as they were presumed to be too strongly influenced by the standard varieties through access to media although these assumptions have been challenged and proven untrue (Milroy & Gordon, 2003).

Another critical issue facing researchers engaged with collecting primary data is the "observer's paradox", by sitting down and conducting an interview, we cause the person we are interviewing to modify their speech. Sociolinguistics is defined by its focus on language that is produced by speakers (Milroy & Gordon, 2003) and speakers are always affected by who they are engaged in discourse with. This problem is acute when it comes to research in First Nations communities. Due to the unequal power balance between Indigenous people and Euro-Canadian settlers in Canada, especially Euro-Canadians, one must assume that any researcher will be treated with a measure of caution and skepticism.

The issues are, in my opinion, best addressed when the interviewer acknowledges their presence as a factor in the interview and addresses it head on. Researchers can realize their role as instigators and participants in the research. This connects to a growing view of authenticity as something not concrete, but plastic and malleable. Linguistic research always requires us to work one step removed from reality, to understand the system (Thomason, 1997, p. 97). The linguistic interview as something that is part of a process of negotiation, a context for the creation of an authentic text. It places the definition of what constitutes authenticity in the hands of the community. Instead of the researcher judging, from an outside perspective, what constitutes authentic data, they may hand the reins to community members may negotiate and offer their own views on authenticity. While this seemingly does not to fit with ideals of scientific objectivity, it does offer a solution to the question of defining authenticity within the context of something that is as variable and changing as a contemporary speech community.

To that end, I chose to focus on story telling as the primary means of gathering and recording material. The topics of the interviews included stories about of participants' lives and the area's history, including any traditional stories that the participants had heard from their own parents or grandparents. I focused on *oral*

history, here following a definition provided by Riessler and Wilber in their 2017 publication *Oral History Meets Linguistics*; an oral speech genre in which people relate their accounts of historical events, that they have themselves witnessed and participated in. Stories from participants' perspectives are essential to this kind of fieldwork, as they validate individual and community experiences and present vital insights into speaker community history (Riessler, 2017; Kinsey, 2017). They are essential as first-hand witnesses and primary sources. Traditional storytelling practices are at the heart of many Indigenous communities and are important modes of transmitting history and culture from one generation to the next (Atleo & Fitznor, 2010). This methodology recognizes that *cin k'ikh* (Witsuwit'en oral history and practice) are vital to teaching and transmitting cultural values, beliefs, and language itself. Additionally, the use of storytelling in interviews may be less stressful for participants as the stories are familiar territory, both literally in in their geography and metaphorically in their content.

4.2 Class and Indigenous people in Canada

This study, while using age, gender and residency in the analysis, will not use social class as a category. Many sociolinguistic studies note social class as an important factor, however, the factors used to determine class status include aspects which are problematic when the research includes First Nations participants. Labov (1972), Chambers (1995) and Eckert (1986, 2000) and many others have noted the importance of the blue-collar vs. white-collar distinction, which is still salient to many populations. Class distinctions continue to play a large role in language variation, especially in industrialized countries (Milroy & Gordon, 2003). Often research has rested on assumptions of nation-state based, Eurocentric homogeneity and monolingualism and did not account for the subordinated and marginalized peoples in colonial societies and power structures (Morgan, 2003). First Nations communities do not easily fall into the classifications derived from engagement with a capitalist, wage-based economy especially for populations living on-reserve. There are a number of key differences, including the fact that many reserve locations are the result of land allocations from Indian agents. The Indian Act has historically worked to prevent any independent economic base from being founded on reserves, both through intentional isolation of some communities and direct legislation against business ownership by Indigenous peoples (Sinclair, 2015). In the long term, this isolation has had serious ramifications. Since Canada lacks the extensive infrastructure of public service passenger trains, and bus connections to small communities may be infrequent or non-existent many First Nations communities with little or no private vehicle ownership may face extraordinary difficulties when it comes to accessing government or medical services, and trips to larger grocery stores, supermarkets and shopping centres maybe be very infrequent or made communally. Many Indigenous people must migrate to urban centres to look for work, although the developing oil and gas industry has recently helped some reserves increase employment and income drastically.

Legislation prevented First Nations people from attending university unless they gave up their Indian Status, and thus their right to live with their family and participate in traditional lifestyles, preventing and stagnating participation in the wage economy and preventing the upward mobility of Indigenous people in Canadian society (Sinclair, 2015, p. 69). The goal was to create an underclass, based on race, to be suppressed and assimilated. Although current trends see First Nations people catching up to the rest of Canada in education and employment, the fact remains they face a huge deficit in many areas.

Many First Nations people still support themselves by living off the land, especially by hunting and fishing. Hugh Brody, writing about his time with the Beaver in northern B.C., calculates that the men are such skilled hunters as to provide anywhere from one to more than two pounds of meat for every person on three reserves, per day (Brody, 1981, p. 203). This is in addition to a domestic economy that includes trapping and the sales of handicrafts (Brody, 1981, pp. 201-202). Brody notes that it is very difficult to calculate the market dollar value of economies like this, since bush meat for personal use has no market value (Brody, 1981, p. 202). The Witsuwit'en similarly rely heavily on spring salmon runs in addition to hunting deer, moose, bear and beaver. They also trap furs for personal use and the fur industry and sell salmon, handicrafts and other artworks to locals and tourists. Then their community relies on the balhat feast system as a method of distributing food and other resources throughout the band. Large amounts of cash can be circulated through the community this way, as debts are frequently paid at feasts. Material goods and food are also distributed. The distribution of food is very important to Elders, many of whom, like seniors everywhere, must deal with low incomes and low mobility. Elders who can not attend a feast retain their seat and the food and gifts are delivered to them later by a family member. By attending the balhats, Elders help to oversee and validate the "it'ën," the transactions and business conducted there (Morin, 2011, p. 20). Their presence ensures that Witsuwit'en tradition is carried on. The balhats function through principles of communal reciprocity, based on not on concrete hourly wages, but on intangible cultural knowledge and authority. To sum, much of the Witsuwit'en economy cannot be fit into traditional sociolinguist classifications based on a capitalist, wage-earing, society.

4.3 Fieldwork

My initial goal when beginning fieldwork was to locate and interview thirty individuals who could serve as suitable representatives of locally centered speech in Witset. Thirty was a number selected as a manageable number within the time frame of six to eight weeks, and a suitable representative sample, as it would represent one percent of the total Witset Band population. The goal was to find fifteen men and fifteen women ranging from ages eighteen and up. I hoped to interview ten Elders, ten "middle-aged" participants, between ages fifty-five and thirty and another ten participants under the age of thirty. This would allow me to identify any sociolinguistic variables that were age or gender dependent and prevent a

bias for either male of female speech. The primary criteria for a participant was that they had band membership, having ideally born in the area or on a reserve, and or lived here for most of their lives. Ethnicity was a factor for participation, in the sense of who self-identified Witsuwit'en. Whether a potential participant spoke Witsuwit'en or not was not a factor as this project focuses on a variety of English. I had roughly two months to complete the interviews, which occurred after the main salmon harvest, but before the start of the hunting season.

Although I have endeavored to avoid bias in my sampling, no participants are under the age of twenty-five, and most of the participants are women. It proved very difficult to recruit men, who often were working or participating in the job training seminars that were being run while I was visiting. Men were also more likely to refuse to give an interview when asked. The people who were most willing and had the time to speak with me were often Elders and much of the recruitment from person to person went through female relations.

After arriving in the area, I was introduced to the person who would be assisting me, Wanda Nikal. Wanda and I met before the start of the interviews to discuss how and where the interviews could be conducted. The HREB had asked me to observe the interviews from a separate room, while a local conducted the interview, but this was simply not possible on the reserve, given the facilities available. Instead, we used Wanda's office as the primary interview room and met people in the Health Center and their homes, as they were available. Wanda was the primary interviewer and was present at all but one of the interviews. She introduced me to the residents of the reserve, took me to people's homes on for other interviews and helped me to find participants. Given the recommendations in the literature on research practices in Indigenous communities, and the advice of the HREB, I elected to seek oral consent. Before each interview, I explained my project and its goals, and what would be required from each participant. Participants were told they could ask to pause or stop the interview at anytime and that their identities would be protected. If they decided to withdraw consent during the interview, the recorded material would be immediately deleted. After giving oral consent, participants were given a copy of the consent form, signed and dated by me. Then the recorder was started. I did not offer cash compensation for participants, instead cookies and coffee were offered for consumption after the recording sessions. The participant assisted me in filling out an information form, Wanda then started with a warm-up. The first set of questions was designed to elicit similar responses in all participants and trigger certain features, for example, "Can you name the four directions?" would elicit the answer "North, south, east, west." The last two words contain the ideal phonetic environments for consonant cluster reduction. This strategy is similar to the reading list presented in traditional sociolinguistics methodology and pioneered by William Labov (1972) but in this case, there was no reading list provided. There was an answer sheet made available to read so participants would not

feel too pressured, but it was not mandatory. The questions primarily focused on local knowledge about local businesses, geography and wildlife. Participants were also free to speak as much as they wanted in answering these questions and free to go off-topic, for example, when "What animals live around here?" resulted in a short discussion about caribou returning to the area. Afterwards, the main interview started, with participants being asked to tell us about themselves, their lives and if they knew any good stories about the area. Although Wanda was the main interviewer, I also asked questions occasionally about specific points. As the interviews progressed, we adapted our method according to what was proving most successful for us and for the interviewees.

Snowball sampling was used to great effect in this study. This is a method of recruitment that has been used very successfully by many researchers (Milroy & Gordon, 2003). This technique, also known as network sampling, is very suitable to working in smaller, more tightly knit communities with close social networks. All participants were asked if they had any friends who would be interested in giving an interview, some were approached in the Multiplex or invited during the community events that I attended. Anyone who said "No" was not asked again. Overall, I endeavored to create an environment where participants would be comfortable with the interview process, bearing in mind that many of the potential interviewees were residential school survivors or may have had other negative experiences with schools and circumstances where they may have been under pressure to provide "correct" answers.

A total of thirty-six participants were interviewed, in thirty-five interviews. The age range was twenty-five to eighty-one years of age. Due to circumstances on the reserve that included the re-opening of the local sawmill, and job training seminars being offered for the construction of a new community health centre, only eleven men were interviewed. Some participants were interviewed more than once, and one interview was a group at an Elder's tea. Participants exhibited a range of fluency in English and Witsuwit'en. Almost all were born on the reserve or in the Smithers hospital and had lived on or close to the reserve all their lives. All the people I interviewed had band membership. In all thirty hours of material was collected.

Seven participants were removed from the data analysis portion of the study. In all cases, the participants had individual circumstances that prevented them from being considered for the feature analysis. The most common reason was that the participant did not grow up on the reserve or even close by. All participants except one had lived at least ten years in Witset, but some had childhoods elsewhere. Another reason was a very low non-standard feature token count which could indicate either a strong preference for a more general Canadian dialect or very carefully guarded speech. There was always more than one reason to discount a participant from the data analysis, some of these reasons can not be disclosed to protect their anonymity. Altogether, three men and four women were removed from the empirical portion of the study, as they could not reliably be considered speakers of the local FNE variety. Despite their removal from the

feature analysis, the testimony of these seven individuals is still counted when discussing the history of the community's language use and current issues. Participants were also asked to reflect on their own history of language use. Wanda, aged forty-four at the time, acted as participant No. 1 in a test interview, and although she is quoted in the examples, her interview and comments were not used for the statistical part of the linguistic data analysis. The following list of pseudonyms (Table 12) was checked to try to ensure there was no overlap with the names of people living on the reserve. Any such occurrence is entirely coincidental. There is, of course, a long and uncomfortable history of assigning settler names to Indigenous people but I would be more uncomfortable using numbers or even initials, since I do not want to come across as dehumanizing the participants. Anonymization is also complicated given the small size of the community and the recruitment of participants through family relations. Ultimately, I have chosen the lesser sin and gone with pseudonyms.

Table 12: Interview participant list with pseudonyms

Name	**Gender**	**Age**	**Interview time**	**Included in linguistic data analysis**
Aurora	F	22	40:41	No
Steve	F	22	24:30	No
Amelia	F	25	28:41	No
Amy	F	27	27:29	Yes
Sylvia	F	29	42:45	No
Mona	F	29	1:12:04	Yes
Anna	F	35	32:53	Yes
Mina	F	35	50:36	Yes
Elaine	F	38	40:54	Yes
Wendy	F	38	40:54	Yes
Tessa	F	40	57:21	No- Group interview No. 37
Ellen	F	43	27.26	Yes
Charlie	M	45	1:09:44	Yes
Hunter	M	45	37:48	Yes
Tracey	F	46	30:23	Yes
Carl	M	47	34:29	No
Ivan	M	47	56:21	Yes
Lisa	F	50	57:21	Yes- Group interview No. 37
Jody	F	53	30:12	Yes

Hanna	F	56	48:07	Yes
Edna	F	57	57:21	Yes- Group interview No. 37
Elliot	M	57	41:41	Yes
Todd	M	62	38:08	Yes
Olivia	F	63	1:39:31	Yes
Lars	M	63	21:30	No
Cora	F	64	1:18:28	Yes
Alexia	F	64	48:10	Yes
Helga	F	64	57:21	Yes-Group interview No. 37
Laura	F	65	30:28	Yes
Tim	M	65	90:00	Yes
Jenny	F	67	1:08:38	Yes
Bobby	F	67	32:52	Yes
Sally	F	68	47:44	Yes
Issac	M	71	47:49	Yes
Barbara	F	76	30:33	Yes
Holly	F	81	45:48	Yes

4.4 Transcription and Data Analysis

The transcriptions of the recordings attempt to retain the quality of the spoken text and allow for readability in longer quotes. All participants have been given a pseudonym and other names mentioned in the text are anonymized, indicated with an asterisk. Examples are numbered chronologically with the chapter number, individual example number, followed by the participant's name. Pauses in speech are indicated by a comma. I have elected to use periods sparingly, only at definitive ends of speech segments with longer pauses or at the end of example clauses. The vernacular nature of the text is maintained by using apostrophes for reduced forms and grammaticalized forms such as *wanna*, *gonna, hafta* and *woulda*. I also include discourse markers and any ejectives. Although there is some overlap (see below) especially regarding verbs, I have indicated notable word final consonant and nasal reductions with apostrophes. Unintelligible speech is marked with ellipsis in parenthesis. A hyphen indicated when a speaker stopped mid-word. Witsuwit'en text is italicized. As the following text sample demonstrates, many of the transcriptions involve stories, presented as complete sections of discourse:

(74) Barbara.76: You hafta took it real easy when you they said when they hunt the link' in the trap they hafta take it easy and put the snare round the neck one time, I got trap I had a trap and then I had an' when I was checkin' my trap and here the link' was sittin' in there an I was makin' real noisy comin' up he had the little finger in there sitting there and then I scared him then he move and then take off.

The speaker repeatedly pronounced *lynx* as [lɪŋk], and I have used an apostrophe to indicate the reduction of the phoneme in word final position. Overall, I have tried to maintain the vernacular, personal nature of the material and the sense of oral storytelling. When discussing phonology, lexical items and stress in more detail, the IPA transcriptions are provided. Otherwise, I use standard orthography, and note changes in pronunciation with an appropriate phonetic transcription symbol. The data collected allows for a combined qualitative and quantitative analysis. The number of tokens collected allows for a broad statistical analysis of a few features. I have presented here many of the participants personal experiences but have not repeated local gossip or personal tragedies, unless it specifically related to the research topic, such as the suppression of Witsuwit'en in schools.

Conducting fieldwork like this required addressing many issues that were site and community specific and required adaptation throughout the research period. My primary goal was to make sure my participants were comfortable, both to follow the ethical guidelines and to allow them to speak as freely as possible. I have attempted to convey an accurate account of my fieldwork, and certainly acknowledge that with experience and the time to reflect on it, there are some things I would plan differently. Ultimately, I worked to adapt to the Witsuwit'en culture and position myself in each interview as someone who was there to listen and learn.

5 A history of language shift in the Widzin Kwah

This chapter focuses on reconstructing the circumstances in which Witsuwit'en English developed, documenting the changing language ecology of the Witsuwit'en people and reconstructing, as much as possible, the timeline of language contact for the Witsuwit'en over the last two hundred years up until the present. This is history is based on testimony from the interviews and historical documentation. While section 2.5 gave a summary of the history of Witsuwit'en contact with Europeans, this chapter looks more closely at how this contact has affected linguistic environment and language use. The idea of language ecology (Mufwene, 2001) treats both Witsuwit'en and English as competing organisms in an ecosystem. Changes to the ecosystem have allowed the non-autochthonous language, English, to flourish, while these same changes proved detrimental to the vitality of Witsuwit'en. English has been adapted to its new surroundings and has overtaken the linguistic domains of Witsuwit'en. Finally, I discuss how the history of language contact fits, or does not, with theories as to how FNEs develop.

5.1 British Columbia: Trade networks and wider language contact

British Columbia, comprising its forested interior and the west oceanic coast, is one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse landscapes in North America. The region is home to as many as 200 individual First Nations groups speaking thirty languages and their diverse dialects, including several language isolates. Its inhabitants were among the earliest humans to settle on the continent, moving from the Arctic regions down along the coastline, with some sites showing continuous human habitation for thousands of years (INAC 2016). The First Nations peoples living there developed a varied and rich material culture that was itself a reflection of complex systems of survival knowledge and worldviews and was matched by an equally complex linguistic landscape. Language contact between different groups has always been a reality and trade networks and pidgins flourished long before the British began trading along the coast and the French began to penetrate from the east.

The widespread trade network moved goods like coastal otter pelts and *oolichan* (candle fish) from the coast inland, where they were traded for beaver pelts, moose hides, and copper. As European ships began to work their way along the coast, the network also carried iron tools and wool blankets through the trade corridors of the cedar forests. All this led to the development of *Chinook Jargon*, the trade jargon that flourished in the 1800s and 1900s along the Coastal interior (Holton, 2004; Bakker & Papen, 2008). It was originally based on Nuu-chah-nulth words, as they were the primary coastal traders in the network. Further input came from the Salishian languages, arrival of British traders on the coast, and contact with the French of the interior. The jargon eventually became a full-fledged pidgin and was well enough established and widely enough used to have a dictionary published in 1891. Franz Boas had extensive contact with it, learning it in 1885 from Bella Coola speakers, and using it with "speakers of Tillamook, Clatsop, Chinook

proper, Lower Chehalis, Songish, Kwakiult, Bella Bella, Tsimshian, Haida" (Boas 1933, in Contact Languages 2009, p. 384). It was widely used by traders and prospectors entering the region, including the Chinese (Lang, 2008).

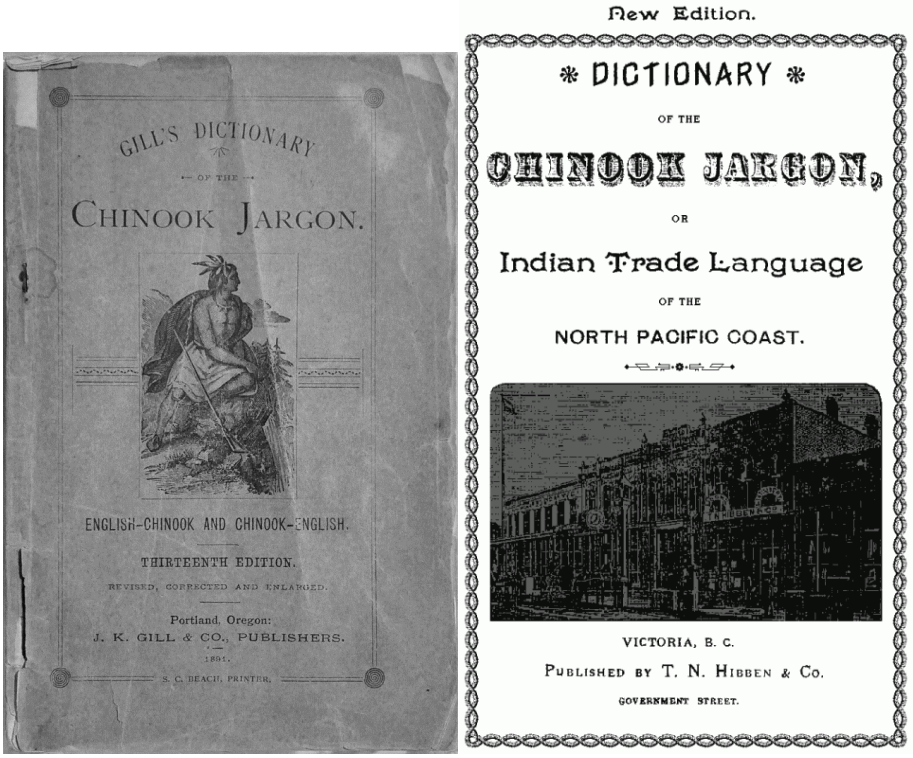

Figure 11: Covers of dictionaries published for Chinook Jargon, in 1889 and 1891 (Sources: Project Gutenburg and The Canadian Encyclopedia)

Chinook Jargon seems to have had a great deal of variation by the 1880s as Franz Boas compares the attestations in a publication to the then contemporary variety, he had learned first hand from its native speakers, the Bella Coola (Haida) and other First Nations peoples along the West Coast (Boas, Orginally in Language, 92:2 (1933), 208-213). Chinook Jargon was indeed a very mixed code, using terms that were otherwise extinct in the "northern dialects" of British Columbian First Nations. Many terms from Chinook Jargon have been absorbed into Canadian English (Anon., 1889; Mabel, 1891) including:

chuck: from Nootka, meaning water, *the salt chuck*, "the ocean"

stick: English, meaning *trees*, still used in B.C. to mean *forest*

wawa: from Nootka, meaning *word, to speak, to discuss, language,* used in *Chinook Wawa*.

Many lakes in British Columbia also derive their names from Chinook Jargon. Examples in the Widzin Kyah watershed include Lake Tyee, which follows the French naming pattern with *tyee*, meaning "chief" as the second part of the name. Contact was apparently frequent enough for Witsuwit'en to absorb a considerable number of loans, including regional borrowings that filtered through from Chinook Jargon and other Athabaskan languages (Hargus, 2007). However, Chinook Jargon was not itself widely known in the Witsuwit'en territories, to the extent that the French priests who spoke it found it useless (Morin, 2011, p. 238). The heyday of Chinook Jargon was the 1850s, after which it suffered a sudden decline. The sudden influx of white English speakers into the language's "heartland" of southern B.C. helped to doom it (Lang, 2008). Residential schools discouraged its use, at the same time a series of epidemics began in British Columbia that would substantially reduce the Indigenous population. Right in the very moment when the jargon was being cemented as a mother tongue, with a population of trappers and Indigenous wives ready to pass it on to the next generation as a creole, almost all of its speaker population was annihilated by smallpox outbreaks (Lang, 2008).

The Witsuwit'en travelled within a network of northern trading roots. Goods made their way through smaller community networks, as opposed to the coastline, where larger distances could be traversed by ocean-going canoes. Witsuwit'en usually travelled along the "grease trails" to trade at Gitanmaxx, where a large trade house accommodated traders from various communities (Morin, 2011, p. 66). Further south, they travelled the Copper River and Kitamaat trail to meet the Haisla people at Kitamaat. The Nuxalk-Carrier trail led down as far as Nuxalkmc/ Bella-Coola territory. The four main oolichan harvesting sites at Ginggolx/Laxgalts'ap, Spaksuut, Kitamaat and Kemaninuxw were the most widely visited.[2]

The Witsuwit'en had no direct access to European wares until the establishment of fur forts close to their territories. Trade was conducted with other Indigenous groups in the vicinity, like the Gitxsan. The Gitxsan handled most of the trade at Gitanmaxx, and trade relationships often revolved around clans and family connections (Morin, 2011, p. 67). The Witsuwit'en did not go far enough south to trade directly with Europeans. Father Morice, writing about contact between D.W. Harmon, an American from Vermont and an officer of the North-West Company, and the "Babine" (Witsuwit'en) in the winter of 1812 states (1904, p. 92):

> The day following we proceeded on our route, and during our progress we saw four more of their villages.... They showed us guns, cloth, axes, blankets, iron pots, etc., which they obtained from their neighbors, the Atenâs, who purchase them directly of the white people.

[2] To get an idea of the distance involved, today a car trip from Witset to Kitamaat would be on 227 km of road and take around 2.5 hours in good driving conditions.

This meeting was facilitated with the help of "Carrier" or Dakehl interpreters. Potlatches were used to settle these conflicts, as family names and crests were transferred as a type of social currency, while transactions themselves were highly public events (Morin, 2011). These close trade relationships did not necessitate the usage of a jargon, since they were well established, long running and made with groups who were perpetual neighbours and considered as family (Morin, 2011, p. 67). These circumstances were more likely to foster symmetrical bilingualism. I have developed the following diagram to show the two patterns.

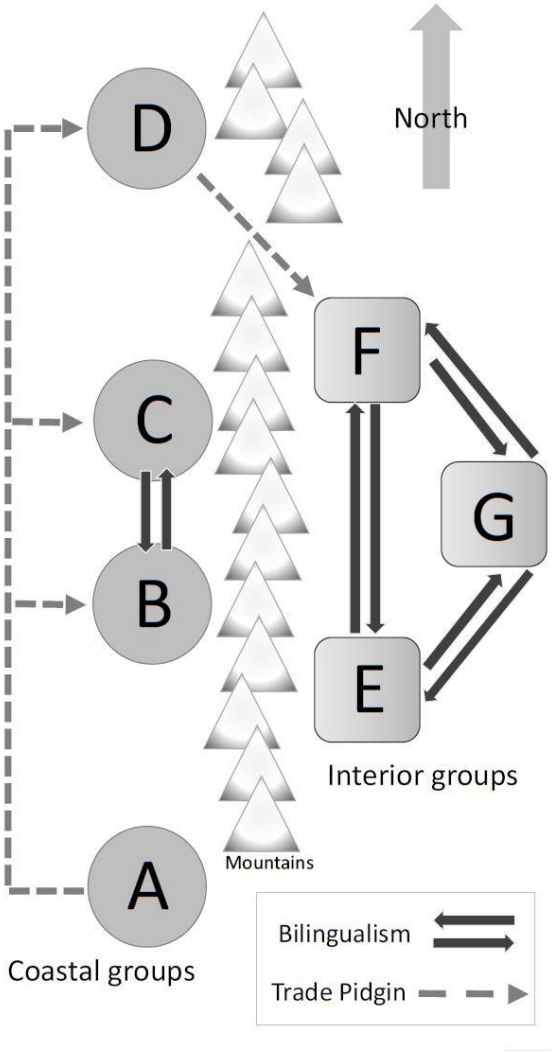

Figure 12: Two types of trade and language relationships in northern British Columbia

This network, albeit simplified, shows the context in which trade pidgins like Chinook Jargon and bilingual relationships developed. Coastal First Nations groups travelled by cedarwood canoe along the coast and gradually built up a pidgin as they had contact between multiple language groups. Groups in the interior, separated from the coast by distance and mountainous terrain, were more likely to develop close-knit

bilingual relationships over time, or become fluent in multiple dialects. They had less frequent contact with coastal groups, as traders had to seasonally traverse small mountain paths on foot or work their way inland up rivers to trade. Although pidgins could potentially develop anywhere, the historical evidence indicates that the second scenario applied to the Witsuwit'en. The arrival of Europeans into the northern region, hungering for furs and offering highly desirable items such as wool blankets, steel knives, iron pots and guns in return, overrode existing patterns and began to destabilize the existing trade relationships.

5.2 Initial contact with the fur trade and the Hudson's Bay Company

The initial arrival of European fur traders and missionaries into the watershed was not very disruptive. Both groups had very different goals in mind and while they sometimes worked together, they ultimately wanted different things from First Nations peoples. The location of the Witsuwit'en, situated in the geography of the northern interior, well away from the coast and on the western side of the formidable Rocky Mountains, protected them for some time from having to deal with sudden waves of European settlement. Further insulation was found in the Witsuwit'en semi-nomadic, seasonally based lifestyle that saw them spend winters living in small family groups and trapping in their territories in the mountains.

In the early 1800s, fur forts gradually began to appear in northern British Columbia. Further north of the Witsuwit'en, in Dakehl territory, Fort St. James was established in 1806 and became the primary trading fort for the region (Canada's Historic Places, 2007). The next station was Fort Kilmaurs,[3] opened in 1822 on Nedut'en Lake (Babine Lake/Fort Babine), Fort Connelly in 1826 followed soon after at Bear Lake. Another fort was built at Hazelton in 1866. (See map 5.6) Father Morice's book on local history describes the reasons for various fort sites (Morice, 1905 p. 208):

> It is at the base of these two projections, a little to the north of the fifty-fifth degree of latitude, that the Company first established its fort. But this was far from the salmon fishery, which was situated on the outlet of the lake, about thirty-five miles farther north; and Babine Lake was then, with Fort St. James and Alexandria, the main source of salmon supplies for the various posts of the district. So far as 1836 we see Fort Kilmars, as the establishment on the northern lake was then called, contributing as many as twenty-thousand pieces towards the sustenance of the entire personnel.

The HBC wanted to cut out the Tsimshian, who dominated the local trade routes from the coast and trade directly with Nedut'en, Gitxsan, and Witsuwit'en (Morin, 2011, p. 210). The following passage from the letters of the Chief Commissioner of Land and Works in 1866 shows the eagerness for furs (Quoted in Kruisselbrink, 2012, p. 26):

[3] Here spelled as Fort Kilmaurs, and in other sources as Kilamurs. The original name was Wit'at, or Wit'ane Keh, meaning 'place of making dried fish.'

> At present, the Indians of at Metlahkatlah and Fort Simpson have a monopoly of the fur trade with these interior tribes and judging by the rates allowed for marten, it must be a most profitable business.

Another passage in Father Morice's text more clearly illustrates the interference Europeans caused by trying to secure a supply of furs (Morice, 1904, p. 244):

> As an augmentation to Manson's cares, a new post, which was destined to be short-lived, was established at that time near one of the sources of the Blackwater River, on a small lake called Lhuz'kœz. This was intended for the benefit of both Carriers and Chilcotins, and its principal object was to prevent those Indians from disposing of their pelts in favor of the free-traders on the Coast.

