Navajo Nation in Crisis: Analysis on the Extreme Loss of
Navajo Language Use Amongst Youth

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine Navajo language proficiency among children in schools on the Navajo Nation and gain the opinions of students, parents, grandparents, and educators about the use of Navajo language at school and home. In the school district selected for this study, the students’ performance on the Navajo Language Proficient Assessment provided data from which to assess the extent there has been a loss of Navajo language usage. Third grade assessment data indicated 84% of students falling into the categories of novice and intermediate levels in SY 2004-2005 and accumulated to 94% by SY 2008-2009, a 10% in five years. In the proficient level the data indicated 16% in SY 2004-2005 and 6% by SY 2008-2009, a 10% decline in five years. A mere 2% showed for SY 2005-2006 in the advanced level. Seventh grade assessment data indicated 92% of students falling into the categories of novice and intermediate levels in SY 2004-2005 and increased to 94% by SY 2008-2009, a 2% increase in five years. In the proficient level the data indicated 8% in SY 2004-2005 and 6% by SY 2008-2009, a 2% decline in five years. There were no students at the advanced level throughout the five years. Eleventh grade assessment data indicated 78% of students falling into the categories of novice and intermediate levels in SY 2004-2005 and decreased to 38% by SY 2008-2009, a 40% decrease in five years. In the proficient level the data indicated 18% in SY 2004-2005 and 24% by SY 2008-2009, a 6% increase in five years. A mere 4% showed for SY 2004-2005 but the percentage was at zero from SY 2005-2009. The language use survey provided data to assess the perceptions of Navajo language usage at school and home. The supporting evidence from the language survey that was administrated to 100 Navajo individuals on their perceptions of the Navajo language use
indicated a majority of our people perceive our Navajo language is of high importance and we need to speak it to preserve it for our future generations.
To

My Dine’ People

My whole dissertation is dedicated to my Dine’ People,
to bring about awareness of our Navajo language loss
among our K through 12th grade students.

May we embark as to how we can revitalize our
Navajo language for our younger generation and generations to come.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

I was born and raised on the Navajo Reservation. I am a Bureau of Indian Affair’s (BIA) product as a student through all my years of schooling and lived in the boarding school dormitory all those years. My primary language had been Navajo all my life until I got to school where the English language was introduced to me. Personally, I had a hard time understanding and speaking English during my early years in school. Because of constant reminders from the BIA staff to “speak English” or receive physical punishment for speaking Navajo, I was able to learn English in a couple of years. The concept of “speak Navajo-only concept” ended somewhere around my sixth grade year. From then on I considered myself a bilingual speaking person. In high school we spoke our Navajo language all the time, and we responded in English to questions only when in the classroom. Today, my thought process (abstract thinking) is still in Navajo and I translate my thoughts into English. Although I am a fluent speaker of my Navajo language, I have a difficult time writing or reading in Navajo; something I aspire to accomplish.

The preservation of the Navajo culture and language has been a paramount challenge for the Diné’ People for the past century beginning with the dominance of the Anglo/Western society (Holm & Holm, 1995). The English-only policies advocated by the United States Government for the last four decades have adversely affected the speaking and survival of the Navajo language (Crawford, 1996). Research studies have focused on Native American’s loss of culture, language, and land mass, but there has been no agreement as to solutions to these losses (Crawford, 1996; Krauss, 1995; Redish, 2001). Many Navajo believe that the Navajo language is strong and viable among our
present-day grandparents; however, they are now a minority of the Navajo people. Most Navajo school-aged children no longer speak or communicate in their Navajo language.

Language is a form of communication for all people living in the world with a primary language in which they communicate in order to function within their society. This primary language is a part of their culture and heritage. Although cultural groups have survived global wars, they were considered conquered societies and became the oppressed people of that country. In the process, they lost their culture and language. Sometimes a “cultural cleansing” took place in which people were forced to accept the dominant society’s culture, including their language. The plight of indigenous people in the world as to their true habitat (land), culture, language, and heritage have been distorted or erased from the past by the dominant society. Some indigenous groups have gone through the acculturation process whereas others have perished. In the United States there is over a million indigenous people still in existence (Crawford, 1998), but most have been assimilated into the mainstream of Western society so that they are no longer considered as distinct indigenous tribes or people.

The Navajo (Diné) people have a strong culture and language that has been preserved by our forefathers for hundreds of years. However, we have arrived at a crisis today; our youth are no longer speaking the Navajo language. A reservation-wide study of Navajo Head Start programs found that teachers estimated that about 54% of preschoolers spoke English only, 18% spoke Navajo only, and 28% were bilingual (Platero, 1992).
Statement of the Problem

In general, the loss of an indigenous language is a global issue, acknowledged by modern-day anthropologists, ethnologists, and linguists. Redish (2001) made us aware that in the United States there are 800 or more Amerindian languages of which 500 are endangered. Even though Krauss (1995) estimated that 175 indigenous languages are still spoken in the United States, he classified 155 of these—89% of the total—as declining. Krauss reported that young Native Americans grow up speaking only English, learning, at best, a few words of their ancestral tongue. Bilingual teachers across the Navajo Nation have expressed concerns that the Navajo people are unaware and unconcerned about the importance of the maintenance of the Navajo language. Present-day parents have accustomed themselves to speaking English all the time in their workplace, in public, and at home so that the emphasis of speaking Navajo is not a priority. This is a way of life for the Navajo people now. The Diné people are more concerned about the economic status, social progress, and academic achievements than making it a priority to speak the Navajo language. Very few people, such as concerned parents and bilingual educators, have expressed concern that Navajo youths are not interested or have no knowledge of speaking or communicating in their Navajo language.

School district bilingual teachers express great concern about students’ poor scores on the annual Navajo Language Proficient Assessment test; while the mass media, newspapers, and educational conferences voice great concern as to the loss of language among Native peoples, substantiated by research conducted by Crawford (1996) and Benally and Viri (2005).
Historically, present-day parents and grandparents have gone through the Bureau of Indian (BIA) acculturation or domestication process where they were restricted from speaking their Native tongue (Crawford, 1996). A very strict punishment was imposed if caught speaking Navajo. Present-day grandparents can attest to this era as the beginning of the loss of speaking their own Navajo language, which eventually was spoken only in the home. At school, more emphasis was on academic accomplishments through English usage in the classroom and in dormitories in the boarding schools.

In the last decade there has been a downward trend of Navajo language usage among Navajo school-aged children due to No Child Left Behind (NCLB) laws and regulations. The enforcement of high academic achievement for all students in English by the NCLB Act contributed to the loss of Native culture and language.

