


PRAXIS AND INSIDER-OUTSIDER RELATIONSHIPS:  
THE ROLE OF NON-INDIGENOUS TEACHERS IN PROMOTING INDIGENOUS  
LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN EDUCATIONAL SPACES

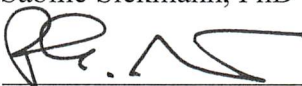
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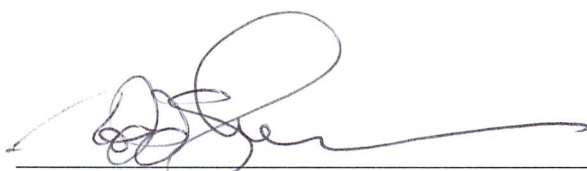
  
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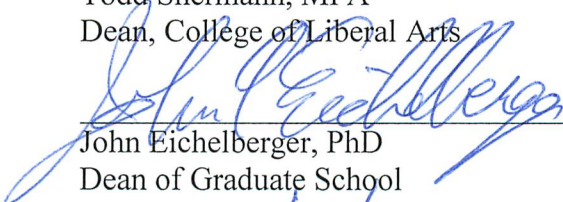
  
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PRAXIS AND INSIDER-OUTSIDER RELATIONSHIPS:  
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A  
THESIS

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By

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## Abstract

In many places throughout Alaska, non-Alaska Native certified teachers are working in communities that foster (or seek to foster) Alaska Native language and culture revitalization in the schools. Often, this means teachers with limited knowledge of the target language need to figure out how to support that content in their classrooms. This qualitative thesis examines interview and field note data collected from five non-Alaska Native teachers (working in Southwest schools) while they took summer classes at an Alaskan university. The teachers shared reflections on their struggles and successes in seeking to facilitate the integration of local Indigenous Knowledges into their schools and classrooms. Several common themes were identified, including Positioning Self as Co-Learner, Transforming Attitude towards Village English (VE)/Yugtun, Promoting VE/Yugtun in the Classroom, and Valuing Linguistic Affordances to Transform Self. When viewed through the lens of critical pedagogy, these themes indicate that participants are engaging in praxis – or reflecting critically and acting – in order to move towards supporting Indigenous Knowledges in beneficial, non-appropriative ways.



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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction

In late August of 2011, I moved to Alaska and began the Applied Linguistics MA program at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Eager to focus on issues of Alaska Native language acquisition and social justice, I pursued the Second Language Acquisition and Teacher Education (SLATE) track within the program. As I progressed through my first year of the program I sought to pinpoint a research topic for my culminating thesis project. However, with each new potential project idea came the same trepidation: how can a non-Indigenous beginning researcher such as myself contribute appropriately and positively to Alaska Native language revitalization efforts without perpetuating the long tradition of cultural and linguistic appropriation that has been exacted on Alaska Native and other Indigenous groups? After discussions with faculty, graduate students, and other individuals involved in language work in the state, I decided to make this tension the topic of my research.

An opportunity to be a research assistant for the Improving Alaska Native Education through Computer Assisted Language Learning (ANE-CALL) grant allowed me to gain access to a community of non-Indigenous individuals grappling with issues similar to those described above. The ANE-CALL grant is oriented towards creating pathways for students, teachers, and other partners to envision a culturally responsive classroom that also meets and exceeds other standards. The ANE-CALL grant funded master's and doctoral students to pursue projects that explore uses of technology in language acquisition. The grant is oriented towards facilitating the promotion of culturally responsive teaching, with the understanding that teaching based on students' Funds of Knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & González, 1992) in their home language and/or culture results in higher overall learning outcomes (Moll et al., 1992; Lipka, 1989). By combining a focus on Funds of Knowledge with educational technologies, the project seeks to

provide opportunities to meet national technology and curricular standards while creating opportunity for enhanced student engagement with spoken and written language production, and higher levels of language acquisition. (For additional description of the program, see Chapter 3, Section 3.4, “Setting.”)

The English Language Learner (ELL) cohort was comprised of five non-Indigenous certified teachers working at schools in predominantly Yup’ik rural communities and whose students were predominantly identified as ELLs. For this study, I engaged in participatory action research (PAR) with these teachers, learning from observations, conversations, and transcripts of focus group and interview data. Through analysis of this data, I began to develop a picture of how these non-Indigenous teachers positioned themselves to support local language and culture in their contexts. While these participants were teachers and thus grappled with their positionality specifically within a K-12 educational frame, we shared similar concerns about our motivations and actions as non-Indigenous participants.

The research question treated by this study is:

How do those who identify as non-Alaska Native perceive of the possibilities available to them for facilitating the integration of local Indigenous Knowledges into an educational space?

## 1.2 Research Limitations

This study has limitations. One limitation is that the data only includes non-Indigenous teacher voices. While setting the parameters of this study to focus on only non-Indigenous voices was useful for developing an analysis of how such individuals articulate their positionality, it was also potentially limiting. A better understanding of the pedagogical possibilities available to

them in their contexts would include local Indigenous voices – of the students, their parents, other teachers, teacher aides, administration, elders, and the wider community.

In addition, this study only examines Indigenous/non-Indigenous relationships in language revitalization through the frame of non-Indigenous K-12 teachers. While analysis and interpretation of this study's data indicates that the positionalities that these participants express do seem to fit into the wider understanding of Insider-Outsider dialectics within Indigenous/non-Indigenous research relationships (see Chapter 5), the study is missing the voices of those who do language work outside of the school system, Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike.

### 1.3 Terminology and Usage

Throughout this thesis, I use the terms “Yup'ik” and “Yugtun” in distinct ways. I use the term “Yup'ik” in ways similar to those in which Marlow and Siekmann (2013) use it. They state: “The term ‘Yup'ik’ refers to Central Alaskan Yup'ik people as an ethnic and cultural group. It is also used as a modifier when referring to the cultural practices of Yup'ik people (e.g., Yup'ik culture)” (p. 4). I use the term “Yugtun” to refer to Central Alaskan Yup'ik, the language spoken in many of the communities in which the participants in this study teach. This follows the practice of most community members, as well as the participants themselves. Where participants do use the term “Yup'ik” in data excerpts to refer to the language, I retain their terminology; in these cases, it is clear through context that they are referring to the language.

I use the term “Village English” (VE) to refer to a Yugtun-influenced dialect of English spoken in many rural villages in Southwest Alaska, and in all of the participants' teaching contexts. In this thesis, I refer to both VE and Standard American English (SAE). However, in the data, sometimes participants refer simply to “English.” In my discussion of such excerpts, I

also sometimes refer simply to “English.” Unless otherwise clarified or obvious from context, it can be assumed we are referring to VE in these cases.

Throughout this thesis, I capitalize “Indigenous.” Marlow & Siekmann (2013), who also do so in their work, state: “this is done to acknowledge that Indigenous peoples are seen and understood on a par with other ethnocultural groups, whether defined broadly (e.g., Europeans, Americans) or narrowly (e.g., Swedes, Japanese)” (p. 3-4). By capitalizing Indigenous, I wish to underscore Indigenous sovereignty.

In this thesis, I often use the terms “Indigenous” and “non-Indigenous,” and also “Alaska Native” and “non-Alaska Native,” to refer to the identities of persons or groups. Where possible, I also name “white” and “European” identities. However, in some instances where I am discussing dialectics pertaining to Indigenous and/or Alaska Native identities, I use only these terms, and do not explicitly name “European” or “white” identities as such. I wish to underscore that any failure to directly name a person or group as “white” is not done with the intention of normalizing “white.” Rather, it is a deliberate choice where I wish to be as concise as possible when exploring dialectics relating to Indigenous ways of knowing.

Finally, some participant data refers to “Yup’ik First Language” and “dual language education” programs. These terms refer to two different bilingual program types that are currently or were formerly implemented in the school districts in which the participants teach. Joshua (2011) describes the Yup’ik First Language (YFL) program as transitional: “Quick transition to English could allow students to catch up with other English speaking students. The students are taught 10-50% in English. They exit this program when they are proficient in English... Most of the students exit this program after two to four years” and do not receive further instruction in Yugtun in school after that (p. 29). Dual language education (DLE), also

called dual language immersion or “two way” immersion, on the other hand, supports additive bilingual programs which aim to develop conversational and academic proficiency in both target languages (Baker, 2011). The DLE model referred to in this study is the Gómez and Gómez “50-50 content model” (Gómez, 2000). As Joshua (2011) explains:

This model is more structured than most. Reading and Language Arts are taught only in the student’s Native language from preschool to first grade and in both languages from second to fifth grade. Math is taught in English for second to fifth grade. Science and social studies are taught in the Native language for preschool/kindergarten to fifth grade.

(p. 36)

In addition, the model emphasizes the importance of “language of the day,” through which all verbal interaction outside of content classes take place in alternating target languages (for example, Yugtun on Monday, English on Tuesday, etc.); bilingual pair work, where students with different language strengths work on tasks together; and Bilingual Resource Centers, where students may engage in pair, group, or other supportive work using available technological support such as computer-based resources (Gómez, 2000). For more information on the Gómez and Gómez model in relation to other DLE models, see Gómez, Freeman, and Freeman (2005).

#### 1.4 Thesis Overview

The rest of this thesis consists of a review of the literature, discussion of the methodology of the study, analysis of the study’s data, and a conclusion which uses the literature to frame and position the data analysis.

Chapter 2, the Literature Review, briefly highlights research and theory that significantly inform the present study. The chapter discusses three items within the field of Indigenous/non-Indigenous research relationships that relate directly to this study: Insider-Outsider,

Decolonization, and Working the Hyphen. Then, I discuss two areas of study that relate Indigenous/non-Indigenous relationships directly to teaching: Critical Pedagogy and Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT). I organize my discussion of CRT into *What* (Indigenous Knowledges and locally-derived curriculum), *How* (relational pedagogy and assessment), and *Who* (non-Indigenous teachers of Indigenous students).

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the methodology of the present study. I discuss the research design employed for this study. This qualitative study used Participatory Action Research. I then examine my own positionality in relation to the study. The chapter then includes a description of the setting, its participants, and research procedures. Finally, I present the analytical framework, constructivist grounded theory, used to analyze data.

In Chapter 4, I analyze the data collected for this study. Using constructivist grounded theory, I coded emergent themes in the data. Two main themes, and three sub-themes within each theme, emerged from analysis. One of two major themes, Teacher as Learner, entails any reference by the participants to themselves as learners of language or culture. Three sub-themes of this theme are past learning experiences, teacher as co-learner, and learning language or culture for a purpose. The second of two major themes, Valuing Linguistic Affordances, entails any positive value judgment by the participants of the language or dialect spoken by their students or by community members at their site. The three sub-themes of this main theme are transforming attitude towards VE or Yugtun, promoting VE or Yugtun in the classroom, and valuing linguistic affordances to transform self. The chapter ends by noting that these themes and sub-themes are not expressed in isolation but overlap and behave recursively.

Finally, Chapter 5 applies the theory and research described in the literature review directly to the major themes described in Chapter 4. I reevaluate the tenets of literature on

Indigenous/non-Indigenous relationships that I describe for this study to fine-tune how they apply to this study's data analysis. Two key concepts – Insider-Outsider and Critical Pedagogy – provide the theoretical framework through which to view my analysis. Then, to relate participant data to theory, I highlight CRT, which can be enacted by teachers through Wink's (2011) description of how to translate critical attitudes to the classroom: “name, reflect critically, [and] act.” I then describe questions for further study.





## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

The rationale for this study lies in the problematic history of research in/on/with Indigenous communities, (Smith, 2012; Brayboy & Deyhle, 2000; Brayboy & Maughan, 2009), and how non-Indigenous researchers and teachers can participate in supporting study and action in Indigenous language and culture revitalization movements without perpetuating the negative aspects of such relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Furthermore, this study examines such tensions through data gathered from a group of non-Indigenous teachers working in Indigenous contexts who provide insight into the teaching/praxis embodiment of these research relationships specifically. Therefore, given the topical parameters of the present study, this literature review will describe three main areas: Indigenous/non-Indigenous research relationships (including the Insider-Outsider construct, decolonization, and the notion of “working the hyphen”), critical pedagogy, and culturally relevant teaching.

#### 2.1.1 Voice

The term “voice” is used throughout this chapter and will be discussed here. Hornberger (2006) describes voice through her account of a young Quechua Indian student in Peru who, though silent and reserved in her Spanish-language classroom at school, is vivacious and talkative when at home speaking Quechua and interacting with her family and culturally significant items and practices. This girl “lost her voice at school and found it at home... use of her own language in familiar surroundings was key in the activation of her voice” (Hornberger, 2006, p. 278). The girl’s changed behavior

vividly exemplifies the individual in active dialogue with her environment, that is, the dialogism which is a prominent theme of Bakhtin’s work and “begins from the premise that sentient beings—alone and in groups—are always in a state of active existence; they

are always in a state of being ‘addressed’ and in the process of ‘answering’” (Holland & Lave, 2001, pp. 9–10). (Hornberger, 2006, p. 283)

In other words, “voice,” as used by Hornberger, is not just the degree to which an individual feels able to speak in a way that is meaningful to him or her, but also in a more theorized way, the degree to which individuals or groups can engage in an “answering” that is agentic. Having voice means being “addressed” by others, and in turn having their “answer” heard. Having voice means being an active, non-marginalized participant in an addressing/answering dialectic.

## 2.2 Indigenous/Non-Indigenous Research Relationships

This study is an examination of a group of non-Indigenous white teachers’ perceptions of how they can best serve their Indigenous students’ language goals. To understand these teachers’ potential roles in their students’ classrooms, and to understand my own role as a non-Indigenous white beginning researcher, this section of the literature review will briefly summarize how Indigenous/non-Indigenous relationships in research are theorized in the literature. Three interrelated concepts will be discussed: the Insider-Outsider construct; decolonization; and “working the hyphen” (Jones & Jenkins, 2008), the act of moving away from dichotomous conceptualization of relationships while still acknowledging the historical tension of colonialism and appropriation of Indigenous knowledge.

### 2.2.1 Insider-Outsider

The general definitions of Insider and Outsider can be described thus: if you are an “Insider” you are considered a member of a given community and are recognized as such by members of that community, and if you are an “Outsider,” you are not recognized as a member of a given community. More formally, “Insiders are the members of specified groups and collectivities or occupants of specified social statuses; Outsiders are not” (Merton, 1972, p. 21).

The terms Insider and Outsider have commonly been applied to non-Indigenous researchers (Outsiders) doing work in communities of Indigenous people (Insiders).

Some academics have called for insiders to do research within their own communities in contexts where being outsiders means a researcher does not have sufficient access to knowledge (Swisher, 1998). For example, Indigenous community members proficient in Western research methods could gain unique access to the process being studied; Swisher (1998) states:

How can an outsider really understand life on reservations, the struggle for recognition, sovereignty, economic development, preservation of language and culture? Perhaps they can gain a high degree of empathy and act as “brokers” of sorts, but it takes American Indians and Alaska Natives themselves to understand the depth of meaning incorporated in Indian education to ask appropriate questions and find appropriate answers. A non-Indian colleague summarized the issue with this statement: The view from the outside remains the same; it’s the inside view that varies. (p. 194)

However, this approach to helping a researcher gain access to a subject or process treats insideredness as monolithic, and because of this, becomes problematic. Indigenous academics can be outsiders in Indigenous research settings due to their affiliation with traditionally non-Indigenous, colonizing approaches to knowledge (Brayboy & Deyhle, 2000). Also challenging monolithic understandings of insideredness are cases in which Indigenous persons live in urban, not rural, settings (Baloy, 2011), or go between rural and urban homes frequently, due to schooling, work, health, or other exigencies. Indigenous attitudes about what it means to be Indigenous can differ between and within rural communities, urban centers, and academic settings (Weaver, 2001). A nuanced discussion of identity is beyond the scope of this study, but

these examples serve to illustrate that the Insider-Outsider construct, when understood as a strict binary, is problematic.

Researchers and theorists have problematized the Insider-Outsider construct. Merton (1972) highlights the folly of adhering to strict versions of what he calls the “Insider doctrine” and “Outsider doctrine.” He states that

[s]ince we all occupy various statuses and have group affiliations of varying significance to us, since, in short, we individually link up with the differentiated society through our status sets, this runs counter to the abiding and exclusive primacy of any one group affiliation. Differing situations activate different statuses which then and there dominate over the rival claims of other statuses. (p. 25)

In other words, individuals occupy multiple status sets and so are never just embodying one identity; we are never strictly “Insider” or “Outsider” but instead navigate a multiplicity of positions simultaneously. Similarly, Gee (2007) writes that individuals inhabit multiple positions at once, and also notes that each position you inhabit has an accompanying Discourse – or way of speaking-being-doing (p. 11). The positionalities an individual chooses to express most strongly can change from one moment to the next (p. 13).

Herr and Anderson (2004) articulate the Insider-Outsider relationship as it specifically relates to qualitative research. They state that by “interrogat[ing] our multiple positionalities in relation to the question under study...we have the possibility of crafting uniquely complex understandings of the research question. In addition we hope to avoid the blind spots that come with unexamined beliefs” (Herr & Anderson, 2004, p. 44). Further, they delineate a four-point organizing schema for the ways in which a researcher can be insidered or outsidered:

1. Insider/Outsider positionality vis-à-vis the setting under study

2. Hierarchical position or level of informal power within the organization/community
3. Position vis-à-vis dominant groups in society – class, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, ability/disability, religion, and so forth
4. Position within colonial relations within and between nation states (pp. 43-44)

Using this four-point organizing schema, a researcher can reflect on her or his positionality in an organized, comprehensive manner. Note that for each point, a researcher might be both outsided and insided. For example, looking at point number 1, “Insider/Outsider positionality vis-à-vis the setting under study,” I might be considered insided because I was, like my participants, a graduate student in the Applied Linguistics program at the University of Alaska Fairbanks at the time of the study. However, I was also outsided. I was not a member of the grant-funded teacher cohort, I had two years of experience in the program while others did not, and I participated in the summer not as a student but as the graduate student research assistant. (For a discussion of these points in relation to this researcher’s positionality to the participants in this study, see Chapter 3, Section 3.3.)