Trade relationships were slow to develop. Gift giving was an important part of starting trade negotiations, and the HBC had to trade both on European market prices and local values (Morin, 2011, p. 210). It took time for the HBC to deal directly and regularly with the Witsuwit'en, although they eventually became established enough to be relied upon for mediation between the Witsuwit'en chiefs and the colonial government. Access to these forts altered the economic and family structure of the clans, as successful trappers were able to climb socially and gain prestige and rank. New wealth was soon outweighed by the fact that they were trapping to pay their debts to the HBC (Morin, 2011, p. 211), and anchored to the colonial wage economy. The fur trade was so important, even in the 20th century, when in the 1920s fur prices rose, that whole families were employed in the activity:

> (75) Barbara.76: I used to go trappin' with my mom dad and little brother and winter time we walk long ways how many miles we walk in the snow shoes, we set trap, my mum set trap, my dad set trap, ahead one I set a trap to, settin' trap and then on the way back on the way back I I said this is where I set a trap and there was a lynx in it, I was trying to own that lynx that lynx, it was mine, my dad said uh this is my trap.

Companies ran with a strict hierarchy, with English, Scottish and Irish managers at the top, and a massive workforce of often-indentured French-Canadians at the bottom (Podruchny, 2006). It was these French-Canadian *voyageurs*, most of them born in the parishes around Montreal and Trois Riviéres (Podruchny, 2006), who did the leg work of the company. They possessed the necessary survival skills, learning local customs and languages and often intermarrying with local Indigenous people to ensure trapping rights and forge connections (Podruchny, 2006).

With the British HBC's strategy of building strings of forts and waiting for locals to come to them, English speakers remained concentrated and isolated from one another in distant outposts, which further forced

them to learn French or local languages so as to communicate with clients and employees (Delisle, 2017). This means that any contact the Witsuwit'en had at a fur fort was more likely to be in French, or an Indigenous language they knew form prior trade relationships. Morin describes one meeting in 1823, only a year after the opening of the closest fort to the Witsuwit'en, Fort Kilmaurs (Morin 2011, p.210). This recounting of the first direct trade negotiation mentions Tsek'ene (Sekani) guides and an interpreter named Baptiste. It seems likely the last man was Métis, and he is believed to have stayed in the region and had children there. Father Morice mentions him in his text (1904, p. 254):

> He was the first white man—even half-breeds are whites to the natives—to take a Carrier girl to wife, which he did in January, 1811. But that union was not to last, as he soon after married Nancy, J. McDougall's daughter, by whom he subsequently had a host of children. Thenceforth he became indispensable to the traders who succeeded one another in the charge of New Caledonia, not only on account of his familiarity with the language of the aborigines, but especially owing to the wonderful ascendency he had acquired over the latter through his indomitable fearlessness and his boldness, which at times verged on rashness.

Traders living at fur forts often found wives from surrounding Indigenous communities, and likely did so in this case. If Baptiste was Métis, as his name suggests, then he would have used French, or a local language. It was not uncommon for fur traders to abandon their local wives and any resulting children when contracts ended. Morice mentions another interpreter in resolving a dispute with some aggrieved Dakelh in Quesnel (Morice 1904, p. 269):

> "Where is Tlel?" cried out McLean through his interpreter, Jean-Marie Boucher, as he rushed in.

There is a third Métis mentioned by name, Alexis Bélanger. He was described as "The son of a French-Canadian adventurer by a Cree woman" by Morice (1904, p. 260):

> An orphan without friends, he entered the Hudson's Bay Company's service at the early age of thirteen (he had been born in 1816), and in due course of time he was sent to the headquarters of the New Caledonia District. He must have had good aptitudes for languages, since, in a relatively short time, he picked up the Carrier dialect sufficiently well to act as interpreter at Babine, where we first see him stationed with a salary of fifteen pounds a year.

The fur forts were also very reliant on local First Nations groups for supplies, constantly leaving the fort to trade with them. Fish, salmon in particular, was extremely important, as the earlier passage and the next note. In quoting another officer, Morice writes (Morice 1902, p. 212):

In your dealings with the Indians be calm and patient, particularly with those of the end of the lake. Keep on good terms with the two chiefs Kishpin and Tanewill. As the majority of your Indians are in the habit of trading their furs with the Fallen Rock Indians, and as we are dependent on them for salmon every fall, it would be perhaps as well to keep them under in their demands, and so the less debts you advance the better... You will have in mind that the Indians I have settled with are, on no account whatever, to have more debts until next fall, and then provided only they have paid what they have received.

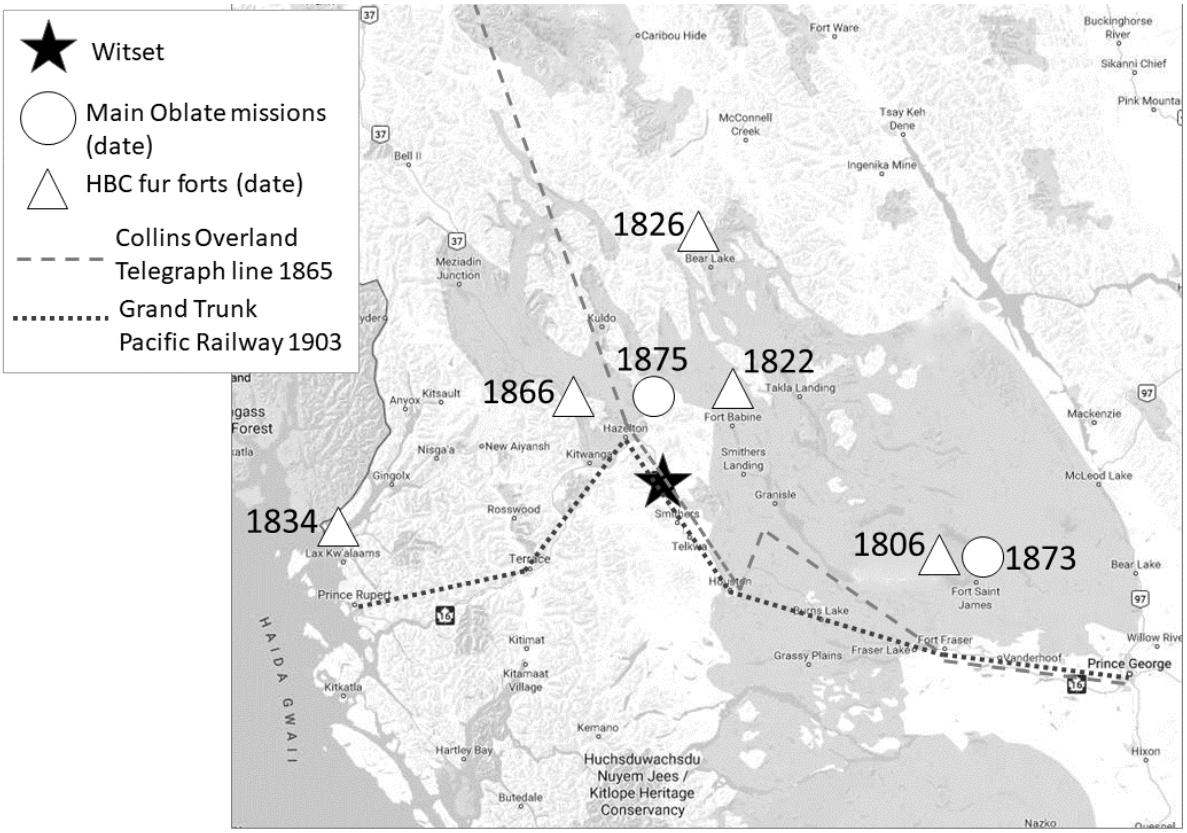

Figure 13: Fur fort and mission locations in the Widzin Kwah

5.3 Initial contact with missionaries and Father Morice

"I am a Protestant, as my father was, but we can bear no other testimony on this point. The priest and the trader have, in this case, gone hand in hand, and commerce has in truth, in this instance, been handmaid to religion." Malcom MacLeod

The above quote, taken from a paragraph brimming with self-satisfaction by Father Morice in 1904 (Morice, 1904), aptly demonstrates the double bind the Witsuwit'en faced. Despite the missionary disdain for rough and corrupting fur fort employees, they also supported each other in their efforts to control First Nations people (Morin, 2011). To recap, Father Blanchet and Father Lejacq were the first have a permanent mission

in northern B.C., at Fort St. James, in 1873. Father Marchal replaced Father Lejacq in 1880. The missionary visits were initially few and far between, as the remote location and the nomadic lifestyle of the Witsuwit'en initially reduced any chances for intensive, continuous linguistic contact. Oblate priests who worked with the Witsuwit'en were forced to travel between fourteen different villages throughout the year, using canoes, barges or toboggans (Morin, 2011, p. 236). Moreover, the winter breakup of the communities into small family units to live on the snow-covered mountains meant the priests had to primarily work in spring, summer and autumn[4]. At these times of course, the Witsuwit'en were busy preparing for the winter. This pattern of sporadic contact continued up until 1914, when Father Coccola began giving daily services at Burns Lake. He went on to become the principal of the Lejac Residential school and was succeeded by Father Allard, a Quebecer who worked from Fort St. James until the mid-1920s, and assisted by Father Godfrey Eichelsbacher, who arrived in the early 1900s and worked around Hagwilget for several decades (Morin, 2011).

As noted earlier, reports indicate that the priests were unsuccessful in using Chinook Jargon, as no one in the region spoke it, and that they were apparently obliged to learn a Witsuwit'en dialect (Morin, 2011, p. 238). There was apparently no overall push to teach the Witsuwit'en French, although as we have seen, they might well have had some exposure to vernacular varieties of French at the fur forts and through casual contact with the missionaries. Early efforts in the region used Indigenous languages. Father Demers, one of the first missionaries in the area, was ordained in Quebec and in 1842 arrived with the latest HBC pack train form Vancouver and began to work in the area (Morice 1904, p. 236):

> As usual, his time not taken up by other duties was employed in studying the Shushwap language and composing hymns and prayers for the use of his people.

The focus on religious instruction and conversion resulted in many loanwords concerning Christian and Catholic practices entering Witsuwit'en, along with loanwords for everyday items of European origin. However, the overall lack of French teaching seems to have had something to do with the personal agenda of one particular person.

The most influential missionary to arrive in the Widzin Kwah was the now oft-quoted Father Adrian-Gabriel Morice. He came in the mid-1887s and set about gaining control of the local people. He was ambitious as a scholar, publishing several books and articles on Carrier/Dakelh and Witsuwit'en. His publications in English include *Notes Archeological, Industrial, and Sociological on the Western Denés*

[4] In the area where the Witsuwit'en live, like many places in Canada, winter is actually a substantial portion of the year. The Bulkley Valley can see snow as early as October and it may remain until March or later, with temperatures often below -20 and snow often over 20 cm deep.

(1894), *The History of the Northern Interior of British Columbia* (1904) and *The Carrier Language: A Grammar and Dictionary* (1932). Although he did conduct important ethnographic and linguistic work, he was, by all reports, rather controlling and self-centred. He also learned to speak Nak'azdli, a close dialect of Witsuwit'en, very well and eventually became the only fluent speaker among the priests, giving him a considerable amount of clout when it came to the Witsuwit'en. He was active in every area of life and activities involving the Witsuwit'en. He founded the village of Moricetown as a model Christian village for his new converts, and later had it moved to the canyon site at Kyah Wiget. He recruited some Witsuwit'en as church watchmen and constables to enforce laws and maintain order, while attempting to supress traditional practice (Morin, 2011, p. 242)s. He remained in control of Moricetown until his removal by the Oblate Order in 1903, after a scathing performance review by a fellow priest. He was later sent to a mental asylum in Manitoba, where he lived until his death in 1938 (Morin, 2011, p. 237). Father Morice's legacy remains rather contentious, and he would no doubt be displeased to learn that Moricetown has been officially returned to its original name, Witset.

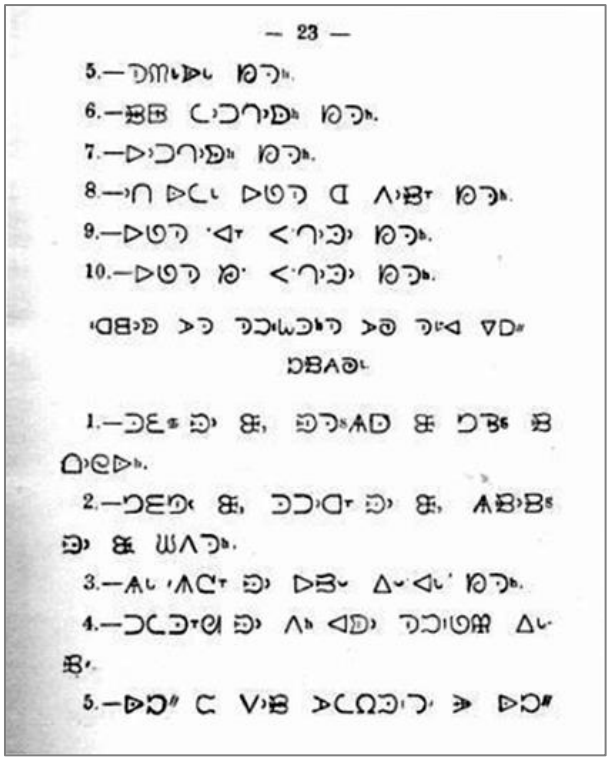

Figure 14: A page of the Carrier Prayer Book, showing Father Morice's syllabic alphabet (Image source: Wikimedia Commons)

Besides his descriptive linguistic work, he created a distinct orthography for Carrier and had a local newspaper published. Called Dulkw'ahke, (meaning *toad feet*), the script was taught by Father Morice,

briefly a few times, and then spread quickly around the area (Poser, 2003). Despite it being very locally popular, no one from outside the immediate community and region could read the new Carrier alphabet. Prior to the 1920s, there was apparently extensive literacy in this script, and it was frequently used on gravestones and to write messages on trees (Poser, 2003) and along the trade trails (Morin, 2011). After the Lejac Residential School was founded and a new prayer book was printed with the English alphabet, the use of the Carrier alphabet declined suddenly. This led to a kind of language gap, with parents and elders being fluent in the syllabics and children knowing only English (Poser, 2003).

The following text, taken from Morice's history of the area, and quoting a Protestant pastor, states that the new script, and English was spoken in the area, by both the Oblate priests and one of the Witsuwit'en neighbours (Morice 1904, p. 344):

> Père X. was, of course, a Frenchman, but his English was irreproachable. It is something of a surprise to find a *savant* and a man of learning working amongst the Indians in a lonely northern mission. But, judging by his congregation, it was evident that his talents were not thrown away. The Carrier Indians are immeasurably superior to their relations, the Beavers. They build log houses, and many speak English, and read books and a monthly review in the native tongue, printed in the syllabary which their priest has invented for them. This is one of the many extraordinary achievements of this prince of missionaries who not only is his own editor, compositor and printer, but has invented a most ingenious syllabary, which is easily learnt; so that Indians, who have no idea what writing is, have been known to learn to read and write this language with perfect correctness after two or three days' instruction.

"Carrier" again refers to the Dakelh people and based on this text, English fluency was becoming more widespread in the region by the 1870s. However, it seems curious that the development of the unique script has been attributed to Father Lejac, as this is Father Morice's publication, and he does not seem to have been the type to let others take credit for his accomplishments. In contrast to the Dakelh people's new fluency, Father Morice actively tried to prevent the Witsuwit'en from learning English. According to one account, he attacked a teacher in a schoolhouse who was attempting to teach English to the people in Hagwilget (Morin, 2011, p. 252). These actions contradicted Oblate policies and stood in sharp contrast to the beliefs of Methodist missionaries across the river, who assumed the Gitxsan would need English to deal with the government and defend their land (Morin, 2011, pp. 251-253). Being able to speak Nak'azdli, when no one among the Witsuwit'en apparently spoke French or English with any great fluency, made Father Morice the middleman between the Witsuwit'en and the colonial government (Morin, 2011, p. 238). His linguistic skills were vital to the efforts of the first local Indian Agent, Richard E. Loring, who is

mentioned as having relied on him for negotiations with the Witsuwit'en chiefs and accompanied Father Morice, Father Wagner and Bishop Dontenwill to a regalia burning (Morin, 2011, p. 230).

Via the priests, the Witsuwit'en had enough contact with French at this point to have the selection of loans concerning not only everyday items, and religious terms like *labise*, meaning "le péché" or *sin*. These lexical items lend support to the argument that the French loans entered directly through contact with French, rather than through Chinook Jargon (Story, 1984). Hargus also writes the loans could have come through Carrier (Hargus, 2007). However, it is important that at no point are the Witsuwit'en mentioned as having proficiency in speaking French as an L2.

5.4 The Overland Telegraph lines and surveyors

The construction of the Collins Overland Telegraph Line reached the watershed in 1866. The surveys conducted to lay the line down were the basis for later colonization efforts. They also created the basis for the next phase of contact between First Nations peoples in the wider region and Euro-Canadians. Unlike fur-trapping, the construction of the line meant major alterations to the landscape, as trees had to be cleared to create a trail to work on. Equipment was initially transported up the Skeena River by steamship and then further by pack trains or large canoes (Kruisselbrink, 2012). The man in charge of overseeing the development of the Collin Overland Telegraph Line was Thomas Elwyn's and his letters describe the main camp being visited by "great numbers of Indians" and relations were mostly cordial, although the tension that would mark later relations is already present (Kruisselbrink, 2012, p. 27):

> I have entered more fully into this Indian question than perhaps, in your opinion, it deserves. But, I am most anxious on the subject. For, should the natives, whether now or hereafter, become hostile to the Company, it would be necessary either to exterminate the former, or abandon the line: neither, I think you will agree with me, being a pleasant alternative.

The completion of the Trans-Atlantic Cable in Sept 1866 and its continued stability put an end to the hopes of the Overland Telegraph Company. Work on the cable ended in March 1867, and the cable was manned by an operator until 1869. However, some of the workers went on to establish Hazelton, leading to the first permanent settlement in the now re-named Bulkley Valley. In the 1890s, when horse and mule pack trains started regularly going through the region, personal testimony from Elders indicates the Witsuwit'en who saw them did not recognize that the packers were speaking English (Morin, 2011, p. 219).

During the Omineca Gold Rush of 1869-72 and the Klondike Gold Rush starting in 1898, numerous prospectors, many of them Euro-American, Euro-Canadian and Chinese, came through or worked the Bulkley Valley. The new village of Hazelton became their main stopping point. By June 1870, at the height of the rush in Omineca, as many as 400 hopeful miners were working along the Omineca River (Hall, 1994).

The first explorers had been practically all Americans, hailing mostly from San Francisco. Hall quotes one RJ Lamont, who ran a dog mushing team to carry supplies and post, the demographics were approximately 60% white, and 40% Chinese, coming from the Cariboo region near the Fraser Canyon (Hall, 1994). The Canadians and others were slower in availing themselves of the treasures hidden throughout the Cariboo valley. The creeks and rivers were not terribly productive for gold, or easy to access and the difficulty of bringing in both food and supplies meant that many new arrivals quickly moved on (Hall, 1994). In the following years, the number of men gradually diminished. According to local historians, at this time it was still necessary to use canoes manned by Tsimshian, first organized by the HBC, and then paddleboats to bring supplies up the Skeena River to Hazelton (Morin, 2011; Kruisselbrink, 2012). Gradually pack trains began to make their way with regularity from the east, using the old telegraph trail. In the winter, dogsleds were able to maintain mail transport. The flurry of activity and the need for supplies meant that the Witsuwit'en were employed as packers, labourers and panners in streams and mines, and contact with English and varieties of non-native English likely increased. Witsuwit'en also took advantage of the gold rushes to set up independent businesses. Some Witsuwit'en ran their own pack trains and were known as good horsemen (Morin, 2011, p. 219). Some Witsuwit'en developed close partnerships with prospectors, so it seems likely that some Witsuwit'en learned good enough English or French to effectively communicate or that the incoming traders and miners were learning local languages. By 1902, at least one HBC trader, R.S. Sargent, had learned to speak Witsuwit'en well enough to worry Father Morice (Morin, 2011, p. 273).

Another prominent pack train owner, Jean Jacques Caux, known as "Cataline", is mentioned by Morin as having good relations with the Witsuwit'en and with those whom he employed. His history is good example of the ambiguity that comes with research into historical language contact. Cataline was a colourful figure who has become the subject of numerous local historians, such as the book *British Columbia Bizarre* (Neering, 2011). He once nodded when asked if he was from the Catalonia region of Spain, hence the nickname (Northword Magazine, 2009). It is generally agreed that he was born on the Spanish-French border, near the Pyrenees, although some sources also claim Mexico or France. He is reported to have spoken a mixture of French, English and Spanish, as well as "a language of his own" (quoted in Neering, 2011). This could possibly have been Chinook Jargon (Northword Magazine, 2009). Cataline's mule trains provided supplies for the telegraph lines and the gold rushes of 1858, 1863 and 1898, after which he moved to the Bulkley Valley to continue working. He married a Nlaka'pamux woman in 1876 and had three children with her (Northword Magazine, 2009). Cataline moved around the region but continued to finically support her, and eventually retired in Hazelton, dying in October 1922 at the age of ninety. We can conjecture that his interactions with the Witsuwit'en involved an interpreter, or that he learned a local dialect that they were familiar with. It is also entirely possible there was some English involved, or an ad-hoc pidgin.

The focus areas of the gold rushes and early mining operations were not in the immediate vicinity of the Witsuwit'en but further north and most of the non-Indigenous population was non-permanent. Nonetheless, the Klondike Gold Rush from 1896 to 1899 saw thousands of people, many of them Americans and Chinese pass through the area to reach the North. The Collin's Overland Telegraph trail was known as one of the "poor-man's trails" used by those who could not afford a ticket to take them directly by ship to Dawson City (Kruisselbrink, 2012). The construction of the Yukon Telegraph Line brought a new wave of workers into the valley and further cemented it as a possibility for ranching and mining.

5.5 Settlers, the railway and the founding of Smithers

The settlement of the Widzin Kwah began as a trickle, not a flood. Morin notes that there were less than seventy-five permanent settlers before 1905 (Morin 2011, p. 283), Kruisselbrink supports this estimate, that in May 1906 there were only seventy-four permanent settlers in the valley (Kruisselbrink, 2012, p. 50). Pioneering in the region was not as easy as many were led to believe, and many homesteaders gave up. A large amount of land was bought by speculators and left empty, much to the frustration of colonial officials (Kruisselbrink, 2012, p. 48). Smithers was officially founded when the railway company, bypassing the land speculators, purchased the low-lying swampy land at the foot of the Bulkley Mountain on which to build the railway station (Kruisselbrink, 2012). While some settlers are mentioned as having good relationships with their Witsuwit'en neighbours, others had a more confrontational attitude. New land claims often overlapped or disregarded Witsuwit'en traditional territories and important trapping, fishing, and berry patch sites. Many confrontations were taken to the local court, where again personal testimony from Elders relates that translators for the Witsuwit'en were not always available, leaving them at a disadvantage (Morin, 2011, p. 279).

As ranchers and farmers continued to enter the area, Witsuwit'en began to work as hired hands for white ranchers (Morin, 2011, p. 275). This work became increasingly important as incoming settlers put pressure on traplines, and fur prices fluctuated:

(76) Barbara.76: They speak English my mum went to up what they call it they teach them she knows how to write her name on a check when she passed on, they speak English, well cause my dad work a long time in the CN, almost all his lifetime, my mum stays home and does she makes uh moccasin moose hide, she sells the moccasin to Hudson Bay for two dollars, that's how much she pays, it was a hard time there was no family allowance, struggling my parents they go out to trapping, that's how they sell their furs to Hudson Bay, Hudson Bay and then we get money.

The railway project brought temporary and long-term employment to many Witsuwit'en, including many women, who worked as part of the railway construction crews or in forestry, logging trees to make and lay railway ties, often alongside their husbands (Morin, 2011). At this point, more and more Witsuwit'en were taking jobs to earn cash and were working for or alongside English speakers:

(77) Ivan.47: People travelled a long way by horse or walking or train, any way they could get by, they worked for farmers, I know that, farmers hired First Nations people so yeah and the wartime, people came a few Natives went out to war soldier, became soldiers, my grandfather he um, did a lot of working, mining trapping and yeah guide, probably a guide.

The Witsuwit'en also engaged with the Euro-Canadian population at fairs and rodeos held in the valley, with many, including women, frequently competing in and winning horse racing (Morin, 2011, p. 306). Despite ongoing land claim disputes, and the fight to protect their fishing rights and ancestral fishing sites, there was continuous interaction between the Witsuwit'en and the settler population. In the 1970s a group of youths known as the Beavers arrived in Witset to work on housing projects. This group hailed from the Caribbean and other countries. Many of them stayed in Witset and married locals, as Wanda and Tim explain:

(78) Wanda: And the Beavers came, so he worked with the Beavers.
Tim.65: All the Beavers came, that why that road was called Beaver Road.
Wanda: They had uh like exchange students from different countries but they were young people from different countries like Trinidad and Saint Kit's and came abroad in a little house and they worked for like one hundred twenty bucks a month and their hydro and telephone bill was paid so, he used to work with them but he lived here and all the Beavers lived up in the, and he said that was what the road was named after from Trinidad so and some of them stayed and got married.

Other Witsuwit'en worked in canneries in Prince Rupert in the 1980s, alongside immigrant workers from India and Japan (Morin, 2011, p. 289). This story from Jenny, aged sixty-seven at the time of the interview, describes her experience of helping her aunt sell moccasins to a tourist and using a bit of English to sell moccasins them:

(79) Jenny.67: I show it to the lady like this and and then she said after she looks at in our own language, she said put your han' out like this and you say it pie dollahs which I did pie dollahs meant five dollars so I did and then the lady took that moccasin and she went to her hand bag took that little five dollar bill out and hand it to me.

Since Jenny was sixty-seven years old when interviewed, so this interaction would have taken place in 1952. The pronunciation of “five dollars” as /paɪ dolʌz/ also shows that some Witsuwit’en were acquainted with English as an L2, at least as much as needed to interact with tourists, but the children had not yet begun to use it as a home language.

5.6 Contact in residential and local schools

Witsuwit’en children were deeply affected by the shift in lifestyles brought on by colonization. As families permanently settled on homesteads and later in government-issued housing on reserves, children were no longer taken up to the mountain territories for the winter and so attended school earlier, more consistently and for longer periods of time. There were two types of schooling available to the Witsuwit’en, local and residential, both of which existed as part the apparatus of colonialism.

The language policy of residential schools was usually that First Nations children needed to learn English, and that any knowledge and use of their AL should be suppressed as part of a wider policy aimed at forcing children to adopt European settler culture and forcibly integrate them into colonial society (Sinclair, 2015). From 1917 until 1976 many children attended the Lejac Residential School, the Kamloops Residential School, or were sent even further, as far away as Edmonton (Morin, 2011, p. 255). There is no record of exactly how many children were taken away from Witsuwit’en communities or how many were able to return home. The Lejac Residential school took the most Witsuwit’en children and there is extensive documentation and testimony available as to what happened there, including the effects of the school’s English only language policy:

(80) Edna.57: I kinda lost it when I went to Lejac, I lost the language, I lost the speakin’ of it, and that’s where we weren’t allowed to say anything in our language.

There are several factors to consider when discussing language contact in residential schools, including the range of variation in the exposure and impact a stay at a residential school could have for a child and their family. First, the length of time a child might spend in residential school could vary. Some children endured years at these schools, while others stayed for only a single semester, when parents refused to allow their children to return after the break. In 1940, just about 200 children were at the school, and the situation, including lack of food and rampant tuberculosis, was so severe that in 1943, parents prevented eighty students from returning after the break (Morin, 2011, p. 262). Some children were even taken up into the remote mountain territories to hide them from colonial authorities:

(81) Jody.22: We lived up by, by Hudson Bay Mountain.
Wanda: On the ranch?

Jody.22: Way up on the mountain with the glacier, couldn't live on the reserve cause they were takin' all the kids away at that time.
Wanda: Oh, so your mom they hid you guys?
Jody.22: Pretty much hid us away up there.
Wanda: None of you guys none of you guys went to residential school?
Jody.22: No, no.

While even a semester or year at a school could have a detrimental effect on a child's AL skills, longer stays were more damaging and prevented children from either fully acquiring their L1 or compelled them to suppress their knowledge of it. It is important to remember that many children were taught that their parents, that is their AL speaker models, were backwards, and "savage" (Sinclair, 2015, p. 103). Since a powerful negative association was created between the Ancestral language and its speakers, children who returned home, even for longer periods, were discouraged from re-learning their L1.

(82) Ivan.47: I'm feeling kind of um, thinking that we weren't taught our language because my mum was um disciplined for speaking our language when she was a young child, I always ask and she says just I don't know, that's not an answer, I know, that's the reason she didn't want us to go through what she went through.

(83) Lisa.50: Unless alone without, there away from all the supervisor and stuff.

(84) Hanna.56: Like I can understand some words but I don't speak it, I used to understand it really clearly when I was younger, and then I lost when I went to residential school, like with me like with our language I fel' like I was ashamed.

A second factor in this discussion is that many of the people running residential schools did not actually consider it important to *teach* the children anything. The principals and teachers had a low opinion of the children, judging them to lack intelligence comparable to Europeans (Miller, 1996; Sinclair, 2015, p. 61). The schools also often had poorly trained or under-qualified teaching staff to begin with and had no intention of providing a fundamental education for the children to build on later in life (Sinclair, 2015, p. 63). Rather than children being in school for the sake of developing skills and careers as professionals later in life, they were to be taught how to live in the white man's world and accept their subordinate place in it (Sinclair, 2015, p. 61). The schools "were failures, and regularly judged as such" (Sinclair, 2015, p. 63). The Lejac School was no different. There the staff used the children for labour on their dairy farm, selling the resulting goods for profit while the children were malnourished and even starved (Morin, 2011, p. 262). Girls were taught sewing, and boys sent outside to do more labour on the school grounds and farm.