Crawford (1996) conducted a study of several southwestern tribes, including the Navajo, showing that the educational policies of the U.S. government’s Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) eroded the use of the spoken language of the Native tribes. It is not too late to save our Navajo language because our elderly (minority) are still fluent speakers in Navajo. But to carry on a conversation with their family members is very difficult due to their children and grandchildren not speaking fluent Navajo. Some grandparents resort to speaking English in order to communicate with their family members.

In actuality, the Navajo people have the responsibility of initiating innovative strategies for revitalizing the Navajo language among our younger generation. As stated by Benally and Viri (2005), it is time for professional educators and leaders, who have the knowledge, personal experiences, and innovativeness, to take on the challenge of
using or creating an effective model to revitalize the Navajo language among the school-aged children.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this study was to examine Navajo language proficiency among children in schools on the Navajo Nation and gain the opinions of students, parents, grandparents, and educators about the use of Navajo language at school and home. In the school district selected for this study, the students’ performance on the Navajo Language Proficient Assessment provided data from which to assess the extent there has been a loss of Navajo language usage. The language use survey provided data to assess the perceptions of Navajo language usage at school and home.

**Research Questions**

The research questions that guided this study were as follows:

1. What trends have occurred on the results of the Navajo Language Proficiency Assessment administered over five years to school-aged children on the Navajo Nation?

   Subquestion 1: Did results vary by students’ grade level?

   Subquestion 2: Did results vary by year the test was administered?

2. What are students’, parents’, grandparents’, and educators’ opinions about the use of the Navajo language at home and at school?

   Subquestion 1: Did results vary by each of the groups surveyed?

3. To what extent is performance on the language assessment instrument explained by survey responses?
Significance of the Study

It is hoped that this study can bring about awareness and understanding among the Navajo people that the school-aged children are on the verge of losing their Navajo language. Our Navajo citizens need to take appropriate actions to bring the Navajo language back into the midst of Navajo society as the primary language of the Diné’ people.

Limitations

1. The retrieval of the educational test data from Central Consolidated School District’s Navajo Language Proficiency Assessment included only grade levels 3, 7, and 11 for the past five years (from SY 2004 through 2009), or 50 randomly selected students from each grade level.

2. Students surveyed in this study included only 25 3rd through 12th grade students attending schools in the Northern agency of the Navajo Nation.

3. Adults surveyed in this study included 25 parents, 25 grandparents, and 25 educators (administrators and teachers) within the Northern agency of the Navajo Nation.

Assumptions

1. When asked about indigenous language, culture is always included; it is interconnected and interwoven as a whole.

2. Responses received from the survey participants accurately reflected their personal and professional opinions.

3. The survey participants in this study answered all of the survey questions openly and honestly.
Definition of Terms

*Dead or extinct language:* a language which has no Native speakers, people who grew up speaking the language as a child.

*Moribund language:* a language which has no Native speakers in the youngest generation.

*Endangered or imperiled language:* a language which has very few Native speakers.

*Diné:* the Navajo people.

*Indigenous Indians:* Natives of the region or country.

*Amerindians:* Native Indians of the United States.

*Mother tongue or Native tongue:* primary language of the Native people.

Organization of the Study

The remaining chapters include Chapter 2, a review of the related literature on Indigenous language loss, particularly the Navajo people. Chapter 3 describes the research design and methodology of the study, the assessment instrument utilized to gather the educational data, the procedures followed, determination of the data sample selected for interpretation and analysis of the study, and an in-depth analysis of the educational data. A discussion of the findings is presented in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 contains the summary, conclusions, implications, of the study, ending with recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

There are Indigenous people living all over the world—Indigenous people, communities, and nations who claim a historical continuity and cultural affinity with societies endemic to their original territories, developed prior to the advances of invading conquerors. These societies, therefore, consider themselves distinct from societies of the majority culture(s) who have assumed cultural sovereignty. Precise estimates for the total population of the world’s Indigenous peoples are very difficult to compile, given the difficulties in identification and the variances and inadequacies of available census data.

Sources range from 300 million to 350 million at the start of the 21st century. This would equate to fewer than 6% of the total world population of about 7 billion people (Campbell, 1997). The loss of language long associated with a culture cannot be taken and replaced without harmful effects.

Statistics on Indigenous Language Loss

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2009) estimated in its leading publication, State of the World’s Indigenous Peoples, that we number around 370 million peoples worldwide, but account for only 6% of the world’s population. Indigenous peoples can be found throughout Africa, the Arctic, Asia, Europe, the Pacific, Central America, North America, and South America. History has revealed that the Aboriginal peoples of NSW Australia were among the very first to experience enforced suffocation of their languages and cultural praxis. This came about not simply because of imposed assimilation as the land was taken out from under them, but also
came about through untimely death due to the ravages and aftereffects of diseases. It was predicted

that up to 90 per cent of the world’s languages are likely to become extinct or threatened with extinction by the end of the century. Some 7,000 languages today, it is estimated that more than 4,000 are spoken by indigenous peoples. This statistic illustrates the grave danger faced by indigenous peoples. (United Nations Department of Economic & Social Affairs, 2009)

Williams (2011), a La Perouse Aboriginal of New South Wales (NSW) addressed the question of “who we are?” Williams emphasized that the most complete and reliable statistical data that provide a numerical account of our Indigenous populations appears to come from Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United States of America.

The statistical data on the Indigenous population in the USA is at 2,447,989 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006); Canada at 1,172,790 (Statistics Canada, 2006, section titled Aboriginal people surpass one-million mark, para. 1); New Zealand at 565,329 (Statistics New Zealand, 2006 section titled census, para. 1); and Australia at 517,200 (Australia Bureau of Statistics, 2006, section titled Estimated Resident Population, para. 2). Williams further iterated as Indigenous people of these nations, we have suffered “the full impact of foreign colonial domination and the subsequent hegemonic force of cultural subjugation” (p. 6, para. 1).

Linguists predict that the 6,000 or so languages currently spoken in the world will be reduced to at least 50% within the next century and some put the figure as high as 90% (Krauss, 1992, p. 7). Crystal (2000) speculated that the reduction will be to one language—English—by around 2100 AD.

McConvell and Thieberger's (2001) research study illustrated a similar view to that of Williams (2011), who explained that countries settled by Europeans were in large
numbers, like Australia; however, typically the Indigenous languages have been embattled from the beginning of colonization and are in great danger of disappearing altogether within the next century. The dominant culture of such nations typically does not value multilingualism in any form, and in particular the continued use of ancient Indigenous languages is seen as a barrier to progress (Dorian, 1998; Wurm, 1996).

The dominant languages used by the majority in such countries are economically and culturally powerful magnets that attract the remaining Indigenous speakers of other minority languages. We are not speaking here of a few languages spoken by large numbers of people but very many languages spoken by small numbers of people, often in very remote areas of Australia. McConvell and Thieberger (2001) did a more in-depth analysis of the decline in the percentage of speakers of Indigenous languages among the Indigenous populations in New Zealand, Canada, North America, and Australia. Overall, the decline in percentages of Indigenous language speakers has been sharp over the last half century in all four countries (New Zealand, Canada, the USA, and Australia).