Qualitative researchers grapple not only with how they position themselves in any given moment as Outsiders or Insiders along the four continua outlined by Herr and Anderson, but also how they position and are positioned by others as they engage in Holland and Lave’s (as quoted in Hornberger, 2006) “addressing” and “answering” dialogue. Brayboy and Deyhle (2000) state that

[q]ualitative researchers must continually be aware of how those we study view us as well as how we view them. Qualitative research, and especially ethnography, relies on what we, as observers, see and what we are told by the participants in our research studies. This is not always a seamless path.” (p. 163)

The notion of maintaining “intellectual distance” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995), common in some research methodologies, runs counter to how knowledge is understood in many Indigenous communities. Brayboy and Dehyle (2000) argue that it is often culturally inappropriate to be distanced in Indigenous contexts, and attempting to enact distance will mark you as an Outsider and keep you from gaining the sort of access to relationships that are necessary for doing good qualitative, ethnographic research. Just as a static understanding of who is an insider and who is an Outsider does not accurately represent how researchers are positioned, so too does the notion of intellectual distance run counter to the realities of data collection, particularly in Indigenous contexts.

Another way in which dichotomous Insider-Outsider thinking is problematic is that it mutes voices – often, Indigenous voices -- that are critical to full understanding of the topic being studied. Trechter (1999), a non-Indigenous linguistic anthropologist, explored gendered speech in Lakshota by examining existing corpora of detailed records of speech in context that had been collected by a community member decades prior to Trechter’s own work. By questioning previous non-Lakshota, non-Indigenous researchers’ descriptions of gendered speech in Lakshota, Trechter opens space for a more nuanced understanding that shows how gendered speech also indicates register and certain paralinguistic aspects of Lakshota culture. Trechter describes how binaries are problematic: “Inevitably, any dichotomous framing either obscures or assimilates the diverse identities of those who cannot be recognized within that frame” (Trechter, 1999, p. 101). By including past research that was done by a community member, Trechter positions a traditionally Insider voice of a community member as a researcher (traditionally Outsider voice).

### 2.2.2 Decolonization

Just as the problematization of Insider-Outsider in the literature foregrounds notions of knowledges/truths as multiple and complimentary, so too does the literature on Decolonization. Smith (2012) provides a useful definition of the process of decolonization:

Decolonization is a process which engages with imperialism and colonialism at multiple levels. For researchers, one of those levels is concerned with having a more critical understanding of the underlying assumptions, motivations and values which inform research practices. (p. 21)

Decolonization can be undertaken by Indigenous or non-Indigenous; Trechter (1999), for example, is a non-Indigenous scholar, yet strives to include voices that challenge her right to outline Lakshota linguistic knowledge, and also begins her paper by acknowledging a predominant Discourse among her Pine Ridge participants that contemporary academic research and European and American lay interest is in fact part of the ongoing colonization of Indigenous culture:

Pine Ridge has a history of being overrun every summer by people eager to delve into the Lakshota way of life, such as anthropologists. Likewise, Europeans and Americans wanting to live like 'real' Indians as they quest for spiritual enlightenment have recently joined the seekers of the authentic Native American 'experience' (Powers, 1994).

Although imitation may be seen as a form of flattery where all other things are equal, many Pine Ridge residents regard the summer influx as an attempt to steal their culture, religion, and language. I will not detail my problematic position as a European American linguist in the continuing colonialization of Lakshota culture as outlined here; needless to say, it is precarious (see Trechter 1998). (Trechter, 1999, p. 107)



For Trechter, giving voice to the “colonized” is seen as *the* key to decolonization of research. In addition, while some researchers (Brayboy & Maughan, 2009) see Insider-Outsider collaboration, particularly in education research and teacher education, as a way to provide “Outsiders” with the knowledge of “Insider” ways necessary to work with insider children and reshape course content and structure to reflect multiple ways of knowing, Jones and Jenkins conceptualize the sharing of Indigenous knowledge with non-Indigenous individuals as just another method of colonization (Jones & Jenkins, 2008, pp. 478-479). We see reflections of this difficulty in the way some Maori individuals feel the nationalization of Maori language and culture not just diminishes the potency of that knowledge but in fact serves to keep that knowledge colonized by mainstream culture (Benton, 2007). Many scholars, Indigenous and non- alike, warn that dissolving the line between Insider and Outsider may be framed as an opportunity to downplay difference, effectively perpetuating the colonization of Indigenous knowledge.

While downplaying the difference between Insider and Outsider is problematic, so is elevating that difference. As noted above, some have suggested a sufficient solution might having “insidered” Indigenous community members be the ones who do research in/on/with Indigenous communities. However, Indigenous researchers are still representing Western academic traditions, and thus are positioned as outsidered. A resolution to this isn’t necessarily a uniform throwing-out of Western research methods. Smith (2012) describes an alternative angle from which to see the possibilities for Indigenous researchers:

Decolonization...does not mean and has not meant a total rejection of all theory or research or Western knowledge. Rather, it is about centring (sic) our concerns and world

views and then coming to know and understand theory and research from our own perspectives and for our own purposes. (Smith, p. 41)

This notion of centering, or recentering (Brayboy & Maughan, 2009), is a key to exploring ways forward that value all knowledges and see them as complimentary. Rather than seeing Western and Indigenous research traditions as at odds in an either/or relationship, recentering simply expands the research conversation to include Indigenous methods as an agentive methodological framework in a broader research landscape.

To recenter the conversation around research methodologies, and indeed to recenter the conversation on Insider-Outsider relationships more generally, it is critical that there be dialogue between individuals towards better understanding. Smith (2012) writes:

At some point there is, there has to be, dialogue across the boundaries of oppositions.

This has to be because we constantly collide with dominant views while we are attempting to transform our lives on a larger scale than our own localized circumstances.

This means struggling to make sense of our own world while also attempting to transform what counts as important in the world of the powerful. (Smith, p. 40)

How, then, can scholars engage in dialogue about these difficult issues in a way that will be productive? How can we “transform what counts as important” – or, ensure that previously muted or appropriated Discourses be given voice, while avoiding the inclination to downplay or avoid focusing on the difficult histories around colonization? In the next section, the concept of “working the hyphen” will be explored.

### 2.2.3 Working the Hyphen

Fine (1994), originator of the phrase “working the hyphen,” defines it in relation to the kind of cross-cultural work that research in Insider-Outsider contexts entails: ““working the

hyphen' in cross-cultural inquiry means creating occasions for researchers and informants to discuss what is, and is not, 'happening between,' within the negotiated relations of whose story is being told... and whose story is being shadowed" (p. 72). By shifting the focus of inquiry from the terms "Insider" and "Outsider" to the hyphen, or the zone of interaction, between the terms, "working the hyphen" provides a mechanism by which researchers and participants can face difficult histories. For researchers and participants who are positioned in relation to traditions of colonialism and oppression, "working the hyphen" provides a way to focus less on their Insider or Outsider positioning in relation to these histories, and instead focus more on what they can do in their shared relational space to amplify the voice of those whose voices have been muted in the past.

Jones and Jenkins (2008) take up Fine's term and apply it to their own work as an Indigenous/non-Indigenous research team in the Aotearoa/New Zealand context. They describe an emblematic moment in their collaboration. Jones (non-Indigenous) and Jenkins (Indigenous) read together a Western account of the arrival of white settlers to New Zealand, during which the first sermon is given shortly after white settlers arrive. Jenkins speaks back to the account during their collaboration, noting the Western account would never have occurred as the books have recorded it (p. 471). Instead, she recognizes that what has been recorded was likely not what happened: "Kuni is unconvinced that Ruatara would have attempted any direct translation. Instead...he would have spoken with passionate eloquence...[and] have enjoined the people to be good to the visitors...in anticipation of the ...advantages they would bring" (p. 472). As with Fine, Jones and Jenkins see their collaboration as inherently difficult. No collaboration between Indigenous and colonizer is ever really dialogic. Jones writes:

We know the different historical experiences cannot be homogenized into one single account (even though our joint academic publication is genuinely shared work, and neither could do it without the other). At the same time, our new, rich account is not produced through mutual dialogue; neither of us attempts to fully understand the other. What we do understand is that the careful, tense interplay of our histories provides an interesting account of the complexity of contemporary as well as past [I]ndigenous-colonizer hyphens. (p. 472)

There is nothing mutual or even about working the hyphen; the difficult tension of history is present, and fronted. Working the hyphen provides a path to voice for Indigenous participants that moves past the notion of voice as “the colonizer’s demand for narrative” (p. 480) and thus control of knowledge, and instead arrives at a process that centers the underlying colonizer/colonized tensions that exist in work done in Indigenous research. In other words, for Jones and Jenkins, “[t]he indigene-colonizer collaboration – if we are open and susceptible – is a site of learning from difference rather than learning about the Other” (p. 480).

Parker Webster and John (2010) agree that it is this place of difference that makes Indigenous/non-Indigenous collaborations so interesting, but instead of underscoring the fact that no one instance of collaboration can be equal, they instead reframe it to something that both acknowledges the troubled history of Indigenous research, particularly in the sphere of education, and acknowledges the potential for learning in the future:

We began our journey together along a path strewn with ethical dilemmas that were characterised by dualisms and asymmetrical power relationships. We are now at a turn that seems the beginning of another path – one on which we invite others to venture with

us as we take ethical first steps to explore a space where cross-cultural collaborations are developed through relationships that are negotiated and renegotiated. (p. 189-190)

They each embody multiple positionings of unequal and changing power, due to their multiple and overlapping interests and types of knowledge. Returning to the fluid, multiple positionalities, or Discourses (Gee, 2007), a person can have access to, Parker Webster and John emphasize that the “learning *from*,” rather than *about*, the Other that Jones and Jenkins (2008) describe should be undertaken repeatedly, “negotiated and renegotiated,” not simply because colonialism has done so much negative work over time that needs to be worked through, but because that working-through is undertaken by individuals whose positionalities are constantly changing.

### 2.3 Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy is a philosophy of education grounded in Paolo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970). In this seminal work, Freire states: “[critical pedagogy] makes oppression and its causes objects of reflection by the oppressed, and from that reflection will come their necessary engagement in the struggle for their liberation” (Freire, 1970, p. 48). In other words, critical pedagogy actively challenges and seeks to mitigate the inherent power imbalance that manifests at sites of organized education.

For the critical pedagogue, education should have the goal of fostering a space in which this becoming-aware-of and struggling against power imbalance for liberation can be carried out. This often contested space reflects a dialectic tension between oppression/reproduction and emancipation/transformation. In these contested spaces, power imbalance is not a given. Rather, it is a situation that can potentially be changed by the very people who are being oppressed. Freire (1970) writes:

Only as [the oppressed] discover themselves to be the “hosts” of the oppressor can they contribute to the midwifery of their liberating pedagogy. As long as they live in the duality in which *to be* is *to be like*, and *to be like* is *to be like the oppressor*, this contribution is impossible. The pedagogy of the oppressed is an instrument for their critical discovery that both they and their oppressors are manifestations of dehumanization. (p. 48)

In other words, critical pedagogues see a pedagogy of the oppressed as an endeavor that seeks to humanize both student and teacher. To be human, one needs to function not in a duality (which is needed for oppressive situations to persist) but in a complex dialectic that sees an oppressive situation as an unfortunate yet impermanent circumstance that can be changed to improve the lives of all involved. As Freire (1970) further describes, “[i]n order for the oppressed to be able to wage the struggle for their liberation, they must perceive the reality of oppression not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform” (p. 49). A pedagogy of the oppressed can harness the knowledge and strength of the very community that is being disempowered in order to overthrow oppressive systems and improve their realities.

Freire’s philosophy of critical pedagogy remains a powerful, and empowering, philosophical framework for educators and education researchers today. However, both those who wish to employ it in the classroom and those who wish to engage with its philosophical aspects have some critiques. For example, as summarized by Bruening (2011), the “post-” discourses seek a better critique of hegemony in knowledge production and research methods, and feminist critics of Critical Pedagogy claim it does not sufficiently eschew transmission-based pedagogy (Bruening, 2011, p. 5). In addition, scholars and educators – including self-identified

critical pedagogues – have argued that “critical pedagogy needs to move beyond educational ideology...[and examine] how it can be meaningfully employed in classroom practice” (Breuing, 2011, p. 2). But others, such as Wink (2011), emphasize the importance of such practices not being prescribed, but arising from the work teachers and students do together in the classroom. Other scholars wish to keep the notion of “critical pedagogy” from blending with other awareness-raising philosophies. For example, McLaren (2003) encourages those who engage in critical pedagogy to return to the original tenets of the philosophy and, as Breuing (2011) summarizes from McLaren (2003), “move away from its present emphasis on other counter-hegemonic praxis, including feminist pedagogy, cultural studies, and anti-racist education” (Breuing, 2011, p. 16).

Still, even with these critiques, critical pedagogy remains powerful. If all organized sites of learning – schools, programs, universities – are “cultural arenas where heterogeneous ideological, discursive, and social forms collide in an unremitting struggle for dominance” (McLaren, 1995, p. 30), all organized sites of learning could benefit from a critical stance towards shifting that struggle for dominance into a struggle for awareness. A critical pedagogue seeks to acknowledge these power imbalances (caused by seeking dominance instead of seeking to exist in a dialectic), create opportunities for students to also discover these power imbalances, and incorporate into their teaching some orientation towards change to mitigate these inequalities (Kumaravadivelu, 2003).

## 2.4 Culturally Responsive Teaching

This section will discuss culturally responsive teaching as it relates to the context of this study. Culturally responsive teaching can be defined as “use of local wisdom, recognition of culture, and active involvement of community...in the established standards of educational

practice” (Nelson-Barber & Trumbull, 2007, p. 134). This approach to teaching incorporates instructional and resource materials that link cultural knowledge originating in the home and community to objectives in the school (Klug & Whitfield, 2003; Lipka, 1989; Yazzie, 1999). Culturally responsive teaching is responsive to cultural groups (Rau, 2005; Marshall, 1989; Nelson-Barber & Trumbull, 2007; Broker, 2010), but also to individual learners (Yazzie-Mintz, 2007, pp. 86-87).

This study refers to culturally responsive teaching, but the literature uses many different adjectives in addition to “responsive” to reference this particular attitude towards students’ home culture in the classroom. The terms “appropriate” (Sternberg, 2007, p. 15), “authentic” (Leyton & Lock, 2007, p. 169), “relevant” (Balter & Grossman, 2009, p. 20) and “responsive” (Nelson-Barber & Trumbull, 2007, p. 133; Rameka, 2007, p. 20) are all used in the literature to indicate teaching that seeks to integrate content and/or modes of interaction that are intuitive for the students in a given teaching setting. While these researchers use the terms consistently in their own work, there is currently no consensus across the field about the specific parameters of each term. For the purpose of this study, it is simply noted that these terms all appear in the literature to indicate what has been defined above, and in this study the preferred term is culturally responsive teaching (CRT).

CRT is concerned with *what*, *how*, and *who*: what is being taught, how it is being taught, and who is teaching it. *What* refers to non-assimilationist (Rau, 2005) curriculum and instructional materials that values multiple knowledges (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005) while connecting student knowledge to school learning objectives (Yazzie-Mintz, 2007). *How* refers to the pedagogical practices, including assessment measures and involvement of community, used to engage with content in ways that connect with students’ cultural practices related to



participation and learning (Lipka, Mohatt, & the Ciulistet Group, 1998, p. 78). Finally, *who* refers to the teacher and his or her knowledge of the community and students, and his or her relationship to them (Yazzie-Mintz, 2007; Lipka et al., 1998; Rameka, 2007).

#### 2.4.1 *What*: Indigenous Knowledges and Locally-Derived Curriculum

CRT values multiple knowledges (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005), particularly any local or Indigenous knowledges associated with the teaching context. Whereas in more Western contexts knowledge might be thought of as discrete units that can be taught and understood in isolation, Indigenous Knowledges tend to be holistic and relational (Brayboy & Maughan, 2009). Fronting local knowledge when employing CRT is not just a way to scaffold learners into mainstream notions of success; these knowledges are positioned as equal in prestige to mainstream culture (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2010; Rau, 2005; Rameka, 2007). In addition, CRT does not aim to set local/Indigenous knowledge in opposition to Western knowledge, but instead creates the space for local knowledge and ways of knowing to be experienced as complimentary in the classroom as valid tools for understanding the world.

CRT is often part of systematic efforts from within local contexts to define what teaching practices are best for their particular school or educational setting (Rau, 2005; Marshall, 1989; Nelson-Barber & Trumbull, 2007; Broker 2010). Many educational sites of language and culture revitalization have achieved measures of success through highlighting and solidifying their group identity and reflecting that in their curriculum choices. In an example from one Hawai'i immersion school context, shared Indigenous cultural identity shapes site content choices. Davis et al. (2005) describe: "participants are committed to educational programming that acknowledges and builds on the linguistic and cultural resources of communities that have suffered years of economic, social, and political oppression" (p. 3). Community members,

teachers, and students at this site share a clear cultural ideological purpose, and it is appropriate and useful to articulate a shared understanding of what is culturally appropriate in that context.