Any English lessons given were usually not very effective. Some children who attended the school reported often working twenty hours a week (Morin, 2011, p. 262). Even when children were given lessons in English, the teaching methods were far below today's pedagogical expectations. Most children in the first generation who learned English in residential schools did so through an abruptly begun immersion, having to pick up the language from teachers and more experienced fellow students. According to the reports of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, "residential schools failed miserably in their mission to provide Aboriginal children with a decent education" (Sinclair, 2015, p. 101) and were moreover "often permanently estranged from continuing their education" (Sinclair, 2015, p. 101). The abuse meted out to children who spoke their Ancestral language within the hearing of their teachers was usually brutal and painful, so many children were quick to acquire the basics of English and only spoke Witsuwit'en when safe to do so. The trauma created by residential schools prevented normal language transmission with the community and created a lasting impact:

(85) Ivan.47: Um, yeah the Health Center pole, that was there is for the residential survivors and there's a big six foot empty space for where the children were gone from the village and went away to residential school and not all the children went back, the ones that did go, it affected every person past present and fut- in the future too, um the four children on the bottom are crying, there's a Caribou and a Small Frog because the territory here in Moricetown and then they got the four children on the, after that crying, and they're getting ready to leave for the residential school, the empty space and then the children climbing up to the top to the name chief Di'nï chief of chiefs, and the eagle is meant for freedom and strength.

The influence of residential schools was so powerful that this suppression eventually extended beyond the walls of classrooms and dormitories, over the mountains and through the woods, into the very homes and hearts of the communities the children had come from. Although the Lejac School was shut down in 1976, and the Kamloops School closed the year after, the affects linger on.

Day schools were available to many First Nations groups through the efforts of missionaries and local settler schools. Missionary-run schools were especially instrumental in introducing English to local communities. The first regular classroom in Witset was started after eight years of continuous protest by Witsuwit'en parents (Morin, 2011, p. 264). At this point there were 123 children in the whole Witsuwit'en territory (Morin, 2011, p. 264). The parents repeatedly insisted that the distance and treatment of their children in the Lejac Residential School was unacceptable. The Day School was opened in 1938 with forty students. The school operated in French and taught elementary school levels classes. Teachers are reported to have been recruited for several countries (Morin, 2011, p. 266). Some of the participants remember taking

French classes there early on, in addition to English. Later, control of the school shifted to the Witset Band, and they now operate it with both English and Witsuwit'en as languages of instruction. St. Joseph's School opened in Smithers in 1958, with around two hundred students (School, n.d.). The school website offers few specifics but does say that many of their early students were Witsuwit'en children from Witset. There seems to be very little in the way of sources on the early years available beyond this mention on the school website. The presence of these two institutions allowed children to attend school and remain in the community. Children still had ongoing contact with their Witsuwit'en speaking parents and wider web of familial relations. Although it was more difficult to separate the children from their culture, language and traditions, that did not stop the teachers from trying. According to former students, male Witsuwit'en students at St. Joseph's were also taken out of class and assigned chores, to the point that many graduated without learning to read and write (Morin, 2011, p. 266). The staff at both schools attempted to discourage the speaking of Witsuwit'en, in the classroom and on school grounds:

(86) Sylvia.29: The Day School, I was pretty young when I started there, I didn't have no, um no not much English, they started, the sisters start teaching us, when we speak our language, we were strap because we spoke our language.

(87) Olivia.63: I just wanted speak my own language, they said I can't, learn English in school.

(88) Alexia.64: But when we start going to school in Smithers, it was really bad for us.

The Day School was on-reserve, and children would have still been relatively isolated from non-Indigenous English speakers their own ages. However, as Witsuwit'en children began to attend St. Joseph's School in Smithers alongside settler children, there would have been numerous opportunities for the learning and transfer of features. The settler children were themselves not always native English speakers or the children of native English speaker parents. Witsuwit'en children could therefore have had exposure to a wide and shifting range of English dialects and learner English varieties. At St. Joseph's children still experienced discrimination, both from teachers and settler children. Some participants reported late starts to their English schooling and an uncomfortable atmosphere. Todd, who was sixty-two at the time of the interviews, directly traced his children's lack of fluency to his and his father's experiences at school:

(89) Wanda: And do you have children, and what language do they speak, do you speak it at home?

Todd.62: I have four children, three girls and thirty years old is the oldest my youngest boy is just turned twenty-two, and they only speak English because uh my dad didn't tell me not teach my kids Witsuwit'en, all he did was, he told me how he was ridiculed um, punished for speakin' his language and I guess subconsciously I thought that if I taught my

kids my language they would be ridiculed laughed at so I didn't teach them that, I didn't teach them the the my mothers language, Witsuwit'en.

Wanda: And when you were younger did they cause they did that to your dad, did you get ridiculed in school for speaking your language?

Todd.62: Me?

Wanda: Did you go to St. Joe's?

Todd.62: Yep, yeah we were laughed at um we weren't allowed to speak too much Witsuwit'en in class, our neighbours our non-Witsuwit'en classmates used to make fun of us and because of that I was one of the feisty ones, fought a lot even in grade school because of that like if kids make fun of our people like our classmates or somebody below or above me in grade I would stick up for them.

Some students also continued to receive schooling outside the community, and had contact with children from a variety of backgrounds:

(90) Sonya: Why were you in Prince George?

Wanda: Well we got sent away to boarding school.

Jen.38: Just to get rid of us. (laughs)

Wanda: It wasn't the bad residential school.

Wendy.38: It was a good place.

Wanda: It was a good place, we met people from all over B.C., it was like a boarding school for, seemed like it was a boarding school for natives but we had so many different-

Wendy.38: There so many different-

Jen.38: There was lots of people from all over the place.

Wendy.38: We even had people from Alberta come there.

Jen.38: Williams Lake, Fraser Lake, Burns Lake, Prince Rupert Fort St. James.

Wanda: Fort Kitimat.

In addition to St. Jospeh's, some students also attended schools like Muheim Elementary School in Smithers, Chandler Park Middle School (now Smithers Senior Secondary School) in Smithers. Many participants left school at a young age, and later completed Adult Education courses to attain their High School Diplomas, and had some type of post-secondary education, especially for language teaching. In 1985, Witset finally had its own kindergarten and elementary school, and it was no longer necessary for younger children to leave the reserve to attend school until after Grade 8. The staff are both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. The primary teaching language of the school curriculum is English, but the environment and classes support Witsuwit'en learning and fluency. However, after Gr. 6, students must transfer to

Smithers for further schooling, where they are integrated into an English-speaking classroom and have no Witsuwit'en language support. Witsuwit'en learning is further supported by programs in the community, including visits with Elders and curriculum-based classroom teaching.

5.7 Testimony: language shift over time

Oral testimony and historical sources have allowed us to construct a timeline of language contact. Although information from the 19th century is limited, we have a much better idea of what happened in the early and mid 20th century, due to eyewitness testimony. Several of the participants are native Witsuwit'en speakers and were witness to the transitional period when English began to replace Witsuwit'en as the community's main language. Table 13 divided the twenty-nine participants who could be reliably said to speak Witsuwit'en English into categories by intervals of ten years and shows the decline of Witsuwit'en beginning in the 55-65 age range. It should be noted though that some of the younger speakers are at various stages in learning Witsuwit'en, so their exact level of fluency is difficult to gauge. There is a noticeable cut-off in fluency between ages fifty-five and sixty, where Witsuwit'en transmission ceases between generations.

Table 13: Participant Witsuwit'en fluency by age

Age Group	Number of Participants	English L1	Witsuwit'en L1	Speakers fluent in Witsuwit'en now
25-35	4	4	0	0
35-45	5	5	0	0
45-55	4	3	1	0
55-65	10	0	10	6
65-75	4	0	4	4
75-85	2	0	2	2

The attrition of Witsuwit'en can be tracked by numbers from other sources as well. Sharon Hargus reports the declining speaker base in her grammar on the language. A 1982 census on 'Babine' reports "1600 out of 2000 population" from a Summer Institute of Linguistics census (Hargus, 2007, p. 4). In 1999 another source (Jim, 1999) gives the number of speakers in Moricetown at 186. In 2002, the Kyah Wiget Society gives the number of speakers, including off-reserve members in Smithers and Telkwa, at 165.

Among the participants, only seventeen of the thirty-six participants spoke Witsuwit'en as their first language. From these, only twelve still maintained a high degree of proficiency in Witsuwit'en at the time of the interview. After age sixty-five, being a native Witsuwit'en speaker as a child is no longer a guarantee of adult fluency. The next drop in Witsuwit'en fluency coincides with the period when the Lejac Indian Residential School was opened in 1917. After age fifty-five, participants are likely to have learned and then suppressed Witsuwit'en as young children, or learned English at an early age, as a first language. Even

participants in their mid-thirties remember living in Witsuwit'en speaking homes and older speakers recall beginning school with no or little English.

(91) Anna.35: Mostly Witsuwit'en, I grew up like me being put in a non-native school but coming home I can hear them just speaking our language mostly, no English so… when I asked her something in English, she would tend to not understand me, so I'd get my mum to come with me and she'd translate it to my grandmother.

(92) Ivan.47: We don't know nothing about English when we move to Wolcut.

(93) Olivia.63: We never to school till were older, she went to dis little Day School, I never spoke English til I was nine years old.

Some students had exposure to French as an L2 at the Day School, but never really learned to speak it:

(94) Jen.38: We went to school learning French but we didn't remember anything.
Wendy.38: I just thought it was useless to learn.
Jen.38: Oui oui, pepé le peau! (laughes)

However, even these two participants, both 38 and both coming from a home where Witsuwit'en was the dominant language:

(95) Wanda: What language did your parents speak?
Wendy.38: Just Witsuwit'en.
Jen.38: Just Witsuwit'en that's it, they always spoke the language they hardly every spoke Carrier around me, I mean English.

Cora began school at the age of six in 1956 and like many other young children at the time, her first contact with English was sudden immersion in the Day School:

(96) Cora.64: Growing up with my parents and my grandmother, our first language was Witsuwit'en, um, when we first entered school, at Indian Day School I didn't know a word of English, I didn't know how to count I didn't know how to do weekdays or colours, I didn't know none of it and I struggled with it, so Witsuwit'en was my first language.

Jenny, born in 1947, also grew up in an exclusively Witsuwit'en environment, before coming in to contact with English sometime in 1950 when beginning school:

(97) Jenny.67: I never spoke English from three years old on at home because English was not spoken, only Witsuwit'en was spoken in our home by my mum and dad and by living the way that we lived it was always Witsuwit'en words, and whenever we did chores as little

children for Elders in our neighbourhood, they spoke to us in Witsuwit'en, all Witsuwit'en was spoken in our home, for my whole family, my older brothers and sisters, it was the same for us in all our neighbourhood where I was raised, Witsuwit'en was spoken in out neighbourhood, with the children we played with we grew up with, all their parents spoke Witsuwit'en in Two Mile that's where I was raised with my mum and dad and um, my zhen'ii which was dad's aunt, I did chores for her and she spoke in Witsuwit'en.

School attendance was often short lived, and many participants had to return to school later as adults to receive their diplomas:

(98) Barbara.67: When I went to school in Moricetown, it was a Day, Day, learn it to speak English and then, I was there roun' eight years old jus' barely and den I, when I go up an then had to take uh because I had to go back to school uh to upgrading and that's how I learn more and more and then I had to go to school for home maker upgrading when I was only grade four un I didn't even graduate or nothing, yeah it was hard it was uh I was learning a little bit cause uh I was scared of teacher, he hit you don't do your job and they get strap its tough learning.

Despite the prohibition on speaking Witsuwit'en within even local schools, support for the language continued in children's homes:

(99) Laura.65: The Day School I went here for one year in Moricetown and I went to St. Joseph's, the Day School I was pretty young when I started there I didn't have no, um no not much English, they started, the sisters start teaching us when we speak our language they used to strap us, it was the same at St. Joseph we were strap because we spoke our language, but we made sure mum always talked to us in our language.

Currently all children on the Witset reserve receive schooling from kindergarten onwards in English and after completing elementary school in Witset. In the reserve school, students receive instruction in Witsuwit'en, including classroom work and visits from Elders. The Witset school only runs until grade six, and students must then transfer to a public school in Smithers to complete their education. No support is provided there for Witsuwit'en learning. Despite intensive language support on the reserve, no children have been able to learn Witsuwit'en fluently, although teaching continues:

(100) Jen.38: Well my husband's Gitxsan so he always speaks Gitney to me, Gitney is half pronunciation of Gitxsan, so its not any offense its just us how we say Gitxsan, but my

children they count to ten, they say some animals and body parts in Gitxsan and they know more of our language than they do theirs but at least both.

Generally, participants where not hostile towards English, and acknowledged its necessity, but they did regret their community's lack of Witsuwit'en fluency. Many participants' parents, having learned English, felt that it was better not to speak Witsuwit'en to their children:

(101) Mona.29: I think I'm, through education, I'm a little more colonized.

(102) Ivan.47: We were most likely not taught in order to get ahead, so we spoke English only, it was a decision they made along time ago or, then it was little too late, never too late now, you ask your own mum why didn't you teach me?

(103) Lisa.50: My dad said when he started school all he spoke was Witsuwit'en, that's all he spoke and when he went to school, he was talking in his own language an' everybody laughed at him and he said he was so embarrass and ashamed that he never taught us how to speak Witsuwit'en, he said that was why he never taught us.

Many participants expressed a desire to see the Witsuwit'en language and culture continue to be taught to the next generation and have tried to support their children learning it:

(104) Mona.29: How awesome it would be to communicate in our Witsuwit'en language, the strongest speakers are the ones that speak the language fluently, they speak the language, they give their speech in their language, and when when you're speaking our language, are always told in Witsuwit'en language.

(105) Anna.35: They are speaking English and I have placed them in our local school here so that'll be helpful for them to learn their culture and their language now.

(106) Jen.38: My son, only my kids they speak Witsuwit'en, Gitxsan Witsuwit'en and English, fluent English, they just know a little bit of pieces of uh Witsuwit'en, they're learning at uh Moricetown elementary school, language, so proud of 'em for that cause when we were growin' up we were goin' to school in Prince George and no one was there to teach us our language.

(107) Helga.64: Hmm, grew up aroun' here and my grandmother like I said Grandma she taught me lotta Witsuwit'en language, she didn't speak English to us she only spoke Witsuwit'en and so I grew up with the language and teach my kids, the basics only the basics cause they speak all English and my grandkids I try to speak Witsuwit'en to them and they only know the basics.

(108) Jenny.67: I don't see communication between the children in Witsuwit'en, and um I'd like these, this language to be taught in high school when our children leave Moricetown elementary they go to Mulheim, they don't get Witsuwit'en Hanuk like what Sharon taught, the high school doesn't have that language so our children are graduating without their Witsuwit'en Hanuk it's not right they should be taught also because these children are our future leaders and not one of them are learning the Witsuwit'en Hanuk properly.

Participants sometimes noted that there are some differences between how the adults and the younger speakers in the community used language:

(109) Mina.35: We thought we were the only ones who didn't have an accent, but some of our kids don't feel comfortable using our slang, if I'm using some of my slang, sometimes when you're getting your story and your slang comes out.

(110) Isaac.71: We do have little accent, not the younger generation but us, us old fart we have accent.

Speakers in Witset use a dialect that is distinct from other English dialects used by communities in the region. This is heavily attributed to the influence of Witsuwit'en as an L1.

(111) Steve.22: I think with the Witsuwit'en are similar to that um cause I think that uh the way that we place like verbs and whatnot in the Dene language um that placement has kinda been carried over to English, so sometimes we'll say things, I've noticed it, one the rez, like people say things backwards to the way people who don't come from that Indigenous background.

(112) Ivan.47: I've been told in high school that we have an accent.

(113) Cora.64: That broken English version, that sort of broken little English.

(114) Wanda.44: They all have deep voice too, and with us, with our people I see, like we still, like how Cora was saying earlier, we have some broken English from our grandparents and they got it from their grandparents, cause their, like Cora's grandparents never ever went to school, so they had broken English, so therefore Cora grew up, even though she went to school, she still had her grandparents talkin' to her, they sort of had broken English so she sorta has it, and so she passed it down to her kids, like that.

There is considerable variation and opinion on accents throughout the region, unsurprising, since the Witsuwit'en are not the only First Nations group in the region:

(115) ETodd.62: Oh yes, we told that we have an accent uh for example the Nootsani's the people from Stoney Creek Fort St. James the definitely have an accent, English accent, uh same with the Gitxsans the most notable one are the one from Kitseguecla, its almost like they're singing just the way they speak it, it is or something, they say that, some say that we speak slow, some say that we speak too fast we grew grew up and you, well they say that we have and accent, we don't think so it's something that we grew up with and it's it's a norm for us the way we speak.

(116) Cora.64: In general when you speak with English like um, I was telling Wanda that um English speaking like, us generations that are born in the fifties up to probably late fifties um, our parents never wen' to school even it they did it was very few so they have that broken English version so we were brought up hearing that from our parents so probably Wanda will pick it up when we talk we have that sort of broken liddle English we have a hard time translating it or how to correc' it, like even when you go to school you always end up taking the way you were brought up so um that a difference I see in English speaking.

In addition to the discussion around pronunciation, some pragmatic aspects of Witsuwit'en and English were also mentioned:

(117) Jen.38: We just expect people to know what we're thinking, that's what we do we just expect to know what we're thinking, cause I think, our people are more visual learners, we're more visual learners than actually seeing it in the document, and that's the difference between us, like you'll notice um, when you go somewhere they, like some of our people find it offensive when you look them in the eye, talk, they don't look at you when, so don't think it's rude, most of our people are like that they don't look at you when they talk, its not that it's a lie or anything but it's just our way of havin' respect so, I notice that a lot of our Elders don't like to be talked to loudly, and they like it if you're right beside them and talkin' like this.

5.8 A summary of the changing language ecology

Historical written documentation on the language situation in the Widzin Kwah is sporadic, sometimes contradictory, and often based on second or third hand information. Records and documents concerning residential schools and local schools are very difficult to access. Much of the existing material that would be useful to linguists is sealed for the sake of privacy. There are undoubtedly pieces missing that would allow us to create a better picture of the history of language contact in the whole northern region of British

Columbia and for the Witsuwit'en. What follows is a list of what we do know for certain, followed by what we can surmise as likely but cannot confirm without better historical information.

We can confirm the following:

- Chinook Jargon was perhaps known but not widely used or understood in the region. It did not have any influence beyond imported lexical items and was not a foundational pidgin for WitEng.
- Employees at the fur forts learned local First Nations languages to trade, as in other places in Canada. The main non-Indigenous languages in the region were English and French, up until perhaps the early 1900s. Both the educated French as used by the Oblate missionaries and vernacular *Canadienne* and Métis varieties were present. There were likely several varieties of English present including possible pidgins and creole varieties like Métis English.
- Father Morice actively discouraged the Witsuwit'en from becoming fluent in English to the extent that the Indian Agents relied on the priests as translators.
- Some adult Witsuwit'en acquired English as an L2 to find work.
- The residential schools in British Columbia started to erode the usage of Witsuwit'en in 1917 and continued to do so until 1976.
- Some Witsuwit'en children never attended residential schools or did so very briefly. Witsuwit'en children first learned English at school, starting in the 1920s, but attendance was sporadic.
- Children who attended residential schools did not always learn to read and write well but had native English speaker models, although interaction may have been very limited.
- Witsuwit'en children learned English as an L2 locally at the Day School or St. Joseph's where they had contact with settler children, who could also act as speaker models and trigger rapid language shift.

The following list contains things we can say with reasonable certainty, but perhaps cannot confirm in entirety, given the lack of hard evidence:

- There was no Witsuwit'en/English or Witsuwit'en/French jargon or trade pidgin that was prominent in the region, or long-lived enough to stabilize and be named.
- Other First Nations groups around the Witsuwit'en seem to have learned to speak English sooner, but English was likely not used between different First Nations groups.
- It is not clear how many Witsuwit'en children attended residential schools, and how many would have been able to return with a residential school-based pidgin to use as a base for further English dialect development.

- Children attending the residential schools had contact with children from other First Nations groups, but it is unknown how this could have influenced the development of WitEng or any FNE, given individual circumstances and the mortality rate of schools.

The language shift experienced by the Witsuwit'en and other Indigenous communities follows similar patterns as those found in other bilingual or multi-lingual settings where long term linguistic stability was upset by the arrival of another language and its speakers, with the incoming language linked to a politically and economically dominant culture. These situations often lead to asymmetrical bilingualism on the part of the subordinate group (Thomason, 2001). The situations created by imperialistic policies and colonial governments are a powerful combination of factors that force or motivate a shift into another language (Myers-Scotton, 2002). These include overwhelming levels of immigration, forcible relocation, or relocation for employment, or diseases reducing the native population severely. Beginning on the coast in the1780s, pandemics continued to move inland, eventually reaching the Carrier and Witsuwit'en people. Later epidemics of influenza, measles and tuberculosis continued to whittle away at the surviving populations until the 1920s, when the Indigenous population of British Columbia reached its lowest number. Beyond reducing the linguistic viability of Witsuwit'en as a transmitted language. The situation led to the creation of small reserves that secured only a fraction of the land the Witsuwit'en consider to be their traditional territory as colonial officials did not anticipate a later recovery of population (Morin, 2011, p. 275). With a small population, the Witsuwit'en and other groups had difficulty occupying land at a time when trappers and settlers began to arrive in the region in ever increasing numbers; this also affected their land claims. The high number of deaths forced the survivors to rely on handouts from the Indian agents or to seek waged employment to buy food and medicine. This further pushed the Witsuwit'en into engaging with the colonial wage economy and into cooperating with the colonial government. After the wave of above-mentioned plagues that hit the Indigenous population throughout British Columbia in the 1900s, as few as six hundred speakers were left (Morin, 2011, pp. 222-223). This created a very limited speaker base, at the time when colonial authorities began to actively work to suppress Witsuwit'en culture and language transmission, as part of the overall program of forced assimilation of First Nations people into mainstream Canadian society.

We have already discussed the impact of residential schools, both across Canada and for the Witsuwit'en (See Section 2.4.3). It is important to consider that residential schooling as a tool for control of Indigenous peoples took place in the context of a wider colonial schooling system. As fur forts and colonies sprang up in Canada, mission schools appeared in their wake. French speaking missionaries from various Catholic orders founded schools, hospitals, and orphanages, and also worked to learn local Indigenous languages (Bakker & Papen, 2008). As British control expanded across the continent, various Evangelical orders also

founded mission schools, and as the colonial government began its program to assimilate First Nations peoples, these schools continued to grow. "At the height of the system, in 1953, just over 11,000 Aboriginal children were in residential schools" (Sinclair, 2015, p. 11). Throughout the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries, classrooms in day schools and boarding schools were the primary points for long term language contact in Canada. This mirrors the spread of schooling across colonial territories. For the sake of brevity, we will confine our discussion to schools in British colonies. Schooling across the British Empire was extremely varied. In theory, the school systems in the colonies were meant to replicate schooling in England, although run by the local colonial government and the efforts of local missionaries (Howatt & Widdowson, 1984). The schooling ran at a slower pace and with a rather high rate of incompletion (Howatt & Widdowson, 1984). Each year was called a "Standard" and over the span of six of seven years, students would be taught "the 3 Rs," although the lessons are referred to as "Reading and Writing," not English, which would have included "more advanced instruction in grammar, composition and literature" (Howatt & Widdowson, 1984, p. 135). The goal was to impart English as a mother-tongue literacy to the students, rather than to teach English as a foreign language, however finding and retaining teachers was very difficult, and eventually this resulted in older pupils frequently becoming teachers to younger ones (Howatt & Widdowson, 1984). This would have created the perfect scenario for the transmission of language learner features. A report on the topic of education in the colonies commissioned in 1901 by the Board of Education in London highlights the variety of school types and curriculum across the globe (Howatt & Widdowson, 1984, pp. 136-147):

- In Mauritius, a former French colony gained by Britain in the aftermath of the defeat of Napoleon in Europe, the exodus of former slaves and the immigration of Indians led to a very mixed population which spoke French, English, Tamil, Telegu and Hindi. All these languages were accepted in the primary years of school, and children were allowed a bilingual education, being gradually introduced to standard French and English through their schooling. Subjects for advanced students included physics, math, and the classical languages. Although the policy eventually changed to exclude French, basic instruction seems have remained available in the Indian languages.
- In Sierra Leonne and the Gold Coast (now Ghana), many children were the descendants of freed slaves, and taught by the government, which ran fourteen schools, and two Christian mission organizations, the Wesleyan Missionary Society, and Church Missionary Society, which ran twenty-eight. The church run schools continued to grow until the government reacted to complaints and established a network of schools to teach Reading and Writing as subjects in English. In Ghana, the situation was also very uneven, with 131 mission schools compared to seven government

schools in 1900. The mission-led schools were heavily criticized for having a "Bible-only" curriculum. The government schools were meant to have a Standards oriented system.

- In Basutoland, now Lesotho, the population fought off the British and the Boers, and was recognized by London as a protectorate. The Basutoland then hired the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society (PEMS), an organization that distinguished between its educational and religious duties, to come and teach for them. The system of British standards was used, but recognized both English and Sesuto, the indigenous language, in primary levels and in exams. This bilingual approach was mirrored in Nyasaland, (now Malawi) where English dominated, but the Chinyanja language was also accepted in the classroom.
- In Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, the situation was similar to Canada. The British colonists found themselves at odds with both the local African population and the Boer settlers. In order to continue the "myth of emptiness" that is at the core of justifying colonization, the British authorities writing the report recommended a boarding school for Dutch-ancestry children to force them to learn English and "Schools for Natives" which would teach gardening and brick-laying to students, with the unstated but nonetheless very clear aim of producing a "docile, illiterate and minimally competent labour source as cheaply as possible."
- In British Honduras, a policy of bilingualism was in place, allowing official classroom space for its Spanish, English, Maya and Creole speakers, but implementation suffered from a lack of bilingual teachers.
- In St. Lucia, a French-based creole, or *patois* was recognized as the mother tongue of the former slave colony, with the francophone Roman Catholic priests teaching English as a foreign language and trying to suppress the local creole variety.
- In early Malaysia and Singapore, schools from the beginning allowed the use of Malay, Tamil and Chinese in the classroom alongside English, with a gradual transition to an English only classroom. In 1900 there were 171 of these bilingual schools, while the more prestigious and expensive English only schools numbered twenty-four. Apparently, the students of the latter suffered from unreasonable expectations, as the curriculum had been imported completely from the UK without any consideration for the levels of the Malay speaking children.
- In Hong Kong, the population had only recently come under British jurisdiction, and was still very mobile, with workers in the port city often living outside the range of its schools. After the failure of the mission schools, and the criticism of an English-only school policy, the writers of the Report suggest a balanced Chinese-English education system that would allow a growing middle-class elite to be educated in British values but then impart these values to their lesser in Chinese.

- In India, education in English became widely available partly at the insistence of the rising Indian middle-class, who were keenly aware of its advantages in light of the need of bureaucracy in the British Empire, and private schools were operating in Calcutta at the time of the Report. The use of English in university created a backwind that would mandate the use of English in all post-elementary school. This, plus other political factors, pushed the East India Company to launch an official policy regarding English language teaching. This policy was thoroughly imperialist and promoted English with the dual aims of both Anglicizing and Christianizing India, as well as creating a two-tiered education system which mimicked the one already in place in England's deeply classist society. However, as the Report shows, India was the first colony in which higher education and specifically higher education in English was given direct priority.

As the above examples demonstrate, the educational goals, pedagogy, and quality of implementation of schooling varied tremendously. We cannot always be certain of the results, but several pidgins and creoles are attested to have developed in mission boarding school settings (Mühlhäusler, 2002). In the Pacific area this included the two principle Northern Australian Creoles (Kriol and Broken), a pidgin spoken by Melanesians on Norfolk Island, and the only known German creole, *Unserdeutsch*, spoken by orphans in a mission on Norfolk Island. Tok Pisin, spoken in Papa New Guinea, also had its development spurred on by mission boarding schools.

The influence of the religious aspect of this schooling should not be underestimated, as it had direct consequences on language policies. The approach of missionaries varied considerably from place to place, being described as "ad hoc and local" and aimed at preparing Indigenous peoples to receive Bible translations (Mühlhäusler, 2002, p. 139). Father Morice's writings on missionary activity in the North repeatably mention priests traveling and teaching prayers and hymns in local Indigenous languages (Morice, 1904). The use of locally spoken language was an oft debated topic, as Indigenous languages were often regarded as harbouring dangerous and degenerate pagan ideas. Missionaries often regarded them as primitive and fundamentally lacking, and occasionally, ascribing their creation to Satan (Mühlhäusler, 2002, p. 141). Teaching English in schools was a way to not only transmit the Gospel, but to civilize people with European languages. In some cases, missionaries encountered numerous dialects and selected one to use in Bible translation. This often resulted in severe consequences for the linguistic ecology and promoted competition between dialects. Those chosen varieties quickly gained prestige and supplanted the other varieties. This can also apply to closely related languages that fall within the sphere of a mission's influence. In Papa New Guinea the policy of selecting the Wemo dialect Kâte, among others in a region to use as a common language and for Bible translation has resulted in the rapid decline of the other Wemo varieties, including Mape, Sene, Momare, Dedua and Migabac (Mühlhäusler, 2002, p. 147). Some religious groups

were known for a different approach. The Jesuits were very willing to use Indigenous languages and the Oblate Order seems to have followed suite. They followed the doctrine that all peoples deserve to hear the Gospel in their own language. Missionaries typically viewed pidgins and creoles in a condescending and negative light, even when their use preceded the arrival of the missionaries and when by necessity the Europeans were forced to use it (Mühlhäusler, 2002).

The missionaries who worked among the Witsuwit'en seem to have followed the trend of using local languages to proselytize, something that was generally characteristic of French and Spanish missionaries. Another example of early language contact is found in the writings William Henry Wheeler, who was one of three children in a missionary family working with an Ojibwe group in Odanah, Wisconsin, from 1842 to 1866 (Bunge, 2009). William describes growing up in Odanah and attending school with Ojibwe children. The settler children learnt Ojibwe and the Ojibwe children learnt English. Although the Wheeler family was somewhat exceptional in allowing their children to play with Native Americans, it seems likely that similar scenarios of language contact could have occurred throughout small mission schools in North America.

Residential schooling in Canada, in its earliest incarnation, relied on volunteer students. This forced the Jesuits to modify their policies to accommodate First Nations cultural ideas about teaching to prevent their few students from running away (Miller, 1996). European instructors did not recognize First Nations discipline and viewed the children as spoilt and unruly. They had total ignorance of First Natives teaching practices, which relied heavily on practicing tasks, and praise for success. Moreover, the reliance on children for labour, some of it to gather food and take care of the school, and often for the commercial benefit of the church, meant that many students spent very little time inside the classroom (Miller, 1996). Children were often sent to the schools and dropped into English immersion so abruptly that they spent weeks, months and years without being able to benefit from what little classroom time they had (Miller, 1996). In some schools, mixed groups of students were more motivated to transition to English or French, as there were not enough common Indigenous languages to use in peer groups (Miller, 1996). For the most part, students were forbidden to speak their mother tongue and were often forewarned by older students about the situation. New students would simply do their best to imitate the older students. There were a few schools across Canada that did value and support First Nations cultures and languages, and actively tried to incorporate elements of First Nations culture into curriculums (Miller, 1996). Unfortunately, such staff and schools were few and far between.