**Indigenous Language Loss in New Zealand**

In New Zealand the census inquires as to which language a person uses to engage in conversations about everyday things. Of the Maori, 24.7% reported being able to carry on a conversation in the Maori language (Statistics New Zealand [SNZ], 1997).

**Indigenous Language Loss in Canada**

There was a leveling off and even a slight rise in Canada’s figure during the 1980s. This was attributed to more positive evaluations by the speakers themselves of their own traditional languages. In the 1990s, however, the decline in Canada seems to have resumed. The Canadian census inquires as to both the language spoken at home and
the ability to carry on a conversation. Aboriginal Canadians spoke an Aboriginal language at home (15.0% and 13.3% respectively). Aboriginal Canadians could carry on a conversation in an Aboriginal language (29.3% and 24.7% respectively; Statistics Canada, 1998). The Canadian figure for *speaks* Indigenous language at home for 1996 was 15%, 11% lower than the Mother tongue figure and much closer to the Australian home language figure.

A case is found in Canada where only 18% of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis peoples spoke their mother tongues, whereas an overwhelming 73% claimed English as their first language, and another 8% in French (Raining Bird, 2011). Kinkade (1991, p. 158) estimated that over 60 languages were originally spoken in Canada; that at least eight were extinct as of 1990 (approximately 13%); and less than 50% of the remaining languages are likely to survive for the following 50 years (1990 to 2040). Thirteen languages of the original 60 (21%) are judged *near extinct* and 23 (38%) *endangered*; the criterion for the latter being that they have few speakers under 50 years and almost no children are learning them. Norris (1998) revised the estimate as to the number of Indigenous languages likely to survive in Canada down to three using the 1996 census data.

**Indigenous Language Loss In the United States of America**

Summary figures for the United States suggested a percentage of around 11.3% for home language speakers of Indigenous languages as to the American Indian population in 1990. Although the home language indicator is comparable to the Australian indicator (measured at 14% in 1991), the figure for the total population is based on the “top 25 Indian tribes in the U.S.” and a more realistic figure may be around
10%. For North America as a whole, it is difficult because of the turbulent early history of colonization and massive mortality due to introduced diseases to the number of peoples originally speaking Indigenous languages, but Bright (1994) and Mithun (1999, p. 1) estimated it at around 300, which is quite comparable to the original number of Australian languages.

In North America, Chafe (1962) counted 211 languages as still living in the USA in 1960; of these only 89 (42%) had speakers of all ages, so that we might be justified in placing most of the other 58% in the categories of endangered and/or near extinct as defined by Kinkade (1991, p. 158). Thirty years later Zepeda and Hill (1991, p. 136) estimated that 51 (approximately 24%) of the 211 languages alive in the USA in 1960 have disappeared, and that the number in the U.S. may be below 150. Campbell (1997, p. 16) predicted that 80% of the North American languages spoken at the turn of this century “will die in this generation.” By 2040, it is predicted that approximately 20 to 30 Indigenous languages in North America will remain as a spoken Indigenous language.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, of the 5.2 million people counted as Natives in 2010, nearly 2.3 million reported being Native in combination with one or more of the six other race categories. Those who added Black, White, or Both as a personal identifier made up 84% of the multi-racial group. The increase in the multi-racial group from 1.6 million in 2000 to nearly 2.3 million in 2010 was higher than that of those who reported being solely of Native descent. The Navajo Nation, whose reservation stretches into New Mexico, Utah, and Arizona, had the highest proportion of people who identified themselves as Native and nothing else at 86% of its 332,000 population (U.S. Census, 2010). The Navajo Nation comes in second as to its size in
population size, which is behind the Cherokee’s 819,000 population, 65% of whom identify with another race. Laura Redish (2010) related that Amerindian languages were deliberately destroyed, particularly in North America.

Crawford (1996), writing about bilingual education in the mid-1980s, wrote that language loss was not an issue or concern among tribes such as the Navajo, Hualapai, Crow, and Tohono O’odham, which had large populations of tribal members speaking their Native languages. But as of 1990s educators noted a drastic decline in Native language usage among the native children of the above mention tribes. Crawford (1986) observed and noticed the encroachment of these Western ways of thinking and the values causing language shifts in the various communities of the four reservations he visited:

**The Navajo Nation.** In the recent past, the Navajo people had less concern about their language loss because they had a large population speaking their native language, but Holm (personal communication, 1994) found that language loss among Navajos began to accelerate in his 1970s and 1980s. The loss was occurring among children whose parents were students in the BIA school system in the 1950s and 1960s; these parents did not want their children to experience the consequences of not being fluent in English in order to survive competitively in today’s Western society.

**The Yaqui Experience in the United States.** The struggle over Indian lands and the plight of freedom for the Yaquis Indians brought on national attention (Hatfield, 1988). A brief history of the Yaquis living in Mexico was that of hardship and suffering under the Mexican Government since the 1800s. From 1825 to 1902, the Yaqui Nation was waging war on the government almost continuously; major Mexican assaults against the Yaquis occurred from 1885 through 1901. Because of prosecution and deportation to
Yucatan, the Yaquis begin crossing the border into the United States as early as 1887 (Trujillo, 1997) into the southern parts of the United States, particularly Arizona (Senate, 1994). Major occurrences of escaping into the United States were during the years 1900 to 1910. By 1910, the Yaquis were almost eliminated from their homeland.

In addition, during the 1950s, Yaquis left the Sonora area because of unemployment and migrated into Arizona. They lived in barrios or work camps so as not to assimilate into dominant society (Spicer, 1961). In essence, they were people with no legal status, who were fearful of being identified as Yaqui and sent back to Sonora. They operated primarily within their own cultural remnant because of perceived threats of deportation. Because of their fears, the Yaqui suppressed their identity, language, and religious practices. Historically they were considered illegal immigrants until 1970s when the U.S. Government granted them tribal recognition and a reservation near Tucson, Arizona, giving them political asylum and religious freedom regardless of political or social status.