While CRT is often employed to be responsive to group needs, it can also be thought of as responsive in a more individually relational way. Yazzie-Mintz (2007) explores the conceptions of three teachers of Navajo in similar school contexts and comes away with three different and equally valid pictures of CRT. She underscores the personal nature of education for each student, and also relates it to the personal experiences of three Indigenous teachers she observed:

“Appropriateness” of curriculum and pedagogy is assessed in terms of its relevance to the student – the student is the center of instruction and the focus of research. ...[W]hile the student’s role is important, the teacher’s role is equally important: She decides how and what she will teach her students...The teacher and student are central in the teaching and learning dynamic, and the instruction and materials need to reflect both participants’ experiences and knowledge. (p. 86-87)

In other words, there can be no “one size fits all” CRT curriculum; in addition to being responsive to the cultural goals of the community as a group, CRT is responsive to the individual student, the individual teacher, and the specific classroom in which the curriculum is being enacted.

#### 2.4.2 *How*: Relational Pedagogy and Assessment

Culturally relevant teaching is “a dynamic process” (Rameka, 2007, p. 126) involving community members. CRT values the non-linearity of learning (Assembly of Native Educators, 1998) in Indigenous communities, and also the interactional norms appropriate to the setting (such as less calling on individual students, and increased wait time when students are speaking)

(Yazzie-Mintz, 2007; Lipka et al., 1998). CRT “require[s] the involvement of the learner, the teacher, and the community” (Rameka 2007, p. 126), and, especially in Indigenous settings, it is crucial for community members to be given space for engaged involvement in the classroom.

Brayboy and Maughan (2009) provide an instructive example of a missed opportunity to integrate CRT pedagogical practices into an Indigenous teacher training context. In a bean-sprouting biology lesson designed by non-Indigenous teacher trainers, beans were observed in a classroom rather than a functional field site, and were not grown for any purpose other than to illustrate the concept being taught (Brayboy & Maughan 2009, p. 8). An approach to this experiment that would have been more culturally relevant would be to plant the beans outside for the purpose of cultivating them to eat, with the direct involvement of community members with local knowledge about the growing of beans.

A perceived hurdle to implementing the pedagogical practices of CRT is high-stakes testing such as those imposed by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Yazzie-Mintz (2007) describes the current high-stakes testing climate as “the larger educational and political context in which parents, educators and policymakers are increasingly invested in seeing gains in academic achievement” (p. 74). The literature for CRT makes frequent and significant calls for locally-created assessment measures (Kawagley, Norris-Tull, & Norris-Tull, 1998; Kushman & Barnhardt, 2001). However, traditional power relations are being intensified with standardized testing enactment such as NCLB at the national level (Broker, 2010; McCarty, 2008; Balter & Grossman, 2009), which effectively disincentivizes locally-created assessment rubrics.

However, while the prevailing opinion is that NCLB has complicated beyond feasibility the task of incorporating culturally appropriate and/or relevant curricula into classroom, some researchers (Balter & Grossman 2009, McCarty 2008, McCarty 2009, Broker 2010) show

positive washback from high-stakes testing if implemented in tandem with CRT. Broker (2010) finds that there has been significant positive washback within one Ojibwe school in Minnesota. Because of new federal rules, teachers gained additional certifications, more effort was expended towards curriculum integration within the school, and required professional development significantly overlapped school efforts to support what he calls “culturally relevant classroom practices.” Assessment measures within this context were not modified to also be culturally responsive, and were indeed state-imposed standardized tests. However, students who were participating in this immersion Ojibwe school’s reconfigured curriculum did in fact out-perform their English-only Ojibwe peers.

In contexts outside of the United States, notably New Zealand, Indigenous movements have pushed back forcefully against non-Indigenous testing. Rau (2005) describes culturally responsive assessments that can be normed and thus function within larger cultural context of academia, while still remaining fundamentally Maori assessments. Additional strong examples of recentring approaches to language assessment to include Indigenous ways include Kaupapa Maori, the New Zealand-based philosophy that is shifting educational “givens” away from Western-centric and toward Indigenous-centric in important, nation-wide ways (Pihama et al., 2002; Rau, 2005; Rameka, 2007; Hornberger, 2006).

#### 2.4.3 *Who*: Non-Indigenous Teachers of Indigenous Students

Relevant to this study is the assertion made by Yazzie-Mintz (2007) that in addition to pedagogy being an essential part of the instructional plan, “the teacher’s personal history and degree to which she has acquired cultural knowledge – in and outside of school – is an essential component in defining a culturally appropriate curriculum for classrooms in which Native students are educated” (p. 80). Teacher knowledge and awareness greatly affects her classroom;

the role of a CRT-implementing non-Indigenous teacher of Indigenous students, then, is emphatically that of learner. To be an effective teacher, it is crucial to work towards an understanding of Indigenous and Western knowledge as valued and complimentary.

Regarding the Alaska context, Barnhardt and Kawagley (2010) also state:

In practical terms, the most important intended outcome [of the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative (AKRSI)] was an increased recognition of the complimentary nature of Native and Western Knowledge, so both can be more effectively utilized as a foundation for the school curriculum and integrated into the way educators think about learning and teaching...the central focus of the AKRSI reform strategy was the fostering of interconnectivity and symbiosis between two... complex systems – [the indigenous knowledge systems and the imported formal education systems]. Within each of these evolving systems is a rich body of complimentary systems and skills that, is properly explicated and leveraged, can serve to strengthen the quality of educational experiences for students throughout Alaska. (pp. 200-201)

It is critical that a white teacher of rural Alaskans be open to perpetually challenging her own beliefs about what knowledges have a place in the classroom, who counts as “learner,” who counts as “teacher,” and how she can empower her students to gain mainstream skills and locally-valued skills simultaneously, and engage in their own individual understandings of how those knowledges are complimentary and relevant to them as powerful individuals.

## 2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined the literature relevant to this study. Indigenous/non-Indigenous research relationships, critical pedagogy, and culturally relevant teaching were summarized. First I described how the research relationship between Indigenous and non-

Indigenous people and institutions is commonly described through the Insider-Outsider construct, which sees participants' positionalities are multiple and fluid. In striving to create research relationships that end the cycle of Indigenous exploitation and appropriation, scholars define a process of decolonization of research methodologies, and also reframe the Insider-Outsider relationship in terms of “working the hyphen” – that is, focusing on negotiating research relationships in a way that productively acknowledges the historical oppression of Indigenous peoples and allows Indigenous voices to be heard on their own terms. Following from this discussion of Indigenous/non-Indigenous research relationships, critical pedagogy was summarized, and it was noted that critical pedagogies (plural) best represent critical pedagogy as it can apply to classrooms in Indigenous contexts. Finally, culturally relevant teaching (CRT) was described and connected to concepts of culture focused on the individual, the group, and finally in concepts of assessment. While many teachers, white and Indigenous, want to use CRT in their classrooms, a significant hurdle to doing so are the practical limitations in an educational climate that rigidly and indiscriminately applies high-stakes testing as a ruler measuring success of students.

By outlining Insider-Outsider research relationships, Critical Pedagogy, and CRT, I have aimed to illustrate how these theories and pedagogical stances relate to one another in overlapping ways. Larger epistemological theories related to challenging problematic research relationships form an overarching field, over which teaching-specific theories related to these same problematic relationships might be overlaid, over which again, in turn, is overlaid the day-to-day enactment of resistance against problematic dominance of mainstream cultural assumptions in the classroom. (See Figure 2.1) White, non-Indigenous teachers, such as the ones

who participated in this research, are daily faced with opportunities to teach and interact with students and community members in ways which either perpetuate Western-centric attitudes about

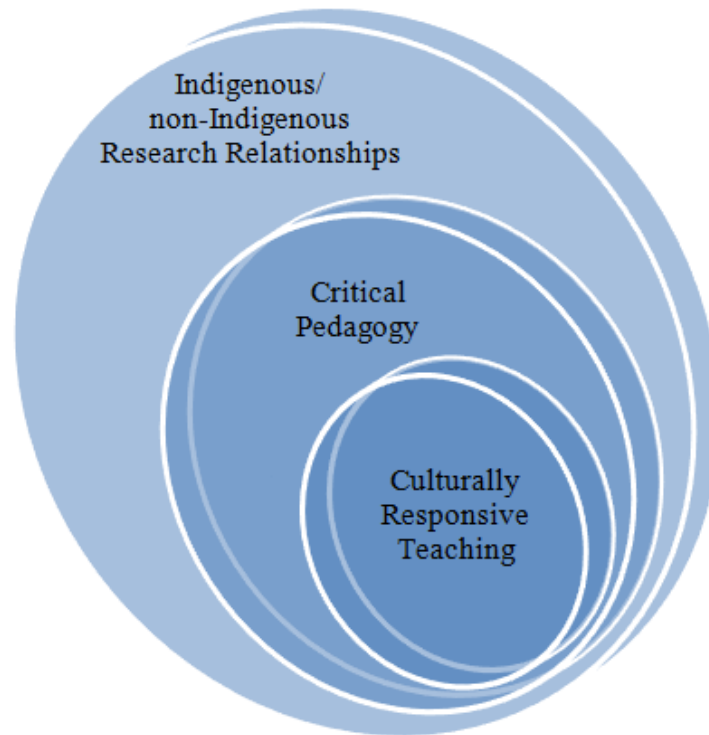


Figure 2.1: Possible Visual Schema for Relationship Between Main Theories

learning and Knowledge, or challenge these power relationships – and their own comfortable positions as traditional holders of power – in the spirit of decolonization.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research design of the study, highlighting how participatory action research (PAR) is specifically suited to the epistemological framework in which both my research questions and my own positionality are rooted. I then describe the setting, participants, and procedures used in the study. Finally, I describe how constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2005) is an analytical framework for data analysis that is in line with the qualitative, participatory nature of this study.

I began this study with the three guiding questions:

1. In one specific Alaska Native language teacher training site (CALL grant summer session 2013), how are participants positioning themselves in relation to each other?
2. How do those who identify as non-Alaska Native conceive of the possibilities available to them for facilitating the integration of local Indigenous Knowledges into an educational space (the classrooms back home, or the research site – CALL grant summer session – itself)? How do those who do identify as Alaska Native conceive of possibilities available to non-Alaska Natives doing this work?
3. Where do these (possibly multiple and varied) views overlap, and how is this overlap space significant for the work being done at this site?

However, the nature of the research design and analytical framework supported modification of these questions as the research progressed. The three research questions above were submitted before data collection began, and stemmed from my desire to better understand how non-Alaska Native language workers in general, and teachers specifically, are and/or can be positioned within communities who are pursuing language and culture revitalization.



However, once data collection began, it became clear that the scope of the questions was at once too specific and too wide. I eliminated Q1, thereby doing away with any explicit focus on how participants positioned themselves in relation to each other. I also eliminated the second part of Q2 and all of Q3, which focused on comparisons between non-Alaska Native and Alaska Native participants. Next I eliminated the parenthetical portion of the first question in Q2, freeing up analysis to consider not just teacher's thoughts on classroom space but also wider interactions with the community that may or may not be strictly classroom-related. Finally, for clarity, I changed the word "conceive" to "perceive" in the remaining question. Given these adjustments, the research question that guided my recursive and fluid data collection and analysis was:

How do those who identify as non-Alaska Native perceive of the possibilities available to them for facilitating the integration of local Indigenous Knowledges into an educational space?

### 3.2 Research Design

This qualitative study was designed within the theoretical framework of participatory action research. Each of these three progressively focused facets of the research design – qualitative inquiry, action research, and participatory action research – were chosen because of their relevance to the setting and research questions of this specific study. Below I describe these three aspects of the research design, and describe how they fit my research context.

#### 3.2.1 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research approaches share common core features. For Richards (2003), these features can be described by the following action points:

“Qualitative inquiry...will: study human actors in natural settings, in the context of their ordinary, everyday world; seek to understand the meanings and significance of these

actions from the perspective of those involved; usually focus on a small number of (possibly just one) individuals, groups or settings; employ a range of methods in order to establish different perspectives on the relevant issues; base its analysis on a wide range of features; [and] only use quantification where this is appropriate for specific purposes and as part of a broader approach. (p. 10)

Qualitative inquiry, then, is a useful tool for examining social, person-focused phenomena that is responsive and dynamic.

Furthermore, studies done within a qualitative framework can have “emergent design and narrative style” (Herr & Anderson, 2004, p. 1), breaking from the mold of strictly formulaic study design and reportage to allow for modes of capturing that better reflect study findings that “reflect the complex social world that we inhabit” (Richards, 2003, p. 8). Indeed, three main arguments for the legitimacy and necessity of qualitative research put forth by Richards, specific to work having to do with language learning, are:

- there is a “need to get close” to practice, as surveys and experiments do not provide sufficient insight into the “complexities and conundrums” of the social realm (p. 8),
- language learning is inherently a “person-centered enterprise” and needs a framework that reflects this (p. 9)
- qualitative inquiry has profound “transformational potential for the researcher” (p. 9)

Qualitative research is most appropriate for my study because I “got close”; I participated in a residential summer session as a student assistant, and also participated in a class in which participants were grappling with subject matter highly relevant to my research questions. ” I seek

to answer “person-centered” questions about how the individual participants in this study position themselves towards language support in their classrooms. Finally, my questions relate to my own potential positioning, and as such this study has “transformational potential for the researcher.”

### 3.2.2 Action Research

There are myriad and varied traditions within qualitative research. The tradition that is best suited to my study is action research. According to Richards (2003), “[a] key aim of ...[action] research is to understand better some aspect of professional practice as a means of bringing about improvement” (p. 24). This improvement can be institutional, but it can also be on the personal level: “an individual may engage in action research with a view to improving their own practice” (p. 24). Action research, then, is defined by its goal of coming to some possible action towards improvement, stemming either from change at the institutional level or personal level.

Action research’s most salient characteristic is its recursivity. In order to bring about institutional or personal change, an action researcher plans, acts, observes, and reflects (Herr & Anderson, 2004, p. 9) in repeated cycles. During any iteration of these steps, a researcher’s relationship with and understanding of her site and/or participants can deepen or otherwise change. The cyclical nature of action research allows the researcher and participants to nuance their study as it is being enacted; this is especially useful when examining a social practice, which is itself fluid and changing.

This study is framed as action research because it seeks to improve the personal practice of this researcher as she seeks to better understand how to support Indigenous language revitalization as a non-Indigenous person. In addition, this study utilizes a recursive turning-back

to the data by using constructivist grounded theory as an analytical framework (see below).

Finally, I recursively check back with participants as we all seek to better understand our roles as non-Indigenous participants in language revitalization contexts.

### 3.2.3 Participatory Action Research

I adopt participatory action research (PAR) for my study. PAR is found under the broader “action research” umbrella. PAR comes from a Freirean tradition concerned with taking action to affect change to oppressive power imbalances (Herr & Anderson, 2004, p. 16). It focuses on data not just to affect change locally but to contextualize local dynamics within “broader societal analysis” (p. 16). Richards (2003) writes that PAR

involves groups of concerned practitioners who work together to improve not only their own practice but also the situation in which they work... The element of personal and professional investment in the research itself and in the outcomes is [an...] aspect that marks this research as different from other traditions. (p. 24)

PAR is an appropriate approach to this study specifically. I am a participant in a group of people who want to enact change. While participatory action research is concerned with power, my participants and I are functionally equals in regards to power. Instead, the power we wish to challenge is that of institutions or circumstances which seek to demote, in overt or subtle ways, Indigenous language and culture within the K-12 school system in southwest Alaska. Inherently, we ourselves may be characterized as part of such institutions; as the participant and the researcher are individuals with personal and professional investment in the strengthening of Alaska Native language and culture, it is critical for this study to orient towards theories that legitimize and foreground a focus on individual self-reflection.

While participants did not co-design the study, they are full participants in that they are co-meaning makers. My relationships with them have developed throughout the study and follow-up interactions, and several initiate additional discussion and analysis of data with me. We are co-learners; I am not a researcher coming in and simply gathering data but instead this study has opened an additional space, beyond their own cohort work for the program, where we can hash out our questions, share our observations, and help each other along in a safe space as we navigate what it means to be white educators/language workers working in Indigenous communities.

Finally, the participatory, action-oriented nature of PAR parallels the participatory, action-oriented nature of Critical Pedagogy, which is both the orientation of the ANE-CALL grant (see Chapter 1, section 1.3) and emerges as a major factor in my analysis of the data. (For a more-detailed discussion of Critical Pedagogy, see Chapter 2, Section 2.3.) Herr and Anderson (2004) note that PAR is directly influenced by Critical Pedagogy (p. 15), and link PAR directly to Freire's understanding of Critical Pedagogy as a research-based approach to teaching:

Freire (1970) views thematic research as a highly inductive process in which research is seen as a form of social action. In this type of research, *generative themes*, or issues of vital importance to community members, are identified and used as a basis for literacy instruction and also studied in a collaborative fashion. (p. 15, emphasis in original)

In other words, both PAR and Critical Pedagogy focus on community-generated action, large or small, that has been identified by the community as an area of needed change and planned through collaborative research.

### 3.3 Positionality

As described above, participatory action research assumes a subjective researcher who is socially situated within the research context. Moreover, her relationships with the participants and the research context are not just part of the research design, but a) function on multiple levels (setting, power, group membership, historical context (Herr & Anderson, 2004, pp. 43-44)) and b) are fluid and change over the course of the study. Finally, by “interrogat[ing] our multiple positionalities in relation to the question under study...we have the possibility of crafting uniquely complex understandings of the research question. In addition we hope to avoid the blind spots that come with unexamined beliefs” (Herr & Anderson, 2004, p. 44). For these reasons, it is important to describe the positionality of this researcher in relation to this study and its participants.