In the United States, residential schools also had a considerable impact. According to Leap, off-reservation boarding schools in the US where a direct outgrowth of similar programs for freed African American slaves (Leap, 1993, p. 157). The architect of the program, Lieut. Richard Henry Pratt, founded the Carlisle Indian

School in Pennsylvania in 1879. The school's first population gathered students from around the country and its apparent success led to the founding of new schools in Haskell, Kansas, Chemawa, Oregon, Chilocco, Oklahoma, and Albuquerque, New Mexico (Leap, 1993, p. 157). By 1902, there were 154 boarding schools (including the twenty-five off-reserve schools) and another 154 day schools for around 21,500 Native American children (Jacobs, 2006). Like schools in Canada, the goal of these schools was to civilize Native Americans. The central tenet was an "outing system" whereby students attended school, but stayed on non-Indigenous farms or with families and gained work experience, and it was emulated in Australia (Leap, 1993; Jacobs, 2006). Some of the students who attended these main schools had prior experience in mission schools, but many were new to European colonial culture when they arrived at the schools (Leap, 1993). In fact, many of them had been essentially kidnapped from their families by the government (Jacobs, 2006). To facilitate the transition to colonial culture, the school was operated as a "tightly controlled, highly regimented, and self-contained" world (Leap, 1993, p. 158). The school rules controlled every aspect of student life and constantly monitored the children, while providing mandatory instruction in Christian religion and Euro-American cultural values. As in other boarding schools around the world, the only language allowed was English and punishments for speaking any Native American language were harsh, including having one's mouth washed out with soap and being whipped. Teaching was based on rote learning, as students were drilled on grammar and sentences. Students were not provided with a structured curriculum that gradually built on previous lessons, instead were put through what Leap describes as *total unstructured immersion* (Leap, 1993, p. 158), and they were expected to simply absorb enough English and put what they learned into practice.

Despite the policies, some students were able to develop strategies to maintain their Ancestral language fluency and find a way to negotiate the school environment. Leap's review of materials from the American residential schools leads him to conclude that standard English may not have been the most influential factor and the text samples show evidence of "codes under construction" (Leap, 1993, p. 162). He also bears in mind that the school population included students from a variety of tribal and Ancestral language backgrounds, some of whom had prior exposure to English at mission schools, and many of whom were learning not only from teachers but from the families that they stayed with. He suggests that student to student interaction, in which students acknowledged their own tribal backgrounds and the cultural background of speech partners, led to the development of codes which broke away from the standard English syntax and grammar (Leap, 1993). In the texts, feature distribution is not uniform, but varies from speaker community to speaker community, evidence of tribally and Ancestrally language-based dialects.

In Australia, boarding schools also targeted Aboriginal children. The goal of these schools was also to assimilate Aboriginal children into white Euro-Anglo Australian society (Jacobs, 2006). Thousands of

children were forcibly removed from their families and sent off to schools where they were abused or adopted, without the consent of their birth mothers, to white Australian families (Human Rights and Equal Oppurtunity Commission, 1997). The removals began in the 1860s and by 1911 every Australian state except Tasmania had created programs to assimilate Aboriginal children (Jacobs, 2006). The authorities often targeted half-Aboriginal children, assuming that Aboriginal people would soon be extinct, and attempting to remove those with the lightest skin and prevent them from ever identifying with their Aboriginal family and culture (Jacobs, 2006). These boarding schools relied on similar policies as those in North America. They were intended to train children for lives of menial labour for the benefit of their white employers, and destroy any attachment to Aboriginal culture, rather than actually educating the children in the same way as Australian settler children were. As in Canada, the removals accelerated during the 1950s and 1960s, when the boarding schools became completely full and children were increasingly sent to live with white families. It was not until 1976 that a paper at the First Australian Conference on Adoption addressed the problem of Indigenous children being placed in non-Indigenous homes by non-Indigenous welfare workers (Human Rights and Equal Oppurtunity Commission, 1997). An increasing push for self-management plus resistance to colonialism gradually led to the end of the system but not before thousands and thousands of children suffered and died. The number varies from settlement to settlement, but it could be as high as one in four, one in three or even half of the children in an Aboriginal community who were taken, many never to return. Parents resisted as best as they could, often attempting to hide children from government officials, but were forced to give them up under duress and force. The document *Bring them Home: National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander Children from Their Families*, published in 1997, details the policies of each Australian state and the personal experiences of many of those who suffered under them, as well as the ongoing issues of how Indigenous people and children are still treated in Australia today.

A discussion of the full impact of boarding schools in the United States and Australia is beyond the scope of this book, although the circumstances mirror what occurred in Canada. In all three countries, the purpose of boarding schools was not really to teach children English. Boarding schools were meant to destroy their culture and further the racist colonial agenda and the suppression of Indigenous languages while teaching English as part of an overall program of assimilation. The acquisition of English was a means to an end. Children were expected to acquire sufficient spoken English to function as an underclass in Euro-colonial society, rather than to master prestigious spoken and written English varieties in order to further their education and gain professional accreditations which would have equipped them to challenge colonialism. In Australia, this was especially severe, as children were not allowed to attend school past the age of fourteen.

5.9 Conclusion: The diachronic perspective on WitEng

The Witsuwit'en people have had a challenging experience when it comes to learning English. Acquisition of English has come with numerous difficulties and obstacles, as the shift in language ecology was the result of colonial policies that actively worked to make life more difficult for the Witsuwit'en in every way. In the face of aggressive Euro-Canadian expansion, they were forced to adapt as much and as rapidly as they could. Throughout the early twentieth century, the situations shifted to allow English to become the most important language economically and culturally, both in the immediate region, in Canada, and world-wide (Crystal, 2003, p. 36). Canada underwent Confederation, but remained in its early years oriented towards Britain, culturally and linguistically. The Canadian government began to view First Nations peoples as impediments to settlement and enacted policies to remove them and force their disappearance. The Indian Act was repeatedly amended to this effect (INAC, 2017). This led to the massive and very direct attack on Witsuwit'en culture and language. The colonial policies of assimilation, via residential schools, directly pressured First Nations languages and purposely disrupted language transmission. The effect could be considered like that of clear-cutting a forest.

It should be clearly noted that we are also not dealing with a transition from French to English as a second language. French was the basis of the two jargons that were recorded being used north of the Witsuwit'en territory, Slavey Jargon and Jargon Loucheux (Bakker & Papen, 2008). However, early trade in the region involved middlemen, which initially reduced the Witsuwit'en peoples' need to learn European languages. The missionaries in the Widzin Kwah were initially and for a long time, French. The records show that Father Morice actively discouraged anyone from learning French, as well as English, and there is no evidence that the Witsuwit'en people, as a community, learned fluent French. Although words and phrases filtered through via contact and trade, French was not being extensively used by the Witsuwit'en, especially among themselves. There may have been some individuals, perhaps the wives of voyageurs, who had some competency, but French had no foothold in the local Indigenous communities and could not compete with the higher number of speakers using incoming English varieties. Teaching in French was only introduced when the Day School opened in 1938. By this point, English had already become the dominant language of the region.

In the residential schools, children were not given the opportunity to learn in a stable, safe classroom environment. They had very little in the way of formal language lessons, and much of their time was given to manual labour. Furthermore, some children never attended residential school. Many of the first children who learned English at a young age did so at the Day School. Their parents still spoke Witsuwit'en at home, although some spoke a little English:

(118) Cora.64: Um, they they spoke English but at home it was all Witsuwit'en, when white man came they spoke English, can't speak Witsuwit'en to a white man but English was very seldom used at our home, like I said when they had visitors they had to speak English, spoke English.

Due to the impact of language policies in local and residential schools, a sharp divide was created between generations. The first generation of fluent English-speaking children, now grandparents themselves, learned the language in formal educational settings and possibly from contact with English speaking settler children, yet Witsuwit'en remained strong as the home language. Figure 15 diagrams the process.

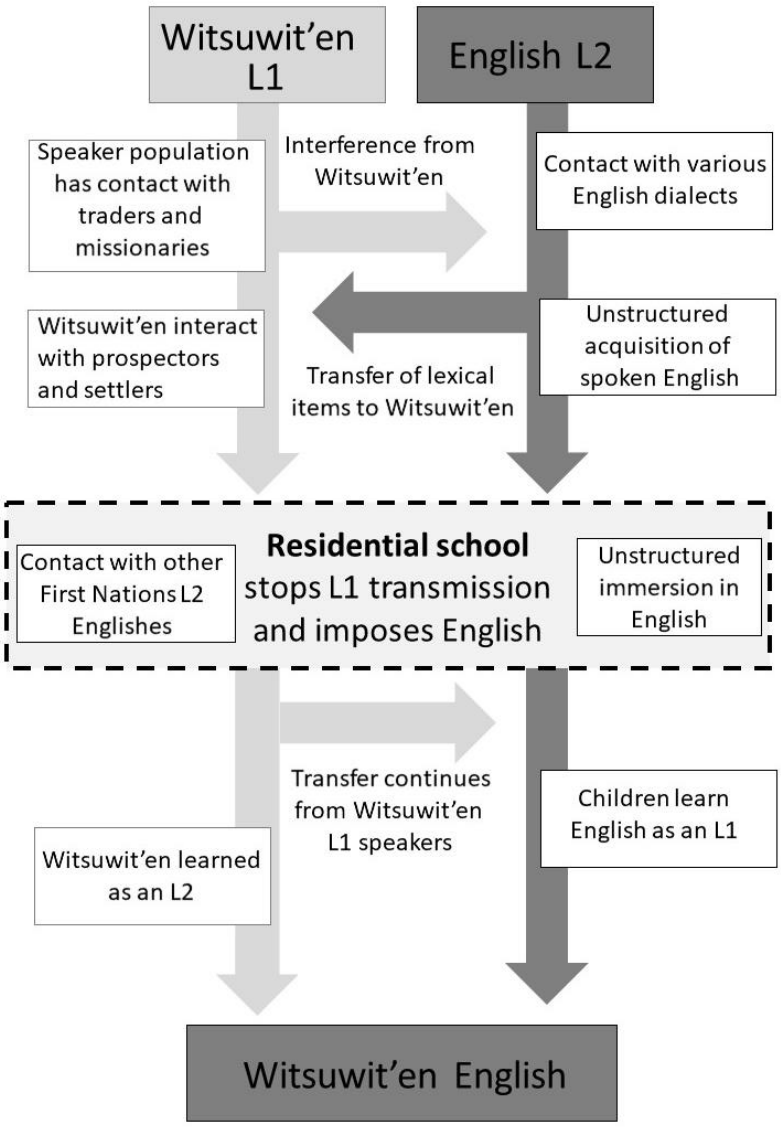

Figure 15: Diagram of language contact and shift between Witsuwit'en and English

At the same time, the influence of the Elders remains potentially strong. The language support programs at the day care, kindergarten and elementary school heavily rely on the knowledge of Witsuwit'en Elders, especially women:

(119) Sonya: So do you like see younger people speaking with an accent or do they sound like white people?

Todd. 62: Um not so much because they're they grew up learning English, they don't have a first language as I did, or some of us did in the community so I guess if there was an accent it would be the speakers and non-speakers, some of them have don't have much exposure to our language so.

Wanda: Well I know that uh my mum said or Jane* told her that John* goes to the Daycare and when he goes home he talks like Jane*. His accent, how Jane* talks and then I was like that's so true cause when Jane went to the Day Care, she used to come home and talk like Aunty Jane*, like hellooo I'm talking to you! Like that's how my aunty talks and it's funny I guess.

Todd.62: That's what I found with my granddaughter, even that short time spent with Jane* it comes out in her.

Wanda: Yeah, yeah I noticed that to with Jane*.

Although the adolescents of Witset are reported to be moving more towards the general and widely used variety of Canadian English, the youngest children are still in contact with the oldest L1 Witsuwit'en speakers. It remains to be seen what impact this will have on the next generation of speakers:

(120) Jenny.67: Um my grandson came up to me a couple years ago, Grandma I want you to teach language at night so I can be like you and speak Witsuwit'en like you he told me.

6 Morphological, syntactic and lexical features of Witsuwit'en English

The following section classifies morpho-syntactic features according to the electronic World Atlas of Varieties of Englishes (Kortmann & Lunkenheimer, 2013). eWAVE's definition of a standard English variety is relatively narrow, being confined to the most dominant varieties of English. However, the atlas is a useful tool of comparison since it covers seventy-six varieties and 325 morpho-syntactic features. Sorting the features this way serves to create a structured set of lists and allows features to be tracked globally, rather than simply compared to local standardized varieties in Canada. Any mention of SCE also serves only to make a comparison between WitEng and the general mainstream middle-class oriented variety that dominates the Canadian linguistic landscape (Chambers, 1998). Many of the verbal constructions that are obligatory in SCE and other "standard" varieties appear to be optional in WitEng. Word order remains mostly fixed, likely a necessity, given the missing syntax elements. The simple present seems to have gained significant ground and overtaken the grammatical domains of other constructions. There is a trend towards deletion of tense markings and auxiliaries, and this leads speakers to use a general underspecified form for a wide variety of situations such as when relating narratives and past events, quoting other speakers and describing completed actions. The discussion and examples of each feature are presented with the eWAVE feature and its number listing. The verb constructions under discussion are underlined.

6.1 The verb phrase

Wider range of uses of progressive be + V-ing: extension to stative verbs (eWAVE F. 89) and Wider range of uses of progressive be + V-ing than in StE: Extension to habitual contexts (eWAVE F. 89): For older speakers, for whom English is an L2, the progressive construction may not have been fully acquired, and is unstable. It may be deleted from the verb or participle:

(121) Edna.57: I got strap from St. Joseph school cause I was skipping and sneak-Ø to town.

(122) Olivia.63: And it was stink-Ø.

(123) Jenny.67: I'm trying to teach the writing but it was too soon for them.

(124) Jenny.67: What I learned from my parents is how to doing beadwork and learning how to do moccasin and blankets.

(125) Holly.81: My doctor was, I quit see-Ø doctor because my doctor was same age as me.

Simple present in continuative or experiential perfect (eWAVE F. 101): The simple present construction replaces the continuative perfect construction or the simple past tense when the speaker is referring to an experience in the past. Speakers may or may not inflect all the verbs in the sentence. Only a single verb is

needed to clarify tense so verbs describing habitual activities can also be inflected for the simple present. The examples below all describe actions in the past that continue up to the present:

(126) Mina.35: The church has been built since 1914, I always see it, 1914 for the church. (Referring to an old photograph of a church.)

(127) Jen.38: I'm there for three years. (Referring to time working in another town.)

(128) Tracey.46: That's where they buries the ol' people. (Referring to an old burial site that has been built over.)

(129) Jody.53: Dad says I'm telling you, that's example. (Referring to advice from the speaker's father in their childhood.)

(130) Olivia.63: And Gitumden, they bring in bear meat, long time ago they used to bring in bear meat.

(131) Cora.64: My dad always tell me you don't make money on dead people, he says that no good for that dead person. (Father is deceased.)

Present tense forms of the modal are used where StE has past tense forms (eWAVE F. 123): The acquisition of the modal may not have been completed, and speakers may swap past for present forms and present for past forms:

(132) Amelia.25: They may as well get money while they could.

(133) Olivia.63: They said I can't learn English in school. (Referring to speaking Witsuwit'en.)

(134) Olivia.63: They can't help his cancer, he's coming home, they can't help him anymore.

(135) Cora.64: He'll crawl up the hill and somebody will be shooting at it. (Referring to watching someone acting out a crest in a mountain goat costume as a child. This is no longer performed.)

(136) Tim.65: Dad was always generous, he likes helping people. (Father is deceased.)

(137) Sally.68: Already the grizzly uh buried the two moose and and he won't let nobody go near it.

Zero past tense forms of regular verbs in the past tense (eWAVE F. 132): In the context of the past tense, the morpheme *-ed* on regular/weak verbs is deleted leading to zero forms. Many of these examples are from narratives that were established to have taken place in the past. The uninflected verb form extends not only to third-person singular, but also third-person plural, first-person singular and first-person plural. It is unknown, given the prevalence of past narratives, if this would also extend to second-person singular and plural. Zero forms are more common in narrative/historical contexts:

(138) Wendy.38: They go up there and they notice-Ø the bodies were missing.

(139) Wendy.38: Father said he notice-Ø that he was being drag-Ø by something in the bushes.

(140) Wendy.38: Is what mum assume-Ø.

(141) Tracey.46: When the subs first start-Ø getting develop-Ø, that's about it.

(142) Lisa.50: They shot at it and revved up the car and it just look-Ø at them.

(143) Olivia.63: Everyone in Moricetown walk-Ø to Two Mile.

(144) Cora.64: If a chief didn't bring nothing they attack-Ø that person and call-Ø it all kinds on name like a nice way.

(145) Tim.65: I ask-Ø him if I can work with him.

(146) Bobby.67: This one happen-Ø on the Smither's planer.

(147) Jenny.67: An elder wouldn't let you interview them unless they know you and trust-Ø you.

(148) Sally.68: My son clean-Ø the house last night.

(149) Holly.81: We don't know nothing about English when we move-Ø to Wolcut.

Leveling of past tense/past tense participle verb forms: unmarked forms (eWAVE F. 129) and Leveling of past tense/past participle verb forms: past tense replacing the past participle (eWAVE F. 130) and finally Leveling of past tense/past participle verb forms: past participle replacing the past tense form (eWAVE F. 131): The past tense is overall subject to a great deal of leveling. In the recordings, leveling most often occurs with the verbs *do* and *see*. In what may be an overlap with the spread of the simple present into the continuative or experiential participle, verbs referencing past actions may take present forms. Alternatively, another participle form could replace the usual one. This could be part of a process of regularizing irregular verbs. This process can apply to both main verbs and modal auxiliaries and frequently occurs with *give* and *run*:

(150) Anna.35: I've went to Alaska.

(151) Charlie.45: And we done some training down there for the camp.

(152) Charlie.45: It went through the falls, we seen it when it was on the other side of the bridge Ø went down the rocks.

(153) Charlie.45: There is people who seen it.

(154) Ivan.47: You think we would Ø saw it as we approached.

(155) Elliot.57: She send her cubs up the tree.

(156) Lars.63: I come back last night from Prince George.

(157) Olivia.63: That I coulda gave to you right there.

(158) Laura.65: When we speak our language we were strap because we spoke our language.

(159) Tim.65: Well, like my dad's mum spoke that to me

(160) Jenny.67: An elder wouldn't let you interview them unless they know you and trust you.

(161) Sally.68: It go back behind the church about fifty years ago.

(162) Holly.76: What happen to her boyfriend I never see.

(163) Jenny.67: Not much anymore since the climate change has came.

(164) Jenny.67: It were up in the multiplex.

Double marking of past tense (eWAVE F. 133): Verbs in the past participle are doubly marked with an *-ed* suffix. This may be part of the process of leveling through analogy:

(165) Jody.53: Yeah I did went to kindergarten up there.

(166) Amelia.25: Because it hurted me so much I had to.

(167) Amelia.25: It hurted me so much that I had to give her up.

(168) Jen.38: I never was born when my dad's mum passted away.

(169) Olivia.63: And he never ever droved.

(170) Olivia.63: They saw two Hawaiian ladies came in.

No auxiliary *be* is required or deletion of auxiliary *be* before progressive (eWAVE F.174) and before *gonna* (eWAVE F.175):

(171) Lisa.50: Our nurse boss Ø gonna teach us.

(172) Lisa.50: Even huckleberry up in the mountain hardly anybody Ø finding anything these days.

(173) Lisa.50: There Ø a bear sleeping in tree yesterday by the canyon. just sleeping away.

(174) Jody.53 She Ø screaming really loud.

(175) Holly.81: Policeman come and we don't know what they Ø asking for.

(176) Todd.62: We Ø told that we have accent.

Deletion of main copula verb *be*: before noun phrases (eWAVE F. 176), adjective phrases (eWAVE F. 177), and locatives (eWAVE F. 178):

(177) Charlie.45: The north side that Ø where the spawning ground for the springs Ø.

(178) Ivan.47: They Ø shy and didn't say nothing about it.

(179) Edna.57: Then we were playing, we knew we were supposed to come, go into the house, it's getting dark but oh we Ø just having so much fun and we were still playing.

(180) Jenny.67: This Ø supposed to be double, for memory game.

(181) Isaac.71: They Ø giving you guarantee that it's not gonna be oil.

(182) Barbara.76: My little puppy Ø this big, running around, play with the cat.

Deletion of auxiliary *have* (eWAVE F.179): Speakers may delete auxiliary *have* before the main verb. It is difficult to determine what has been deleted in running speech, so examples are limited:

(183) Charlie.45: I heard your sister Ø seen it too.

(184) Lisa.50: And I Ø never seen a cougar but everybody else Ø seen a cougar.

(185) Todd.62: We Ø told we have an accent.

(186) Sally.68: Already the grizzly uh Ø buried the two moose and and he won't let nobody go near it.

Auxiliary *do* deletion: This feature does not appear in eWAVE, but is apparent in the data. *Do* may be deleted when part of a question:

(187) Cora.64: That forestry, what Ø they call that?

(188) Edna.57: How many times Ø we got stuck?

(189) Laura.65: What Ø they call that?

Deletion of *to* before infinitives (eWAVE F. 208):

(190) Elain.38: Ask me Ø tell about her eh?

(191) Hunter.45: And we went Ø check.

(192) Olivia.63: I just wanted Ø speak my own language.

(193) Helga.64: She said she's got nothing Ø do with it.

(194) Sally.68: And um the one that used Ø be Aspen.

(195) Barbara.76: We had Ø crawl under the house so that we thought we'd be safe.

Multiple negation/negative concord (eWAVE F. 154): Use of *no* + NOUN, or *nothing* in negative constructions. SCE would prefer *any* + NOUN or *anything* in these constructions:

(196) Jen.38: Back then they didn't have no help or anything.

(197) Charlie.45: As big as it was it never made no sound in the bush, just disappeared.

(198) Charlie.45: That didn't have no siding on it yet.

(199) Todd.62: I didn't tell him nothing.

(200) Olivia.63 He doesn't have no teeth.

(201) Olivia.63: Materialistic stuff don't mean nothing to us.

(202) Cora.64: Those things you don't see no more but they really practice it back then.

(203) Laura.65: I didn't have nothing going on with this and my arm.

(204) Tim.65: He phones back to say can't be be nothing done for her.

Never as a preverbal past tense regulator (eWAVE F. 159): *Never* occurs directly after the subject or after a contraction of the auxiliary and subject pronoun, and before the main verb. SCE prefers the be/have/do + *not* construction:

(205) Amelia.25: After that we never had no mirror in the bathroom.

(206) Jen.38: I never was born when my dad's mum passted away.

(207) Charlie.45: As big as it was it never made no sound in the bush, just disappeared.

(208) Olivia.63: And I never came back till I was eighteen.

(209) Sally.68: Never did make cookies, I make all kind soft things, I never make cookie.

(210) Holly.81: That's my neighbour, she never come over for candies and coffee, twenty-two years now.

Degree modifier adverbs have the same form as adjectives (eWAVE F. 220): This feature is found in the deletion of *-ly* suffix from adverbs:

(211) Wanda.44: It's total Russian, its Russian cartoon.

(212) Wanda.44: His wife speaks fluent.

(213) Mina.35: I think a golf course would do really nice in Moricetown.

(214) Ivan.47: It was real nice hot day, the river come real calm.

(215) Lisa.50: I said oh my god serious?

(216) Olivia.63: And lucky we had those big freezers.

(217) Olivia.63: If I wanna cook I'll cook real good.

(218) Laura.65: I take my language very serious.

(219) Sally.68: Most Witsuwit'en we talk until I went to that school.

Existential/presentational *there's/there is/there* with plural subjects (eWAVE F.172): Plural subjects are preceded by the singular form of *be*. The reverse can also occur as in Ex. 6.108, a singular subject with a plural verb:

(220) Jen.38: There was couches all around.

(221) Charlie.45: Just that sasquatch's legs was bigger than that.

(222) Olivia.63: So we were really happy when our whole family were together.

WitEng also includes some innovative phrasal verbs discussion and communication:

(223) Mina.35: You're not gonna see us arguing around for nothing.

(224) Wanda.44: And tell 'em not to swear down the girls.

(225) Jody.53: She lied through her way.

(226) Jody.53: These things were screaming aroun' at midnight and see it walk around the village.

6.2 The noun and noun phrase

One finds a lower frequency of standard plural and possessive suffix markings in recordings as speakers get older; plurals and possession may be expressed in other ways. Plural markings are often dropped, and regularization of inflected forms like *childrens* occurs.

Plural markings may be deleted after quantifiers (eWAVE F. 56), but it is not obligatory; the presence of a quantifier is not needed for the zero plural to appear. We also find plural marking optional for nouns with human referents (eWAVE F. 57) and plural markings generally optional for nouns with non-human referents (eWAVE F. 58): Human and non-human nouns may be treated as singular, with no plural morpheme or a singular noun form. The context of the sentence establishes that the speaker is referring to items in the plural:

(227) Anna.35: then what I know is that the missionary got involved here.
(228) Tracey.46: There a little side road for the tourist to walk on.
(229) Lisa.50: Unless alone without, there away from all the supervisor and stuff.
(230) Lisa.50: Even huckleberry up in the mountain hardly anybody finding anything these days.
(231) Todd.62: We have five dialect.
(232) Cora.64: That's our five clan.
(233) Jenny.67: Loon we have them in the lakes, and swan, we get a lot of swan, ducks.
(234) Jenny.67: I misplace my keys, I don't know where I put it and how many day I looked for it.
(235) Jenny.67: So uh there was ten cents uh for a hundred pound.
(236) Jenny.67: And got five pound rice.
(237) Barbara.76: Then we start pickin' uh acorn, we steal a acorn from squirrel.
(238) Barbara.76: We set trap my mum set trap my dad set trap ahead one I set a trap too, settin' trap.
(239) Barbara.76: …and she grabbed those sugar.

Plural *-s* is extended to StE irregular plurals (eWAVE F.48) and phonological regularization of plural forms (eWAVE F. 49) We also see different count/mass noun distinctions resulting in the use of plural for StE singular (eWAVE F. 55). We see from the examples that multiple effects can occur across a single sentence:

(240) Ivan.47: That's when all the lumbers were going like crazy, they rough lumbers too. (*Lumbers* refers to slats of wood.)
(241) Olivia.63: It was a red shorts, it was a a real fancy red and black shorts.

(242) Olivia.63: All the Indian medicine that the elderly womens collected, every day different womens brought…

(243) Cora.64: I've done that to a lot of womens and I really respect them accepting what I've taught them.

(244) Cora.64: Especially womens, they are the care takers of Moricetown, womens, womens are the strong leaders in their clan, if it wasn't womens feast wouldn't happen.

(245) Jenny.67: They have someone working on that damaged trees, and they're selling furnitures from that.

(246) Jenny.67: All the foods.

No gender distinction for first person singular pronouns (eWAVE F. 10): This feature appeared mostly with the oldest speakers. Although appearing rarely here, it is commonly observed in FNEs and NAEs. Pronouns in IndEng may be subject to deletion, or other changes. There are several possible reasons; for instance, not all Indigenous languages have pronouns for only biological gender. Pronouns may instead indicate animacy or power relationships:

(247) Aurora.22: She got mad at her. (The first pronoun is a male referent)

(248) Cora.64: If a chief didn't bring nothing they attack that person and call it all kinds of name, like a nice way.

(249) Cora.64: He'll crawl up the hill and somebody will be shooting at it. (Referring to a person acting out a mountain goat.)

(250) Cora.64: The spouse that comes widow, they're not allowed to talk at any time, he can participate but he's not allowed to talk.

(251) Laura.65: Ø was left hand-writing really really nice, Sister Jane* her name, she used to put the pen Ø and Ø start writing right handed.

(252) Jenny.67: And he's telling us about the owl. (Referring to a participant's grandmother.)

(253) Jenny.67: It's an Indian doctor.

(254) Holly.81: My mother sneak away from me try to shoot the deer he just goin' shoot 'im he said.

Subject pronoun drop referential pronouns: referential pronouns (eWAVE F. 43) and subject pronoun drop: dummy pronouns (eWAVE F. 44): While running casual speech is likely to have many halted and restarted phrases, there are some clear examples of pronoun deletion in WitEng:

(255) Jen.38: Ø face turns all red when we speak our English.

(256) Lisa.50: It went through the falls, we seen it when it was on the other side of the bridge Ø went down the rocks.

(257) Laura.65: Ø was left handwriting really really nice, Sister Lucy* her name, she used to put the pen and Ø start writing right-handed.

(258) Jenny.67: From now on you put Ø in Ziplock bag, waterproof.

(259) Barbara.76: Not like nowadays you just order the wood and Ø just deliver the wood to your place.

(260) Holly.82: Ø make me warm up, this coffee.

(261) Holly.82: …and I come here, they both of them want sleep with me, Ø tell the story of my time.

(262) Holly 82: We quit school go back with my mother for trapline maybe Ø was about ten years old.

Use of *us* + NP in subject function (eWAVE F. 28) and use of *us* in object function with singular referent (eWAVE F. 29):

(263) Ellen.43: Us kids would have really long sticks like that with the tails cut and then Ø carry it up the hill.

(264) Tracy.46: Us are bush Indians.

(265) Laura.65: And then us were Beaver.

Object pronoun drop (eWAVE F.42): There were only two tokens recorded, so it is possible that this feature was rare to begin with and has been strongly reduced in usage by younger speaker groups.

(266) Olivia.63: That's where they gave Ø to Polly*.

(267) Olivia.63: That I coulda gave Ø to you right there.

Emphatic reflexives with *own* (eWAVE F. 16): Object pronoun may be used as possessive pronoun together with *own*. WitEng features a noun phrase construction indicating possession with possessive pronoun + *own* + noun:

(268) Aurora.22: They don't know how to speak their own language.

(269) Mina.35: Saying like oh, this is one of our own.

(270) Wanda.44: No, that's mum's own, you guys had one?

(271) Charlie.45: That's the kind of glove I was using but my dad's own was black.