**Pasqua Yaqui Indians.** Today, the dominant language (roughly 70%) for the Arizona Yaqui is Spanish, spoken in the greater majority of Yaqui homes. The Yaqui language is spoken approximately 20% of the time, usually by older family members, with the remainder speaking English. Most also speak a regional Spanish dialect, which has become steadily dominant. However, Yaqui children used to learn Spanish as their first language in their homes, but the trend today is that more children are learning English as their first language. It is very common that parents speak to their children in Spanish and their children respond in English.
According to a census conducted by Felipe Molina, a Yaqui writer and lexicographer, only 8% of the 8,500 tribal members are fluent speakers of their native language. Surprisingly, there were no children who spoke their native language. The youngest Yoema speaker was 18 years old. The Yaqui families still move back and forth into Sonora, Mexico, where they have relatives who speak fluent Yoema. This provides an opportunity for the younger generation to learn their Yoema language. The Tucson School District also organized cultural exchange programs for the Pasqua Yaquis students and their relatives in Mexico. Historically they were considered illegal immigrants until 1970s when the U.S. Government granted them tribal recognition and a reservation near Tucson, Arizona. Today, the Yaquis have assimilated into the Anglo society just like their counterparts, the Hispanics in Tucson and Phoenix, Arizona.

The Hualapai Tribe. The Hualapai Tribe’s native language is also spoken by kindergartners entering school. However, many of the present-day parents are no longer fluent in Hualapai; consequently, as compared to 95% in the mid-1970s, the percentages have gone down to 50 to 60% who now speak Hualapai fluently. On a positive side, community-wide, Hualapai is the dominant language among the elderly members, which creates a positive effect in that it provides Hualapai language exposure to the children at home.

There are contributing factors as to the language shift to the small population of the 1,500 tribal members. Dialect differences in Hualapai create communication problems because people are loyal to their native dialect. Problems include criticism and ridicule about each others’ linguistic errors and family or extended family movement. Problems also include a dispersing population due to HUD housing arrangement; the
school on the reservation is only up to eight grade; and the high school is 60 miles one-way in Kingman, Arizona where no bilingual programs are provided.

**Mississippi Band of Choctaw.** Nearly 43,000 of the Choctaw Nation live in southeastern Oklahoma. The Mississippi Band of Choctaw has a population of 5,500 tribal members, who have a high retention of their native language where 90% of their children not only speak the Choctaw language fluently, but are also considered fluent English speakers. The Mississippi Choctaw are recognized for their stable bilingualism, in which their native language is an everyday life function. English is used to maintain outside communication and business management.

Crawford noted that this was the only reservation he visited where he encountered groups of teenagers carrying on conversations in their native language without any cajoling from any adults. How they arrived at 90% percent of their students speaking their native language has been questioned; social observers believe the key factor has been social isolation.

Another insight is the people have developed a strong ethic of self-reliance and self-isolation. The concept of assimilation has not been an option to them; their primary goal is the preservation of their native language and that English usage is more for business management. The tide may be changing because in the last 15 years the Mississippi Choctaw Tribe has ventured more into economic sectors, such as factories, the casino, commercial businesses, and construction ventures. The process involves outsiders coming on to their reservation for jobs; communication with advisors, educators, and administrators of tribal enterprises requires English language usage. The Choctaw elderly are very conscious of immediate and future changes within their
Indigenous Language Loss in Australia

There has been a severe decline in the numbers of Indigenous languages spoken in Australia since White settlement, and that decline has been accelerating. Dixon (1980, p. 18) estimated that in 1980 roughly 25% of the original languages were extinct; 50% threatened with extinction; and 25% relatively healthy. In 1990, Schmidt (1990, p. 2) estimated that 64% were either extinct or had only a few elderly speakers left; 28% severely threatened; and only 8% relatively healthy. Schmidt (1990, p. 8) also gave a total figure of 90 as surviving (36%; 1990, p. 8), which evidently did not include languages with just a few elderly speakers. We might add 35 languages of the latter kind, bringing the number of surviving languages including the near-extinct to about 120 or 50% of the original number; but over the period of 1990-2000 many of the last speakers would have died.

McConvell in 1991 estimated that over 50% of Australian Indigenous languages would no longer be spoken in 2000, and this has been borne out. An 8% or greater stated in the 1996 census that they know an Indigenous language rather than saying they spoke it at home. Of the 20 languages categorized in 1990 as strong, three should now be regarded as endangered.

Williams quoted Marika (1999) in his testimony before the Senate Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affair in 1999 that

the language of our old people is esoteric. It defines the land where they come from. It has boundaries. It has boundaries out in sea also—the sea and the land; there is nothing different about that. I would like to tell you that the land has
multi-layers of literacy for Yolngu. It is text. It is what these old people sing and
dance. It is what they educate our children about. . . land and language go hand
in hand. It is all linked together, because without language . . . cannot define our
land.

Dr. Marika went on to say that to the Aboriginal people language is much more
than just words. It is a direct link to land and country. It holds traditional songs and
stories. It is about spirituality and deep meaning, and it reflects unique cultural concepts
and ways of looking at the world.

New South Wales population of 517,200 (Australia Bureau of Statistics, 2006,
section titled Estimated Resident Population, para. 2) has approximately 52,000 speaking
their Native language:

Those indigenous people who speak an Indigenous language at home, almost
three quarter (74%) live in Very Remote Australia, with 14% living in Remote
Australia. Only 4% of Indigenous people who speak an Indigenous language live
in Major Cities. Over half (56%) of all Indigenous language speakers live in the
Northern Territory where 59% of the Indigenous population speak an Australian
Indigenous Language.

In his annual report, former Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) Social
Justice Commissioner Tom Calma (2009) reported that only 18 Indigenous languages in
Australia are known to be spoken fully by all generations, and that only 100 languages
exist in one form or another, with most being considered endangered. If these statistics
are bit bewildering enough, Calma goes on to corroborate that

the loss of languages in Australia has received international attention. A
significant international study on language endangerment has singled out
Australia as a place where languages are disappearing at a faster rate than
anywhere else in the world. (2009, Context, p. 58)
Native Language Revitalization Efforts

National Studies on language learning and educational achievement indicate a positive correlation: the more language learning the higher the academic achievement. Native American language immersion schools and projects are the focus of this study (Pease-Pretty On Top, 2003). Language immersion positively impacts educational achievement (McCarty, 1993). “Students of foreign languages score statistically higher on standardized test conducted in English” (Marcos, 2007, Section titled What Are the Benefits of Knowing a Second Language? para. 2). The Northwest Regional Laboratory (1990), a regional agency of the U.S. Dept. of Education, related that learning more than one language enhances cognitive development, social growth, and promotes understanding among diverse people and cultures. Dr. Kenji Hakuta (2001), a nationally known language expert, testified before the National Commission on Civil Rights in 2001 that when the school values and utilizes students’ native language in the curriculum, there is increased student self-esteem, less anxiety, and greater self-efficacy.