Herr and Anderson (2004) describe four ways in which researchers are positioned along the Insider-Outsider continuum:

1. Insider/Outsider positionality vis-à-vis the setting under study
2. Hierarchical position or level of informal power within the organization/community
3. Position vis-à-vis dominant groups in society – class, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, ability/disability, religion, and so forth
4. Position within colonial relations within and between nation states (p. 43-44)

I will examine my own positionality in relation to this four-point schema.

The setting of this study was, as described in more detail below, a grant-funded distance MA program’s intensive in-person summer session that took place early in the program’s timeline. The courses of their program are the same as those in which non-grant-funded students enroll; in this manner, I am an insider. In addition, since the teachers participating in the present

study are non-Alaska Native, we are all potentially framing our trajectory through the program within the larger question of how we as non-Alaska Natives can support language work in the most appropriate ways. However, I was also in some ways an Outsider in relation to setting. I was not a member of the grant-funded teacher cohort, I had two years of experience in the program while others did not, and I participated in the summer not as a student but as the graduate student research assistant. These circumstances marked me as not a part of the group.

Herr and Anderson's (2004) second organizing point for describing Insider/Outsiderness focuses on the researcher's power within the organization or community studied. When considering the university community, I held more power than the study participants in several ways. I am a resident of the city in which the summer session took place and therefore have year-round access to in-person interactions with faculty and university staff; these place me in an advantageous position for developing working and mentoring relationships, friendships, academic support, and professional networking. I was also staff during the summer session, and was often in charge of videotaping student classroom interactions; this act could be seen to imply power over those being recorded. When considering the teacher community, however, I held less power than study participants. I am not a K-12 teacher, while all participants are. The study participants have daily access to the complex, lived experience of supporting Indigenous language work in these classrooms, while I lack such experience.

Thirdly, Herr and Anderson (2004) highlight insidered/outsideredness in relation to broader societal categories such as "class, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, ability/disability, religion, and so forth." All five participants are white non-Alaska Native, as am I; my research questions and data analysis acknowledge and utilize this fact. In this way I am strongly insidered. In addition, all participants but one are female, and my age was almost

exactly the median participant age. For other categories, there was some variation within the group; for example, some participants articulated religious faith, while others (including this researcher) did not. This researcher did not feel either insidered or outsidered, nor did the variation within the group make for a polarized atmosphere.

Finally, Herr and Anderson call for attention to “position within colonial relations within and between nation states.” As non-Alaska Natives of European descent working in Alaska, my participants and I are all Outsiders in relation to the communities who are working toward language revitalization due to the culturally and linguistically destructive presence of Russia and then the United States in Alaska.

### 3.4 Setting

The setting for the primary data collection for this study was an intensive three-week summer session at a large Alaskan university. This was the first intensive summer session for a cohort of language teachers pursuing higher degrees in applied linguistics as part of a two-year federal grant-funded program. The program, at the time of primary data collection, had 16 MA students and four PhD students enrolled, as well as two non-grant-funded PhD students who began their programs of study concurrently and whose research interests were strongly aligned with the Indigenous language education focus of this program.

Students in the program were clustered into four groups (See Figure 3.1). Two Yup’ik cohorts were formed, consisting of three and four Yup’ik MA students respectively and an Indigenous PhD student mentor for each cohort. In addition, a third cohort consisted of four non-Yup’ik Alaska Native students with an Indigenous PhD student mentor, and a fourth cohort of English Language Learner (ELL)-specialized non-Indigenous teachers working at schools in predominantly Yup’ik rural communities, also with an Indigenous PhD student mentor. Numbers



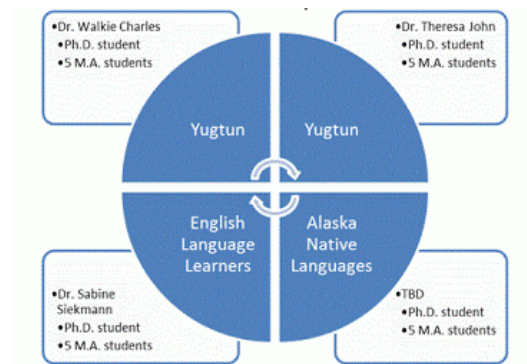


Figure 3.1: Original Faculty-Student Cohort Organization for the ANE-CALL Grant

in Figure 3.1 reflect initial plans for enrollment figures; a combination of circumstances resulted in the slightly different number of enrolled students described in this paragraph.

### 3.5 Participants

Although all five participants in this study were certified teachers working in predominantly Yup'ik rural settings throughout southwest Alaska, both the settings themselves and the teachers' current and previous experiences and circumstances vary across participants. Points of variation between teaching sites for the participants include language(s) and/or dialect(s) spoken by the students and community, and the curriculum currently used by the school district (for example: Dual Language Education (DLE) model, English-only, Yugtun First, etc.) The participants varied in age, gender, how long they had been teaching, how long they had been teaching in rural Alaska, and how long they had been teaching at their specific site. (See Table 3.1 below for an overview of participants and their teaching sites.)

#### 3.5.1 Participant T1

After growing up in a rural area in the Lower 48 and earning her undergraduate degree and teaching certificate, T1 began teaching at her site and has been there for the last seven years. She currently teaches 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade English. She indicates a desire to stay there indefinitely.

She reports feeling at home in the village, and frequently states the similarities between the rurality of her upbringing and the rurality of the village.

At her teaching site, T1 characterizes Yugtun as “very important...that’s what they speak; it’s part of their identity.” She observes that the community in general wants to work to keep the language and support children learning and using it, but also notes at least one anecdotal example of a parent not speaking it with his child at home because “he didn’t see a need for it.” In addition, she notes that a kindergarten teacher at her site “has noticed that the kids coming in don’t seem to know quite as much [Yugtun] as they used to.” Still, T1 reports that peer-to-peer language is predominantly in Yugtun at her site.

### 3.5.2 Participant T2

T2 is a teacher in her early thirties, and is originally from the Lower 48 where she earned her certification and taught in the public school system, including students from high poverty areas. After several years there, she taught in a variety of locations overseas to students of diverse cultural backgrounds, though she characterizes their economic backgrounds as middle class or higher, before coming back to the States to teach in southwest Alaska. She changed teaching sites after her first year of teaching in Alaska, but remains at the second teaching site for her third year of teaching in the state.

In T2’s current teaching site, student linguistic strengths vary: some are stronger in Yugtun, others in English. During the data collection phase of this study, T2’s site was preparing to begin its second year of DLE model, and T2 was preparing for her first year in a classroom participating in DLE. T2 reported not knowing Yugtun outside of a few phrases. She expressed excitement over the opportunity to compare English vs. Yugtun reading instruction and evaluation strategies, and also expressed apprehension about what would be expected of her –

and to what degree she would be able to actively participate – on Yugtun language days. (For more information about alternating language days in DLE model classrooms, see Chapter 1, Section 1.3.)

### 3.5.3 Participant T3

While T3, in his early 30s, has spent nearly a decade in Alaska (having moved after completing an undergraduate degree at a university in the Lower 48), at the time of this study he had just finished his second year as a classroom teacher at his site, had taught in a different southwest site for two years before that, and had two years as a Special Ed aid before that, for a total of six years classroom experience. Before pursuing certification, T3 worked with children, many of whom were Alaska Native, from primary through high school age in various capacities. While he is relatively new to teaching in a school setting, he already feels at ease interacting with young children and Indigenous families.

T3 teaches primary grade (K-3) elementary school students. Students might come to school stronger in Yugtun or stronger in English. The school uses an English-only curriculum, but T3 uses Yugtun, albeit “very limited[ly],” in class, is supported by the administration in doing this, and is learning Yugtun himself outside of the classroom. He reports that current school administration at his site is very supportive of Yugtun and Yup’ik culture being acknowledged in the classroom, and for non-Native teachers to increase their awareness of and sensitivity to local ways of knowing. T3 sees a connection between strong Yugtun skills and strong families; he states “the ...students ...[who] feel comfortable in both languages, their families [are] involved in the community... many of them are very supportive of the school,” even if they “may not know how to help” and don’t become involved.

#### 3.5.4 Participant T4

T4 is an elementary school teacher in her mid to late 30's with a decade of experience teaching in southwest Alaska. After earning her degree and teacher certification from a university in the Lower 48, she began teaching in an Alaskan village where she met her husband, who is Yup'ik and with whom she now has several children. After living in the Lower 48 for several years while she and her husband began raising their young family, she and her husband and children moved to her husband's village to be near his family. Her husband's parents speak Yugtun but do not to speak it with their grandchildren (her children), who themselves do not speak Yugtun. Her husband also does not speak Yugtun.

She reports that, in her village, “no one under 50 speaks Yup'ik.” Indeed, the core curriculum used at her teaching site is delivered in English. However, T4 reports that her students do come to school speaking Village English (VE). T4 reports that one prevalent teacher attitude in her setting towards students who speak VE is that “the kids don't know Yup'ik and they don't know, can't speak standard English; it's like they're caught in the middle and they don't know either well [...] so they don't really have language.” In other words, many teachers at her site, as in many sites across the region where students come to school speaking VE, perceive VE as something without intrinsic value within a school setting – as an additional hurdle on the path towards Standard American English (SAE) fluency and academic success. T4 notes that she accepted this perception of students' language in the past. However, as described further below, she states that, due to her involvement in a summer session coursework project for which she is closely examining one linguistic properties of VE as compared to Yugtun and English, she is shifting her shifting her frame of reference for VE to a much more positive one that values VE as a legitimate, robust, rule-governed dialect of English.

### 3.5.5 Participant T5

T5 is a second-year teacher in her late 20's. She grew up a minority white in a black and Hispanic neighborhood of a major American city. When she moved to a predominantly white suburb in high school, she notes that she felt little connection to the dominant culture of the school. While earning her undergraduate degree and teacher certification at a public university in the Lower 48, she student-taught in classrooms with predominantly Native children. The research interests of some of the faculty she worked with focused on Native education, and topics discussed in some of her courses reflected this. So, while she was new to Alaska her first year of teaching, she had first-hand experience with Native education and cross-cultural contexts.

T5 taught in her current southwest village for her first year, and returned to this site for her second year immediately following the summer during which data for this study were gathered. Many children in this village are raised speaking Yugtun at home, though not all are; according to T5, what language a child comes to school stronger in “just depends on the home and what their parents speak to them.” Regardless of what language a child is raised speaking, however, the preferred peer-to-peer language among children in school, as T5 observes, is Yugtun: “most of my students will talk in Yugtun in conversating (sic) with each other.”

### 3.6 Research Procedures

As noted above, the majority of this study was carried out during an intensive 2013 summer session. Consent forms for this research were presented in conjunction with consent forms for a larger, faculty-run evaluation project for the grant as a whole. Consent forms for this research and the larger grant research were presented during the first class period of the summer session. All students in the ELL cohort consented. While this research initially included data from two PhD candidates travelling with the grant-funded ELL cohort who are also white

Table 3.1: Overview of Participants

Participant Identifier	age	grade(s) taught	how many years teaching	how many years in rural AK	how many years at current site	language(s) spoken by students at site	school language (English, DLE, etc.)
T1	30's	3 <sup>rd</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup>	7	7	7	Yugtun, English	DLE
T2	30's	3 <sup>rd</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup>	10	2	1	Yugtun, English	transitioning to DLE (not to T2 yet)
T3	30's	K-3 <sup>rd</sup>	6	4	2	Yugtun, English	English
T4	30's	4 <sup>th</sup> , 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup>	11	10	10	English	English
T5	20's	5 <sup>th</sup> , 6 <sup>th</sup>	1	1	1	Yugtun, English	DLE

educators working in Alaska Native contexts, due to researcher concerns about scope of the study, only data from the five MA students were ultimately used.

Data points gathered as part of the summer session portion of this study included an ELL focus group transcript; personal field notes for said focus group (for which I was present); transcripts of one-on-one interviews between the grant evaluator and each participant (for which I was not present); field notes from observations as a participant in a graduate-level course on language, reading, and culture in education that was attended exclusively by ELL cohort members; and field notes from casual interaction with the students outside of class during lunch or other impromptu activities.

In addition, data included subsequent interactions with participants after the main summer session. An email exchange with each participant in late February of 2014 established that participants agreed with the themes that initial coding had highlighted as salient. In April, in-

person member checks with participants were held in conjunction with an end-of-semester immersion weekend class for all grant students in a major Alaskan city. (One member check was held via Skype due to a participant not being able to travel for the in-person weekend class.) During these member checks, which were audio recorded and transcribed, the themes were further expanded. Participants and this researcher also expanded our understanding of themes while interacting more casually during meals and down time.

### 3.7 Analytical Framework

This study uses constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2005) to identify the major themes brought up by each participant. Grounded theory is a form of qualitative data analysis through which researchers “remain close to their studied worlds and[...] develop an integrated set of theoretical concepts from their empirical materials that not only synthesize and interpret them but also show processual relationships” (p. 508). In other words, grounded theory researchers develop theories about their participants’ relationships to others in the world. They do this by collecting multiple layers of data, and by integrating what they learn from their data analysis into additional analysis or data collection (i.e., grounded theory is recursive). Through this process, themes emerge from their data. Constructivist grounded theory takes this one step further, and adds a layer of criticality to the analysis; by paying attention not just to overt statements of participants but to “the tacit, the liminal, and the implicit” (Charmaz, 2005, p. 513) factors behind participants’ statements and actions, researchers can say even more about what deeper power structures and assumptions lie beneath the data. In this way, constructivist grounded theory can be a powerful tool for social justice research.

To collect and analyze data for this study, I use constructivist grounded theory for the reasons above, but also because it assumes a non-neutral, involved researcher. I was a graduate

student assistant during the period of the study, and interacted a great deal with the students while doing participant observation.

### 3.8 Conclusion

This chapter described the present study's research design, which is grounded in PAR. Also described were the setting, participants, and procedures; I collected data during an intensive summer session for teachers pursuing a graduate degree in applied linguistics. Participants are a sub-section of the teachers in this program, and are all white, non-Alaska Native teachers in rural settings who have a desire to contribute to Yugtun language and Yup'ik culture revitalization at their sites. Constructivist grounded theory guided my data analysis, and from this process, I refined the research question at the heart of this study to be the following: How do those who identify as non-Alaska Native perceive of the possibilities available to them for facilitating the integration of local Indigenous Knowledges into an educational space? The following chapter, Chapter 4: Data Analysis, discusses the salient participant themes that helped refine this research question.





## Chapter 4: Data Analysis

### 4.1 Introduction

Using constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2005), this chapter analyzes focus group and interview transcripts and participant observation notes to discern what themes and sub-themes were most often brought up by participants. Two main themes emerged from the analysis: Referring to self as learner and valuing linguistic affordances. Referring to self as learner refers to any reference by the participants to themselves as learners of language or culture. Valuing linguistic affordances refers to any positive value judgment by the participants of the language or dialect spoken by their students or by community members at their site, with the implication that the language or dialect also has value in the classroom equal to or above that of Standard American English (SAE). These themes can then be further divided into three sub-themes. For the Referring to self as learner theme, data can be grouped into these sub-themes: linking to learning experience, positioning self as co-learner, and learning for a purpose. For the valuing linguistic affordances theme, data can be grouped into these sub-themes: reflecting on own attitude towards Village English (VE) or Yugtun, promoting student use of VE or Yugtun in the classroom, and teacher valuing VE or Yugtun to reflect on self. (For a description of both VE and Yugtun, See Chapter 1, Section 1.3). A chart summarizing these themes and sub-themes can be seen below (Table 4.1).

These themes, while discussed separately, do not function in isolation. They could be described as functioning in a recursive loop. For example, teachers who engage in learning as part of their teaching practice (positioning self as co-learner) might consequently have an easier time shifting away from negative perceptions of non-standard dialects such as VE (reflecting on own attitude towards VE/Yugtun). Likewise, the more they value their students' first language or

Table. 4.1: Themes and Subthemes Described

<b>Themes and Theme Descriptions</b>	<b>Subthemes</b>	<b>Subtheme Descriptions</b>
<b>Referring to Self as Learner</b>  any reference by the participants to themselves as learners of language or culture	<b>linking to past learning experiences</b>	participants link their own language learning experiences to their current students' experiences
	<b>positioning self as co-learner</b>	report positioning themselves as a co-learner with the students in some capacity within the classroom
	<b>learning for a purpose</b>	learning the language and/or culture of their site to better facilitate their students' learning experience
<b>Valuing Linguistic Affordances</b>  any positive value judgment by the participants of the language or dialect spoken by their students or by community members at their site	<b>reflecting on own attitude towards VE/Yugtun</b>	shift in understanding of the dialect or language spoken by students that allows the participant to view those affordances as having status
	<b>promoting VE/Yugtun in classroom</b>	any usage of VE or Yugtun in the classroom
	<b>valuing affordances to reflect on self</b>	participant acts of learning or acquiring language or culture

dialect (reflecting on own attitude towards VE/Yugtun), the more readily they might be able to facilitate classrooms that take advantage of the powerful role a student's first language or dialect can play in scaffolding students towards literacies in both SAE and Yugtun (promoting VE/Yugtun in the classroom) (See Figure 4.1).