(272) Tracy.46: Yeah they all have their own dialect.

(273) Ivan.47: You ask your own mum, why didn't you teach me?

(274) Ivan.47: Take our own time and teach.

(275) Edna.57: Dies in her own little yellow house.

(276) Olivia.63: This is my own book, yeah.

(277) Olivia.63: She's learning her own language on internet.

(278) Olivia.63: My Grandma's own we didn't want it down (Referring to a feast hall.)

(279) Tim.65: We used to speak our own language in school.

(280) Bobby.67: A native person came up to me and talk in his own language.

(281) Sally.68: That's their own country.

Use of articles and demonstratives in WitEng is quite innovative in some respects. In some cases, transfer or influence from Ancestral languages is possible. Witsuwit'en does not have articles, as plurals are marked on the noun itself. Many Indigenous Englishes use topicalization, not articles, to identify the subject of a sentence therefore it is not unexpected that definite and indefinite articles are often deleted.

The use of a zero article instead of the StE definite article (eWAVE F. 62) or the use of a zero article where StE has an indefinite article (eWAVE F. 63), especially before the lexical items to quantify amounts like *lot*, *lotta* or *little*:

(282) Anna.35: Our Indigenous people Ø long time ago.

(283) Hunter.45: And we made her walk on Ø far side.

(284) Tracy.46: Right at Ø canyon.

(285) Ivan.47: Potlaches are on Ø weekend.

(286) Ivan.47: That's our elders our elders from Ø long time ago are checking up on us.

(287) Olivia.63: Go hang out with Jane Doe, she's Ø pretty good girl.

(288) Olivia.63: Where you go to Ø feast hall.

(289) Cora.64: Thousand dollars you used to get Ø thousand loaves of bread.

(290) Laura.65: We used to live down at Ø other village before.

(291) Laura.65: Like this was Ø long time ago, then Ø different boss came in.

(292) Jenny.67: She walk to Ø store.

(293) Jenny.67: We used oolichan Ø winter months.

(294) Bobby.67: All Ø front wheels were gone.

The use of the definite article where StE or SCE would favour a zero article (eWAVE F. 64) or the use of an indefinite article where StE would favour a zero article (eWAVE F. 65): F. 65 does not appear as often as the zero article, with only one example found in the under sixty group. In some cases, the article appears before a plural noun:

(295) Mina.35: The certain slang words.

(296) Helga.64: In just the two more months I'll be sixty-five.

(297) Laura.65: The Prince George.

(298) Bobby.67: I see about four or five of them in the Smithers.

(299) Jenny.67: Not much anymore since the climate change has came.

Associative plural marked by postposed and *them/them >all/dem* (eWAVE F. 52): WitEng uses a postposition pronoun to reference groups, creating an associative plural with the postposition *them*. I have already discussed the possessive construction NOUN + *own* and the NOUN + *an' 'em.* "Mum's own" and "mumenem" are both phrases that are reportedly only to be heard from speakers in Witset:

(300) Wanda.44: When I was younger I always noticed Jane* an'em like John* an'em.

(301) Wanda.44: So Jane* an'em are Little Frog?

(302) Anna.35: Give'em his consent.

(303) Charlie.45: Great an'em.

(304) Olivia.63: He was laughing with John* and them.

Plural demonstratives with mass nouns: *those* and *these* can be used with mass nouns. This is not found in the eWAVE Atlas. SCE speakers would prefer *that* or *this*. Note that these mass nouns are not regularized with plural *-s*:

(305) Olivia. 63: They were putting her name on all those food.

(306) Olivia. 63: When we're in the territory cause dad had no sons to do any of those.

(307) Olivia.63: And all these stuff that was coming at me.

(308) Laura.65: He taught us all those stuff.

(309) Holly.81: We ask her Grandma what are those black stuff.

Relativizer *that* or *what* in non-restrictive contexts (eWAVE F. 185) and substitution of *that*-clause for infinitival subclause (eWAVE F. 207): *That* is interchangeable with *who* and *what*. Although *that* as a relative pronoun is allowed in SCE, here there seems to be a preference for *that* and *that* is used where a SCE speaker would likely prefer *what* or *who*:

(310) Mona.29: If you're talking to Witsuwit'en that are not English speaking.

(311) Charlie.45: That's both him when he was a teenager.

(312) Olivia.63: They saw two Hawaiian ladies came in that traded the soap berries with their medicine.

(313) Cora.64: Those are the two that are picking up the Witsuwit'en language.

(314) Helga.64: It's that much harder to try to teach our kids that was taken way from us.

(315) Laura.65: Me and my sister that was.

(316) Laura.65: It would be our Grandma that would skin the moose.

(317) Laura.65: That was involved male and female getting married the Indian way.

That before plural nouns and replacing the definite article *the*: Where most SCE speakers would prefer the definite article *the* or no demonstrative at all, WitEng speakers use *that* + obj. plural noun. This construction can be used in either subject or object position. It can also be part of a prepositional or an adverbial clause. It is used for constructions involving marked plural nouns. It might be that this construction reinforces the plural by double marking it, and it could also be that the singular determiner *that* is replacing *those*. While eWAVE lists the possibility of *a* demonstrative used in place of the definite article (eWAVE F. 67) there is no mention of it systemically being used before a plural noun:

(318) Wanda.44: I was doing a tour of Moricetown with that Ottawa kids.

(319) Ivan.47: That's our elders, our elders from long time ago are checking up on us.

(320) Olivia.63: He can walk without that crutches.

(321) Olivia.63: I rode for them for forty years and I worked for them that forty years.

(322) Cora.64: It's right on Ø main drag, that little buildings, what they call it.

(323) Jenny.67: They have someone working on that damaged trees.

(324) Holly.81: We don't know nothing about English when we move to Wolcut and that white kids do something in school, they blame us and they call policeman.

Demonstrative *that* as an intensifier for emphasis, and possibly *that* as a definite article (eWAVE F. 67): We also see *that* in contexts where SCE speakers might prefer to use the definite or indefinite article or no article before the subject or object noun. It can appear before singular and mass nouns. Here it appears to be used as part of a noun phrase to highlight and support the relevant noun in place of the definite or indefinite article:

(325) Mona.29: That Red Apple in Smithers is fine for them.

(326) Charlie.45: He always drank that Royal White.

(327) Todd.62: Before that time I met John* at the Bay.

(328) Helga. 64: I think kids our teenagers, kids are buying too much of that energy drink.

(329) Cora.64: I went to that Adult Ed.

(330) Cora.64: That broken English version.

(331) Tim.65: He's the one that saved me from that epilepsy.

(332) Laura.65: We had that Canada flag on us we had a flag on us, we had Ø Canadian flag on us.

(333) Jenny.67: I didn't teach my children that language.

(334) Bobby.67: Try to stay away from that alcohol as much as you can.

(335) Sally.68: Most Witsuwit'en we talk until I went to that school.

Prepositions in WitEng are not only subject to patterns of deletion but are also combined to create new ones that seem to reflect Ancestral language patterns. eWAVE lists the deletion of stranded prepositions in relative clauses (eWAVE F. 198) and the deletion of any preposition (eWAVE F. 216):

(336) Anna.35: I was going Ø school in Smithers.

(337) Hunter.45: I could just see this thing Ø corner of my eye.

(338) Hunter.45: She gets calls and she goes Ø clean John Doe's house.

(339) Edna.57: Before we're bring people Ø their appointments.

(340) Todd.62: I don't travel Ø Canada much.

(341) Todd.62: There used to be a snake pit up Ø Bulkley canyon, a huge one.

(342) Laura.65: I don't mind shopping Ø Extra Food.

(343) Helga.64: She seems to be addicted Ø this energy drink, she thinks it's helping her.

Speakers use a variety of prepositions that would seem unusual to a SCE speaker and have created some innovative constructions as a result. The constructions are reminiscent of directional constructions used in Witsuwit'en, which locate people or places in relation to local geographic spatial and directional relationships. The intention is to create a sense of distance and direction between the speaker and a referent or providing a sense of spatial reference to an action or activity:

(344) Wanda.44: To tell them that that was a lesson to them.

(345) Wanda.44: Like people down Ontario Toronto way.

(346) Mine.35: I know down south they get paid more than what they get paid down this way.

(347) Hunter.45: I know one story that always stick out on me.

(348) Charlie.45: She and her family stays down that way.

(349) Cora.64: They put it on that widow's bag and within those years.

(350) Laura.64: We went with a youth group for that Europe.

(351) Laura.64: We had the common sense to leave at a certain period of time.

(352) Laura.64: We used to find human remains down to where my mum's still living today.

Other possibilities for fronting other than StE (eWAVE F. 224): Instances of participants using a different word order the SCE would normally allow were recorded:

(353) Hunter.45: Winter, it just gets harder to pack them out.

(354) Charlie.45: Horse racing they were good at it two small women.

(355) Olivia.63: Beavers Operation they called them, from each different countries.

(356) Laura.65: The Day School, I went there for one year in Moricetown and went to St. Joseph's.

(357) Laura.65: Was left handwriting really really nice, Sister Jane* her name, she used to put the pen and start writing righthanded.

Much as comparative marker (eWAVE F. 81): *Much* can replace *many* with plural nouns and pronouns:

(358) Anna.35: They don't have very much items that you really need.

(359) Wanda.44: Name as much restaurants in Smithers as you can remember.

(360) Charlie.45: Too much expenses, the optimizer kept breaking down.

(361) Ivan.47: There's so much things happenings people's lives.

(362) Olivia.63: Oh I had so much good times with them.

(363) Cora.64: See too much memories of myself facing the wall.

(364) Jenny.67: There's not much of these.

Speakers may also employ double adjectives for emphasis. This is similar to (eWAVE F.78): double comparatives and superlatives, which is common in the database. Here it seems to be limited to a specific number of phrases denoting size, especially *little* and *tiny*:

(365) Charlie.45: Huge big head.

(366) Charlie.45: It was big huge moose.

(367) Edna.57: Any ways the little tiny cabin.

(368) Edna.57: We lived in a tiny little house.

(369) Alexia.64: They had little tiny cabin beside the big house.

(370) Alexia.64: John* picked us up with a small tiny boat.

(371) Helen.64: We lived in a tiny little house.

6.3 Lexical items

WitEng has distinct lexical items. A few words showed up in more than one interview, and some of them were discussed in the interviews, although this list is certainly incomplete. They can be divided into two categories. The first category is made up of loans entering into English through Witsuwit'en. These lexical items can be native Witsuwit'en words or French loan words in Witsuwit'en. One example of the latter is *lasuc* for "sugar." French loans, borrowed with the article and noun as one lexeme, are used as a normal English noun, complete with an article:

(372) Wanda.44: You want some *lasuc*?

Two examples from Witsuwit'en are *neeto*, and *mah*'. *Neeto* denotes either a Euro-Canadian "white" person or the English language and is derived from the Witsuwit'en word *nïdo*. The exact original meaning is unknown, and it can be pejorative (Morin, 2011, p. 210). *Mah'* is Witsuwit'en word that denotes agreement, similar to *yes* in English:

(373) Mona.29: All the *neeto* kids are taking about the places they went in summer.

(374) Hunter.45: She married *neeto*.

(375) Olivia.63: That's *neeto* law.

(376) Tim.65: *Mah!* Mum was only fourteen, they were makin' shakes for roof.

(377) Bobby.67: I never forget that I said I'm not a *neeto*.

(378) Bobby.67: My kids only know how to talk *neeto*.

(379) Bobby.67: Gee who taught that *neeto* to talk Indian? I said that's no *neeto* that's my baby brother.

(380) Jenny.67: *Mah*, the vowels sounds, properly.

(381) Barbara.76: I'll just need sugar, two (was given sugar cubes) *mah*.

Beh' is another word that appeared as some participants discussed traditional fishing practices. The term refers to salmon that has been processed through cutting, drying and smoking. It functions in WitEng as a full noun and can also be compounded with English words to create terms like *beh' house* and *popcorn beh'*. These terms refer to the shacks or huts where salmon is cut up and smoked and to small, bite sized pieces of salmon kept in bags, often eaten with butter or a dip, respectively:

(382) Wanda.44: She's the family guru of smoked salmon. We have a family *beh'* house back there, I remember being back there when you guys were doin' *beh* so that's our *beh'* house and she's been doi- makin' *beh'* since when, beginning of July?

(383) Sally.68: I had *beh*' instead of chips.

WitEng also reassigns meaning to English words to create local vernacular. We have already seen that this process is productive with prepositions. Otherwise, WitEng speakers also repurpose English adjectives and verbs. There are without doubt other terms that could be included, but for now this short list must suffice. *Ugly* now serves not only a teasing insult to both people and objects. The verb *to bump* refers to a collision with a car or other vehicle. *Bush* refers to the surrounding forest area and mountain territories and was overheard several times outside of the recorded interviews, and is used widely in Northern Canada, also by non-Indigenous people, for instance, as in the term "bush pilot." Finally, as seen in the previous chapter, the term *slang* refers to the English spoken the Witsuwit'en in Witset and other communities:

(384) Wanda.44: If somebody calls you ugly don't take it to offense it's just our slang.

(385) Wanda.44: My ugly computer.

(386) Wanda.44: Stupid, dumb ugly email.

(387) Wanda.44: My dad bumped the totem pole.

(388) Wanda.44: I coulda been bumped.

(389) Wanda.44: After she got bumped, he'd look around for her.

(390) Mona. 29: But some of our kids don't feel comfortable using our slang.

(391) Mona. 29: If I'm using some of my slang.

(392) Mona.29: Sometimes when you're getting your story and your slang comes out.

(393) Anna.35: They have different slangs of how to say it.

(394) Tim.65: Her dog was bumped.

6.4 WitEng: the synchronic perspective

Many of the features listed above are found in eWAVE and documented in other varieties of Native American Englishes and First Nations Englishes. WitEng also has several distinctive features and is productive in creating new constructions and meanings. It shares some relatively recent widespread developments with SCE, such as the spread of *gonna* and *wanna* (Dollinger, 2008) and quotative *be like* (Tagliamonte, 2006).

It is not always clear what nonstandard feature may be present and how it should be classified, even within the context of the conversation. In the phrase "I don't remember I talk like that", given the presence of the first-person singular pronoun, it seems meant as a simple past construction with both *that* and *-ed* deleted in the subordinate clause. But ambiguity is found in sentences such as the following:

(395) Jenny.67: Medicine woman up at Stoney Creek, her old man shoot moose.

(396) Holly.81: You kids Ø lucky, you never go long ways go to school.

In Ex. 395 we are either seeing *shoot* without verbal *-s*, as a habitual, or the past verb leveled to simple present with a deleted indefinite article. The first interpretation is more likely given the context of the discussion around stories about the past and a Witsuwit'en medicine woman. In Ex. 396 is the sentence meant to be "You kids are lucky, *you never had to go a long ways* to go to school" or "You kids are lucky, *you never went a long ways* to go to school?" In Ex. 397, below, was the auxiliary *have* deleted or is it that the form of the strong verb has been changed? In the following Ex. 398, did the speaker delete the indefinite article before the object phrase, or was plural *-s* on the object noun *distances* itself deleted?

(397) Olivia.63: First time they seen a CD.

(398) Olivia.63: Gee, I drove long distance with these guys.

(399) Tim.65: Somebody saw a car stop and took Spot.

In the above Ex. 399 the sentence has two possible interpretations. In GC English the sentence would probably be "Someone saw a car stop and *take* Spot But this could also be a case of pronoun deletion: "Someone saw a car stop and *they* took Spot." Since WitEng allows for both pronoun deletion and the use of a strong verb's preterite verb form in the subordinate clause, it is difficult to put this in one category or the other. In some cases, this ambiguity makes analysis difficult to classify, but the meaning is not ambiguous to the people involved in the conversation.

6.4.1 Verbal morphology

In WitEng, the verb phrase can be altered in several ways. The overall structure and order of the sentences remain compatible with the SCE sentence structure. Regular/weak verbs can be changed by removing the morphemic endings and irregular/strong verbs by choosing a verb form that would normally be used in another tense/aspect, but again, an SVO word order is maintained. Speakers often level the past tense into the simple present, or delete auxiliary verbs, especially when recounting more distant past events and in storytelling. Tense can often be inferred from context. The initial main verb in the sentence may establish tense, and the following verbs do not need to be inflected. Since the interviews focused on story telling, Witsuwit'en customs, and speaker's personal histories, there was ample opportunity for these constructions to occur. In the example below, the verbs that should be conjugated for past tense are underlined:

(400) Barbara.76: They told me lotta stories, now that I'm getting older I'm forgettin', there was a story long time ago I guess you gotta all, ever tell you, did anybody tell you that there were the, a young girl turn into a frog and it happen right in Moricetown eh? Girl disappeared and year uh the granddaughter, she turn into a frog a (indistinct speech) yeah and they turn into frog and they use to live in smokehouse, they kick- kicked that frog out, that frog keep coming back, they didn't know it was their daughter that vanished, turn into frog, hmm gee I forgot the rest.

WitEng shares a number of verb features with varieties listed on the eWAVE database. The most prominent are those that level past and perfect tenses in the simple present. A snapshot of WitEng shows that the system of conjugation for irregular/strong verbs is shifting. Speakers do not use preterite verb forms systematically and often use the zero form of regular verbs:

(401) Olivia.63: I keep it running, so I stayed in the truck and keep it running.

Interestingly, eWAVE F. 128, the regularization of irregular verb forms, was very rare, despite it appearing in 62% of the varieties in eWAVE and being obligatory or pervasive in many North American varieties,

including Newfoundland English. The examples listed above were the only ones recorded. WitEng seems to instead prefer the deletion of copula and auxiliary verb clause elements. These deletions can occur before progressives and *gonna,* as well as noun, adjective and locative phrases:

(402) Lisa.50: Even huckleberry up in the mountain hardly anybody Ø finding anything these days.

(403) Charlie.45: The north side that Ø where the spawning ground for the springs Ø.

The verbal inflection system of Witsuwit'en is quite varied and like in many highly agglutinative languages, very complex. Some verbs are inflectionally defective, and cannot be inflected for first or second person, while some can be inflected only for second person, others have no perfective, or no imperfective, or some have no positive forms, and some cannot be inflected for tense or subject (Hargus, 2007). Witsuwit'en verbs are heavily weighted with prefixes, essentially the opposite of the English verb, which is conjugated with suffixes, or changes in the verb form and ablauts. Prefixes account for imperfective, perfective (both aspectual), future (tense) and optative (mood). In the active verb, tense is marked by the prefix and a stem-final consonant. Voiced stem-final verbs are typically non-perfective and voiced stem-final verbs perfective (Hargus, 2007). In stative or neuter verbs, perfective morphology applies to both perfective and imperfective verbs, both in positive and negative forms. In active verbs, the main difference between imperfective and perfective verbs rests on whether the action is completed or not. The imperfective is used to handle narratives involving past activities; Hargus says that in one example (although she does not provide it), the background of the story is imperfective and in the second part with the more immediate action, uses perfective verbs (Hargus, 2007, p. 359).

Given that a Witsuwit'en verb is the central element of a clause, and the focus of the most prefixation, the deletion of auxiliary elements of the verb phrase in WitEng might be part of an effort to focus attention back on the main verb. Speakers are removing the suffixes that do not exist in a Witsuwit'en verb construction, essentially maintaining post-verb empty slots. English verbs, especially the most common regular verbs, have fewer "slots" to fill with no prefixes. In many examples, WitEng speakers also begin sentences and stories with the past tense, and then use the simple present and bare verbs for the rest of the sentence, or they slip in and out of the tenses. Features like F. 101 which use the marked present tense for the past, are appropriate for storytelling, when the context makes it clear that an event is contained, as it were, in the far past, and therefore the distinction between past and present tense marking becomes optional within the narrative flow. The use of a narrative present is, of course quite common across all varieties of English. The text below, part of a larger story (see Appendix), shows how the first part of the text, establishes the framework of a past narrative, after which the storyteller is free to vary the tenses in the story itself:

(404) Wendy.38: How we got the Moricetown name, John* tol' me that story 'bout the sasquatches, erm, Bigfoot, um the way John Doe told me was uh Father his name was Father Morice, is how she said it, said that he took, he like-Ø being the father of Moricetown, when he buried somebody he said that in short he said when he buried somebody, they go up there and they notice-Ø that the bodies were missing.

Some of the rarer features are found only in texts from speakers in the fifty-five and above age group. These include extensions of the progressive to past habitual (eWAVE F. 88) and continuative contexts (eWAVE F.89). These two features are attested in 63% and 49% of eWAVE varieties. We also find deletion of the progressive *-ing*. At the point of this research's time, the progressive construction in WitEng seems to be somewhat unstable.

(405) Barbara.76: Went long ways to go to trap in dad's territory, they never uh eh no I don't know where where in the bush eh and then it was snow-Ø, lost our track an' we're just going aroun' oh mum somebody was here they went up that way yeah it was our own track, I feel real happy for nothing.

The progressive suffix *-ing* may conflict with Witsuwit'en verb prefixation. Witsuwit'en has no progressive, instead using a perfective, which is used more for the past tense. It can be translated as V-ed or V-ing in English (Hargus, 2007, p. 359). In Witsuwit'en, the customary aspect denotes habitual activities, and is frequently realized as the verb stem.

The spread of the bare verb and the simple present may be accelerated by Consonant Cluster Reduction. The conditions that favour CCR include word final consonant sequences ending with interdental fricatives and stops. Any time a regular verb takes the *-ed* suffix, a potential environment for CCR is created. Enough occurrences of CCR clipping off the past tense morpheme *-ed* could have helped to normalize the bare verb in past tense constructions: hence, "I misplace my keys" is one acceptable variation in the WitEng grammar continuum.

(406) Jenny.67: And tell you this true story about my dad he's on Blun' Blunt Mountain coming home from trapping, he sit sleep under the tree, build a fire stay overnight pretty soon he hear Indian song up in the trees drumming an Witsuwit'en song and dad said their Elders tol' him only person hear that song he going to be (indistinct speech) gonna become (indistinct speech) what he said to me he heard it but then dad threw, he shoot gun towards that way, he ordered that singer go away and that song went away right away.

(407) Sally.68: No, I go with my mother is see bear big bear standing up an' I saw his teeth rah noisy and my mother said get down hide get down they're goin' kill us she said, I hike

> down and they shoot bear right in his head, I, it looks like, I don't shoot, he said next day go and look for that and he shoot and he dead, find the bear.

Witsuwit'en lacks an equivalent to the English infinitive (Hargus, 2007). As a result, WitEng speakers may be prompted to delete the *to* infinitive. This feature is less common in the eWAVE atlas, being pervasive or obligatory in only ten varieties and confirmed in fifteen others.

Genee and Stigter (2010) noted similar features in their review of Blackfoot English which omits inflections affecting regular and irregular verbs, as well as auxiliaries. In Blackfoot English, the particle *to* may be omitted and Genee and Stigter note the absence of a comparative form in Blackfoot grammar, thus explaining the lack of it in English (ibid. p. 68). Blackfoot uses fully inflected verbs in the predicate and affixes to indicate progressive and future tenses but lacks an equivalent for the English past participle, and tense marking itself is generally optional (Genee & Stigter, 2010, p. 66). They also suggest the presence of uninflected past participle forms to be the result of phonological factors as well. Consonant clusters are not allowed at the beginning or ending of a syllable in Blackfoot; however, as their sources are written, they are unable to conclude if the alterations are the result of CCR, influenced by Blackfoot phonology, or are transfer features from Blackfoot (Genee & Stigter, 2010).

Be, *have* and *get* are frequently deleted in IndEng (Leap, 1993, p. 70). Comparisons have also been made between these constructions and those in Black English vernaculars (Leap, 1993; Labov, 1969; Labov, 1972; Wolfram & Fasold, 1974). Labov finds that copula deletion in African American Vernacular English (AAVE) in is not mandatory, and that speakers prefer deletion to contraction (Labov, 2001). Deletion is dependent on phonology. AAVE speakers do not delete with tense vowels that cannot be reduced to schwa, so *be*, *ain't*, and *can't* are not subject to deletion, and contractions with final nasals are not reduced (Labov, 2001, p. 228). AAVE will not delete copulas after pronouns but favors contraction of the copula when the subject ends with vowels, while subjects that end with consonants will trigger deletion of the copula (Labov, 2001, p. 228). According to Leap NAE grammars use the same rules as African American Englishes but broaden their scope. In Iseltan English, deletion of copula "linking verbs" and "helping verbs" is a common occurrence (Leap, 1993, p. 70). In Mohave English, only one instance of copula *be* deletion was found, but it is common in perfective and passive constructions (Leap, 1993, p. 71). Copula deletion is not widely attested in spoken Ute English but occurs widely in written Ute English (Leap, 1993, p. 71). We see that WitEng allows the deletion of a main and copula *be* after a noun and a pronoun and following both a vowel and a consonant. In both sets of examples for deletion in eWAVE F. 174, F. 175, F. 176, F. 177 and F. 178, the preference is for deletion following vowels and pronouns.

6.4.2 Negation

WitEng shares patterns of non-standard negation with other English varieties. While preverbal negation and multiple negation are found, WitEng does not appear to make any strong use of Features 155, 156 or 157, that is negation involving *ain't*. This would be an important distinction between WitEng and SCE rural dialects, which do allow *ain't*. *Ain't* is also very frequent in the North American and Atlantic English varieties in eWAVE. *Ain't* as a generic negator (eWAVE F. 157) is quite rare, but *ain't* as a negated form of *be* (eWAVE F. 155) is considered pervasive or obligatory in all but one continental US variety (Gullah). It is found in NflnE (Wagner, 2012; Clarke, 2010) and in working class/rural Canadian English (Boberg, 2010). It is somewhat surprising not to find it in this data. Instead, preverbal negators like (eWAVE F. 154) Multiple negation/negative concord and (eWAVE F. 159) *never* as preverbal past tense negator, are preferred:

(408) Amelia.25: But I never had it since.

(409) Jen.38: I never was born when my dad's mum passted away.

(410) Olivia.63: I never spoke English from three years old on.

(411) Laura.65: We didn't have nothing like that.

This may also be related to Witsuwit'en grammar. Negation is morphological in Witsuwit'en, and is marked with a prefix *we#*, as well as prefixes *s*- or *i*-, in the tense zone, depending on the verb aspect (Hargus, 2007, p. 370). The negative prefix *s*- is used with the future and optative, and with imperfective active verbs. The prefix *i*- is used with perfective verbs and with imperfective neuter verbs. Hargus suggests that literal translations of Witsuwit'en into English show tense as having more weight than negation in a sentence. The choice of preverbal negation would suit Witsuwit'en negative prefixes and could be positive transfer. Since nonstandard varieties of English have a slot in the syntax which allows for preverbal negation, WitEng speakers may match up this space in their syntax with the corresponding prefix space in Witsuwit'en morphology.

6.4.3 Social stratification

There were two morpho-syntactic features with sufficient tokens to plot according to age and gender, non-standard plurals and non-standard articles. Tokens were counted and plotted as percentages of all occurrences. This included all of the following:

- eWAVE F. 48: The extension of -s to StE irregular plurals and
- eWAVE F. 49: The phonological regularization of plural forms
- eWAVE F. 55: Different count/mass noun distinctions resulting in use of plural for StE singular
- eWAVE F. 56: Plural markings absent after quantifiers

- eWAVE F. 57: Plural marking optional for nouns with human referents
- eWAVE F. 58: Plural markings generally optional for nouns with non-human referents
- eWAVE F. 58: Regularization of plural nouns: *-s* is extended to irregular plurals and mass nouns are regularized with plural *-s*
- eWAVE F. 62: The use of a zero article instead of the StE definite article
- eWAVE F. 63: The use of a zero article where StE has indefinite article
- eWAVE F. 64: The use of the definite article where StE or SCE would favour a zero article
- eWAVE F. 65: The use of an indefinite article where StE would favour a zero article

These tokens where tallied as a percentage of all instances where a standard plural or article would occur. The resulting data tables were analyzed and plotted in R.

Table 14: Variation in plural and article usage by age in women

Name	**Age**	**Standard plural *-s***	**Plurals deleted**	**Percentage of non-standard occurrences**	**Articles**	**Articles non-standard**	**Percentage of non-standard occurrences**
Amelia	25	38	31	81%	40	4	10%
Mona	29	132	1	0.07%	121	3	2%
Anna	32	52	5	9%	64	11	17%
Mina	35	80	13	16%	45	0	0%
Jen	38	47	0	0%	18	3	16%
Elaine	38	22	2	9%	40	5	12%
Ellen	43	33	1	3%	39	0	0%
Tracey	46	35	1	2%	20	2	1%
Lisa	50	21	4	19%	19	2	10%
Jody	53	14	3	21%	33	6	18%
Hanna	56	75	24	32%	51	1	1%
Edna	57	14	5	35%	36	9	23%
Olivia	63	76	10	13%	105	16	15%
Cora	64	103	42	40%	95	29	30%
Alexia	64	37	4	10%	46	15	32%
Helga	64	22	3	13%	50	7	14%

Laura	65	44	14	31%	57	30	52%
Jenny	67	37	2	5%	39	14	35%
Sally	68	93	6	6%	72	27	37%
Barbara	76	20	3	15%	61	29	47%
Holly	81	38	9	11%	74	50	67%
Total		1,033	183	17%	1,125	265	23%

Table 15: Variation in plural and article usage by age in men

Name	**Age**	**Plurals**	**Non-standard plural**	**Percentage of non-standard occurrences**	**Articles**	**Non-standard articles**	**Percentage of non-standard occurrences**
Charlie	45	79	7	8%	56	10	17%
Hunter	45	64	1	1%	48	3	6%
Ivan	47	48	4	8%	75	5	6%
Elliot	57	79	4	5%	97	4	4%
Todd	62	39	2	5%	46	1	2%
Tim	65	22	2	9%	65	7	10%
Bobby	67	37	2	5%	33	8	24%
Isaac	71	38	17	44%	64	37	57%
Total		406	39	9%	484	75	15%

Table 14 and Table 15 show women using the non-standard features more often than men, in the case of plurals, nearly twice as much. Although there is the same issue with there being less data from men, the data is very regular. The same two male speakers, Isaac and Charlie, have the highest percentages on both halves of the data table. As Isaac is the oldest male participant it would be expected that he shows a high rate of non-standard features. With Charlie, it is less clear what the reason is. Witsuwit'en was his L1 before he attended residential school and lost his fluency, so it could be that his L2 English features fossilized. He has no post-secondary education and has worked locally at the sawmill and in other so-called "blue-collar" jobs throughout northern BC. When plotted, the variation on plurals shows Elder women with the overall highest usage. The oldest male speaker uses so much that he becomes an outlier.