Through desperate efforts by our concerned educators, parents, linguists, and cultural and tribal leaders, Native Americans are on a quest to establish language immersion programs, especially designed by individual tribes. It has been recognized that Native language immersion schools have promoted remarkable benefits, such as students’ high academic achievements and basic language knowledge skills that are acquired in a short period of time through high levels of interest and motivation. A knowledge-base on Native culture and language contributes to family strength and promotes positive mentality for college-bound students (Pease-Pretty on Top, 2003).
Pease-Pretty on Top (2003, p. 9) noted in her study’s Executive Summary that there are five compelling reasons for language immersion: (a) realization of our Native language loss and making commitment to the revitalization of our Native language; (b) the immersion programs will enable our Native American children to make academic progress in schools; (c) the emphasis and motivation of our Native language preservation or revitalization efforts will strengthen and rebuild the positive cultural environment within our Native communities; (d) culture and language teaching and participation positively correlate with Native student retention rates; and (e) national awareness on the loss of indigenous language world-wide and how it affects the Native family and their unique culture.

Pease-Pretty On Top (2003) also recognized some key factors motivating Native language immersion:

1. Citing Crawford (1994), there have been severe losses in Native language fluency. Of the 155 indigenous languages still being spoken in the United States, 135 of these are spoken only by the elders. Of the 20 remaining languages, though still spoken, survival is dubious.

2. According to McCarty (1993, p. 187), educational achievement is positively impacted by language immersion. According to Marcos (2001), nationally, students who took foreign languages for four years statistically scored higher on standardized tests, including the SAT.

3. According to Crawford (1994, p. 7), there needs to be a connection within the greater Native community of language preservation and a revitalization of culture and
language. Language loss results in a people who are dispossessed and disempowered; it also results in a people who are in need of their cultural resources to literally survive.

4. According to Heavyrunner (2001, p. 5), student retention is the result of students being positively affected by Native culture and language teaching and learning, which positively correlate with student graduation.

5. According to Mistaken Chief (1999, pp. 26-28), learning the “tough struggle to maintain the integrity of our way of life” means that language immersion is a strategic counteraction to the demoralizing effects of the American colonization of Native peoples.

The dedication and work requires knowing the tribal language and perseverance beyond all measures. Pease-Pretty On Top (2003) quoted the principles of Native American language immersion as a primary responsibility of our Native people; tribal government involvement on the preservation/revitalization of our Native languages; utilizing our own elderly in our Native language teaching and learning; and the design of immersion programs according to our cultural setting and identity.

Pease-Pretty On Top (2003) emphasized that the Native American language immersion activity in the United States today is recent, innovative, and is remarkably reflective of the respective Native identity of the Native people. Pease-Pretty On Top did her research on 50 tribal locations as to Native language immersion projects that serve Native adults and children. Several are listed and described as follows:

The Northern Cheyenne

The Northern Cheyenne of southwestern Montana hold their summer language immersion camp in the Wolf Teeth Mountains. The student populations consist of ages 7 through 20 years old. The process of learning the Northern Cheyenne language rests with
intervention teams who are composed of educators, parents, elders, and sponsors who have a planning session for two weeks prior to a summer language immersion camp for their students. The students stay for two weeks and live in teepees with their instructor in a complete Native cultural environment. During the language immersion camp, learning groups are established with a ratio of approximately 5:1 with their educator.

All the learning groups meet concurrently, led by the educator who shares his or her childhood experiences. Each day they implement their cultural activities, such as (a) going on hikes or nature walks to learn about the flora and fauna near the encampment, (b) making miniature rawhide shields, (c) having circle talks on family relationships, and (d) doing bead work. Everyone at the language immersion camp becomes involved in buffalo butchering, which involves learning about the buffalo anatomy, how to cut and dry buffalo meat, construct drying scaffolds, and plan, prepare, and serve a traditional feast to elders and guests.

The Northern Cheyenne language is the topic of all the discussions within the cultural activities. Students are encouraged to listen and respond to question-and-answer sessions in the Native language. Attending Cheyenne scholars instruct on tribal history and culture, which involves verbal participation in the Native language development five to seven hours every day.

The Northern Cheyenne language immersion camp provides highly intensive language instruction in which learning groups gather and build positive relationships among the students and educators. The camp assemblies, field experiences, and all related activities contribute to a rich language immersion environment. Overall, the
language immersion camp emphasizes full communication in their Native language throughout the two-week language camp.

**Fond du Lac Community and Tribal College of Cloquet, Minnesota and Lac Courte Orielles Ojibwa Community College**

Fond du Lac Community and Tribal College of Cloquet implemented a teacher training program on the Ojibway culture and language. Their objective is to enroll 25 tribal members into a cultural teaching program where those teachers and trainees (college students) become immersed in the Ojibway culture, language, and history. During the academic year and winter term, the trainees are involved in coursework on the Ojibway language and culture, which is applied during the summer language immersion camps.

At the end of each academic season, the trainees participate in a one-week summer immersion language camp, which directs them to communicate as much as possible in the Ojibway language, 24 hours a day for 7 days. The first year of the Ojibway language immersion camp the students learn mostly vocabulary lists, numbers, and names of things. The second year, the trainees use less English and more Ojibway language; trainees do presentations in the Ojibway language.

The increase of fluency in Ojibway language was observable and witnessed by sponsors who contributed its success to the Ojibways’ rich cultural environment. The sponsors observed confidence in the trainees when they did their presentations in the Ojibway language and noticed the intensity and enthusiasm of the trainees. Observers observed and indicated that each immersion language camp or retreat had the trainees communicating less in English and more in the Ojibway language.
In 1998, Lac Courte Orielles Ojibwa Community College opened a pre-school for tribal children, an Ojibwa language immersion school. One obstacle they encountered was finding a fluent Ojibway instructor or speakers to spearhead the immersion program. The process of starting the immersion pre-school took a little time because they had to recruit a fluent Ojibwa instructor from other neighboring Ojibwa tribes. Classroom instruction and field study are exclusively in the Ojibwa language; full immersion allows the students to learn their Ojibwa language right away. The success of the Ojibwa language immersion project can be attributed to the elders of the community who provide assistance in the classroom by speaking the Ojibwa language to the students and by promoting cultural emphasis. The most critical elements are the positive support of the parental involvement, the elders’ commitment of contributing their knowledge of the Ojibwa language, and the students’ interest and enthusiasm to learn their Ojibway language.

**Three Affiliated Tribes of North Dakota**

The three affiliated tribes of North Dakota established a mentor/mentee project to address the revitalization of their Hiatsa, Mandan, and Arikara languages. There are five apprentices for each language for a total of 15 enrollees. These fifteen apprentices are engaged in the tribal language, culture coursework, and tribal studies program at the associate of arts level. The completion of their tribal language and culture coursework enables them to become the master teacher in their Native language at their local schools.