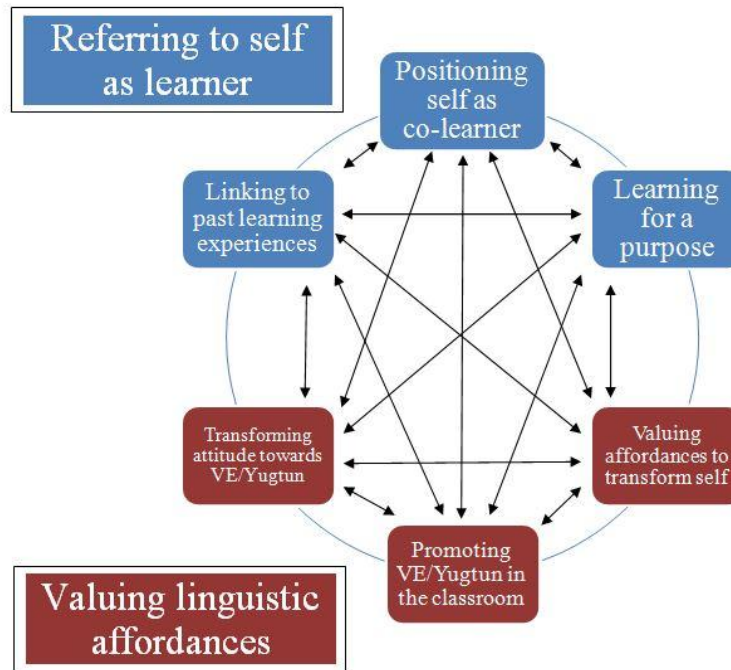


Figure 4.1: Relationships Between the Six Subthemes

#### 4.1.1 Data Analysis Procedures

I analyzed the data following Charmaz's (2005) Constructivist Grounded Theory (See Chapter 3, Section 3.7). To analyze the data, I transcribed interviews and focus group recordings using the free transcription tool InqScribe. Some field notes were rewritten in longhand in a notebook during classes and other moments where notetaking was perceived by this researcher to be unobtrusive.. Other field notes were typed out immediately following events such as casual conversations during which I was unable to take notes. After the data collection period, I typed out salient portions of my longhand notes, and organized them chronologically within my existing document of typed field notes. I then printed out all of these materials for the first rounds of coding.

The coding process was undertaken in coordination with a committee member, Dr. Joan Parker Webster. Over the fall semester following data collection, I hand-annotated the data,

brought it in for discussion with my committee member, and discussed what I felt was emerging from the data. We repeated the process every week to two weeks, until arriving at the two main themes and six subthemes (See section 4.1). Although a central purpose of our meetings was to help me deepen my understanding of how to code qualitative data using Charmaz's (2005) understanding of constructivist grounded theory, we also achieved interrater reliability. Additionally, the two main themes that emerged (Referring to Self as Learner, Valuing Linguistic Affordances) also informed her own academic work with the grant as part of a larger ANE-CALL faculty research project resulting in a joint presentation to the Oxford Ethnography Forum (Marlow, Parker Webster, Martelle, & Kealy, 2014).

To better understand how these themes overlap, I input the data and my codes into the free qualitative data management program Dedoose. Most of my coding remained, but the process of inputting my work into data management software did allow me to see additional data points that could be ascribed a sub-theme code that I had previously missed. The main purpose of inputting data into Dedoose was to manage the data in a systematic, organized way as I attempted to write this analysis chapter.

Finally, I performed brief verbal member checks with participants. A week in advance of a meeting of all grant members in Anchorage, I emailed participants with a brief summary of the themes and subthemes, and let them know I would be present in Anchorage and seeking feedback. A typical member check entailed stating the main themes and subthemes, reading from a printed copy one or two exemplary data points from the participant with whom I was engaging in a member check, and asking openendedly what they would add or change about my interpretation of their data. During these member checks, themes and subthemes were questioned and confirmed. At later dates, participants were also provided with an electronic copy of this

analysis chapter, and then the whole thesis, and invited to suggest edits as they felt necessary.

While three of the five participants asked for minor edits relating to biographical information, no edits were requested on the data analysis itself.. (For additional description of member checks, see Chapter 3, Section 3.6.)

## 4.2 Referring to Self as Learner

One of the two major themes that emerged from the data was Referring to self as learner. All participants – despite wide variations in their personal experiences, the language profiles of the students at their sites, and the curriculum used at each site – articulated an awareness of their own learner-ness, past and/or present, when discussing their current teaching work. The data can then be grouped into three main subthemes: linking to past learning experiences, positioning self as co-learner, and learning for a purpose.

When articulating the linking to past learning experiences subtheme, participants link their own language learning experiences to their current students' experiences. Several report a heightened understanding and empathy towards their students' learning process, and several also articulate how their past experiences influence their insight into modifying input appropriately. The second subtheme, positioning self as co-learner, is used to describe data in which participants report positioning themselves as a co-learner with the students in some capacity within the classroom. This can include teachers learning cultural class content alongside students, teachers engaging in parallel tasks but at a different skill level, or teachers learning from students or community members outside of class curriculum. The third subtheme, learning for a purpose, refers to teachers learning the language and/or culture of their site to better facilitate their students' learning experience.

#### 4.2.1 Linking to Past Learning Experiences

The first sub-theme for referring to self as learner is linking to past learning experiences. This sub-theme entails teachers linking their own experiences of language and culture learning to their present teaching contexts. The participants reflect a variety of learning experiences within a secondary education context, or more recently, as adult learners. These experiences include both learning to speak another language as well as learning *about* a different language through English.

Some teachers articulated a very strong sense of empathy with their students, due directly to their own previous language learning experiences. In the following data extract, T3 reflects on what he learned from his experience taking a conversational Yugtun class via the telephone:

I felt like taking those conversational classes was probably the best professional development I've done in the last three years. Just reflecting on how I would get very frustrated when I didn't understand something, and then, ...once I'd calmed down, [I would think]... "I just had this mini temper tantrum because my teacher's talking really fast. I don't understand and she thinks I should know... she repeats the same thing, just says it slower, it doesn't help me if I still don't know what it means." And so I started making those connections of like, maybe I do that sometimes, where they ask me the directions, and I'll stop and I'll just say it again... maybe I should say it differently.

T3's difficulties seeking teacher clarification during the audio-delivered language class increased his empathy towards the experiences of his own students. He now seeks to provide variation in his oral clarification of instructions. Similarly, his frustration with the lack of visual clues

provided during his own language learning experience led to him to incorporate more such visuals into his own classroom teaching:

After I took that class I felt like I incorporated a lot more visuals, a lot more actions...if I were to say something new, I'd really try to pay attention to their body language, and read whether or not that connected, and if it didn't..., try to say it another way until I could see the lights go on or ...get a sense that they really knew what that meant.

Connecting his own language learning experiences to those of his students gives T3 a heightened sensitivity to what the students are going through: "I think that helped me...shift my mindset into more just putting myself in their shoes, because... yeah, [it] wasn't fun, not knowing. And realizing that's where many of them are at certain points throughout the day."

T5 also shares an explicit connection of her own past language-learning experiences with that of her students:

It was really hard for me to keep up [in higher-level Spanish classes conducted only in the target language]. I ...[stopped] taking Spanish at that point because it was hard for me, I couldn't get it. And so I always think of that with my kids. If I'm going too fast, then some of my kids'll be like "slow down"... I have to...think about timing. Because I remember those times where a teacher would just start...speaking in Spanish and I'm [thinking], "I have no idea what you just said." And then having to process it and complete an activity?...I don't even know what we're supposed to be doing.

T5 was a student in language classes conducted in the target language, during which the instructor spoke so quickly that she was often unable to understand class activity instructions, let alone attempt to engage in and learn from those activities. But she says "I always think of that



with my kids” – she remembers her own struggles in the language classroom and, like T3, uses that to directly inform her own teaching.

Even though T1 did not draw a direct connection between her experiences and that of her own students, she agreed when the interviewer suggested her own experience might compare to that of her students:

T1: [L]earning the written form of the language was what I really liked... I didn't have to worry about other people listening to me say the words ...[or making] myself understood.

Interviewer: ... Do you find that with your...students? Do they find [English] harder [to produce], since they're Yugtun first speakers?

T1: I think so sometimes, yeah.

T1 reflects on the difficulty she had with speaking while learning a second language, and readily agrees with the interviewer when it is suggested that T1's students face the same difficulties producing spoken English. T1 also reflects on how her students have trouble differentiating between “p's and b's, t's and d's, ...I didn't realize my first year they didn't hear [the difference].” This difficulty arises from the phonetic structure of Yugtun, which does not mark any difference between voiced and voiceless stop pairs including p/b and t/d (Jacobson, 1984). By coupling reflection on her own language learning experiences with learning more about the specific language interference that her students experience, T1 begins to deepen her empathy for and understanding of her students' specific language production challenges.

As part of the 2013 summer session, participants took the graduate level class LING 601: Principles of Linguistic Analysis. In this class, students used VE as a source of data to learn linguistic concepts. The over twenty students in the class were organized into discovery learning groups composed of Yugtun speakers, VE speakers, and those who were less fluent or not fluent

in either. While this course was not intended to teach students VE or Yugtun, participants reported a comparable zone of discomfort, of not-knowing. T4 in particular reflects:

[I]t's very humbling because I don't know Yup'ik, I haven't taken any Yup'ik classes, so for parts of our research, there are parts that I can not do because the project that we have chosen, that they're all:: excited about, is, I'm learning a lot from it, but there's no way if I was doing a project on my own that I could do that project.

T4 realizes that working collaboratively with group members who bring different strengths and knowledge to the group task is an experience that is helping her learn and do more than she would working alone. T4 also connects her experience directly to her students' experiences:

[I]t's been really good to have [this group work experience; it] kinda helps you be able to relate to kids that they might feel overwhelmed and not be able to do all the parts. And... working in groups is a very good way to come at something, especially kids who have different strengths.

T4 had the experience of doing group work in which not all students held all the knowledge necessary to complete the task. Through this experience, she came to understand both her own students' frustrations stemming from their own knowledge gaps, as well as the potential for discovery learning groups to turn such frustrations into positively framed opportunities for learning. In a well-designed discovery learning project, knowledge gaps become knowledge strengths and the group is empowered to produce a result greater than what they might have produced individually (de Jong & van Joolingen, 1998; Gijlers & de Jong, 2005).

This section has described the first Referring to self as learner subtheme, Linking to past learning experiences. Whether the past learning experiences being drawn upon are traditional language classes taken in high school years ago, distance-delivery conversation classes taken as

adults, or graduate level discovery learning projects currently being undertaken, these participants translate their own difficult experiences into sensitivity towards what their own students may be going through. All these participants use their memories of their frustrations to reassess how they themselves teach students who may be facing similar frustrations.

#### 4.2.2 Positioning Self as Co-Learner

Participants also expressed orientation towards a Referring to self as learner stance by specifically framing “learner” as co-learner. The subtheme Positioning self as co-learner is used to describe such data. This was sometimes shown through the teacher either learning the same content along with students, such as cultural content, or engaging in the same type of learning task but with different content, such as contributing to a collaborative list of vocabulary words the participants want to learn. The co-learner subtheme also extends to teachers learning content outside of the curriculum, and can take place in casual interactions between the teacher and the students or other members of the community. In each case, the teacher is currently modeling, or seeks to model in the future, good learner attitudes and is cultivating an attitude of classroom as practice space. T3, T5, T2, and T4 note this goal outright within the data.

Discussing one way in which he fosters the desired learner attitude within his own classroom, T3 states:

I worked really hard to create an atmosphere in my classroom where we can make mistakes and we don't have to feel bad about that, and so every once in a while I'd... say something in... Yugtun that I had learned that week, and [the students replied] ‘[T3], that's not how we say [it].’

T3 is using his own Yugtun-learner status to show students that mistakes are acceptable and encouraged. He is also underscoring the value that Yugtun language and culture have for him, a

factor that will be taken up more thoroughly in the “Valuing Linguistic Affordances” section below.

An activity that T3 described throughout the summer session, though not in either the recorded interview or focus group, was the “parking lot.” During the year, anyone can put any vocabulary word they don’t know on a post-it and “park” it in a designated location on the classroom wall. T3 participates in this space as a learner – he too puts up vocabulary that he wants to learn better. In addition to being a co-learner, T3 could be said to be a co-mistake-maker; in his classroom, he perpetuates the motto “try your best,” and has it posted on the board at all times:

[P]art of my classroom expectations...is trying your best. And I use myself as an example...it doesn't say up on the board, you must get everything right all the time. It says, try your best. As long as you're trying, that's fine. And you guys'll notice, I make mistakes sometimes. And it's so fun when kids catch me, they'll be like, “[T3], you didn't write that on the board!” And somebody in the back will go, "but he tried his best."

In this example, T3 casts himself as a co-learner and the students as co-teachers as everyone collaborates and tries their best together.

Like T3, T5 has some students who are stronger in Yugtun than English. By inviting her students to produce journal writing in whichever language they prefer, T5, a Yugtun learner, casts herself in the role of needing to learn from students and other teachers in order to understand what her students are producing. During journal-writing activities,

if [students] want to first write in Yugtun, they're allowed to, and then if it's gonna be for a grade then they have to transcribe it into English. But if we're just doing our daily journal activity ... I allow them to choose whether or not to use Yugtun or English...I

have one-on-one aides and I know enough of the teachers, I... work well with all of my other teachers, so I can go to them and ask them what it says and they can tell me.

In order to create an environment in which her students can produce writing in whichever language will help them process the content at hand, T5 seeks out her own learning tools – other teachers – to help her then respond to her student journals appropriately. In this way, she is still able to engage in written dialogue with her students where necessary, and the student's journal entries in Yugtun are not ignored by T5 just because T5 lacks the ability to read them on her own. The journaling process, already a space where a teacher can have genuine dialogue with students (Siekmann & Charles, 2011), gains an additional layer of Referring to self as learner. As with several other examples of teacher learning given in this section, we will see below how this data also serves to illustrate valuing linguistic affordances.

Even when teachers are not necessarily integrating language into their curriculum they may still report more casual language exchanges with their students. T1 describes: "The kids like to ask me to say things [in Yugtun] because I don't say them correctly so then they go 'hehehehehe.'" In addition, on Yugtun days at T1's Dual Language Education (DLE) site, "we're all using our Yup'ik names, and [the students are] very... forgiving of my pronunciation." (For a description of DLE, see Chapter 1, Section 1.3.) There are also casual interactions during which teachers are challenged to learn cultural practices, rather than language specifically. T5 describes:

I know my students try to get me to say a lot of phrases...that's helped me grow connections with my students. It's the same thing with NYO [Native Youth Olympics] events. One of my kids loves NYO, so her big thing is to try to get me to do every event with her. So then I will get down and try one and then she'll laugh and then she'll...try to

get another teacher to do it and they won't, and she'll be like, 'that's why she's better than you.' ... It's helped me make those connections with the kids.

These examples from T1 and T5 show that the act of trying to speak Yugtun or practice an NYO sport, even if what they are able to do is at a beginner's level, engender respect in several ways. T1's example shows that she respects Yugtun language days, and will keep trying to pronounce her students' names correctly, even though she may not yet be succeeding. T5's example also shows respect; she respects the cultural games shared by her students, and is willing to try them when her students offer the opportunity. These participants respect their students' language and culture through participating in them during sanctioned times (as part of school-wide Yugtun-only days for T1, or when invited to for T5). Likewise, students return that respect, such as when T5's student says "that's why she's better than you." When teachers position themselves as learners, one result can be the engendering of a positive, respectful environment in the classroom (Wink, 2011).

While teachers may recognize that a Referring to self as learner stance has the benefits described above, they may still be uncertain of how to enact it authentically in the classroom. T2 shared that she struggles at times with what she calls "fake confidence," or a hesitation when it comes to shifting from *recognizing* the importance of integrating community linguistic and cultural knowledge into the classroom, to actually *doing* so:

I have the tools, and I know there's support staff around, so I can figure it out [how to bring community culture into the classroom], but then it comes to the point where I know I can reach out ... and so that's where I start to feel fake confidence... a weakness because I don't always [have the energy or confidence to] take that step or make that effort..... I don't always follow through in that respect, I don't always make that effort.

Here, T2 struggles with the difficulty of opening oneself up to not-knowing – necessary for being a learner – within her professional context. She is aware that taking on that learner stance would benefit both herself and her students greatly, but she lacks the self-confidence needed to enact that knowledge.

T4 also struggles to have the confidence to make the changes necessary to foster a classroom atmosphere in which she can confidently take a co-learner stance. For T4, the central hurdle is learning to navigate perceived curricular or site administration constraints that make it difficult for her to position herself as a co-learner. T4 characterizes the classroom as a potential practice space: “that's something I haven't been as good at as I would like to, you know, having kids speak standard English in the classroom, because that's a place to practice.” But simultaneously, she feels pressure to move very quickly through material – which can make it difficult to foster the relaxed, mistake-encouraging atmosphere necessary for creating an effective practice space for her students:

I've always struggled with maintaining that balance. I have seen where teachers who stick to the...standards we need to teach...[and who]keep moving ahead, their kids seem further...academically on the test...they seem to be making better progress than what I have been doing, by that measurement...[It can feel like] it is either you [take the time necessary to] teach culturally relevantly, or you're teaching the textbooks, like it was either or.

Whether it is practicing SAE or bringing community members into her classroom to share cultural knowledge, T4 struggles to foster that co-learning space in her classroom while simultaneously “keeping up” with the short-term achievement benchmarks which she perceives may be met more consistently by other teachers’ classes.

#### 4.2.3 Learning for a Purpose

A third prominent sub-theme within the referring to self as learner theme is learning language or culture for a purpose. Participants report a desire for, or a current engagement in, language learning and/or learning about the language and/or culture of their site to better facilitate their students' learning.

When T1 was asked if she thought it was important for an English teacher in her teaching context to know something about the first language of the students, she replied,

Is it helpful? Yes... I wish I could go back to my first year [seven years ago] with some of the stuff I know now. Do I know everything? No. but like p's and b's, t's and d's, ...I didn't realize my first year they didn't hear [the difference]... The kids are really good about going mhm!, and it's very easy... to forget that... they don't know things.