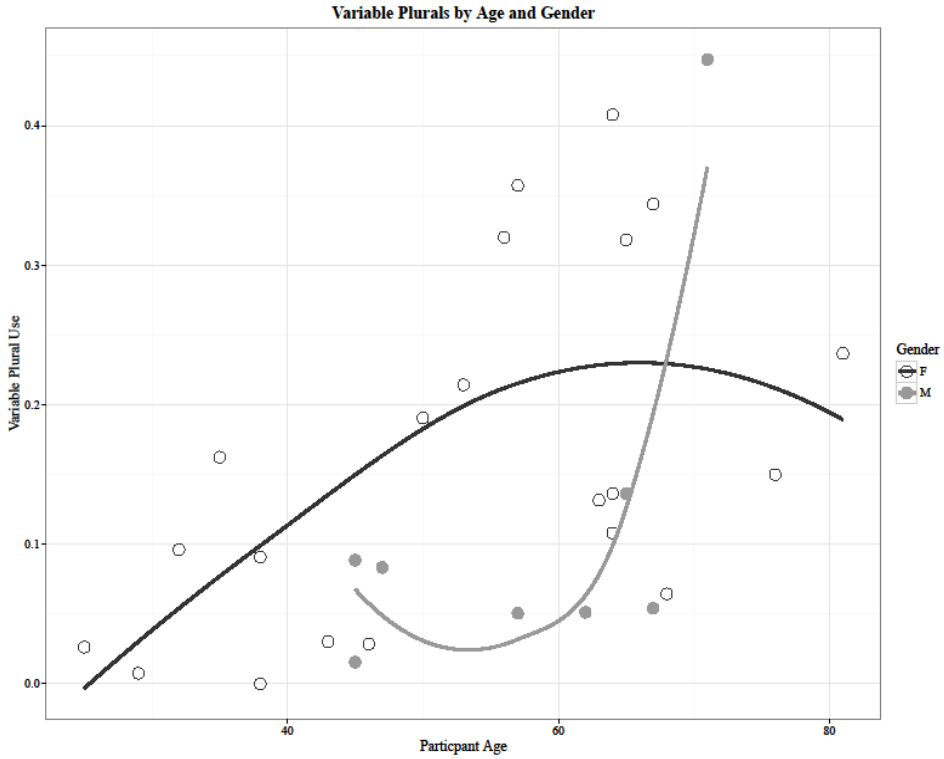

Figure 16: Plot of Non-standard plural use by age and gender

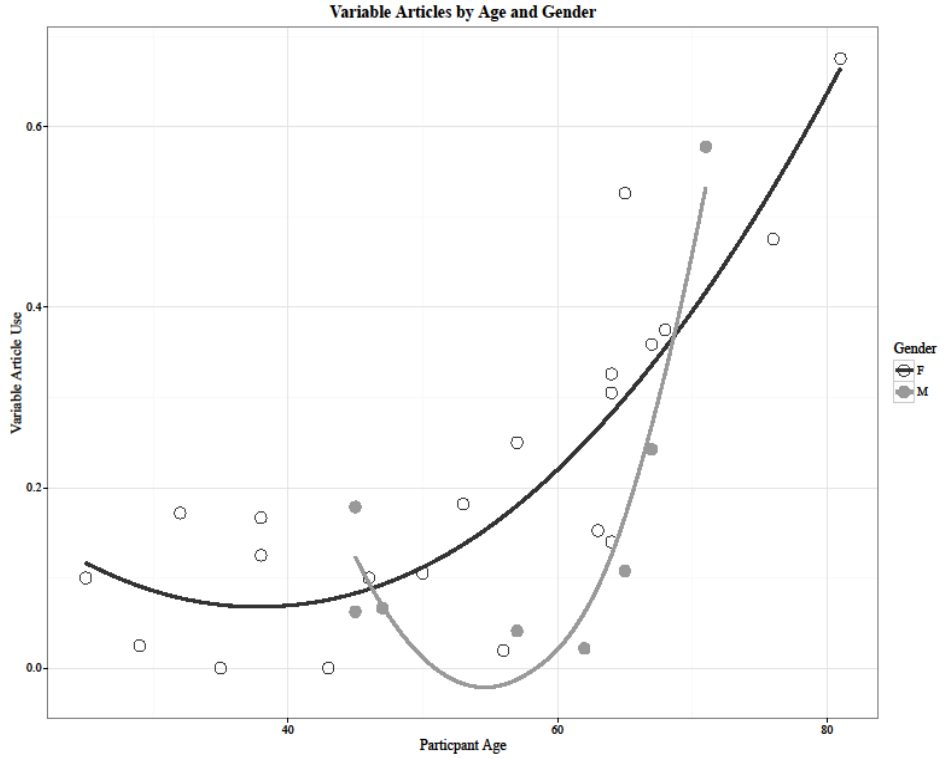

Figure 17: Plot of Non-standard article use by age and gender

Both plots show age-grading for men, with the typical U- curve. As with CCR there is a decline of feature use with younger speakers. The drop begins to level around when speakers are between 50 and 60. Unusually, even with the small number of male speakers over a shorter range of ages, we see more nonstandard usage by women. With the exception of one outlier, men remain clustered on the lower half of the plot. In the case of non-standard plurals, we do not see the U curve, due to the low token counts of some older women.

Deletion of plural endings, articles and full nouns is allowed. The fact that WitEng has no written standard and is a primarily oral variety may have some weight here. Nouns in Witsuwit'en do not have a plural morpheme. Other information about the noun is marked onto the verb, with information on noun classes denoting animacy, shape, and number coming in the form of verbal qualifier prefixes and classificatory verb roots. Since the information is loaded onto the verb, speakers might be inclined to delete plural markings on some nouns, such as those preceded by quantifiers, and nouns with human or non-human referents:

(412) Holly.81: My doctor was, I quit see-Ø doctor because my doctor was Ø same age as me, I'm sixty years old sixty five doctor sixty-five too and they quit since that I got no doctor, oh my mother was Ø good doctor, get Indian medicine for us when we get Ø bad cold, go in the bush and get Indian medicine, boil something that in Ø stew, give us, every night and morning, just one week we get sick feel better she's Ø good doctor.

(413) Helga.64: And another story is I heard it from Jane*, and we always, everybody lived out in camps in the bush and she said there's timber wolf-Ø, they're all howling and um she said Gitdimt'en gonna die and um it's a timber wolf, they know all the different animals and that was howling all night long and the next day the two more days after the messenger came and said somebody passed away in Burns Lake, he walks on foot to pass the message, yep Gitdimt'en passed away, so they know by the different animals.

WitEng also uses *much* for *many*, attributable to the lack of distinction in Witsuwit'en between *many* and *much*, both of which can be translated as *łay* (Hargus, 2007, p. 320):

(414) Charlie.45: They had, they had so much coolers and they had really lots of coolers and lot of bins for it too.

(415) Olivia.63: Oh I had so much good times with them.

Nouns are instead directly marked by prefixes and postpositions, but these indicate states such as possession rather than generality (*a/an*) or specificity (*the*) as in English. There is a pattern established by French loanwords in Witsuwit'en, where one of two strategies to eliminate articles are followed (Hargus, 2007).

Some words are borrowed from French without the definite article, such as *dimos*, from French *Dimanche* "week", Witsuwit'en *məsəç* French "merci", or *Goshon/cochon*, from French *porc* or 'pig' (Hargus, 2007, pp. 283-284). Along with deletions, articles were merged with the noun, as seen in *lili* <les lits "bed" and *liGoc* <*les coqs* "chicken" (Hargus, 2007, p. 282). Witsuwit'en marks the plural with prefix /yɐ/. Often translated as "all", it pluralizes subjects. This may explain why in WitEng, when a noun is preceded by an adjective indicating a general amount, such as *lots* or *lotta*, the article may be deleted. As these adjectives indicate "more than one" of whatever the following noun is, an article that indicates a singular amount could be seen as contradictory or redundant. The indefinite article can therefore be deleted before an adjective that quantifies general amounts, such as *lots* or *lotta*:

(416) Anna.35: They had a huge battle Ø long time ago.

(417) Olivia.63: The Elders Ø long time ago.

(418) Cora.64: Thousand dollars that Ø three hundred difference.

This pattern of deletion is found in other FNEs. In Blackfoot English, one finds the same variation on articles and like other Algonquian languages, does not have articles and does not include definiteness as a grammatic distinction (Genee & Stigter, 2010, p. 77). Northern Ute speakers are more likely to delete the article if the noun occurs in the sentence predicate and less likely if the noun is in the subject position and identifies the sentences primary agent (Leap, 1993, p. 55).

Instead of using articles, speakers in some IndEng use topicalization to move a topic to the front of the sentence. Topicalization in Ute involves adding a marker to the end of a construction and possibly reconfiguring the whole sentence (Leap, 1993, p. 56). WitEng speakers were periodically recorded doing something similar, beginning sentences with a topical noun phrase, and later referencing it with a pronoun:

(419) Olivia.63: Beaver's Operation they called them, from each different countries.

Parallel constructions are found in Witsuwit'en (Hargus, 2007, p. 306):

(420) yəχ c'ət'ał
house things are being eaten
"People are eating inside the house."

As a further step, the WitEng grammar system has recontextualized English determiners and demonstratives, notably focusing on expanding the use of *that*. We do find a listing in eWAVE, (eWAVE F. 67), that allows the substitution of the definite article with *that*, and WitEng uses *that* to mark plural subjects, and *those* or *these* for singular. In cases where a demonstrative appears in object position or in a predicate clause, *that* precedes a plural noun.

(421) Wanda.44: I was doing a tour of Moricetown with that Ottawa kids.

(422) Cora.64: It's right on Ø main drag, that little buildings, what they call it.

(423) Laura.65: I used that words when I went to that meeting.

A similar feature has been described in York English, by Rupp and Tagliamonte (2017). Their paper describes the repurposing of the vernacular demonstrative *this here*. At the time of their research, speakers in the city of York in northern England had three non-standard determiners, a zero article, reduced determiners and the complex demonstrative of *this here* NP. The *this here* construction supports the zero article and has a regular deictic meaning and a discourse anaphoric deixis meaning, that is they help the speaker to mark elements that are physically present in the speech context and to keep track of referents previously mentioned in the discourse (Rupp & Tagliamonte, 2017).

WitEng does not require the same subject-verb concord as SCE does. Verbs can be stripped of their endings in many contexts. Plural nouns need not be marked for agreement if they occur with the form of *be*:

(424) Charlie.45: Just that sasquatch's legs was bigger than that.

WitEng seems to follow similar rules regarding subject-verb concord as Laguna English. Stout, in his study of elementary school students in Laguna, New Mexico, found that concord marking is the result of subject number and type of verb construction (Stout, 1977). The two primary constraints in Laguna English are as follows:

- The singular verb form extends variably to plural subject when the verb was *be*, past or present.
- The plural verb form extends variably to singular subject when the verb is non-be present.

In WitEng, the rules are structured somewhat differently:

- The singular determiner *that* extends variably to plural subjects and nonhuman referents:

  (425) Jenny. 67: They have someone working on that damaged trees.

  (426) Tim. 65: He's the one that saved me from that epilepsy.

- The plural determiner extends variably to the singular subject when the noun is a mass noun and a non-human referent:

  (427) Olivia.63: I never ever touched none of those stuff.

  (428) Olivia.63: They purchased these stuff.

In Witsuwit'en, verbal qualifier prefixes and classificatory verb roots help mark classes. As in other Athabaskan languages, these classes are properties of animacy, shape and number. In Witsuwit'en these

classes are careful handling, rough handling, independent movement and stative location (Hargus, 2007, p. 257). Witsuwit'en, furthermore, has four plural suffixes for lexical categories referring to groups of people, such as kinship terms: *-qe*, *-(y)u*, *-qu*, and *-ni*. The suffix *-ni* can also be applied to other nouns, while nouns that refer to people have plural forms, rather than suffixes (Hargus, 2007, pp. 254-255). WitEng speakers may have repurposed *that* as a type of prefix to draw attention to the noun referent relationships. WitEng does to use *that* in front of nouns that represent intangible objects, and was often seen in front of *language* when it referred to the AL:

(429) Cora. 64: That broken English version.

(430) Laura.65: I used that words when I went to that meeting.

(431) Jenny.67: I used that words when I went to that meeting.

(432) Laura.65: We went with a youth group for that Europe.

(433) Jenny.67: All the Elders did that same.

(434) Jenny.67: I was reading that Witsuwit'en language.

English in San Juan Pueblo, near Santa Fe, New Mexico, also makes use of a plural noun reference, *this* (Wolfram & Christian, 1979). Leap argues that these types of demonstrative constructions are part of a structured set. Wolfram and Christian suggest that the phonology plays an important role. Speakers of San Juan English regularly devoice final-position voiced consonants of standard English, and merge standard English high front tense and lax vowels [i] and [ɪ] into a single sound segment (Wolfram & Christian, 1979). *This* and *these* thus become [dis]. Such constructions could be lexical mergers derived from phonological processes rather than grammatical differences (Wolfram & Christian, 1979).

WitEng also has several innovative syntactic constructions:

(435) Amy. 27: These things were screaming aroun' at midnight.

(436) Mina. 35: You're not gonna see us arguing around for nothing.

(437) Wanda.44: We'd used to swear around.

(438) Wanda.44: Are there any stores that you would like to come up in this area?

(439) Wanda.44: Another death happens before the years goes up.

(440) Wanda.44: We need to laugh around.

The construction NOUN/PRONOUN+ *own* indicates personal ownership or a familial relationship:

(441) Ellen.43: Like when I was a kids growin' up we always had our own fishing spot behind gramma's place we always did our fishing, back there, we had our own garden up there like where we grew our own vegetables, and all that our own smoke house and all that sorta stuff like everybody else had their you know, their own little thing.

This construction is possibly a direct transfer feature from the AL, both in terms of morphology and semantics. In Witsuwit'en, inalienable nouns cannot be used without a morphological possessor, either a noun or a possessive prefix (Hargus, 2007, p. 235). Nouns indicating familial relationships are inalienable, for example, use of the term *mother* requires marking the relationship somehow. Such a noun cannot stand alone, a mother must have her status as someone's mother marked. Since first and second person subjects, objects and possessors are obligatorily marked on verbs and nouns, the personal pronoun in these constructions is only for focus and emphasis (Hargus, 2007, p. 237). Witsuwit'en has an obligatory prefix *c'-* which marks unspecified possession of nouns and appears on doubly marked nouns (Hargus, 2007, p. 230). Otherwise, ownership is specified with various prefixes according to first, second, third persons, and plural. There is a basic inventory of seven possessive prefixes. *D-* and *həd* are third person singular and plural reflexive prefixes. Hargus provides examples of their use (Hargus, 2007, p. 230):

(442) d- Duziʔ yəɣnəli. "He doesn't slander." (lit. "he takes care of his own name")

(443) Dəɬtsen yət'əy. "He's like a brother to him." (lit. "he has him as his own brother")

(444) həd- Hədəc'eʔ həyət'əy. "It's already theirs, they own it already." (lit. "they have it as their belongings")

(445) Həduziʔ həyqaʔnenədzən. "They want their own names back."

In this case, *own* is functioning as the obligatory marker of possession, as seen above, when referencing family members. A similar use of *own* also prefaces nouns when marking Witsuwit'en ownership and identity; "our own language." A language cannot exist independently of a speaker community. Thus, in WitEng, it must be marked as someone's language.

(446) Olivia.63: I just wanted speak my own language.

(447) Olivia.63: I'd rather do things my own way.

(448) Bobby.67: And he talking and talking in his own language.

(449) Bobby.67: He said it in his own language.

WitEng speakers use the construction NOUN+*them*, with the interdental stop dropped. *Mum and them* is pronounced as [mΛm'ən'əm] and has a plural reference. It was mentioned in the interview as being specific to Moricetown and as being an identifying feature of Moricetown speech. Like NOUN+own, this appears to be part of a structured set, and used to include referents and their associates:

(450) Olivia.63: I hardly went out with Jane* and them.

Witsuwit'en has a subject prefix to mark verbs with first-person dual, and accordingly has dual person pronouns. They are based on a root *neq*, from *ne-* "two." There are three forms listed (Hargus, 2007, p. 237):

1. nedətni, nendəltəx- "the two of us"
2. nex tni, nenəxłt'əx- "the two of you"
3. netni neltəx- "two people, the two of them"

So the *an'em* construction may support the concept of the dual plural in the AL. This construction also parallels the *dem Fred* construction described by Mulder (1982) and Tarpent (1982) in Tsimshian English, a variety that neighbours Witsuwit'en (see Section 3.2.2):

(451) Them Fred's having a party tonight. (Tarpent 1982, p. 118)

(452) Beatrice is by them, Joanne's. (Mulder, 1982, p.104)

Tarpent notes that the usage of *them* parallels the usage of *dim* in Tsimshian. Both markers are combined with a proper noun to indicate not only the named individual, but also those with whom they commonly associate. At the time of publication, Tarpent reports that while older speakers still treat the construction as a plural, younger speakers, who no longer speak Tsimshian, treat it is as singular reference. Given the available data, it is not clear if younger Witsuwit'en speakers also use this construction. Tsimshian English uses *them* to indicate a named individual and people who commonly associate with that person. The plural marker *dim* fulfills this function in Tshimshian, supported by context and topic already established in a conversation (Mulder, 1982). Younger speakers of Tsimshian English, not fluent in the ancestral language, consider *them* to be a singular reference, while older speakers still maintain its collective plural usage (Tarpent, 1982). This feature (eWAVE F. 52). associative plurals marked by postposed and them/them and all/dem, is also noted in the eWAVE atlas and is very widespread, attested in 62% of the atlas's varieties, in every region covered. It is attested in six of the ten continental North American varieties, including the only other Canadian dialect listed, Newfoundland English (Clarke, 2010).

The tendency to reduce and analogize nouns is found in other FNE and NAE varieties. In Blackfoot English, mass nouns may also become grammatically plural, while context sometimes makes plural marking unnecessary (Genee & Stigter, 2010, p. 72). According to Leap, Indian English speakers, regardless of language background, add plural markers to mass nouns (Leap, 1993, p. 54). One study on Koyukon English found that while speakers recognized the difference between mass and count nouns, the marked mass nouns were every day, frequent vocabulary and therefore very noticeable (Kwachka, 1988). Miller reports that among eleven-year-old Pima school children, no allomorph plural occurs more than 50% of the time (Miller, 1977). While non-Indian children in her study had complete mastery of English plural inflections

by the age of eight, eleven-year-old Pima children used /z/ only thirteen percent of the time (Miller, 1977). Flanigan reports deletion or double marking of plural nouns in her study of Lakota English (Flanigan, 1984). Although similar occurrences can be found in other non-standard varieties, and in the English of language learners, there is strong evidence for the influence of Ancestral languages as the cause in some settings (Leap, 1993, p. 55). English demonstratives may fulfill several additional functions for IndEng speakers. Indigenous speakers may innovate with English demonstratives in order to recreate the relationships indicated in ancestral languages, such as spatial, temporal, and social ideas (Leap, 1993, p. 56). In Isletan English, speakers intensify stress/pitch assigned to the demonstrative, to indicate particularly close (*this*) or distant (*that*) relationship to topic reference (Leap, 1993, p. 56).

6.4.4 Noun and pronouns

The full extent to which noun deletion is permissible in WitEng is not entirely clear, as the analysis is based entirely on oral data. Since continuous casual running speech allows for breaks and restarts, there will obviously be parts where nouns and pronouns might be cut and a new clause started. However, there are some tokens which show that noun and pronoun deletion are allowable in WitEng. The deletion is noticeable in running speech, especially with the older participants:

(453) Helga. 64: I heard the story bout that that's its about a girl or a boy that thinks about like a girl keep thinking about her boyfriend all the time and then uh she's walkin' in the evening time and the tsun'dye turn himself into their boyfriend, Ø looks like her boyfriend, [di:] only thing he does is cover 'is mouth cause Ø can't change the teeth, Ø can lure can lure her into the river or the creek, yeah Ø close its mouth.

Older speakers of WitEng may also switch the gender of pronouns. The feature is not present in other North American English varieties in the eWAVE atlas. Its appearance is focused in the four varieties associated with African American speaker populations. This feature is found in only one variety in the UK, British Creole (Kortmann & Lunkenheimer, 2013). Worldwide, the distinction between genders in third person singular is found in dialects in the Caribbean, Central American and the north-east coast of Southern America, and in West Africa, varieties in Asia such as Butler English, and is pervasive or obligatory in Northern Australian Aboriginal English and nearby island varieties (Kortmann & Lunkenheimer, 2013). This feature is very well attested in FNE (Genee & Stigter, 2010, p. 74) and NAE dialects (Leap, 1993). In WitEng this may be related to AL's system of gender in the third person. Witsuwit'en does not have equivalents for English he/she or him/her (Moris, 2016):

(454) Bilegh 'enekh.
Help him/her.

(455) Uzīlhs'ay.
Listen to him/her.

While kinship terms can be extremely specific for gender, references to humans in the third person can be translated as either *him* or *her*. As a result, WitEng speakers may switch between genders when using the third person singular:

(456) Cora.64: The spouse that comes widow, they're not allowed to talk at any time, he can participate but he's not allowed to talk.

However, varieties that have written sources do show both pronoun and noun deletion, as well as variation in pronoun genders. Blackfoot English shows pronoun deletion, and here a direct connection is made to the AL (Genee & Stigter, 2010). It is explained that once a character has been introduced into a narrative, their presences can be maintained over a long stretch by the use of cross-referencing morphology on the verb only (Genee & Stigter, 2010, p. 74). In their data, pronouns are only missing after previously established context. Moreover, possessive pronouns are also affected by Blackfoot grammar, which uses non-gender specific and caseless morphemes, and marks the possessed item, or uses head marking, and has no match for the English *-s* genitive (Genee & Stigter, 2010, p. 75). Blackfoot English also has a distinction for animacy, not gender, and this controls for the inflection of nouns and the forms of verbs (Genee & Stigter, 2010, p. 74). It should not be surprising that this strongly influences the pronoun in Blackfoot English, in this case rendering gender fluid.

Penfield-Jasper found that for English speakers (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) on-site gender/number errors are most likely to occur when sentences are ambiguous, and use pronouns whose genders do not correspond to that in the antecedent noun when those pronouns occur at the end of the clause (Penfield-Jasper, 1977). These errors are less likely when the pronoun occurs in a clause-initial position, but for Mohave English speakers, clause-initial and clause-final errors were just as likely (Penfield-Jasper, 1977). Instead, speakers establish pronoun referents through contextual details and other clues. Penfield-Jasper offers possible reasons for this pattern of pronoun deletion: First, Mohave English allows for equi-deletion, deleting a noun or pronoun the second time in the sentence. Second, the Mohave language grammatical rules form "headless" subordinate clauses when contextual details supply the identity of the subject. Leap offers an additional factor, case marking. Mohave grammar uses case marking to identify the subject and distinguish between the functions of noun constructions in the sentence (Leap, 1993, p. 61). Subject pronouns belong to syntactically more "marked" category and are more vulnerable to deletion, as opposed to object pronouns, which are "neutral" and so more secure (Leap, 1993, p. 61).

Pronoun deletion in Cheyenne English also appears to be based on AL rules. In Cheyenne English, gender is less relevant than other features of noun reference, such as living things, or sacred things, or things to which Cheyenne culture assigns special properties (Alford, 1974, pp. 6-7). In the context of Cheyenne culture, language, and Cheyenne English, biological gender is not relevant (Alford, 1974). A second possible source of error is the Cheyenne language, where pronoun markers are verb-related, verb-dominated syntactic categories. Irregular pronoun usage reflects the conflict between two different grammatical systems, as Cheyenne English speakers attempt to integrate the verbal based pronominal system into English usage (Leap, 1993, p. 60). Ute English, in southwestern Colorado, also shows frequent subject pronoun deletion, occurring after a series of constraints (Leap, 1993, p. 61). The pronoun must precede an auxiliary-main verb sequence, not just a main verb with an auxiliary suffix. The auxiliary must identify the aspect of the verb action, and not just serve tense marking function. The deletion is more likely before modal main verb sequences than inflected *be* and *have* constructions. The auxiliary must otherwise be eligible for contraction or deletion. When these conditions are met, the subject pronoun may be deleted.

6.4.5 Prepositions

WitEng is very productive in creating new prepositional phrases, as well as allowing for deletion and stranded pronouns. Most interesting is the construction of new prepositional phrases, that may be traceable to Witsuwit'en spatial orientation within their local landscape over distance (with *way*):

(457) Mina. 35: I know down south they get paid more than what they get paid down this way.

(458) Cora. 64: I went to a conference and I was hoping that they'd send more people that way.

As in many other Na-Dene languages, prepositions in Witsuwit'en can be coded within a reference system of relevant landscape features (Hargus, 2007, p. 307). Living in the Widzin Kyah watershed, navigation for the Witsuwit'en was based on landmarks like the river and its flow, or the height relationships of mountains and canyons. Directional terms in Witsuwit'en are made of a directional root, distance-indicating prefixes, and suffixes denoting motion vs. rest. Hargus provides a short list of how the concepts are coded in space.

Table 16: Witsuwit'en directional concepts (Table 9-1 in Hargus 2007, p. 307)

	in 3D space	to/from water	along water
Up	(straight) up	uphill	Upriver
Down	(straight) down	downhill	Downriver

Witsuwit'en marks first and second person subjects, objects and possessors on the verb, and has an inflection system to mark third person and demonstrative pronouns. It marks primarily distance, and human/number and other properties.

Table 17: Witsuwit'en pronouns (Table 7-26 in Hargus 2007, p. 237)

	sg nonhuman 'it'	place, time 'there, then'	sg human 'he, she'	pl human 'they'
Neutral	ʔe	ʔet	ʔen	ʔeni
closest distance	Ndi	nge, ngen	ndən	ndəni
middle distance	nGi	nGət	nGən	nGəni
Furthest distance	-	Nyut	Nyun	Nyuni

Witsuwit'en uses postpostions to indicate directional and spatial relationships (including locative or temporal meanings). These can also be created from directional adverbs, and some verbal prefixes also create directional meaning. A directional prefix may indicate distance or direction from a speaker, and a directional suffix indicates diffuseness vs. compactness of location, direction of motion to or from location and distance from location. However, Hargus notes that, when compared to English, Witsuwit'en makes "sparing syntactic use" of these postpositions compared to English (Hargus, 2007, p. 305).

It could be that WitEng speakers underplay the role of prepositions in English syntax. If Witsuwit'en does, as Hargus suggests, make use of fewer directional and locative markers as than English, then WitEng speakers might carry this over by deleting or stranding prepositions which in English word order would fall into a "postposition slot" after the verb. Secondly, the directional system of Witsuwit'en, based on local topography, leads to the construction of prepositional phrases that locate persons or objects in space relative to the locations and activities in progress. Phrases such as *swearing around* follow the English pattern of creating phrasal verbs, albeit ones that reflect the Witsuwit'en local topography and social relationships. Prepositions can also be deleted. This feature is attested in 70% of the varieties in the eWAVE Atlas, so it is not unexpected to see it here. The deletions could be influenced by the presence of postpostions in Witsuwit'en. There are no slots in English syntax structure to accommodate a Witsuwit'en postpostion, so speakers may ignore the open slot in the English syntax.

6.5 The effect of language contact on WitEng morphology and syntax

WitEng can be compared in many areas to other varieties of post-colonial and World Englishes. So perhaps it should not be surprising that WitEng displays traits that are consistent with other varieties and types that have arisen through language contact situations. Its speaker community has experienced contact with the same vernacular varieties of the British Isles as in other colonies. Although we find similar features, the particular set of features that make up WitEng can be attributed to how the contact with these varieties occurred.

Thorburn's (Thorburn, 2014) research finds that the features of Nain English lack social cohesion across the board. In her examination of three variables, interdental fricatives, verbal *-s*, and adjectival intensifiers, she concludes that only two variables, the verbal *-s* and intensifier *right*, shows any statistical significance. It is possible that the young women in the community are leading linguistic change, but since Nain English has a history of only sixty years, the residents might still be learning the sociolinguistic meaning of their variables. Thorburn's examined variables are traceable to Newfoundland English, the main input variety for Nain English. Newfoundland English itself is also a variety that does not so much have unique features, as it does a combination of features found no where else in the world (Wagner, 2012), consisting of two dialects, one deriving from the English dialects of Southwest England, and the other from Southeast Irish English. Nain English seems to be retaining forms that are now becoming obsolete in Newfoundland English (Thorburn, 2014). The younger L1 English speaking population and especially young women are leading the community in developing a cohesive dialect of Nain English. Thorburn identifies several possible processes to explain this repurposing of features from a dialect associated with a rejected identity. While dialect leveling and diffusion are considered, Thorburn suggests that Schneider's Dynamic Model (Schneider, 2007) is best suited to account for the development of Nain English, which has entered the Differentiation phase as a dialect, but socially is at the Nativization phase (Thorburn, 2014).

Like Nain English, WitEng has developed very rapidly over a short span of time. However, unlike Nain English, WitEng has had contact with numerous varieties of English. It has many features associated with language contact, such as CCR, and the loss of inflectional morphology. WitEng is perhaps unsurprisingly an unfocused variety, with few features being obligatory. Some of its features its could be considered unique, such as its phonology, determiner system, prepositional phrases, and the construction NOUN+ *own*. These are directly traceable to Witsuwit'en grammar.

We can start the process of contact with the "L1 plus" and L2 Englishes of native French Canadian or Métis speakers and the L1 English of higher-level HBC employees. Throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries in the Widzin Kwah, there was an ongoing rush of speakers of British, Scottish, Irish and American English. We can even include contact with Chinese prospectors. This was followed by increasing numbers of settlers from various backgrounds, including British, Dutch, and those from German speaking countries. Given the presence of such a linguistic salad, it is perhaps not surprising that WitEng morphology and syntax should be counted as unfocused and highly flexible. The recorded material provides a picture of an emerging dialect of English, spanning the time period from when speakers learned English as an L2, through to the period of contact in residential schools, to the period when Witsuwit'en children began attending local schools and then learning English as an L1.