The mentor program has several positive advantages for language learning: (a) It is a career opportunity for the trainees to become cultural and language specialists in their community, and in the process serve in that capacity; (b) being in the capacity as a Native
language instructor or cultural advisor, they become involved with their Mandan, Arikara, or Hidatsa language on a daily basis with their students and become influential within their community to be in the forefront of promoting their Native language; (c) the tribal leaders and school administrators establish a Native language instructor position to promote Native language immersion in their school and community; (d) the master will have an opportunity of training his or her successors (leaders) to carry on the mentor projects to fulfill the tribe’s obligation of their language revitalization process.

**The Southern Ute Language Immersion Pre-School**

The Southern Ute Language Immersion Pre-School is located in Ignacio, Colorado. The school serves children from infancy to the third grade level. The Southern Ute language immersion school utilizes the Anna Montessori teaching/learning model. The immersion school’s emphasis is to facilitate the language/culture component and eventually the revival of the Ute language. According to the community advisor, the Ute community advisors thought the Montessori methods mixed well with Native American thoughts and philosophies as to teaching and learning methods. The aspects that were especially accepted were the exploratory and self-paced learning features.

The Southern Ute Tribe did not seek federal funding, state funds, or a private sector to initiate the Ute language immersion program because they did not want to be encumbered by federal regulations. The program is funded through the casino revenues and appropriations. Another reason was they wanted to serve only the Southern Ute tribal members or the direct descendants of the tribal members. The tribal council’s commitment is to build a new school facility. They have a five-year plan that includes training Montessori/Ute language teachers. There is one major obstacle with that plan;
there are only a few potential applicants that speak Ute language. Overall, early intervention of the Southern Ute language immersion program is an essential commitment by the tribal government in revitalization of their Southern Ute language.

**Native Hawaiian Language Immersion**

The Native Hawaiian language immersion program began in the 1980s when there was a realization that there were only 35 speakers of Hawaiian language under the age of 35 and only 2,000 Hawaiian speakers among the elders. By 2002-2003, there was an estimation of 1,750 school-aged students attending kindergarten through 12th grade in 22 *Ke kula Kaiapuni* language immersion schools. The Native Hawaiian and Hawaiian Language education programs include the following:

- The *Aba Aha Punana Leo*, pre-school language nests serve children ages three and four;
- The *Ke Kula Kaiapuni*, K-12 language immersion schools serve school aged children;
- The *Ka Haka ‘Ula O Ke’elikolani*, College of Hawaiian Language, University of Hawaii-Hilo, serves undergraduate students in the *Hale Kuaamo’o*, the Hawaiian Language Center, and graduate students in the Hawaiian language and literature master of arts program; and
- The *Kahuawaaiaiola*, the Hawaiian Medium Teacher Education Program of the university serves graduate students—language immersion teacher trainees.

The comprehensive model is a masterpiece of Indigenous education and language learning. The *Aba Aha Punana Leo* and *Ke Kula Kaiapuni* schools have rocketed from 35 only to 2,400 youthful Hawaiian speakers. These Native Hawaiian language immersion
programs have significantly and positively impacted the vitality of the Hawaiian language. Native Hawaiian language immersion is a comprehensive family- and community-based educational system.

The Kahuawwiola has established a language immersion teacher preparation program where potential teachers go through a rigorous training course, seminars, semesters of teaching practices, and job placement. The teacher training programs develop approximately 20 new teachers annually.

The Native Hawaiian culture is embedded into the curriculum in the language immersion pre-schools through 12th grade. The richest language resource is the Kuma, the teachers. The parents are the second richest resource promoting Hawaiian language, culture, and field-based learning. The Hawaiian Kingdom produces relevant and appropriate Hawaiian language instructional materials for a comprehensive school system. The 20-year history of language immersion, Aba Punana Leo and Ke Kula Kaiapuni, has built an impressive record of educational achievement. Students’ academic achievement has contributed to students finishing high school and transitioning into secondary college education, some even obtaining BA degrees in the Hawaiian language and teaching licenses.

**Navajo Nation Discussion**

The Navajo (Dine’) people have been experiencing a rapid decline in the Navajo language use among young Navajos over the past 20 years. There were two Navajo local controlled schools on the Navajo Nation known for their highly regarded bilingual education programs that deviated from the English-only concept that the BIA implemented in the 1950s. In the 1970s, more than 95% percent of the children starting in
these bilingual education programs spoke Navajo, whereas others spoke little or no English. Today, the education staff at the two schools estimated that only about half of the new arriving kindergartners were fluent speakers of their Navajo language. The maintenance of the Navajo language has been overshadowed by the encroachment of the Western values, border town life, educational institutions demanding high academic standards, opposition of the bilingual education, and less urgency on language loss. It was reported by the Navajo Head Start program that their teachers estimated 54% of the preschoolers were monolingual in English, 18% were monolingual in Navajo, and 28% were bilingual (Platero, 1992). The 1990 census counted more than 100,000 Navajo speakers, living on the reservation, not being at a proficient level.

In 1992, a Navajo Nation survey (Holms, 1993) found the Navajo language declining proficiency level at 32% out of 3,328 Navajo kindergartners at 110 schools across the reservation. Out of the 3,328 kindergartners, 73% spoke English well, and only 16% spoke at the advanced level in Navajo. The Navajo language usage among our youths is further limited by the current educational philosophy and mission statements of the local schools (public, BIE, Grant, private, etc.) emphasizing high academic achievement and the No Child Left Behind NCLB) mandating English proficiency.

The surmounting language loss among the Navajo and/or Native people are supported by the research studies done by Crawford (1996) and Benally and Dennis (2005). Crawford (1996) hypothesized that the language shift has been imposed through the Bureau of Indian Affair’s (BIA) assimilation philosophy and that the English-only concept in the boarding school system is the biggest cause of the Native language loss. He believed language choices are by nature influenced, consciously and unconsciously,
by social changes that disrupt the community in numerous ways. The social changes are further supported by Fishman’s (1991) range of dislocations that included areas, such as demographic factors, economic forces, mass media, and social identifiers. Two decades ago, Navajo language was one of the most resilient American Indian languages but today in the 21st century there is a drastic decline of the Navajo language usage among the Navajo people as stated by Benally and Dennis (2005). Primarily, their research study addresses the differences between the normal changes and adaptation of Navajo as a living language and the dramatic language shift due to cultural transmission, public education, and mass media that jeopardizes the survival of the Navajo language.