T1 enrolled in the masters program in applied linguistics in order to equip herself to be a better teacher at her site given that the following year would see a new DLE curriculum being adopted. For T1, "being part of the dual language [curriculum] and... being in a school district where language is such an issue" was a motivator.

Additionally, after beginning the LING 601: Principles of Linguistic Analysis group discovery learning project analyzing VE during the summer session, T1 reports a better understanding of the rule-governedness of that local dialect of English:

I've lived in the village I'm going on my seventh year now, and you know I've heard people talk but I don't pick up the differences? But...some of the things that the students say [in VE], now I can see a reason for it, how it came to be, and it's just not them making a mistake.



It is through this process of learning about her students' dialect of English that T1 is able to be better oriented to the rule-governed speech of her students. This may allow her to create more easily-accessible opportunities for her students to acquire a second dialect of English – SAE – without de-valuing what her students can already do (Spada & Lightbown, 2002). Similarly, T4 also reports that learning about VE has resulted in her increased respect for not just her students but the community as a whole: “I’m getting a better perspective and more of a respect for the Native community that I live in, because... it is a language, they are following rules.”

Both T4 and T1, who have taught at their individual sites for several years, report having acquired the local dialect to such an extent that they must pause before making grammaticality judgments about VE. This can then open up opportunity for teachers to authentically frame the classroom as a practice space for SAE. T4, who is non-Native and not from Alaska but who is connected to the village by marriage and is raising her children there, notes:

Slowly I have begun speaking Village English without even realizing it... When we were doing our research paper [examining a linguistic properties of Village English, the Yup’ik-fluent members of my group] said, “This is how we would say it in Yup’ik, ...can you say it that way in English? Is that ok?” And there were a couple times when I was... not sure, because things that used to sound... awkward because they were Village English now sound so familiar.

T1, who had taught at her site for six full years at the time of the study, also reports hesitation with grammaticality judgments: “I realize I do not use the most standard English... I have to stop and think, ok, that's not correct. I pick up a lot of what people are doing around me... in the village... Even though now it sounds right to me, is it really standard?” As teachers with some

proficiency in VE, combined with an understanding of VE as a rule-governed dialect of English, these participants are positioned to co-practice SAE with their students.

While the participants who have lived in their village for an extended amount of time (T1, T4) both note having internalized VE to the extent that distinctly VE pronunciations and syntax are sometimes unmarked for them, positioning oneself as an active learner of Yugtun, by contrast, is not always feasible. While most participants (all but T1) express definite interest in learning Yugtun, only T3 and T5 were actively doing so. Referring to a discussion with all five teacher participants at which the researcher was not present, T5 reported that some teachers expressed apprehension over learning an Indigenous language as a non-Indigenous person: “[for] some of the teachers...sometimes it's a self-conscious thing? You know, you don't wanna say it wrong, or be seen as that outside person trying to speak it.” But regardless, T5 and other participants push through and still learn anyway. T5 states:

I want to...interconnect both languages into my language teaching... [to be] able to understand the Yup'ik rules, so that I understand how to help them change the Yup'ik rules into English rules, and how they change from one to the other. We're moving to dual language...I want to be more equipped to... switch between the two with them....just even with spelling and stuff, just helping my kids to understand the basic rules and, being able to relate it back to Yugtun would be able to help them cause then they can see those correlations and be like ok, in Yugtun it does this, but in English it's this rule. So I need to better understand the Yugtun rules in order to help them.

T5's desire to “switch between the two with them” in order to better help her students keeps her motivated to keep learning Yugtun.

The participants in this study report that previous, current, or desired future learning about language or culture at their site has helped or will help them create better learning environments for their students. Likewise, those who have gained receptive or productive skills in VE or Yugtun have reported a deepening of their understanding of how to facilitate better classrooms for their students. Though the act of acquiring productive language skills can raise difficult questions related to being seen as the “outside person trying to speak it,” and the act of learning about the language might have potential overtones of appropriation (Smith, 2012), all participants still persevere in their learning for a distinct purpose: their desire to improve their students’ classroom environment.

#### 4.3 Valuing Linguistic Affordances

The second theme that emerged from the data was valuing linguistic affordances. Valuing linguistic affordances refers to any positive value judgment by the participants of the language or dialect spoken by their students or by community members at their site, with the implication that the language or dialect also has value in the classroom equal to that of SAE. These themes, as mentioned above, can then be further divided into three sub-themes: transforming attitudes towards VE or Yugtun, promoting student use of VE or Yugtun in the classroom, and teacher valuing affordances to transform self.

The first sub-theme, transforming attitudes towards VE or Yugtun, is any shift in understanding of the dialect or language spoken by students that allows the participant to view those affordances as having status. For many participants, learning about VE as a rule-governed full dialect of English provided the tools for them to make such a shift. The second sub-theme, promoting student use of VE or Yugtun in the classroom, is any usage of VE or Yugtun in the

classroom. The third sub-theme, valuing affordances to transform self, focuses on participant acts of learning or acquiring cultural or linguistic skills.

#### 4.3.1 Reflecting on Own Attitude Towards VE/Yugtun

Data supporting the first sub-theme, transforming teacher's own attitude towards VE or Yugtun, focuses on teacher perceptions of the status of the language or dialect spoken by students. Participants report learning about the rule-governed nature of VE and its status as a full dialect of English has helped them shift their perceptions of the status of the language their students speak. Participants also report Yugtun has helped them orient more towards understanding the language abilities that their students come to school with, and the complex language landscapes in which their students are living.

T1 and T4 make a point of noting that the process of learning about the rule-governedness of VE during LING 602: Principles of Linguistic Analysis has opened the way for them to more firmly ally themselves with VE having status as a full, robust, legitimate language. T1 reports that "some of the things that the students say, ...now I can see a reason for it, how it came to be, and it's just not them making a mistake." Similarly, T4 describes:

They have developed a new form of language through Village English. It follows rules and [pause] it really is its own language...And that's been good for me because it gives it more status... So to realize oh, they are following rules, there is a structure that is being followed...that's been enlightening for me.

T1 and T4 are learning that student production of VE is not "them making a mistake" but in fact is rule-governed like any dialect of English, standard or non-, and "there is a structure that is being followed." Knowledge of this provides a way for these participants to shift towards an

understanding of their students' language as robust and a potentially useful tool as T1 and T4 scaffold their students toward SAE literacy.

Echoing T1 and T4's focus on status, T2 reflects on an earlier conversation with a classmate:

[T]here was a lightbulb that went on when [a classmate] said yesterday in a discussion that if... a family feels like its culture or language isn't valued...and there's a push for one language over another, a lot of frustration and... a lack of growth occurs. And when she said that, I could see in the last couple of years, yes it is very true... because it really does mess [with students' sense of] cultural identity.

Here, T2 describes her observations of the negative effects of teachers not seeing student language as having status in the classroom. She connects teacher attitudes in the classroom to the broader community by saying problems arise when "a family" perceives "its culture or language isn't valued." By creating a classroom where student language and culture are respected as strengths which students can lean on to practice weaker skills, a teacher is granting status to those affordances. By extension, the teacher is also communicating a respect for the status of the community, its families, and the students.

T3 and T5 are participants who can be described as already being able to confidently articulate how they utilize their students' language as an affordance in the classroom. For example, T3 strongly encourages his students to use Yugtun with each other to figure things out; he speaks positively of an example in which two students struggle over a math problem, and then a student "starts speaking in Yugtun. And like 'oh ok!' and then they understand it. I encourage that with them." Likewise, when T5 was asked what one truth about second language teaching

would be, she replied: “the second language [SAE] isn't better than the first. That would be my one true thing.” She also notes:

Yugtun is... my village's primary language, and so the ability to speak Yugtun is key to being a part of the community and...for my kids, being a valued member of the community... And also, from what I've seen travelling with my students to other villages, it's a sense of pride, and it's also a way for my students to make connections.

T5 reflects on her own experiences observing her students interacting both in their own home community and with others in other communities. She has translated these observations into an understanding of how Yugtun is valued in each of these spaces for her students. T5 has come to realize, through her own reflection on what she observes, that Yugtun is a key to being a valued community member and to making connections across the region. In these ways, T3 and T5 are already strongly oriented towards valuing linguistic affordances.

But even participants like T3 and T5 find themselves continuing to develop and expand their understanding of that orientation. T3 reflects on what new aspects of his students' language that LING 601: Principles of Linguistic Analysis has highlighted for him:

It's just very interesting to think about how language in general changes, ... it's just been fascinating to think about. I've heard ... complaints from people, that this is the direction that the kids are going, where their root word is more an English root word, and then the postbases are... staying Yup'ik. So instead of saying “I wanna go to the store,” it wouldn't be “kipusvigcugtua,” it would be “store-cugtua.” So they just change that root, and I know that that frustrated our Yup'ik teacher this year. He's like “aah, some parents they just say real lazy” [chuckles]. Looking at what we've been learning about [language

change], how that transition [can happen] in language...very quickly and very easily and how that can really mess with the way people understand language.

T3 reports here that a Yup'ik teacher at his site does not see the code-mixing that students do as having status; instead, it's seen as "lazy." In the linguistics class, discussion covered code-mixing and language change; T3 was exposed to a counter-narrative to seeing the student speech described above as lazy, and instead as a potential factor in rapid language change at a site.

Wyman (2011) states: "Contemporary language shift settings are complex heteroglossic environments, in which students' forms of mixed language use evidence both students' language shift and their remaining strengths as heritage language learners (McCarty, forthcoming)" (p. 82). Students in many of these sites are navigating rapidly changing linguistic landscapes, and their modified Yugtun production may be at least in part the result of them "performing multiple situated identities" (Wyman, 2011, p. 8) in an environment that can be described as having complex and at times confusing language ideologies (Wyman, 2011, p. 9-10). In such environments, there can exist multiple and overlapping attitudes towards non-standard language use within a speech community. In many of these sites where students speak Yugtun, the way in which that language is spoken by the younger generation can be seen as "lazy" to speakers from older generations. T3 already demonstrates a respectful attitude to the language his students bring to class, but in the quote above he is also demonstrating a developing understanding of the complex language attitudes held by the community. At his site, a tension exists between generations of Yugtun speakers even before considering possible tensions regarding the status of Yugtun in an SAE classroom.

When participants learn more about VE and Yugtun, they shift towards both an ability to see them as holding status equal or greater to that of SAE, and they also shift towards the

potential to deepen their understanding of the complex language attitudes already in place in their communities. Through this continual reflection and subsequent shifting in their own attitudes towards VE or Yugtun, participants deepen their understanding of their students' language abilities, how those abilities fit in with the larger community context, and what that means for how they as teachers can challenge their own attitudes and move towards valuing student language proficiencies in the classroom.

#### 4.3.2 Promoting VE/Yugtun in the Classroom

Another way in which participants expressed the theme of valuing linguistic affordances was through referencing how they currently support, or would support in the future, student use of VE or Yugtun in the classroom. Participants work in varied contexts; some are in DLE sites where there are strict rules about what language can be used on specific days of the week, others teach English language curriculum, and students in either curriculum may have varying competencies in Yugtun, SAE, and VE. Despite the variations between sites, participants shared an orientation towards promoting student language strengths in their classroom.

Keeping in mind that T3 works in a context where school curriculum is ostensibly all English, it is interesting to reflect on the following from T3:

I enjoy when my kids are, you know, if they can't figure something out, like the two of them are sitting there over a math problem, and I start hearing “no no no!” and then he starts speaking in Yugtun. And like “oh ok!” and then they understand it. I encourage that with them, “oh yeah, go ask him! He knows.” And then they'll [speak Yugtun] when they're trying to work something out.

T3's site does not use Yugtun as a language of instruction. There is an Elders Program at his school, during which elders come into the schools and speak in Yugtun about topics that the



elders themselves choose, but no school subjects are taught using Yugtun. T3 characterizes the current position of the community to be “the school's going to do English and we're going to do Yugtun and it's going to work.” He characterizes the community as viewing these distinct language domains as “a comfort.” Each language has its place, and currently he doesn't perceive anyone “push[ing] really hard” to implement a dual language program. Yet, even with no explicit pressure from either the site administrator or the community itself, T3 recognizes that speaking in Yugtun is useful for his students as they seek to understand new content. He encourages his students to use what tools make the most sense to them as they seek to make meaning, even if that means he as teacher may not understand all that gets said by the students during that process.

Still, for all his comfort integrating student language strengths into his classroom, T3 thinks carefully about how he is positioned as an Outsider while doing so:

[m]y role as a[n] outside teacher coming in, I get very...I try and be very careful and very sensitive about how I do that, because it's a very fine line, I don't want to be the outside teacher coming in and saying this is what I think you guys should be doing, I think it's much more meaningful having that [come from the community]...It's this odd dynamic of... seeing something that would be great, but knowing that if I pushed my agenda it wouldn't be there....I think it's neat to be learning about [Yugtun and language learning] so that when there are those people in the community who support it [in the classroom], I can then support them.

T3 seeks to strike a balance between his own beliefs and knowledge about what should happen in a classroom where students have multiple linguistic affordances, and what the community in which he teaches sees as important in the classroom.

While T3's classroom uses an English language curriculum, T5's was, at the time of this study, the first English-medium classroom the students encountered after the Yugtun First Language (YFL) program for K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade (For a discussion of YFL, see Chapter 1, Section 1.3). But for many of her classroom tasks, T5, like T3, encourages students to use what language they feel most comfortable using. As with T3 and other participants, T5 is also thinking about her own identity and how it interacts with her choice to promote Yugtun or VE. She notes:

I'm the first white teacher they come to after being in a Yugtun First program...I wanted them to still see the value of their language and that it's important... no matter where they're at, and that it's ok... if that's where they're most comfortable, and that makes the most sense to them, and that that still works in an English classroom.

Here we see T5 underscoring of the importance of demonstrating to students that their language has value within the classroom, whatever the target language or dialect may be.

Other teachers demonstrated valuing linguistic affordances in other ways. T2, for whom the culture of teaching at her site is a focal point for her continual struggle to become a better teacher for her students, wonders aloud about how the structure of Yugtun classes at her site (before it began using Dual Language immersion) are communicating value to her students:

I thought [the Yugtun class] would have, again this is me pushing how I do things onto another teacher, but I thought there would be more structure? Or it would be... set up in such a way [that there would be]...an outcome for the students by the end of the year: you will know this, this and this. So when I didn't see that happening, I was wondering, what place does the language of Yugtun have in this course,... if they're not working on vocabulary or whatever they're supposed to work on. It's a lot of word searches and – which I guess it would be voca... that does – I don't know.

T2 questions the efficacy of the activities, such as word searches, that were chosen for her students' Yugtun class period, before her site transitioned to Dual Language. She questions whether the day-to-day activities contribute to students' long-term language development. However, she recognizes that "pushing how [she] do[es] things onto another teacher" is problematic; by saying "I was wondering," T2 frames her doubt in terms of how she is perceiving what is being taught, rather than placing blame elsewhere. At the time of the main portion of the research for this study, T2's site anticipated implementing Dual language immersion at the start of the coming school year. The DLE entails Yugtun and English instruction in two parallel reading curricula. T2 noted being "interested to see how the two compare." T2 knows there is immeasurable value for her students when they interact with teachers who teach in culturally responsive ways, but at the time of the study T2 could not distinguish those practices. T2 viewed Dual Language as an opportunity to directly compare teaching Yugtun reading vs. teaching English reading. This in turn may inform her perception of how she herself can support Yugtun and Yup'ik culture and pedagogy.

Participants reported currently supporting, or wishing to improve their support of, student use of VE or Yugtun in their classrooms. They also report an understanding of the wider implications of local language or dialect being promoted in their classrooms; as T5 describes, "I'm the first white teacher they come to after being in a Yugtun First program." Student use of Yugtun not only allows students to use all available "tools in their toolbox" to learn, but it underscores the value of Yup'ik voices, quite literally, in otherwise non-Yup'ik spaces. Still, other participants such as T2 wish to support Yugtun-language use, yet struggle with how to do so meaningfully if they lack the language skills themselves. T2 is hopeful that the parallel nature of the Dual Language reading curriculum may help create such opportunities.

#### 4.3.3 Valuing Affordances to Reflect on Self

The third sub-theme is valuing affordances to reflect on self. When reflecting on how they value students' linguistic affordances, participants sometimes also reflected on their own understanding of themselves. These self-reflections weren't related simply to language use; they included reflecting on their own awareness of the weight, or power, of their role as teacher at their site, and reflecting on their appreciation of the rich perspectives of their students and community members.

T4 wonders how she can position herself to have language and culture present in her classroom in respectful and meaningful ways, given that she herself is not Yup'ik. Though she has married into the community and is raising children there, she still feels her outsiderhood in regards to what is appropriate for her to do. She wants to

not just validate the culture but help... the culture continue, even. 'Cause it seems like in my village, people say they want the kids to remember who they are, but nothing is really being done to perpetuate it... And as an outsider, I feel like I need to be careful... I can't really teach the culture directly. I can learn with them, and that's acceptable. But to actually say oh well this was this way... you really need to rely on the community for that.

T3 also considers the import of her positioning as a teacher. The teacher, as Outsider and "expert," has the power or "weight" to either perpetuate or challenge the historical relationship of the non-Native Outsider teacher, and Western school institution, to Alaska Native communities. T3 shares a firm resistance to perpetuating historical relationships between outside institutions and these communities:

because it's a very fine line, I don't want to be the outside teacher coming in and saying this is what I think you guys should be doing, I think it's much more meaningful having that...internally. [I]t's this odd dynamic of... seeing something that would be great, but knowing that if I pushed my agenda it wouldn't be there... I think it's neat to be learning about that so that when there are those people in the community who support it, I can then support them.