The tokens show a clear decline of nonstandard features as the participants become younger. At the time of the interviews, there was a question of how many of these features were being transmitted to the next generation. Some participants discussed the attitudes towards their "slang" in the area, and noted that younger community members were less likely to use features that are more closely associated with Witsuwit'en:

(459) Mona.29. But some of our kids don't feel comfortable using our slang… when we're talking our slang when we're older, if I'm using some of my slang, sometimes when you're getting your story and your slang comes out.

Witsuwit'en speakers also use a feature that is pervasive in SCE and other WE varieties. *like* as a focusing device (eWAVE F. 234) and *like* as a quotative particle (eWAVE F. 235):

(460) Amelia.25: I was like geez I wish cars were like that cheap now.

(461) Mina.35: Saying like oh this is like one of our own.

Use of *like* has surged among SCE speakers, reaching 62% of quotative usage by 2004 (Tagliamonte & D'Arcy, 2004).[5] It is not surprising that it has penetrated FNEs, and attests that WitEng is certainly not an isolated variety nor an entirely conservative one:

(462) Wanda.44: You saw tsun'dye, where? Right at the canyon?

(463) Tracey.46: Oh, you used to work there right? It was when we were young though, we twelve years old, we were all going to the canyon one night late and there's Jane*, hey guys come on over! What are you guys doing down here? Come! Come! She was inviting us and we were just like what the heck you doing here all alone, there's about ten of us and went down there and she was sittin' at one end of the bridge and then when we got to her and she was at the other end of the bridge that's when we all- and she was still trying invite us over come on! Wahhhh! About ten of us went flying up the hill.

WitEng also shows the same grammaticalization of modal constructions *wanna* and *gonna* that become widespread in SCE (Dollinger, 2008; Tagliamonte, 2007):

(464) Jody. 53: Yeah she did everything bad instead of the they try to keep her on the right side but she did everything opposite instead so they said they're not gonna bury her up the graveyard they're gonna bury her up there cause she was a bad woman and showing other

[5] Speaking of first-hand testimony to language change: quotative *be like* entered SCE when I was in my early teens, in the early 2000s, and I was told by some teachers not to use it. It is currently used by female speakers of every age group, including my mother and grandmother.

> ladies how to be bad so that was the story my parents told us about and we got scared and we don't wanna be bad we wanna be on the good side.

Some of the features here could be instances of *transfer* and *fossilization* from L2 forms as occurs when speakers fail to achieve complete proficiency in the L2 and instead settle on sustaining successful and effective communication in the L2 (Matras, 2009). This would not be unexpected for a community under stress, where speakers need to rapidly acquire English in order to attend school and/or find employment. The very process of language shift causes restructuring in the L2, in addition to the restructuring that would normally occur in L2 acquisition (Matras, 2009). Matras considers fossilization to be akin to stabilization, occurring after speakers develop a certain level of input sensitivity and perceptual saliency, which can vary widely from individual to individual. Yet he also notes that stabilization can occur across whole community and that has happened here. WitEng was created as the entire community shifted from L2 to L1 English, so this could be a case of *shift-induced interference* (Thomason & Kaufman, 1988). Here we see the effect of a substrate language transferring features into the target superstratum language (Thomason, 2001).

Many of the features under discussion can also be attributed to language contact processes like dialect mixing and leveling (Trudgill, 2004). This is a process of accommodation by which speakers from multiple dialect groups work with each other to make communication easier. This would certainly describe the contact situation in northern BC in the 18th and 19th centuries. More marked forms will be discarded, and new forms may arise as the dialect speakers and their descendants interact with each other, leading to *koinéization* (Trudgill, 2004). WitEng has probably left the phase of *koinéization*, as its speakers are no longer receiving variable input, and could possibly be in the *focusing* phase, in which the speakers formalize and stabilize their speech (Trudgill, 2004). A significant difference between the younger speakers and their Elders is the input variety. While older speakers had to deal with less stable input, the main input variety at this point would have to be the stabilized variety of Canadian English.

As to whether WitEng is a creole, the answer is no. While WitEng does have some features in common with creoles such as reduced consonant clusters, the placement of the negative particle before the verb, lack of plural marking on nouns and pronouns (Matras, 2009), there is no specific set of features that can be attributed solely to creoles, or that all creoles uniformly lack (Winford, 2003; Thomason, 1997). There is no evidence that there was any stabilized trade language from which a creole could have developed, such as a jargon or a pidgin (Matras, 2009). WitEng developed from a very different type of contact situation than creoles. In settlements and sugar plantations in the Pacific and Atlantic, where a minority caste of overseers and some indentured English-speaking servants needed to communicate with the African slaves who formed the majority of the labour force, pidgins and their resulting creoles show an imbalance between the lexifier and the substrate, with the colonial language base making up the majority of the creole

superstrate (Matras, 2009). While some might argue that the mixing of children from various communities and the duress they experienced in residential schools is very similar what happened in slave plantations, there is a not a one-to-one correspondence Witsuwit'en children learned English firsthand, rather than having to rework a pidgin or jargon inherited from their parents. Children heard Witsuwit'en at home, while parents used L2 English for work or later, if their parents attended residential school, an L2 English at home. Nor is WitEng a mixed-language like Michif. While there is an AL substratum that influences an English superstratum, the language is not mixed. There is not anything like a distinct Witsuwit'en grammar underpinning a whole English lexifier. SVO word order remains fixed, and there are no unusual verb constructions that differ from patterns observed in other WEs. Almost all the features here are found worldwide, in numerous other varieties of English. While the AL does have an impact, we do see similar effects in other FNEs and NAEs. The evidence more strongly suggests that there is an ongoing interplay play between language contact, dialect leveling, and the acquisition and fossilization of L2 features, with some interference from Witsuwit'en.

7 Conclusion

The previous two chapters described the history and features of Witsuwit'en English and together construct its story. We recall that the research questions posed at the beginning of this book were:

- What circumstances prompted the Witsuwit'en to switch to English?
- Does Witsuwit'en English have distinguishing features and if so, where did they originate from?
- Are these features found in other First Nations Englishes?
- In what ways does Witsuwit'en English show sociolinguistic variation?
- How does Witsuwit'en English fit into a wider network of post-colonial Englishes, in terms of its speaker community, contact history, and features?
- Do language contact or creole theories account for the development and features of Witsuwit'en English?

In chapter five, historical sources and personal testimony detailed how English became the L1 for the Witsuwit'en. Chapter six has given a description of WitEng's features and compared them to other FNEs, NAEs and World English varieties listed in the eWAVE atlas (Kortmann & Lunkenheimer, 2013). There is some age stratification in WitEng, with the usage of nonstandard features decreasing among younger speakers and correlating with a drop in AL knowledge. The last two questions can now be addressed, and we can draw some conclusions about how WitEng fits into the landscape of post-colonial Englishes and what theories are best applied to FNEs overall.

WitEng, or at least in the "snapshot" taken by this research project, appears to be an unfocused variety of English. The reason for this may be at least partially found in its speakers' tumultuous language contact history. As seen in chapter two, the Witsuwit'en people have, in the last two-hundred years, had contact with a variety of non-Indigenous languages and dialects, including varieties of English and French, while simultaneously dealing with the events that drove the contact situations.

The Witsuwit'en began learning English to enter the cash-based wage economy. English and Witsuwit'en could have existed side by side in a multilingual speaker community had it not been for the introduction of residential schools. The forced attendance of children, in this case primarily of the Lejac Residential School, stymied the transmission of Witsuwit'en to the next generation. This contributed to the reduction of the Witsuwit'en speaker base, a decline that had been started by the epidemics that hit northern B.C. in the late 19th century. Due to residential schooling, English was able to gain traction in the region very rapidly, with a speed that would not be possible in a normal, undisturbed language ecology, that is an ecology without an explicit colonial language policy. It is important to reiterate that historical evidence and personal

anecdotes reveal that English was not introduced into the Witsuwit'en community solely via residential schools, nor did every child learn English there.

WitEng, on first inspection, appears to be shifting closer to a more standardized Canadian English variety. This is likely because younger speakers now begin schooling at a younger age, and remain in school longer, which contributes to the effect of dialect leveling, a historically powerful process in Canada. In addition, we have the obvious influence of the internet and social media. Speakers may shift between standard and non-standard constructions over the course of a conversation and during storytelling. At least three features, CRR, nonstandard plurals, and non-standard articles, exhibit age grading. Speakers over the age of fifty use more non-standard features and the number of tokens falls as speakers become younger. This drop coincides with a number of other events or circumstances, including the drop in AL fluency, brought on by the compulsory and increased attendance of residential schools, the introduction of local schooling, and the increased engagement with the wage economy, including non-Indigenous employers like the CNN railway, and the forestry and tourism industry.

Table 18: Sequence of events in Witsuwit'en language ecology shift

	Witsuwit'en		
Prior to contact and the 17th century	Witsuwit'en as a mother tongue, used in all domains. Some speakers and some households are bilingual in Gitxsan and Witsuwit'en.	French	
		Possible contact with French lexis through Chinook Jargon, and Métis interpreters.	
18th century		Various vernacular French varieties, used in the fur trade, prospecting and by missionaries, although learning is limited by Oblate missionaries and Father Morice.	English
			L1 vernacular varieties of English used by prospectors and construction crews.
19th century			Government agents and settlers create a permanent base for L1 English.
20th century	Witsuwit'en speakers begin to learn English for work. Witsuwit'en is being suppressed in residential schools. Domains and activities that support Witsuwit'en such as potlach, are attacked and banned. Normal language transmission is stymied.	The presence of French speakers diminishes, due to the end of the Gold Rushes, and the administration and settlement of the region by British colonial authorities. Children are forced to attend English residential schools. French language teaching ceases.	Settlers enter the region to farm and ranch. The Indian Act forces Witsuwit'en onto reserves. The residential schools suppress language transmission. Children gain access to English on-reserve and locally. English overtakes all domains of the Witsuwit'en speaker community.

21rst century	Witsuwit'en receives support in the on-reserve daycare, kindergarten and elementary school and for adult learners.		English is the primary language or L1 of all speakers who attended residential schooling. English continues to be used in all domains, and levels of education.

Women are more likely to use nonstandard forms than men, bearing in mind the smaller age rage for male participants in this study. This is contrary to one of the most commonly observed trends in sociolinguistic research (Labov, 2001). The "gender paradox", that men and women in a community speak differently, has held almost universally true worldwide. Women are often observed to use more prestige forms, be more conservative in their speech, and avoid stigmatized forms (Labov, 2001). It has been suggested that women may adhere more closely to standardized speech codes because they are on some level conscious of being models for their children and are often find jobs that bring them into contact with social networks outside their own community (Labov, 2001). The idea that men always use more vernacularized, locally centred linguistic forms while women adhere to the standardized variety no longer holds true, as studies have shown that in certain conditions, women may orient themselves towards the vernacular, local language variety (Labov, 2001). Younger women are known to be linguistic innovators, such as in the spearheading of the spread of *be like* (Tagliamonte, 2005).

It could be that in a sense, Witsuwit'en women, are more "conservative" in their use of features that derive from L2 and AL influence, rather than using contemporary, more urban oriented and standardized varieties of English. This would fit well with women holding important positions within the traditionally matriarchal Witsuwit'en culture. Although the arrival of Catholic missionaries was detrimental to their status, Witsuwit'en women originally were the societal equals of men, having considerable influence within clan politics, controlling chief names and access to inheritances, and acting as shamans (Morin, 2011). Today in Witset, while both genders work off-reserve in a variety of jobs, women are closely tied to the governance and social life on the reserve. They are involved in organizing traditional community events such as feasts. At the time of the interviews, the band administration was almost entirely run by women. The mother's side of the family is considered more important to a child's future, both male and female chief names are passed on through the mother's side of the family, and husbands join their wives' family:

(465) Cora.64: Especially womens they are the care takers of Moricetown, womens, womens are the strong leaders in their clan, if it wasn't womens feast wouldn't happen.

As well, women are likely to have jobs that involve interactions with Elders. For instance, my last interview involved four women who all worked as caretakers for Witsuwit'en Elders. In the case of WitEng, it could

be a case of *change from above*, that Witsuwit'en women are acutely conscious of modelling and transmitting their culture and so choose features that are more closely associated with non-colonial Indigenous and Witsuwit'en societal norms. Since SCE is directly connected via colonial policies of education and governance to a culture that is hostile to Indigenous modes of knowledge and being, caregivers who seek to transmit their Ancestral culture and language may well attempt to position their speech on the opposite end of the spectrum from SCE and associated varieties. It is important to stress though, that the results come from a limited, albeit consistent, data set and that highest rates on non-standard features come from Elders who learned English as an L2.

WitEng has many features in common with previously studied FNE varieties in Canada and NAE varieties in the USA. This includes Tsimshian English, Blackfoot English, Cree English, Nain English and the varieties studied in the Southwestern USA. More widely, it shares features with non-standard English dialects and contact varieties around the world. CCR reflects WitEng's status as a contact language. Like many others it has dropped some consonant clusters that are not found in the AL and that are often simplified by L2 English speakers (Schreier, 2005). WitEng speakers may also use interdental stopping, and a rounded or audibly elongated /s/, merging /ʃ/ and /s/. Other features, such as pronoun deletion, article deletion, loss of verbal morphemic ending and plural *-s* are found in contact varieties of English around the world (Kortmann & Lunkenheimer, 2013).

The evidence suggests that previous theories about the development of FNEs offer at the most partial explanations for FNEs or are also interpretable as evidence of language contact processes. Most of these theories have not accounted for the tumultuous and varied history of linguistic contact between individual First Nations populations and groups of European, African or Asian peoples across North America. These histories differ considerably from the contact scenarios that occurred in the colonies and plantations where the classic creoles of the Atlantic and Pacific developed, and around which creole theory is primarily based (Matras, 2009; Thomason & Kaufman, 1988; Mufwene, 1996). Features such as PRONOUN+*them/'em* are examples. This feature is not only found in English varieties as diverse as Newfoundland English (Clarke, 2010), AusAbEng, Palmerston English, Hawai'i Creole and Scottish English (Kortmann & Lunkenheimer, 2013), but also in a neighbouring FNE variety, Tsimshian English (Mulder, 1982). This feature could have developed from within WitEng, from contact with another English variety such as Scottish English or Irish English or transferred from contact with Tsimshian English speakers. In some respects, WitEng at this stage resembles other varieties in that it is a highly unfocused or currently developing a community standard, such as seen in Croker English, currently under investigation (Mailhammer, et al., 2018) or Pitcairn English (Mühlhäusler, 2013).

One theory that does receive considerable support is that the AL of First Nations speakers have to some extent influenced the phonology, morphology, syntax and pragmatics of their English varieties. Features of various FNEs have been directly traced back to quite specific constructions and to the realization of First Nations discourse structures, pragmatics and social norms. The AL works as a substrate contributing to the English superstratum. Some of the morpho-syntactic features are directly traceable to the influence of Witsuwit'en grammar. The construction PRONOUN+ *own* directly mimics the Witsuwit'en possessive construction for inalienable nouns, as does the creation of prepositional terms.

One of the other prominent theories about FNEs is that they are the result of incomplete language acquisition, as FNE speakers first learned English as an L2 and the next generation acquired the partially learned L2 English as their L1. Personal testimony has shown that some adult Witsuwit'en already had some English L2 fluency when their children began to acquire English, either in residential schools or the Day School. Thus there were two forms of L2 English simultaneously existing within the community, an adult and a childrens' L2 variant, when the children were home. However, the primary language of home communication remained Witsuwit'en, until children's continued attendance of school forced them to switch to English. The learner/transfer features of these adult/child L2 Englishes could have become fossilized, then passed on to children who grew up as L1 English speakers. The transition was very fast, so that within a single household, one might find grandparents who spoke only Witsuwit'en, parents who spoke Witsuwit'en and possibly some L2 English, and children who spoke only an L2 or L1 English. One might even find families in which the older children still speak Witsuwit'en and their younger siblings only English. Under these complicated circumstances, it is difficult know exactly when certain features became crystalized and transferred. This also means the WitEng cannot be classified as a creole. Children did not learn English as a reworked L2 from their parent's pidgin, or even only from an L2 English. Young children acquired English directly within a school environment, sometimes in contact with settler children and teachers. Parents continued to use Witsuwit'en, until their children could no longer understand them. Testimony from participants makes it very clear that within home environments, Witsuwit'en and English were usually kept separate. As adults continue to work to save their AL, and continue to engage with their children and grandchildren, the Witsuwit'en substratum may therefore continue:

(466) Ellen.43: I talk to them in my own language at the Day Care, they're small and they know how to say it right away.

Residential schools were a challenging environment for the children sent there, to put it mildly, and learning English was generally part of students' survival strategies. Children may have learned English from eachother as much as from their teachers. Most teachers would have been native speaker models, but as survivors of the Lejac school have attested, not all of them were (Morin, 2011). However, children were

exposed to English during the pre-adolescent stage, when the brain is primed for language acquisition, and often came from communities where multilingualism was the norm. While residential schools did result in groups of children from different communities mixing, this may have resulted in the cementing of L2 features, or learner English, rather than creating a true pidgin within the residential school. Boarding schools have been proven ground to develop new pidgins (Mühlhäusler, 2002), but Leap, writing on the effects of residential schooling on NAE in the US, suggests that the mixing of numerous students from different reserves, with different linguistic backgrounds, "*heightened* the development and retention of these contrasts" (Leap, 1993, p. 165) (emphasis in the original). Leap reports that some students at theses schools in the US developed strategies to maintain their AL fluency, including maintaining close relationships with other speakers of their language while at school and often speaking in private together.

Researchers have reported that FNEs can function as inner-code dialects with significant covert prestige (St. Denis, 2007). This should be quite expected. FNEs are spoken by a group of people who have been widely marginalized and discriminated against, and who lack faith in Canadian institutions (Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study, 2010). FNEs can function as an indicator of cultural and ethnic affiliation away from and against the dominant colonial power structure. It may then be meant to directly contrast with and even directly challenge SCE or other non-Indigenous English dialects. Covert prestige and code-switching may explain the continuance of the spectrum of features that FNEs exhibit. These tactics allow speakers to adjust the opacity of their speech when engaging with outsiders and to signal group membership to those in their own speech community. This range of possibilities allows FNE speakers to maneuver across the Canadian cultural landscape. For those First Nations people who have lost access to their Ancestral language, using an FNE enables them to signal Indigenous identity.

7.1 Developing a model for FNEs

WitEng has developed very rapidly, with its founding phase occurring only in the first half of the twentieth century. According to Schneider's model, for the older and middle generation of speakers, WitEng would place somewhere between Phase 3. Nativization and Phase 4. Exonormatively Stabilization. However, for the youngest generation of speakers it might be as far along as Phase 5. IndEng varieties are not an exact fit for the Dynamic Model, something noted by Thorburn (2014). Thorburn places Nain English in the fourth or fifth phase of Schneider's model. Nain English, while being influenced by a different variety of English, and using features differently, is similar to WitEng in having developed recently and relatively rapidly. There are other phenomena that have likely exerted influence on Witsuwit'en English. One of these, dialect leveling, has been active in Canada since the foundational stages of Canadian English (Chambers, 1998). Even today, despite Canada's geographical stretch, Canadian English shows significantly less

variation than dialects of the continental USA and certainly has nothing like the dialect diversity of the British Isles or even England itself (Chambers, 1998).

The process of creating FNEs could be contextualized as *layers of contact*. A model of development for FNEs should account for the Ancestral language strain, and its suppression by colonial authorities and mechanisms, as well as potentially rapid linguistic shift. The Dynamic Model is an appropriate starting point, as it accounts for colonialism and the Indigenous strain of the English variety. However, for FNEs, we can flip the model around taking into account that First Nations people already had distinct governments, and linguistic identities, and in the past several decades have been working to re-establish their sovereignty.

Table 19: A potential model for FNEs

Foundation/Contact Phase	The First Nations community encounters (probably) Europeans through explorers, trappers, traders and missionaries. Contact is infrequent, and the community's overall ecology is not impacted. English is introduced as another language for trade and possibly learned as an L2.
Language Shift/ Early Colonization Phase	European/colonizer presence becomes continuous and disruptive, possibly involving a shift from a trade to a settlement agenda. English becomes a necessity for negotiations, and participation in a wage economy. This may include the creation of a reserve, attacks on traditional culture and the implementation of residential schools. English begins to supplant the Ancestral language.
Nativization/ Colonization Phase	Transmission of the Ancestral language ceases. English is passed on as the primary L1 to children by their parents, thus merging the Indigenous and Settler strains and creating a true non-learner FNE variety. The community continues to resist and organize against colonization.
Stabilization/ Decolonization Phase	An active process of decolonization begin as the community begins to re-establish a positive Indigenous identity. Attempts may be made to reteach the Ancestral language(s). The FNE may be affected by dialect leveling continued contact between the FNE speaker population and the settler population and its institutions.

7.2 A call to further research

Canada lags far behind the USA and Australia in research the field of First Nations Englishes. There are certain gaps which remain unaddressed, even beyond descriptive research. Perhaps foremost among these is the critical lack of sociolinguistic work on FNEs in Canada's court system, a topic which has been worked on in Australia since the 1980s.

This project cannot address the impact on the children who were sent into foster care off-reserve, nor the impact of demographic trends which have seen many First Nations individuals and families moving to cities. That Indigenous children living in urban areas use varieties of Indigenous Englishes is well documented, but what that means for the future of FNEs is not yet clear. As well, little has been said

concerning the First Nations varieties of French that likely do exist in Canada, even though there is a sizeable amount of written material available from Indigenous writers in Quebec (Gatti, 2009). Growth, use and recognition of FNEs also helps to allow the exploration of alternative viewpoints and epistemologies, and prevents the national, and supra-national "coloring of the entire anglophone world by one nation" (Isernhagen, 2009, p. 248). English is the language of the colonizer, forced on Indigenous peoples, but FNEs may also serve as "an easier point of entry" for individuals wishing to learn Ancestral languages (Ball & Bernhardt, 2008, p. 575). They may also serve as carriers of cultural identity for speakers who have lost access to their AL and can be, as writers and poets are in Gingell's article *Lips' Inking*, a "communicative media" used to mediate between colonial and Ancestral cultures (Gingell, 2010, p. 57). This idea can only be realized if First Nations English features are accepted to be linked to heritage language features. Doing so would also reduce both the pathologizing of First Nations children in the Canadian school system and the misplacement of developmental and speech pathology resources.

While WitEng could be described as an *unfocused* variety at this stage, this is very understandable given its quite recent formation. WitEng could be thought of as a patchwork quilt. Speakers have picked up bits and pieces from various English varieties, including more mainstream contemporary varieties of English, from their AL, and stitched these pieces together to suit themselves and their needs.

At the beginning of this book, there is an illustration which I commissioned from James Madam, a Witsuwit'en artist living in Witset. It is titled *Misdzï's message* and it features an owl, (Misdzï) telling stories to a group of humans. I specifically requested this theme. In Western European culture the owl stands for wisdom. In Witsuwit'en culture, the owl represents for death. This dichotomy is very much a part the history of First Nations Englishes in Canada. The development of FNEs is intertwined with the "death" or diminishment of many First Nations languages. However, the adoption of English, regardless of the circumstances that has occurred in, gives life to new varieties and provides a potential route of access to the institutions that oppress First Nations speakers. It remains to be seen in what direction FNE speakers will take their Englishes. However, whether they decide to adhere closer to the mainstream English varieties, to move in a collective direction to form a true pan-First Nations English, or if they stick closer to home, as it were, and continue to build on the influence of Elders and their Ancestral languages, whatever path they take, it will be an English of their own making.

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Appendices

This appendix presents a corpus of interview material. It is divided into two broad categories. Appendix 1.1 includes participant histories, which often included discussion of language shift and the Witsuwit'en language. Appendix 1.2 collects material on local history and events, including supernatural stories. The table at the start of each interview presents the speaker's age, the interview number, the interview time and the length of the excerpt. The length of each interview is given in hours, minutes and seconds. Individual Witsuwit'en words are not italicized. Italicization is used to denote codeswitching involving long phrases.

Appendix 1 Participant histories

Story 1.1

Cora. 64	Interview 06	Interview time: 01:18:28	Example length: 10:05.00

Wanda: So I'm sure the first three questions fall under this, could tell me about yourself?

Cora: I was born in Moricetown back in nineteen fifty in a log house, and I've lived in Moricetown all my life, what else?

Sonya: What's your job?

Cora: I the beginning when I first entered into work experience, uh, we tree plant and then I worked at the Bulkley Valley Hospital as a helping in laundry, then I moved into kitchen working as a dairy aid, and then while still working at the hospital I got myself a job with the School District 54. For seven years workin' as a home support worker and um, nineteen eighty-five I started workin' in Moricetown elementary school teaching Witsuwit'en language program and during my younger days I help my dad, he had a sawmill so we were out in the bush helping our dad during summer mon' doing sawmill, lumber piling, skidding, slap pack, lumber pile.

Wanda: Did you do any of the ties?

Cora: I pushed I wasn't even thought of when they were doing that.

Wanda: Oh. (laughs)

Cora: (laughs) But that's my experience working with my dad, truck driving, and then as a chil' did a lot of um, home gardening, lots of um, our dad had a big garden so every spring he'd plant it and then we had to look after it so.

Wanda: Like potatoes?

Cora: Where my brother's house is now.

Wanda: Which one?

Cora: John*, that's where the garden was.

Wanda: So you guys just plant potatoes and what else?

Cora: We planted whatever grew aroun' here, we planted potatoes, lettuce, radish, beets, carrots, turnips, white turnips, and did I say beets?

Wanda: Yep.

Cora: Whatever grows aroun' here, um dere's some that you have to build a green house for like tomatoes, cucumbers but our dad never had that.

Wanda: What language did you speak growing and what language did your parents speak?

Cora: Growing up with my parents and my grandmother, our first language was Witsuwit'en, um, when we first entered school, at Indian day school I didn't know a word of English, I didn't know how to count I didn't know how to do weekdays or colours, I didn't know none of it and I struggled with it, so Witsuwit'en was my first language.

Sonya: How old were you in the Day School?

Cora: Probably around six, at that time they started at six now they start at five.

Sonya: Yeah.

Wanda: And your parents, you grew up with your parents speaking Witsuwit'en?

Wanda: Speaking fluently?

Cora: Our home, our home environment was all Witsuwit'en, everything we did um summertime working with our grandmother in the smokehouse everything was Witsuwit'en, uh probably every direction you were asked to do something was all Witsuwit'en was our first language.

Sonya: Did your parents speak English?

Cora: They, they spoke English but at home it was all Witsuwit'en, when white man came they spoke English, can' speak Witsuwit'en to a white man but English was very seldom used at our home like I said when they had visitors they had to speak English, spoke English.

Wanda: Do you have any children, what language do they speak and what language do you speak at home? Three questions in one.

Cora: When I experience the problem that I had attending school, and for that reason I didn't teach my children how to speak Witsuwit'en and I really regret it today an um the reason why I didn't teach Witsuwit'en is that the experience I had at the school is that um I can't remember the principle's name but if I wasn't able do things I had to stay in at recess or I was in a corner facing the wall, so the purpose I don't like that school up there, when I walk in there there's too many memories of myself facing the wall because I couldn't do what I was asked to do, so I had I had some experience at that building, so when they were asking me to do the program I thought I was scared I thought their gonna send me up there which I probably would had a lotta problem with that and I don't know if anyone else did so that was the experience I had and I really regret not teaching my children the Witsuwit'en language that I shoulda as a mother but slowly I'm teaching them now, so Jane* Jane* understands a lot outta the seven children I have lef', John's* catching on so those are the two that are trying really hard to pick up the Witsuwit'en language, Jake*, Jake* he just say's it's funny I don't wanna say it, and Joan* Joan* was raised by grandmother, in general when you speak with English like um, I was telling Wanda that um English speaking like, us generations that are born in the fifties up to probably late fifties um, our parents never wen' to school even it they did it was very few so they have that broken English version so we were brought up hearing that from our parents so probably Wanda will pick it up when we talk we have that sort of broken liddle English we have a hard time translating it or how to correc' it, like even when you go to school you always end up taking the way you were brought up so um that a difference I see in English speaking.

Story 1.2

Todd.62	Interview 11	Interview time: 00:38:08	Example length: 00:07:49

Wanda: And you spoke Witsuwit'en first, you were?

Todd: Oh, yeah, Witsuwit'en was my first language and musta been about, probably before grade one, grade one is when I started learning English, my dad, I only speak my mother's language, my dad spoke Gitxsan as well an Witsuwit'en, but I don't speak his language, my dad's language, his first language was Gitxsan and his second was Witsuwit'en, and third was English.

Wanda: Mhm, where are your parents from?

Todd: My mum is from here in Moricetown and my dad was born into Jeff's* house in Kispiox, so his father is Witsuwit'en, and his mother is Gitxsan, but he came here to live with Jeff* eight years old and when he came here, he only spoke Gitxsan, so we had to learn Witsuwit'en.

Wanda: And do you have children, and what language do they speak, do you speak it at home?

Todd: I have four children, three girls and thirty years old is the oldes'**,** my youngest boy is just turned twenty-two, and they only speak English because uh my dad didn't tell me not teach my kids Witsuwit'en, all he did was, he tol' me how he was ridiculed um, punished for speakin' his language and I guess subconsciously I thought that if I taught my kids my language they would be ridiculed laughed at so I didn't teach them that, I didn't teach them the the my mothers language, Witsuwit'en.

Wanda: And when you were younger did they cause they did that to your dad, did you get ridiculed in school for speaking your language?

Todd: Me?

Wanda: Did you go to St. Joe's?

Todd: Yep, yeah we were laughed at um we weren't allowed to speak too much Witsuwit'en in class, our neighbours our non-Witsuwit'en classmates used to make fun of us and because of that I was one of the feisty ones, fought a lot even in grade school because of that like if kids make fun of our people like our classmates or somebody below or above me in grade I would stick up for them.

Sonya: Do you think that the Witsuwit'en have accent?

Todd: Oh yes, we told that we have an accent uh for example the Nootsani's the people from Stoney Creek Fort St. James they definitely have an accent, English accent, uh same with the Gitxsans the most notable one are the one from Kisegluaca, its almost like they're singing just the way they speak it it is or something.

Wanda: So you do you think we speak clear than them?

Todd: They say that, some say that we speak slow, some say that we speak too fast we grew grew up and you, well they say that we have and accent, we don't think so it's something that we grew up with and it's it's a norm for us the way we speak.

Sonya: When you were in school did the children in Smithers make comments about the way you spoke English?