Language loss was recognized back in the early 1990s when a special issue of the *Bilingual Research Journal* (Begay et al., 1995) was devoted to language maintenance among various American Indian groups. The former president of the Navajo Nation, Peterson Zah, is quoted as saying:

> It is priority of the Navajo Nation President and a dream of the Navajo Division of Dine’ (Navajo) Education to someday take control of their own education. It is the mission of the Division of Education to assure that all Navajo people have the opportunity to be educated, and to be able to carry on the work of building the Navajo Nation. Navajo young people need to be proud that they are Navajo and hold respect for the heritage, land, and people to which they belong. They need to be able to build strength from their culture, language, and history, and have faith in their own potential. (Begay et al., 1995, pp. 136-137)

This shows a drastic decline in the use of our Navajo language since the 1950s. Between 1980 and 1990 the proportion of English-only speakers, ages 5 and older, on the Navajo reservation doubled from 7.2 to 15% (Crawford, 1995). The estimated percentage of our young school-aged children who are Navajo speakers dropped from 95% in 1969 to 52% in 1993. At the same time a special program introduced at Fort Defiance
Elementary in 1986, the researchers found that “only a third of incoming kindergartners at Ft. Defiance had even passive knowledge of Navajo” (Holm & Holm, 1995, cited by McCarty, 1997, p. 50).

Jackson (2008) did an in-depth research study on using dual language, full immersion, and sheltered immersion instructional programs for Navajo students by comparing their reading comprehension. The research revealed that the dual language bilingual education and the full immersion bilingual education programs had no significant differences on academic achievement as compared to the students in the Sheltered English Immersion program.

The dual language and the full immersion instructional program at Morning Dawn Elementary School made AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress); whereas, the Sheltered English Immersion program at Rainbow Elementary School located in the southwestern area of the United States did not make AYP. In summary Jackson stated that the school-to-school comparison of two instructional programs, Dual language and Sheltered English Immersion, showed that the AIMS (Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards) reading concept scores for the school years of 2005 to 2007 for third grade Dual Language students’ reading scores increased from 33% to 54% of students who “met” proficiency. In comparison, the school with the third grade Sheltered English Immersion students’ reading scores, increased from 30% to 47% of students who “met” proficiency. These data indicated students who are instructed in two languages in the Dual Language program have better reading scores than those students who were instructed in English-only in the Sheltered English Immersion program.
Reyhner, Martin, Lockard, and Gilbert (2000) conducted their research as reported in their publication titled “Language Revitalization in Navajo/English Dual Language Classrooms” that described Chinle Primary School’s dual language project. The bilingual teachers successfully provided a dual language instruction to the Navajo students where English and Navajo language were taught as a parallel instructional program.

A home language survey reported that 700 students attending Chinle Primary School in 1995-1996 spoke Navajo as a home or ancestral language, and that 393 of these students were limited English proficient. In 1996-1997 the number of limited English proficient students increased to 456 or 61% of the school population. The Dual Language Program was implemented with two classrooms at each grade level in 1997. The primary intent of the year-round bilingual instruction and the Summer Dual Language Camp was to provide community-based language learning experiences so to reverse the tide of a language shift. The concept of Dual Language Program is the total opposite of English-only instruction. He also related that there were several bilingual schools that came into existence:

1. The first Navajo controlled school, Rough Rock Demonstration School, opened on July 27, 1966, where Rough Rock was “regarded not just as a place for educating Indian children, but as the focus for the development of the local community” (Roessel, 1977).

2. Ramah Navajo High School, which opened in 1970, was the first contract high school (Iverson, 1993).

4. Rock Point Community School’s, which gained contract status in 1972, goal was to educate students within the community and to educate students in their Native language (Holm & Holm, 1990). Northern Arizona University and Annenberg Rural System Initiative provided staff development for the Dual Language Program by providing bilingual and ESL endorsements for the teachers.

McLaughlin (1995) in the publication titled “Strategies for Enabling Bilingual Program Development in American Indian Schools” typifies the complexities of establishing bilingual program development in a public school district within the Navajo Nation and to point out consequent social engineering strategies that help dual language programs grow. He said he wrote this article for a narrow audience: Navajo (and other American Indian) educators who are struggling to develop linguistically and culturally appropriate instructional programs in school environments that have historically been hostile to such efforts. Overall, he emphasized how Rock Point Community School established a successful bilingual instructional program where full language immersion was taught by local community people. Social issues were addressed as to outside authorities versus local school board authorities on school standards and operation, staff credentials, salary ranges, dynamics of the parallel instructional program, and the development of new genres and functions for oral and written Navajo language. The biggest impact he noticed was the profoundly negative effects of the language shift on our present-day students. To offer Navajo language to our students and parents, what we must do is figure out locally how we can utilize school resources to make meaningful, lasting connections to the communities that we serve, and to utilize oral and written Navajo to facilitate the development of local knowledge, language, and resources in this
process. Lastly, reversing the Navajo language shift must happen in Navajo homes as a function of the transmission of Navajo language, and beliefs in support of its use from grandparents to parents to children (Fishman, 1991).

**Summary Statement**

Indigenous language loss is no longer a phenomenon. Indigenous language loss is a reality of life for millions of Indigenous people on this earth. Research has shown that indigenous language loss is a reality from Australia to Canada, and within the United States of America. The loss of Indigenous languages are primarily due to attributes of modern day civilization; colonization by dominant society; domestication process for Indigenous people; territorial wars; an educational system emphasizing modern-day language; elderly language speakers/carriers dying off; lack of Native language usage in the home, work place, and school. Many leaders of nations in this world do not burden themselves with their country’s Indigenous language loss. Their priorities are more at the national level, such as economy of the nation, stability of the nation, and establishing partnerships/relationships with other nations. There is a lack of concerned people (leaders, linguists, Indigenous people, etc.) being involved in the preservation of Indigenous languages, disseminating relevant information on Indigenous language loss, and implementing needed language immersion programs to revitalize Indigenous languages. Many indigenous populations have undergone a dramatic decline, and even extinction, and remain threatened in many parts of the world.

Foreign researchers have indicated that Indigenous language loss is primarily due to annihilation by the government, forced occupation, enforced suffocation of languages, Indigenous language speakers dying off, and imposed assimilation by government and
the educational system. A dominant culture of such nations typically does not value multilingualism in any form, and in particular regarding the continued use of ancient Indigenous languages as a barrier to progress (Dorian 1998) and (Wurn 1996). Another finding is that there are many people speaking different language by small numbers of people in very remote areas that are not recorded. There is an overwhelming settlement of dominant societal people on ancestral land that’s contributing to loss of Indigenous language. Countries that have continually experienced Indigenous language loss are Australia, New Zealand, Canada, New South Wales, and Mexico.

For North America as a whole, it is difficult because of the turbulent early history of colonization and massive mortality due to diseases that resulted in the deaths of speakers of original languages. Again, researchers in North America have identified similar causes on the loss of Indigenous language or Native language due to annihilation of their government, forced occupation of ancestral land and culture, enforced suffocation of language through the “English-Only Concept,” the deaths of Indigenous language speakers, and imposed assimilation by the government and the educational system.