Both T3 and T4 are learning aspects of culture and language not in isolation, but with a deep sensitivity to what it means to be a non-Alaska Native teacher in a rural community. They are committed to learning how to support language and culture movements at their sites on the communities' terms, not theirs.

T2 also exhibits an increased awareness of the weight of her role as teacher. She connects what she is learning about VE to previous classroom interactions she has been a part of. While she does not describe those exact interactions, this excerpt does underscore that her learning about VE is changing her understanding of the effect of her pedagogical decisions. Her attitudes towards VE carry over into her attitude in the classroom. She states:

[A]s a teacher you're going to enlighten them or burn bridges with them. [[laughs]] you know what I mean? ...[Y]ou have the power to do either one. [A]nd...this [group project examining VE], this has definitely opened my eyes to how that has definitely, it has happened, that I was not aware of before.

T2 is extending her learning experience during the VE group project to reflect on her past and future teaching. T2 is demonstrating a new appreciation for how her words and actions can have a profound influence on her students. Learning more about the dialect of English in which her

students are fluent is affecting her perception of the power she can have as an Outsider teacher at her site.

Participants are valuing students' linguistic affordances to reflect also on themselves in relation to their own awareness of the rich, deep perspectives of the communities in which they teach. T3 reflects on how he feels about the different perspectives at his site. He notes: "I really appreciate the cultural aspect of where I live and so trying to understand that – it's hard to understand the cultural stuff aside from the language." He views language and culture as linked, so we can assert that he is learning the language to better understand the cultural nuances of his students' learning. In turn, learning more about the culture can then be linked to him creating pathways to learn more language. This kind of long-term commitment to the language and culture of the site will give T3 a unique insight into how to help his students learn. It will also serve to provide a pathway for him to be considered more a part of the community.

T5 also reflects on the different perspectives of community members at her site. She shares a salient experience she had while on a field trip with her students and some other non-Alaska Native teachers:

It was interesting last year,...going moose hunting and [seeing] the difference in perspective...[S]ome teachers ...[said] "arrgh, we didn't get a moose, [so] it was...a bad trip"...[But] the kids [said]... "it was so great! We saw this animal and this animal and this animal and this animal." And it was...just a different perspective. [W]e saw the negative, we didn't achieve our ultimate goal of what we wanted to do, but the kids were so much more focused on all of these other great things that we were able to do, even though we weren't able to complete that ultimate goal. [I]t's just a difference in looking at things.

T5 connects with the attitudes of her students, and learns from their emphasis on learning from observation, being aware of the environment around you, and staying positive. These are qualities often associated with Yup'ik cultural values (A. John-Shields, personal communication, October 29, 2014). By shifting her own parameters for what can be seen as a successful outcome, T5 is in turn deepening her understanding of her students' world. This can translate to the classroom, where she will now be better attuned to how her students learn.

As described above, participants reported that learning about the linguistic and cultural affordances of their students resulted in a change in their own understanding of themselves. Participants reported an increased awareness of the weight of their role as teacher at their site or increased appreciation of the rich perspectives of their students and community members. These shifts in perspective lead to self-change, and to increased ability to provide the learning environments that best meet the students' learning needs.

#### 4.4 Conclusion

This analysis describes two major themes that study participants articulated consistently: Referring to self as learner and valuing linguistic affordances. All participants a) orient themselves towards thinking of themselves as learners of language or culture (referring to self as learner), and b) seek to deepen their own understanding of the linguistic affordances their students bring to the classroom in order to create a more meaningful learning environment for them (valuing linguistic affordances). These themes emerged from the data despite differences between participants' site curricula, languages and dialects spoken by students and community at each site, and differences in participants' own strengths and experiences.

Each theme can be divided into three sub-themes. The referring to self as learner theme can be subdivided into linking to past learning experiences, positioning self as co-learner, and

learning for a purpose. Linking to learning experience signifies any example of participants linking their own language-related learning experience to the experiences of their students, with the result of empathy and an orientation towards seeking to improve their students' learning experience. The teacher-as-co-learner subtheme includes any instance of participants positioning themselves as a co-learner alongside the students in some capacity within the classroom. The learning for a purpose sub-theme encompasses participants reporting learning about or learning to speak the students' language or dialect, or learning about the students' or community's culture, for the express purpose of being able to better facilitate their students' learning experience.

The valuing linguistic affordances theme can be divided into these sub-themes: reflecting on attitude towards VE or Yugtun, promoting student use of VE or Yugtun in the classroom, and valuing linguistic affordances to reflect on self. Reflecting on attitude towards VE/Yugtun is any shift in understanding of the dialect or language spoken by students that allows the participant to view those affordances as having status. Promoting VE/Yugtun in the classroom is any encouragement or desire to encourage student use of VE or Yugtun as a valued, legitimate tool in accomplishing classroom tasks. Finally, valuing affordances to reflect on self describes any participant acts of learning or acquiring language or culture which lead to the teacher's understanding the importance of changing oneself to be a better teacher at a particular teaching site – teaching on the community's terms, rather than one's own.

#### 4.4.1 Recursivity

These themes and their subthemes exist in a recursive relationship. While this chapter has described each in isolation, each sub-theme supports the enactment of the others, and vice versa. All sub-themes can be present simultaneously. Accordingly, the sub-themes do not progress in a



linear manner; though the Referring to self as learner subthemes are presented here in an order which puts “learning for a purpose” last, this does not imply that participants who exhibit this sub-theme have reached the apex of “Referring to self as learner.” For example, when T5 reports she is learning Yugtun for the purpose of being better able to respond to journal entries (learning for a purpose), she is practicing language skills alongside her students (positioning self as co-learner). From this process, she will then have a new and highly contextualized language learning experience to reflect on (linking to past learning experiences). The journals can be in Yugtun (promoting Yugtun in the classroom). With each written interaction with her students and written and spoken interaction with the teachers she is going to for language assistance, she is adding nuance to her understanding of how her colleagues view student Yugtun production (transforming attitudes towards Yugtun). T5 can then apply this nuance to her own interactions with her students. These interactions, such as the hunting trip that she saw as unsuccessful but the students deemed fruitful, shift her towards being more sharply attuned to what is seen as having value by her students (valuing affordances to transform self). Her experiences, while they can be labeled with each individual sub-theme, are in fact related and feed into one another to create a constant cycle of learning and valuing.

The participants in this study are orienting their graduate work towards continual reevaluation of what works for their students, and what they are able to do right now towards making needed changes in the system, their classrooms, and most importantly their own personal attitudes and practices. It is this recursive self-reflection that makes space for the attitudes necessary for implementing culturally responsive learning and teaching in these classrooms. This in turn allows the needs of the community to come through, and provides opportunity for

teachers who are not originally from those communities to do their teaching work in ways that respect those community needs.



## Chapter 5: Conclusion

### 5.1 Introduction

This study was undertaken to examine what roles non-Indigenous individuals can play in language and culture revitalization in Indigenous contexts. After securing a research context and participants, I refined my research question to investigate non-Indigenous involvement in revitalization in rural Alaskan school contexts specifically. The study participants frame their own understandings of their roles as white non-Indigenous teachers in Indigenous contexts, and this led to a modified research question: How do those who identify as non-Alaska Native perceive of the possibilities available to them for facilitating the integration of local Indigenous Knowledges into an educational space?

### 5.2 Relating Data Analysis to the Literature

This study examined interview and focus group data as well as researcher field notes. Data was coded for themes and analyzed using constructivist grounded theory. Through this process, two main themes were described, each with three sub-themes (see Table 5.1 below). The theme Referring to Self as Learner entails any reference by the participants to themselves as learners of language or culture. This can include reflection on their own past learning experiences; description of themselves as co-learners alongside their students in some capacity within the classroom; and/or an articulated desire to, or active effort to, learn the language and/or culture of their site with the specific goal of better facilitation of their students' learning experience. The theme Valuing Linguistic Affordances entails any articulation of a reflection on the teacher's own attitude towards Village English (VE)/Yugtun, promotion of VE/Yugtun in the classroom, and valuing of linguistic affordances in order to reflect on self. (For detailed

description of each theme and subtheme, see Chapter 4, sections 4.2 and 4.3. For a description of VE, see Chapter 1, section 1.3.)

These themes function in a recursive loop; for example, teachers who engage in learning as part of their teaching practice (Reflecting on Self as Learner theme) might then more readily shift away from negative perceptions of non-standard dialects such as VE (Valuing Linguistic Affordances theme). These two main themes link directly to critical pedagogy. Freire (1970) describes the concepts of conscientization and praxis, and Wink (2011) describes a “name, reflect critically, act” framework; I will be examining the participant data of this study through these theoretical lenses.

Table 5.1: Abbreviated Table of Themes and Subthemes

Referring to Self as Learner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• linking to learning experience</li> <li>• positioning self as co-learner</li> <li>• learning for a purpose</li> </ul>
Valuing Linguistic Affordances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reflecting on own attitude towards VE/Yugtun</li> <li>• promoting VE/Yugtun in classroom</li> <li>• valuing linguistic affordances to reflect on self</li> </ul>

### 5.3 Review of Key Theoretical Concepts

In my literature review, I discussed Indigenous/non-Indigenous research relationships (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2), Critical Pedagogy (See Chapter 2, Section 2.3), and culturally responsive teaching (CRT) (See Chapter 2, Section 2.4). Critical Pedagogy emerged as a primary organizational framework within which to understand the participant data. Freire’s (1970) notions of conscientization and praxis, and Wink’s (2011) reframing of these two concepts as

“name, reflect critically, act,” are a clear theoretical framework within which to reexamine participant data. The concept of Insider-Outsider, discussed within the Indigenous/non-Indigenous research relationships section of the literature review (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.1), informs my understanding of participant positionality as they struggle with how to teach in a critical way without perpetuating oppressive classroom practices. CRT is a set of pedagogical practices that participants reflect on in relation to how they might begin to or continue to promote student language and culture in their classrooms. Both Insider-Outsider and Critical Pedagogy, specifically conscientization and praxis, play such important roles in how I understand the data that these are further expanded on below to orient the reader to the discussion.

#### 5.3.1 Insider-Outsider

A significant construct within the literature on Indigenous/non-Indigenous research relationships is that of Insider-Outsider (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.1). Rather than understanding Insider-Outsider as a simple, strict binary, which is not a realistic portrayal of reality (Merton, 1972), Insider-Outsider instead can be seen as a way to conceptualize any of the multiple, often contentious, positionings Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals take on, moment to moment, when engaging in research relationships (Brayboy & Deyhle, 2000; Brayboy & Maughan, 2009; Trechter, 1999).

My examination of the Insider-Outsider literature revealed a powerful mechanism for decolonization of traditionally Western-dominated academic spaces. When the Insider-Outsider relationship is viewed as multiple and dynamic, this constant negotiation makes room for a refocusing of the center (Brayboy & Maughan, 2009), a way of negotiating Insider-Outsider relationships that values Indigenous Knowledges, and sees them as complimentary to

mainstream Western approaches to Knowledge rather than inherently at odds. Refocusing the center parallels the process of Decolonization as described by Smith (2012). Decolonization seeks not simply to challenge exploitation and colonization of Indigenous Knowledges by Western systems (p. 62), but to actively increase the agency of Indigenous Knowledges within those systems and, importantly, within “our colonized views of our own history” (p. 36).

Many scholars, Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike, note that dissolving the line between Insider and Outsider may create an opportunity to downplay difference, effectively perpetuating the colonization of Indigenous knowledge. (Benton, 2007; Smith, 2012; Jones & Jenkins, 2008; Parker Webster & John, 2011). These scholars hold that it should not be the goal of Insider-Outsider research partnerships in Indigenous contexts to “fix” the racialized tensions embedded in spaces with histories of colonization. Rather, research partners continually negotiate with and learn from each other, while acknowledging that distinct and sometimes irreconcilable personal or group histories are located within a common historical frame (Jones & Jenkins, 2008; Parker Webster & John, 2011).

### 5.3.2 Critical Pedagogy

To relate the theory-driven research of Indigenous/non-Indigenous relationships described above to teaching specifically, I reviewed the literature on critical pedagogy (see Chapter 2, section 2.3). The educational philosophy laid out in Freire’s (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* forms the foundation of Critical Pedagogy. In this work, Freire (1970) states that all educational settings manifest power imbalances, and it is the teacher’s responsibility to facilitate a space where these inherent power imbalances can be named, critically examined, and actively challenged by the students themselves. In Freire’s words, critical pedagogy “makes oppression

and its causes objects of reflection by the oppressed, and from that reflection will come the necessary engagement in the struggle for their liberation” (p. 48).

Freire (1970) refers to this process of “reflection,” of becoming aware, with the term “conscientização,” or conscientization. Freire states:

Reflection upon situationality is reflection about the very condition of existence: critical thinking by means of which people discover each other to be “in a situation.” Only as this situation ceases to present itself as a dense, enveloping reality ...can commitment exist. Humankind *emerge* from their *submersion* and acquire the ability to intervene in reality as it is unveiled. Intervention in reality—historical awareness itself—thus represents a step forward from emergence, and results from the conscientização of the situation.

Conscientização is the deepening of the attitude of awareness characteristic of all emergence.” (Freire, 1970, p. 109)

Conscientization, in other words, is the process of becoming aware. As such, conscientization situates human beings as active agents who can recognize their historical and present reality and because of this are able to transform it. Through conscientization we become knowing subjects (not passive objects). As such, we achieve a deepening awareness of the sociohistorical/sociocultural reality that shapes our lives and come to understand our capacity to transform that reality. In this way, power imbalances are not part of an irrefutable, monolithic reality but instead a social reality that can be “intervened” in. The contested space of the classroom reflects a dialectic tension, and those who have less power at a given point are able to participate in the dialectic to change the circumstances for the better.

Praxis is the process of putting conscientization into practice. Freire describes praxis thus:



To no longer be prey to [oppression's] force, one must emerge from it and turn upon it.

This can be done only by means of the praxis: reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it.” (Freire, 1970, p. 51)

Praxis, then, is the process of reflecting (conscientization) and then acting on an oppressive circumstance. Applied to an educational context, once aware of power imbalances at their site, teachers and students alike may move forward to make the change in their schools and/or classrooms that they, not an outside party, deem useful and necessary.

Freire's deep educational philosophy has been taken up by many scholars. This study turns to Wink (2011), who provides a more practical description of conscientization that teachers may find more easily applied to their lives:

[T]eachers [are] ... powerful humans who can make a difference in the lives of students.

However, they often feel weak because they see themselves as victims of a system that renders them passive. Conscientization enables students and teachers to have confidence in their own knowledge, ability, and experiences. Often people will say that conscientization is a power we have when we *know* that we *know*. (Wink, 2011, p. 37, emphasis in original)

Wink describes conscientization simply: it is the confidence that comes with knowing, with becoming aware, that you are not a passive victim but a potential change-maker. Wink also provides a simplified recast of the process of praxis as a process through which teachers “name, reflect critically, [and] act” (Wink, 2011, p. 28). This organizing schema is used below to reframe participant data. It is important to underscore that while these terms seem to clearly delineate the process of reflecting from the process of acting, this relationship in fact manifests in

more subtle ways, and the journey from conscientization to praxis – from reflecting to reflecting-acting – may be a long and/or wending one with fits and starts.

#### 5.4 Name, Reflect, Act: Relating Participant Data to Critical Pedagogy

The data for this study can be described in terms of Wink's (2011) schema for describing critical pedagogy, "name, reflect critically, act." Below, I describe data in terms of Wink's schema. However, It will also be shown that, while this schema is very useful for discussing naming, reflection and action, it is only fully fleshed out when analysis returns to Freire's conscientization and praxis, which conceive of reflection and action as complex and in a dialectical, spiraling relationship rather than distinct stages along a linear trajectory.

##### 5.4.1 Name

For Wink, Critical Pedagogy first entails learning to name spaces of tension related to disempowerment. The teachers in this study all name such areas of tension in their contexts. For example, T1 notes that, regarding her students' phonemic awareness, "[I] didn't realize my first year [that students] didn't hear [the difference between]... p's and b's, t's and d's." As students learned in Summer 2013, Yugtun does not distinguish phonemically between voiced and voiceless stop pairs including p/b and t/d. This trait is also a feature of some dialects of VE. In this data point T1 names a difficulty her students have (not hearing the difference between specific English phonemes), but she frames it as simply a language trait that keeps her students from succeeding in her classroom. T1 does not acknowledge, in this data excerpt, the role her lack of knowledge about Yugtun plays in disempowering her students and maintaining preexisting power imbalances. To do so would be an example of reflecting critically.

T5 also provides an example that, in isolation, exemplifies the act of naming:

I want to...interconnect both languages [Yugtun and English] into my language teaching... I want to be more equipped to... switch between the two with [my students]... helping my kids to understand the basic rules and being able to relate it back to Yugtun would be able to help them cause then they can see those correlations and be like ok, in Yugtun it does this, but in English it's this rule. So I need to better understand the Yugtun rules in order to help them.”

Whereas it is not necessarily the obligation of teachers at her site to learn Yugtun to assist students as they seek to improve Standard American English (SAE) proficiency, T5 recognizes her own lack of this knowledge as a factor that keeps her from providing the most effective teaching possible for her students. This example may be seen as naming, but not yet reflecting. Due to the history of Western education in Alaska, teachers have historically been white non-Alaskans. These teachers most often lacked the Native language knowledge needed to integrate students’ home language and culture into the classroom. In order to rise to the level of reflecting, this data would need to be acknowledging the role of language in maintaining preexisting power imbalances and disempowering her students. While T5 does make these connections elsewhere, it isn’t exhibited in this particular data.