Todd: Yes pronunciation-wise, because like I said my first language was Witsuwit'en.

Sonya: Do you see the children growing up in the community having that same accent as you did, even though they don't speak Witsuwt'en?

Todd: In this community it, our language are different dialects noticeable, but it's there, um in English I would say yes, because um, one of our translators during a court case was John*, and his mum originated from Stolaco and even in English sometimes I notice that his accent is the same as people from Stolaco, it came out a little bit even in our language.

Sonya: So do you like see younger people speaking with an accent or do they sound like white people?

Todd: Um not so much because they're they grew up learning English, they don't have a first language as I did, or some of us did in the community so I guess if there was an accent it would be the speakers and non-speakers, some of them have don't have much exposure to our language so.

Wanda: Well I know that uh my mum said or Jane* told her that John* goes to the Daycare and when he goes home he talks like Jane*. His accent, how Betty talks and then I was like that's so true cause when Jessica* went to the Day Care, she used to come home and talk like Jane*, like hellooo I'm talking to you! Like that's how my aunty talks an its funny I guess.

Todd: That's what I found with my granddaughter even that short time spent wit' Jane* it comes out in her.

Wanda: Yeah, yeah I noticed that to with John*.

Story 1.3

Laura.65	Interview 03	Interview time: 00:30:28	Example length: 00:02:34

Laura: Well like with us like all of us are girls like my sisters Jane* and Joan* and Jem* and Jessica* and we our parents that raised us dad left us early an he um he he got married and moved up here and we still live down in the village and my parents always made sure that we knew how to hunt and trap on our own even after school we had to go check the the snares that mum put up for us and me and my sister that were there we used go check it every after school, we long ways on the tracks and made sure to check the snares and both had guns with us and we if we didn't get anything in the snares we get uh grouse for mum or a squirrel and then later on in the years mum and dad took us to the territory Telkwa river or the Samgusli and made sure we knew how to do the trapping ourself for beavers and I remember this one time dad me er I think it was Jane* Joan* and Jessica* we went trapping with him an he was showing them how to trap underwater and I think Jane* was there too, dad tol' me to stay in the car and the truck and keep it running so I did that and I was wondering why he kept saying you stay in the car keep the truck running so I stayed

in the truck and keep it running and all of sudden they came back and they were all wet, he had showed them how to trap under water, the beaver an he taught us all those stuff and how to use guns and how, down the canyon, he taught us how to do the net and stuff like that so how to be independent on our own, I'm still like that I like to be independent do things on my own now I'm helpless and the kids are out doing everything for me.

Story 1.4

Jenny.67	Interview 13	Interview time: 01:33:08	Example length: 00:10:20

Jenny: I never spoke English from three years ol' on, at home because was not spoken only Witsuwit'en was spoken in our home by my mum and dad and by living the way that we lived it was always Witsuwit'en words and when we did chores as liddle children in our neighbourhood they spoke to us in Witsuwit'en um they spoke to us in Witsuwit'en and carried on (paused to answer a phone call) Okay where was I?

Sonya: Witsuwit'en at home.

Jenny: All Witsuwit'en was spoken in our home for my whole family, my older brothers and sisters as the same for us in all our neighbour hood where I was raised, Witsuwit'en was spoken in our neighbourhood, with the children we played with we grew up with, all their parents spoke Witsuwit'en in Two Mile that's where I was raised by my mum and dad um my zhen'ii which was dad's aunt, I did chores for her and she spoke to us in Witsuwit'en, and we never ever forget those Witsuwit'en words that are given to us and then further up we have another elderly lady that was on crutches, I packed water for her and she spoke to me in Witsuwit'en, and gave me a lot of advice as a young little girl, she wouldn't trust' anyone to go into her house, all the Elders did that same, they won't trus' you unless the know who you are, who your parents are before they can let you enter into their home, but this lady somehow knew my mother and I was going by her house she would stand by the door and call me over, she yell at me to come over so I came over and she had a two empty buckets ready for me and she wanted me to pack water for her which I did quickly and then I went on to do my chores for mum this is how we were brought up in out childhood, we packed water those days and we packed it along way and we did this for all the elderly ladies and we did not as' for anything in return my mother tol' me don't take no money from them, do it for nothing, so I did, I was trusted to go into their homes and my mother used to tell me don't ever touch anything that doesn't belong to you, don't take anything form their home, you'll be honest she used to tell me and I was scared to go into these other homes cause something might be missing and I'll get the blame for it, as a little girl I thought things out, but I did my chores and left quickly, this old lady she used to give me one small bannock as a payment for packing water and packing in her wood, and the other things that I did for her was wash her

feet cause she couldn't do it one her own, and then she had disposables that she was sleeping um, she told me to wrap the disposable and not touch it and throw it in the outhouse, everyone of our families had outhouses, we did not have running water in the house, that's why I packed water with a bucket, in every home was like that, we packed our water along way to do dishes, to cook with, to wash out clothes with, we didn't have washing machine we had no electricity, we us coal lamp winter months and firewood, dere times when we went out if wood an our house would get col', we went by stric' rules by our mum, we had our half hour, our water buckets full, and if not she comes home, sees buckets empty she'll make us go and pack that water in the dark without light, that's her punishment towards us so every time before dark we would check the buckets, we would take turns filling it up, my brother and I, he was a year younger than myself so we worked together, there are so many things that our Elders taught us and this is also with our Language Witsuwit'en, we didn't learn this language from a book, dees words came form their mouths, we heard them and never forgot them, and I'm glad that we did cause today at sixty-seven years ol' I still have that language in my heart in my mind and I don't ever wanna stop using it, I get called upon doing language work with language cause I love doing it, I love, I teach preschoolers, kindergarten, um, school age children, and teen, teen groups in the pas' and I love doing it and then the Young Adults, I taught them my language verbally and I'm trying to teach them to do the writing part but it was too soon for them, the first time is teaching them verbally, they can hear and do the pronunciation properly, with the vowels sounds that Sharon Hargus gave us, there are seven vowels in Witsuwit'en Hanuk, that we follow and when to use it and how to use it, to do the proper pronunciation, there are times that I come across some words that I get stuck with but I phone maybe Jane*, our Elder, older than myself, I approach her for help and she gives me help, and I always love working with the language, I will never give it up, and I wanna the younger generation learn their language but I don't see it happening in our community, for years and years and years the language has been taught but I don't see communication between the children in Witsuwit'en, and um I'd like these, this language to be taught in high school when our children leave Moricetown elementary they go to Mulheim they don't get Witsuwit'en Hanuk like what Sharon taught us, the high school doesn't have that language so our children are graduating without their Witsuwit'en Hanuk it's not right they should be taught also because these children are our future leaders and not one of them are learning the Witsuwit'en Hanuk properly, I can talk with my eyes closed like a dictionary, this is my life about how I grew up with it.

Sonya: Why do you think children aren't learning Witsuwit'en today?

Jenny: I don't know, because they are going to school in our school here, our school, Multiplex with the elementary school with grade one to eight, they do have classes but I do not hear the children speaking Witsuwit'en, I always walk in the hallway meet them in the hallway *Hadïh hadïh so"endzinli?* I think they're too shy to answer but there's no response coming from them.

Story 1.5

Jenny.67	Interview 13	Interview time: 01:33:08	Example length: 5:54

Jenny: I'll tell a story about when sol' moccasin for my Aunty, short story about how I sold moccasin when I was probably five years ol' Jane is aunty to my dad she came over to our place from her little house over there she walked over she had a cane with her didn' know how ol' she was but I knew she had to walk with a cane she came over an talk to my mother out mum was doing something washing clothes I think outside an think this was the touris' season I'm playing outside with a skipping rope an then I could see her go down to mum and ask mum's permission for me to talk for her to sell moccasins to the tourist down by the road and mum said okay and she ordered me to walk with her an I took her han' and I was happy to walk with her an she had a little paper bag under her arm an as we were walking down to towards the tourist on the road she said Jenny *cas cwhat spay be gyo'd on ke't* that means your gonna sell the moccasin for me she said to me so I was really happy and walking with her and as we got closer she stood back by the road an she said take that moccasin outta the bag like this it's a brown bag take it out an show it to the lady an which I did it was embroidered no beads jus' embroidered an it's a woman's moose hide moccasin women's size and I show it to the lady like this and and then she said after she looks at in our own language she said put your han' out like this and you say it pie dollahs which I did pie dollahs meant five dollars so I did and then the lady took that moccasin and she went to her hand bag took that little five dollar bill out and hand it to me and I looked at my zen'ia an she went like this so she give me its okay that I sold it for her and she walk to store an' got five pound rice and one box of tea and that what that five dollars she bought rice and tea with it that's a sort little story I sol' moccasin for her an' I didn't know how to speak English at all all I knew was Witsuwit'en.

Story 1.6

Sally.68	Interview 12	Interview time: 00:47:44	Example length: 00:03:37

Sally: Mostly Witsuwit'en, we talk until I went to that school, started slowly we started learning English at our own, uh, the teachers were nice, they taught us how to speak English we went to school till about grade six I think, Moricetown school, we used to walk to school, until we went to I went to grade seven I went to town St. Joseph's school and then when we went to St. Joseph's school the sisters there they did not allow the Natives to talk their language if they catch us even in the lunch room or auditorium and make each family sit on one table, we have our lunch, and I remember my brother start talking to my sister in Carrier,

they grabbed ‘im by the ear and put ‘im in the corner and my poor brother didn’t even eat lunch with us his lunch was still in his lunch box, the teachers were so mean some kids they fought back with de teachers that were there, and that’s that’s how some our community lost their language an’ uh us we kept on all of us, pretty much right down to my younger sister, we taught each other how to speak our language that was learned in our family and my mum was smarter than us she talk Gitxsan and (clears throat) she learned Gitxsan language by, taught her how to, from ‘er sister in law, my brother was married to a Gitxsan lady from Kispiox and she taught her how to speak Gitxsan, and mum never tol’ us that she can talk fluently in that until one day de nurses as the hospital de maids at the hospital were Gitxsan and they were talking about my mum in der own language they figured oh she’s a Witsuwit’en from Moricetown and she won’t understand us and they’re talking about her, did ol’ lady has too many visitors everyday we hafta clean her room every day, and my mum answered them in Gitxsan and she even told the boss what they were saying, I think she musta almost got those two ladies fired I think, for speakin’ outa turn in their own language.

Appendix 2 Local histories and stories

Story 2.1

Amy.27	Interview 28	Interview time: 00:48:07	Example length: 00:05:16

Amy: Well they used to talk about tsun’dye, how they can turn into humans or they can turn into anything what they wanna be, an I remember that as a kid there was me my sister my brother an a couple of our cousins we used to run across the bridge over there by the canyon and we used to go down to this house where they’d uh always give us snacks and candies and it was Jane’s* place that’s when she used to be with that John guy she used to lived down there an I remember as a kid we were makin’ it home too late it was dark we got stuck in the middle of the bridge an there’s four tsun’dye we were all huddled together an I was the oldest one there so I was tryna protect them an they wouldn’t let us off the bridge and that was the scariest time after that we quit going across to the to that house after that, it it was like ol’ people standing one each corner and dey dey looked scary to, no no they blocked us on the bridge on the middle of the bridge -no they’re just standing there looking at us and we’re all too scared to move.

Wanda: How long do you think you guys stayed there?

Amy: We stood there for like uh maybe an hour or two hours and then we just all huddle together an we’re all cryin’ an finally I looked up an I said they’re gone they’re gone let’s go round so we started running we

started running home and then in nineteen-sixty gee I can't remember the year John* drowned sixty-seven, sixty-eight he drowned down at the canyon I experience seeing his spirit when I was a kid my parents they went drinking, Jane* was lookin' after us and Jane* wouldn't give me Coke so I I got mad and I sat outside crying I heard like water running an runnin' from the road down below and you could water in the boots so I ran to the edge and there it was my brother's spirit John* he goes Come follow me I'll show you where I'll fell in I got scared to I ran in an called Jane* out an I told Jane* Jonh* I said John's* tryna tell me to follow him and he hit me in the head he says don't lie about it I said I'm not lying I said I saw him he said he had a white shirt on a black pants -no he wasn't buried cause he didn't find him they didn't find him, no so that's one story I remember that I told my kids and I saw my mum's spirit in college it was my last I think it was my last year there grade twelve we all decided to sleep in the living room an um everybody was sleeping an the fire the fire thing was going cause we all had a snack that night and we all went to bed and you know that hallway that goes to the kitchen? Remember that hallway? I was sleeping by there one girl was here I was here and then another one there and there's a chair right in the corner by that hallway I was still tryna go to sleep and I heard someone call my name I recognize the voice it was my mom and I laid there I said oh my god I'm hearing things and then I hear it again so I pull that blanket off and my mum she was sitting on a chair she was going like this me and and I started cryin' and I was just gonna go reach up an one of my friends grabbed my hand pulled it back said don't touch her she's tryna take you, that's one thing I remember about my mum.

Story 2.2

Anna.35	Interview 02	Interview time: 00:32:53	Example length: 00:03:22

Anna: Um I know that we've like we've spread all over the continent like was, I'd say about ten thousand years ago and um as soon as this place was located this place was foun' by our Indigenous people long time ago and we resided here and still here today, the reason being is the fishing grounds and its been protected for about ten thousand years and today it still is, it's all the main reason is the territories and also the fishing grounds and um I know 'bout the history that we had 'bout how the how you know how they had Christopher-

Wanda: Columbus?

Anna: Columbus come here but with our territories, Christopher Columbus is different he introduced himself to the native people but he started takin' advantage of it an they started trading but he took advantage of it by trading alcohol, that's when alcohol was introduced and same with, that's when the

sickness started and that the sickness wiped out most of the Indigenous people long time ago and so that's how it all spread that's how we all ended up spreading all over the continent is trying to get away from the white people um because they'd take over your lan' they'd take whatever you own they'd take your culture the stuff that you'd made and burn it and then what I know is that and then what I know is that the missionary got involved here so um I just know that there was history of uh natives fighting the natives here uh over the territory over the fishing grounds cause that was the best place to be living, that was here um my mom where she's located right now they had a uh huge battle long time ago an wherever people were killed down 'ere they were buried in the same place where they died and we we tend to hear uh somebody singing someone dancing and my mom says its just the people that were buried here from long time ago cause of the battleground that was where we're located on an I guess just recently they found some human remains down there and they were over two thousand years old some maybe could be more so I'm still learning a lot about my culture like I was working at the museum an I started reading up on stuff and tourist would come an ask me questions and I'd bring them to this post where I'd have all the stuff bout how we were created here and how the missionary got involved and um pretty well showed them and there's people from like Germany that have heard the stories from here and that's why they enjoyed coming here and yes uh I hear a lotta legends from long time ago from my grandmother and I believe them some.

Story 2.3

Anna.35	Interview 02	Interview time: 00:32:53	Example length: 00:03:05

Anna: I just recently did like I I spent two months with the Williams Lake First Nations people spending time with them up that's where I learned that you need to know look into your culture more um they really opened up my eyes like um how to live off the land especially they saying that waters real spiritual to you and you need water in your life you need water to drink all the time an um when I was was spending time with the Chokotan people down there they were really into their culture I actually learned the lahal song it's a game song used to be its considered like bingo its their kinda gambling it's a game its pretty neat and here I was asking my head chief Jane as how come we don't have lahal, I heard thousands of years ago that's what they used to play hear why why was it stopped and he didn't have an answer for me for that cause lahal, it's a native game its like two groups of clans competing with each other with songs an they have two sticks they got two larger sticks an those sticks are given the opponent across you and you hafta guess which of those little sticks are in your hands and then their singing away first an after the songs over that's when they hafta guess they switched the object back and forth in your hands an just you hafta do it in front of them and then you hafta put it behind your back an switch it real quick and and and the other

opponent um tries to guess it and if they loose they don't get that long stick if the win then the clan member has to give up that stick so I was just asking we should bring that lahal game back here too they still play up down south.

Story 2.4

Jen.38	Interview 04	Interview time: 00:32:53	Example length: 00:02:11

Jenny: The bodies, the bodies, nah, you don't wanna hear about that.

Sonya: Yes, I do.

Jen: The whole graveyard the whole graveyard, they said that our whole village is all graveyard, right from John's*, the Gas Bar, across the road there, all the way from John's* all the way to here, is what my mum told me.

Sonya: How old like?

Wanda: Like probably seventeen, eighteen hundreds.

Sonya: Oh really?

Wendy. 38: That hall was in built in eighteen hundreds eh?

Wanda: It was built in the sixties.

Jen.38: Mum said they moved most of the bodies good but they missed some of them is what mum assumed cause they have, they heard something in John's* field at one point and that's when I even asked mum too cause they even our kids to this day they see stuff in the fields there and I tell my mum and my mum says well my girl this used to be a whole graveyard here this whole village because the village-

Wanda: The village was down by the canyon.

Jen: By the canyon, that's why they called us K'san or Kyah, people by the river, so then after they moved like they managed to put it up here, they say they missed some of the bodies, maybe that's whose bugging people, but that's jus what I was told by my mum, that's one thing, bout this lodge.

Story 2.6

Wendy.38	Interview 04	Interview time: 00:32:53	Example length: 00:03:34

Wendy: How we got the Moricetown name, John* tol' me that story bout the Sasquatches, erm, Bigfoot, um the way John Doe told me was huh Father his name was Father Morice, is how she said it, said that he took he like being the father of Moricetown when he buried somebody he said that in short he said when he buried somebody, they go up there and they notice that the bodies were missing, the one that they just buried up in the graveyard there, noticed they were missing and he got tired of cause every time they buried something the body went missing, so what he did and figured the only way he could find out who was doing it was they buried him, made it so that he could breathe and everything in the box, he took some like bread crumbs or whatever, but a trail to make sure he could find his way back, sure enough they said that thing dug him out and started draggin' him up the mountain here, they said there's a cave up here, Father said he notice that he was being drag by something in the bushes so he'd leave little bread crumbs so if he got away he would know which way to come back, well when he got there he notice that there was a family of them woman he said that she had boobs so he knew she was a female, little one but a family of eight of 'em, so what he did was he manage to escape get away and he followed the breadcrumbs back home and he told everyone in the village he knows whose been doing it, it's these sasquatch these bigfoot, we hafta go up there we hafta get 'em and so what they did they brought a whole bunch of people up there they found the cave they didn't see any of the people well the sasquatch so they just so they just burned it they burned the cave with them in there they say that one, even to this day they say that one got out, but they did kill them and that's when they named out village after Father, Moricetown.

Story 2.7

Hunter.45	Interview 02	Interview time: 00:32:53	Example length: 00:01:08

Hunter: Just a sasquatch one, it was um, were like you know you're teenager, and I was with my sister and uh John, and I swear to God I saw something it was towards John's and we're going down to two mile and I don't know why we went back we pass some, and I could smell this awful, like how bear smells cause bears don't they smell good, they stink anyways we walk by and I could just see this thing corner of my eye it was way taller than us it was just standing on side of the road and my sister we put her on the far side, we made her walk on far side and we walk past it and John said shit lest turn and I said go past that thing again? And we did and soon we got back to the log house which was still standing and we heard all the dogs in this whole area going crazy and it was freaky because it made a howling sound like a, they say they can make different noises they can emulate different animals, this one made a wolf sound, soon as it did that all the dogs, at home even my three dogs after that I stayed in, didn't go out.

Story 2.8

Hunter.45	Interview 20	Interview length: 00:37:48	Example length: 00:02:29

Hunter: And then years and years later, I worked for the fisheries, we were going at six in the morning, went down to boat launch area, er, not boat launch, just down the site, dogs are barkin' on the side and we couldn't see anyone, but we're hearin'em eh? Get down to the site and we walked over a little bit and see the rock and there's a guy on it eh? And he says what'er you doing, he's like he kept looking over to the bush, cause we couldn't see down where we were standing, and he was packing up his gear real quick I never seen a guy, fisherman pack up his fishin rod' just he didn't even win' it up he just threw everything inside his gear and jumped across and what's you doin? I was like It's just a bear, relax, and he's like Yeah bears run on their hind legs, away from the dogs! And he was literally running up the steps, and we went check, got open could hear the dogs takin' off you could hear crack bushed like branches crackin' that was it, it was like-

Wanda: You guys didn't see it?

Hunter: Nothing

Wanda: Just heard it?

Hunter: And the dogs were way down like if you go down to the thing there you can see it the boat launch area then there's the river turns out and that's how far away these dogs were waiting and they were up and down the hill after that and then was about half an hour later those dogs came back and what we say it from what our grandparents says is Bigfoot or Sasquatch, whatever they call'em, they won't harm animals unless they're eating them but dogs and that they won't hurt 'em.

Story 2.9

Jody.53	Interview 22	Interview time: 00:30:12	Example length: 00:03: 30

Jody: They tol' us the story about the old lady 'cross the river, and they said they seen her screamin' around, at midnight and she'd it walk around the village, People stay out late, they see that that lady figure, that that the lady that go buried across at the campground, she wasn't uh she wasn't listening to the village people what they tell her not do and she does opposite.

Wanda: Didn't she burn her wedding dress after she got married or something?

Jody: Yeah she did everything bad instead of the they try to keep her on the right side but she did everything opposite instead so they said they're not gonna bury her up the graveyard they're gonna bury her up there cause she was a bad woman and showing other ladies how to be bad so that was the story my parents told us about and we got scared and we don't wanna be bad we wanna be on the good side.

Wanda: Yeah.

Jody: So didn' run around in the village either the only one that did was Jane* She was running the way that lady was and dad said see that's example im telling you about looking her she's running of again we just just finished telling her she was sorta like that lady too, she lied through her way and just did everything the opposite, the only thing she did was cleaning and bead work and doing the laundry and after awhile shed get all that done so be gone for three four days and she'll be coming back they found out about a month after so told her she gotta leave they pitied her again and brought her back so that was pretty difficult for Jane* and didn't know what was right and wrong, didn't understand to much of the English, cause the teachers at St. Joseph were giving her a bad name too, so she went to school up there too.

Story 2.10

Todd.62	Interview 11	Interview time: 00:38:08	Example length: 00:11:28

Todd: Well it used to be a very small village, one of the oldest villages in this area, that's why they call it Kyah Wiget, the original village was down where uh um John*, John* lived down below.

Wanda: By the river?

Todd: Yeah uh and later years they moved up up here right uh where the highway is is where they moved too I guess for fishing and um the first minister to come across was a Catholic priest named Father Morice and cause of him Kyah Wiget became Moricetown and um early nineteen hundred they built that church there's pictures where it's being built nineteen twelve so the church is over a hundred years old now, our people were very uh were known as nomads cause because it made sense, when I was going to night camp I was in Kamloops uh Caribou College there I met some people in Chase who knew people from up here, people like John* and Jack* they were in the band and there's some Elders down there that in Chase, they're people here and that kind of uh explains why we're called nomads, we're very structured in terms of our culture and with our laws we're very strict and not very many people broke our laws because of how uh things that were done for example there used to be snake pit up Bulkley canyon a huge one and for someone

who would break the law, let's say example that my great uncle told John um that was evidence that was uh if someone um committed an offense um fighting first offense he would be he or she would be hung upside down above the snake pit,

Sonya: Like an actual pit full of snakes?

Todd: Yes.

Sonya: That's awesome.

Todd: That's what you call a snake pit, yeah and the second offense they snip, that's why not very many people broke laws back then its also like trespassing on a territory, a small village everybody knows how many people go hunting, four people go hunting and everybody knows who those four are, when they only three come back, and one of them comes back with uh um a cedar wrist ban' made out of cedar a wrist band or a neck band the people in the community would know what happened to that fourth person that didn't come back, the fourth person would've trespassed on some, another clan's territory, there's no warning, they kill them on the spot so that's how stringent our laws were, not very many people broke laws back then. And the other one is um when a chief gets up in the feast hall, he or she would say I I don't claim to be an expert at this and would talk about what the situation is what that potlatch is if there's something that um if there's an issue there or let's say if there's a name going to someone that they don't agree, it would stand up and speak, one of the ways respect that is demonstrated is when that chief says I don't claim to be an expert however, and how we speak to one another if we speak out of turns publicly to another clan member it'll cost you'll have to put up a potlatch to apologize not only to that person that um you offen' publicly, you'll have to uh his or her chiefs because when I got my first name I was told don't dirty your blanket, they don't say they don't say they don't give you details, you learn over the years, what is meant that way it stays with you when I was prepping for my name I ask I knew some protocols because I grew up I started to train it was at an early age and when I was prepping for my name John I made some suggestions to the Elders John*, James* um Jason* and Elders from Burn's Lake, um Jack,* they don't including my grannie Jane* they don't tell me when I have an idea they don't tell me no no no that's wrong, they never ever once tol' me that's wrong you don't do that they just told me stories and what relate to what me idea is and what the end result was or what it could be.

Wanda: So they kinda maybe figure it out yourself the way they were telling the stories?

Todd: Yeah or they told me what worked and what didn't in the stories, they never told me no you're doing it wrong! Or they didn't say you do it this way! They didn't say that, it's respect that's how its demonstrated and when I was prepping for my name Elder would say something, put me up here and two three minutes

conversation and put me up there, not all at once, little at a time leading up to the potlatch, and all of them did that, and by the time I put up my clan name, my clan my family my clan put up the potlatch for Jack*, John*, James* I felt like I was seven foot six it's a over the year that they talked to me, built me up to that, it's and today I feel we're losing it there's a disconnect, we kids know a lot but its not something that they feel comfortable, not yet, um to say yeah I know that we walk them through some situation starting very young with our sister, I don't sit hem down and say okay this is what just a little bit at a time, when we're gonna have a feast after a potlatch I would say this is what we did, just a little, little things, I don't give them to much information to overload them, just a little bit at a time.

Wanda: Did you do what my mom and dad did was when they wanted us not to fool around when there's a death in the community they used to tell us the story about uh the d'niizuk coming into the house and stretching your mouth so you could be mute that's what they told me and I thought it was just a scare tactic but you're not supposed to outta respect for the family who lost a loved one you're not supposed to play around celebrate and anything when there's a death in the community.

Todd: Yeah, we talk about the spirit a lot.

Story 2.11

Cora.64	Interview 06	Interview time: 01:18:28	Example length: 00:10:11

Cora: Back then, when we were growin' up, like Moricetown was a beautiful place to live, um, a lot of Elders they've all have passed on, like everything you did they were welcome by them, I remember visiting Wanda's grandparents, there was always big pot on the tea, on the stove, just like a central place for people, it was just a building that people had to go in, so um and them um, lot of our Elders, some of them that I remember as a very young chil' did a lot of trapping so um during winter Moricetown was sorta like um, little deserted area till springtime when people all came back home for doing their feasting, either taking a name or doing a headstone, right where uh right beside John's* house is at that used to be a real big place for gathering place when were growin' up, Jane's* used to have a building there and when people came in there was tent set up around the whole area, there was that house and that little yellow house where Joan's* house was between those areas it used to just packed with uh wagon team and tents and a uh big camp fire and people waiting there to start hosting feast and um they'd have traditional singing practicing and um, everything had on campfire was all traditional food, whatever they got for the winter, I that's what I seen when I was growin' up, mainly a lot of things happening within that area and um they had a hall down at

the other end of the village and that was Jack's* hall and that was used for feast and that was used for feas' and they had a hall right where um, Jeff* has his house now they had a had a hall there that belonged to a Likhsilyu clan so those were the halls that they used and um growing up when you take on names used to take two days, one day they'd um, that were allowed to come, cause it was outdoor and that mainly took place at the other end of the hall, village, at Jack's* hall they would do cin k'ikh acting out their cres' the names that they hol' so we to see a lot of then it took two days back then for a person to take a name or even do the headstone, one day everything was done outside, and the next day they did the draggin' of the stone and did the feas' so that was two days, that they did business, now we just do one day, it's really changed a lot.

Sonya: Um, what do mean by a feast for a headstone, like an actual stone or a-?

Cora: When a, when a person's passes away especially a traditional, a hereditary chief uh when they pass on and they're gonna do a headstone feas' that that person that's takin' the name of the person's headstone they're putting up they have to do cin k'ikh they act out their names the cres' um everybody had different cres' within their names so dey act out, if somebody was a skunk they would put on a blanket and uh have a spray bottle and walk up to somebody and spray them with the water or perfume or whatever it was.

Sonya: Okay, cool.

Cora: And um, one person was uh, had a mountain goat so he 'ah uh um, mountain goat hide specially made 'specially made for him that he puts on with the head on it and he'll crawl up the hill and somebody will be shooting at it, so and the bear had a bear so those things you don't see no more but they really practice it back then, so some people they just dance or sing, not everyone had a animal crest but the one that did really acted out their, even killer whale, I seen that in action uh what was done, and it was always that little Jack*, he was small and he can participate in everything so he was the main actor at that, all the things that they did and from the time I firs' seen him he hasn't change he was still the same height the same person.

Story 2.12

Jenny.67	Interview 36	Interview time: 00:12:20	Example length: 00:04:16

Jenny: And tell you this true story about my dad he's on Blun' Blunt mountain coming home from trapping he sit sleep under the tree build a fire, stay overnight pretty soon he hear Indian song up in the trees drumming and Witsuwit'en song and dad said their elders tol' him only person hear that song he going to be diyinï gonna become diyinï what he said to me he heard it but then dad threw he shoot gun towards that way he ordered that singer to away and that song went away right away.

Sonya: Diyinï as in like a ghost or a-?

Jenny: No no, its a Indian doctor and then he heard that and then a same area then a owl come to him and uh talk to him in Witsuwit'en, dee owl jump up on the tree but our tradition says you cannot answer back the owl, a Fort St. James lady told me the same thing, its their tradition too, you can't talk back to the owl and keep talking, the owl will keep going going going and if you stop the owl beat you, you gonna die, that's why you don't answer the owl no matter where you are that's what they told us when we were kids, I thought it was fun, we were copying the owl, here after that they tol' us not to do that answer it back um that owl jump on the tree and dad was under the tree, he was spending a night there fire going, col' and uh, dee owl tol' him John* pass away back home and then the owl said you got one martin in your trap ahead and dad said sure enough in the morning he was heading out on the trail, 'is first trap had martin in it an um dad had to stop this owl from talking he said to him *nen da neras day!* Fly away or I'll shoot you! that's in Witsuwit'en, that that owl he listen, he flew away cause dad didn't wanna talk back anymore and it did fly away, this is true story of the owl speaking Witsuwit'en to dad telling him someone died back home and when he got home it was true, the owl was messenger, delivered the news to dad while he's out in the bush.