#### 5.4.2 Reflect Critically

The next element of Wink’s schema is reflecting critically. Reflecting critically entails thinking about a given circumstance in terms of who or what is given power, and who or what is not given power.. All participants except for T1 engage in some level of critical reflection during the data collection period. Often, participant reflection engages the historical colonizer/colonized relationship of teachers and students in rural Alaska. For example, several teachers reflect on the implications of various ways they might implement cultural content in their classrooms. T3 and

T2 reflect on their Outsider status in relation to local cultures and languages, and their Insider status within the school. T3 states:

I don't want to be the outside teacher coming in and saying this is what I think you guys should be doing, I think it's much more meaningful having that [come from the community]...It's this odd dynamic of... seeing something that would be great, but knowing that if I pushed my agenda it wouldn't be there.”

T3 reflects on how, as “the outside teacher coming in,” his positionality recalls the historical colonizer/colonized relationships within the school context in his village. T2 is also reflecting on how language use at her site embodies historical colonizer/colonized relationships and thus links directly to issues of power. She comments on her developing awareness of language status and how it affects student confidence:

there was a lightbulb that went on when [a classmate] said yesterday in a discussion that if...a family feels like its culture or language isn't valued...and there's a push for one language over another, a lot of frustration and...a lack of growth occurs. And when she said that, I could see in the last couple of years, yes it is very true...because it really does mess [with students' sense of] cultural identity.” (See Chapter 4, Section 4.3.1.)

T4 reflects on the importance of valuing VE as a full, rich dialect of English from which students can draw to succeed in the classroom, and T5 names student use of Yugtun as a powerful tool to scaffold students' own peer learning in an English-language classroom. These participants strive not just to provide access to locally relevant content within their classrooms, but to do so in a way that doesn't position them as holders or appropriators of that knowledge (see Chapter 4, Section 4.3.2). While different participants are at different places regarding their own ability to

integrate local knowledge and pedagogical norms into their classrooms, they display an awareness of their effect as white teachers in Indigenous classrooms.

While these participants reflect on their own positioning and who does and does not have power in their contexts, in these isolated excerpts, participants are not articulating changes to their own actions or attitudes that might begin to mitigate such power imbalance. To do so would be the third element in Wink's (2011) schema, "act."

#### 5.4.3 Act

Finally, after naming and reflecting critically, critical pedagogy entails acting (Wink, 2011) in order to mitigate power imbalances. Participant data shows that some participants are able to articulate how they currently transition their critical reflection into action in their classrooms. They do so by using culturally responsive content and pedagogical practices, or CRT (See Chapter 2, Section 2.4). During the first summer of the grant during which primary data collection occurred, participants T3 and T5 were describing classroom practices that embody CRT, such as encouraging L1 use in the classroom (Chapter 4, Section 4.3.2) and modifying their own behavior in the classroom in ways that are sensitive to institutionalized power imbalances. T5 articulated her awareness of power and language in her classroom:

I'm the first white teacher they come to after being in a Yugtun First program...I wanted them to still see the value of their language and that it's important... no matter where they're at, and that it's ok... if that's where they're most comfortable, and that makes the most sense to them, and that that still works in an English classroom. (Chapter 4, Section 4.3.2)

T5 reflects on the difficulty that her students may have coming to her English-only classroom after previously having Yugtun instruction during their school day. She acts on this in an effort

to increase her students' agency and create an atmosphere that is conducive to learning on the students' terms. What makes this action critical is its direct relation, articulated by T5, to mitigating a power imbalance. Students are being asked to excel in an English-only classroom at a site with a history of devaluing students' linguistic abilities in the classroom. T5's concern with righting a power imbalance, showing students that Yugtun "still works" in an English classroom, makes this an example of real critical action (Wink, 2011), or praxis ("reflection and action...in order to transform [the world]" [Freire, 1970]),

Other participants are reflecting critically, and have the desire to enact CRT in their classrooms, but meet with a complex of hurdles (personal, administrative, external) and are struggling to enact change. An emblematic example of how challenging it can be to shift from critical reflection to strong, confident action is provided by T2, who, while highly motivated to enact change at her site, frequently notes a self-perceived lack of confidence as a potential change agent. She struggles to reach out to the community and support staff for advice on what changes would be relevant to her site specifically:

"I have the tools, and I know there's support staff around...but then it comes to the point where I know I can reach out...and so that's where I start to feel fake confidence...I don't always [have the energy or confidence to] take that step or make that effort" (See Chapter 4, Section 4.2.2).

T2 wants to move beyond reflection to action, but notes that she hesitates to do so because she lacks the consistent confidence needed to "make that effort." This discomfort with reaching out to community members might stem from a discomfort with how she is positioned as an Outsider in an Indigenous community.

Another participant, T4, recognizes that one prevalent view for some white teachers at her site – VE is deficient and students who speak it “don’t have language” – is highly problematic. She is motivated to share what she has learned with her fellow teachers when she returns to her site. However, she still grapples with how to act on this knowledge in the classroom. For T4, fostering a classroom in which students’ VE affordances are valued and promoted as tools for learning is not a simple task when faced with the need to meet district mandated benchmarks in SAE. She struggles with how to bring elders into the classroom without feeling as if she is falling behind in other areas: “[It can feel like] it is either you [take the time necessary to] teach culturally relevantly, or you’re teaching the textbooks, like it was either or.” T4 is eager to act on empowering her students to use their own language to learn. She reflects on how prevailing teacher attitudes are perpetuating the disempowerment of students. But she still grapples with how to actively empower her students in the face of administrative or district-imposed hurdles.

#### 5.4.4 Name, Reflect, Act: Tying it All Together

Participant data suggests that while naming and reflection may be relatively easy to achieve, action may be considerably more difficult for some of these participants. However, I do not take the difficulties that some of the participants reported at the time of data collection as weaknesses. These participants’ self-reported lack of confidence and hesitation to act may indicate a deep awareness and critical reflection of the difficult history and colonized nature of their teaching contexts. For these Outsider teachers, it is daunting to recognize oneself as the ‘colonizer’ while reaching out to more-knowledgeable Insider elders and community members. It is a great personal challenge to act when acting means working productively with traditionally colonized populations at those very sites of colonization. Furthermore, what Wink calls

reflecting critically and acting, and what Freire refers to as reflecting on a situation in order to then act and transform that situation, are not distinct stages along a continuum. Instead, reflecting and acting – praxis – occurs recursively and repeatedly. One’s awareness of tension at a site is constantly deepening, and one never really completes action or transformation of a site.

The participants in this study are orienting their graduate work towards continual reevaluation of what works for their students, and what they are able to do right now towards making needed changes in the system, their classrooms, and most importantly their own personal attitudes and practices. It is this recursive self-reflection, this struggle towards conscientization, that makes it possible to implement culturally responsive learning and teaching in these classrooms. This in turn allows the needs of the community to come through, and provides opportunity for teachers who are not originally from these communities to teach in ways that respect community needs. By leaning on notions of critical pedagogy, teachers can access the space in which they might “work the hyphen” with colleagues, students, community members, or other collaborators.

### 5.5 Participant Differences

The data for this study was collected in 2013 at the very beginning of this MA program. Member checks were conducted in Spring of 2014, and ongoing discussions indicate that the participants continue to move from naming and reflecting to acting. Even so, some participants seem to be acting more readily than others. To better understand why we must examine the differences between the participants.

Differences in willingness or ability to act may stem from personal experiences, and the degree to which participants may have prior experience reflecting and acting on power imbalances and Insider-Outsider positionality. T3 and T5 display a measure of confidence



towards “acting” in their contexts (i.e., they embody praxis). Perhaps significantly, they both have a great degree of previous experience that informs their confidence. T5 grew up majority white within a minority community. She received her teacher training in a critically-oriented program and completed her student teaching in an American Indian serving institution in the lower-48. T3 had been living in Alaska for a several years before pursuing his teacher certification. His career before teaching involved interacting with Alaska Native youth in a capacity that called for T3 to provide reflection and support in a non-prescriptive way.

T2 and T4, on the other hand, articulate a great deal of struggle as they move towards action. Both individuals have extensive experience teaching and interacting with students from economic and cultural backgrounds that differ from their own. T2 taught in public schools in the Lower 48 serving low-income students, and then left the country to teach in strikingly different cultural environments. When asked during the 2013 summer session why she had chosen to teach in rural Alaska, she noted rural Alaska’s strikingly different cultural setting as a primary motivator. T4 is married to an Alaska Native and has biracial children, and reports feeling outsidered in multiple ways: she is married into the community, which marks her as different from other non-Alaska Native teachers at her site, but she is not herself from the site where she teaches, which sets her apart from the wider Yup’ik community there. It is worth noting that individuals from even nearby villages can be positioned as Outsiders, regardless of ethnicity (P. E. Marlow, Personal communication, November 13, 2014).

One explanation for the marked struggle that T2 and T4 exhibit may be a lack of prior experience with American Indian or Alaska Native students. While T3 and T5 both worked with American Indian and Alaska Native students prior to coming to their current teaching positions neither T2 nor T4 articulated such experience. Alternatively, T2 and T4 may be struggling with

reflection so markedly precisely because their lived experiences have made them particularly conscious of their Outsider status. T2 has repeatedly sought out teaching positions that position her as an Outsider, both domestically and abroad. T4 is uniquely positioned as an Insider-Outsider through her marriage and residence in her husband's community. Thus T2 and T4 may in fact be particularly attuned to the power imbalances around them and may simply require significant reflection yet to envision how they can enact change as Outsiders.

Finally, T1, in the data collected for this study, did not articulate a strong sense of struggle and this researcher would not describe her as oriented towards critical reflection. During the first summer session of the program, T1 focused on downplaying differences between her students and herself. Often, in response to direct questions related to her position as a white teacher in a Yup'ik setting, she redirected to focus on her rural upbringing, her difficulty learning Spanish in high school, and her own anxiety over speaking "correctly" in SAE. As T1 had been teaching at her site for 7 years, her focus on commonality over difference may stem from genuine comfort with and acceptance of her positionality due to sheer longevity at the site.

A shortcoming of this study is that it is only a snapshot of what is in fact the cyclical, overlapping, messy, time-reliant process of naming-reflecting-acting, or conscientization and praxis. To gain a more accurate representation of participants' movement towards praxis, we would need to be able to engage this process and examine participant attitudes and actions over a longer period of time with a longitudinal study.

Since the reflecting and acting loop (conscientization and praxis) of Critical Pedagogy mirrors the Action Research spiral (plan, act, reflect), a Participatory Action Research-oriented program that involved teachers in research at their site might contribute positively to jump-starting a reflective orientation for participants like T1, or accelerating confidence-building in

participants like T2 and T4. Including a course explicitly on Critical Pedagogy for all students may also prove instrumental. Anecdotally, one participant who attended the defense session for this master's thesis spoke animatedly afterwards about conscientization and how this concept gave her a way of talking theoretically about her personal struggles towards action (praxis).

## 5.6 Implications for Positionality of the Researcher Outside of K-12 Contexts

This researcher, in turn, is also transforming. Over the course of this research project, I was able to observe, participate in, and reflect on what it means to do Participatory Action Research (PAR). I feel that I am coming to a better understanding of the ways in which teachers and language instructors both inside and outside the K-12 system can speak with, and to, university and other institution-based researchers and project organizers. What I had seen as hurdles – my non-Indigenusness, my lack of being situated in the K-12 system, my outsidership – are in fact simply ways in which I am positioned in relation to the larger landscape of language and culture revitalization efforts in Alaska. Further research might take the shape of examining how Indigenous/non-Indigenous relationships are navigated between UAF entities (e.g., Applied Linguistics faculty, Alaska Native Language Archive staff) and non-school-affiliated language institutions (e.g., Dinjii Zhuh K'yaa in Fort Yukon, Alutiiq language initiatives such as Alutiiq Language Club, Eyak Language Project and summer immersion camp). What positionality-sensitive methodologies such as PAR are being or could be used to contribute positive momentum in these types of collaborative Alaskan projects, and to effect change more broadly across the state?

## Appendix A: IRB Exemption



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### Institutional Review Board

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July 8, 2013

To: Patrick Marlow  
Principal Investigator

From: University of Alaska Fairbanks IRB

Re: [483762-2] Non-Alaska Native teachers in Alaska Native Education Contexts: Self-Perception, Positioning, and Possibilities

Thank you for submitting the Amendment/Modification referenced below. The submission was handled by Exempt Review. The Office of Research Integrity has determined that the proposed research qualifies for exemption from the requirements of 45 CFR 46. This exemption does not waive the researchers' responsibility to adhere to basic ethical principles for the responsible conduct of research and discipline specific professional standards.

Title:	Non-Alaska Native teachers in Alaska Native Education Contexts: Self-Perception, Positioning, and Possibilities
Received:	July 8, 2013
Exemption Category:	2
Effective Date:	July 8, 2013

This action is included on the August 7, 2013 IRB Agenda.

*Prior to making substantive changes to the scope of research, research tools, or personnel involved on the project, please contact the Office of Research Integrity to determine whether or not additional review is required. Additional review is not required for small editorial changes to improve the clarity or readability of the research tools or other documents.*



## Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

**IRB#** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date Approved:** \_\_\_\_\_

You are being asked to be a part of a study. I am trying to understand how non-Alaska Native teachers position themselves as teachers in rural schools in Alaska. This can be as an insider, outsider, combination of the two, or something altogether different.

I would like to learn about three things. One is if or how non-Alaska Native teachers think about their own role in the rural Alaska classroom. Another is if or how Alaska Native teachers think about non-Alaska native teachers' role in the rural Alaska classroom. The last is what possibilities you think there are for non-Alaska Native teachers who want to help teach or support Indigenous content and Indigenous ways of learning in their classrooms.

The study will include focus group discussions, follow-up interviews with any focus group participants who are interested, and my own notes about what I observe inside and outside the classroom during the CALL summer session 2013. I will also look at some of the papers students hand in for their classwork during the summer session. I will show you the transcript of the focus group you participate in and give you a chance to tell me not to use some or all of the parts concerning you. Later, I will show you how I am using these parts of the transcript in my thesis, and you can tell me not to use some or all of it. I will do the same thing (transcript check, thesis check) with data from interviews.

### **Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:**

If any of my focus group or interview questions are too personal or upsetting in any way, you should not answer. You can redirect our discussion at any time. If you don't want me to include my observations of certain conversations we have or interactions I see, you can tell me not to include this data at any point after the interactions or observations happen. You may stop participating in the study at any time. There is no penalty for withdrawing from the study. To withdraw, simply tell me you want to quit the study. If you withdraw from the study, no data relating to you will be used in the study.

### **Confidentiality:**

The data from this study could be used in reports, presentations, or publications. Your name (or the name of your school, etc.) will not be used in any reports or publications unless you specifically request that your name be used.

### **Voluntary nature of the study:**

Your decision to take part in the study is voluntary. You are free to change your mind at any time. There will be no penalty for changing your mind. If you withdraw from the study, nothing you said will be used in any materials resulting from this study. Any interviews or similar data will be destroyed.

**Uses of the information:**

The data from this study will be used for a Masters Thesis. The data might also be used in publications (conferences, journals). You will have a chance to read anything I write before it is published. You have the right to withdraw anything you want before it is published.

**Questions:**

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask me. If you have any questions later, please contact me at your convenience:

Kelly Kealy  
kkealy@alaska.edu  
(732) 687-9220

You can also contact the members of my thesis committee with any questions or concerns:

Patrick Marlow  
Committee Chair  
(907) 474-7446  
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If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, please contact the Research Coordinator in the Office of Research Integrity at 474-7800 (Fairbanks area) or 1-866-876-7800 (outside the Fairbanks area) or [fyirb@uaf.edu](mailto:fyirb@uaf.edu).

**Statement of Consent:**

I understand the procedures described above. my questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study to the extent noted below. I have been provided a copy of this form.

My information can be used for (please check all that apply):

\_\_\_\_\_ Master's Thesis

\_\_\_\_\_ Publications and/or conference presentations

I permit my information to be collected using the following data collection methods (please check all that apply):

\_\_\_\_\_ Audio recording

\_\_\_\_\_ Video recording

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name (Research Participant)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name (Obtaining Consent)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix C: Focus Group Protocol

### **Description:**

This is a conversation around topics initially posed by the faculty co-researchers. However, all participants shape the direction and content of the pursuing conversation. The researcher(s) may ask follow up questions, and participants can also nominate topics.

### **Script:**

We would like to ask you to have a conversation with us around topics relevant to your teaching.

We have a couple of topics we would like to discuss relating to local knowledge and ways of knowing, but we are hoping that this will be an organic conversation. If you have topics you would like to bring up, please feel free to do so. You may choose to participate as much of little as you wish. We would like to record the session. Will that be ok? You may at any time ask that the recorder will be turned off. Do you have any questions? Are you ready to begin?

### **Topics**

Introduce yourself. Tell us where/who you teach? Tell us something that is important to you (personal, professional, academic, etc.)

What are some of the challenges that you see in your classroom/school (or other work/language teaching context)?

How would you define local knowledge/local ways of knowing?

Is local knowledge incorporated in the school? If so, how? If not, why not?

Do you incorporate it in your classroom or work context? If so, how? If not, why not?

If you are a non-Native teacher working in an Alaska Native context, what was it like for you when you first started teaching there? What is it like now?

If you are an Alaska Native teacher, what was it like when you first started teaching? What is it like now?

Anyone want to add anything else to the discussion





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