James Crawford (1996) cited the causes of Native language loss among several southwestern Indian tribes occurred because the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) embarked on a conscious attempt at cultural genocide through the boarding school system where all Native American students were immersed in a English-only concept, which resulted in severe punishment if you spoke your Native tongue. Overall, the maintenance of the Navajo language has been overshadowed by the encroachment of the Western values, border town life, educational institutions demanding high academic standards, opposition of bilingual education, and less urgency on language loss. The other
southwestern tribes have experienced a very similar maintenance or language loss as the Navajo tribe.

Other researchers focus on how we can start the revitalization process of our Native language loss through language immersion programs for our Native students and professional people. These Native language teaching and learning efforts include year-round schools, summer and seasonal camps, and weekend retreats and seminars. These schools, camps, and programs rely exclusively on the tribal language as the teaching and learning medium. For Indigenous people, these Native American language immersion activities hold great promise in the development of children, youth, family and community on the preservation or revival of their Native languages.
CHAPTER 3

METHODS

The purpose of this study was to examine Navajo language proficiency among children in schools on the Navajo Nation and gain the opinions of students, parents, grandparents, and educators about the use of Navajo language at school and home. In the school district selected for this study, the students’ performance on the Navajo Language Proficient Assessment (Appendix A) provided data to assess the extent there has been a loss of Navajo language usage. The language use survey provided data to assess the perceptions of Navajo language usage at school and home (Appendix B).

This chapter delineates the research design and methodology of the study. The Central Consolidated School District’s Navajo Language Proficiency Assessment was utilized to establish the trends of Navajo language usage among school-aged children. The first procedure was the retrieval of five years of educational data from SY 2004 through 2009, at the 3rd, 7th, and 11th grade levels. The second procedure was to distribute a Language Use Survey to 25 students, 25 parents, 25 grandparents, and 25 educators (teachers and administrators) asking about their perceptions of Navajo language usage among Navajo people. Last, methods of analyzing and describing the data are discussed.

Research Design

This quantitative research study utilized two instruments: (a) the school district’s Navajo Language Proficiency Assessment in order to establish trends by comparing results for school years from 2004 through 2009; and (b) a survey developed by the researcher and his colleagues titled Survey on Language Use to gain the opinions of a sample of Navajo people on the usage and preservation of the Navajo language.
Population and Sample

The student population in this study attended schools within the Central Consolidated School District #22 (CCSD) located in New Mexico in the northwestern part of the Navajo Nation. The CCSD district is the 11th largest school district in New Mexico with a student population of over 7,000 students and is comprised of 17 schools, including 4 high schools, 3 middle schools, and 10 elementary schools.

The sample study included 50 out of 200 randomly selected third graders, 50 out of 200 randomly selected seventh graders, and 50 out of 200 randomly selected eleventh graders from school years 2004 through 2009. These randomly selected students from the Central Consolidated School District #22 were administered the Navajo Language Proficiency Assessment and a survey titled Use of Language Survey. The selection was composed of 100 Navajo individuals, consisting of 25 students (K-12), 25 parents, 25 grandparents, and 25 educators (administrators and teachers) residing in the Northern Agency of the Navajo Nation.

Sampling Procedures

The criteria for selection included the following:

1. Schools serving Navajo student populations in Grade 3, 7, and 11. The rationale for the first criteria was to focus on Navajo students in Grades 3, 7, and 11 to represent students in the elementary (K-5), middle (6-8) and high school (9-12) grade levels.

2. Schools administering the district’s Navajo Language Proficiency Assessment every year since 2004 through 2009 in order to examine students’ performance over the five-year period.
3. Navajo adults and students who were living or going to school within the
Northern Agency.

**Instrumentation**

The research study utilized two instruments: (a) the school district’s Navajo Language Proficiency Assessment (Appendix A), and (b) a survey to determine the true perceptions of the Navajo people as to the usage and preservation of the Navajo language (Appendix B).

Central Consolidated School District’s Navajo Language Proficiency Assessment is an assessment instrument developed internally and was revised extensively during the summer of 2002 by the Bilingual Education Department, which consisted primarily of the bilingual program director, bilingual teachers, consultants, and parents from across the district. Both the reading and writing components were added to the test at that time. Previously, it only consisted of oral testing; receptive skills, and expressive skills. The revisions were made based the work of Omaggio Hadley (2000) in *Teaching the Language in Context*.

The test (Appendix A) is primarily for the district’s Navajo students in the Diné language bilingual education program. It assesses the students’ Diné language proficiency level in comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing. It basically follows a progressive spiraling pattern of language acquisition and development and aligns with the principles of the Diné philosophy of education. The test assesses proficiency at four levels: novice, intermediate, proficient, and advanced. The point system establishing performance level is 0-25 points at the novice level, 26-50 points at the intermediate level, 51-75 points at the proficient level, and 76-100 points at the advanced level. A
student may continue to function at one level for a couple of years or more, but eventually, depending on the various language learning factors, including services he or she receives, the student will progress to the next level of language acquisition. The test is valid because it satisfies requirements for home language proficiency testing data for New Mexico state and national regulations for bilingual education programs. The test has three sections:

**Oral Language (K-3\textsuperscript{rd})**

The oral language section assesses the student’s receptive and expressive abilities. (a) In receptive skills the student understands directions and responds appropriately either physically, or in a limited fashion, verbally; and (b) as to expressive skills, the student understands directions and responds verbally in complete sentences or responds in a simple word, phrase, or sentence (Table 1).
Table 1

*Oral Skills Quarterly Scores (0-100) as Determined by Bilingual Teacher*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Commands</th>
<th>Score pre/post (date)</th>
<th>Score pre/post (date)</th>
<th>Score pre/post (date)</th>
<th>Score pre/post (date)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B. Pronunciation</td>
<td>Score pre/post (date)</td>
<td>Score pre/post (date)</td>
<td>Score pre/post (date)</td>
<td>Score pre/post (date)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Comprehension I</td>
<td>Score pre/post (date)</td>
<td>Score pre/post (date)</td>
<td>Score pre/post (date)</td>
<td>Score pre/post (date)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Translation</td>
<td>Score pre/post (date)</td>
<td>Score pre/post (date)</td>
<td>Score pre/post (date)</td>
<td>Score pre/post (date)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Oral responses</td>
<td>Score pre/Post (date)</td>
<td>Score pre/post (date)</td>
<td>Score pre/post (date)</td>
<td>Score pre/post (date)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Comprehension II</td>
<td>Score pre/post (date)</td>
<td>Score pre/post (date)</td>
<td>Score pre/post (date)</td>
<td>Score pre/post (date)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Oral proficiency level: Level determined & points
- Novice: 0-25
- Intermediate: 26-50
- Proficient: 51-75
- Advanced: 76-100

Oral gain or loss (%)
- Novice: (0-25) %
- Intermediate: (26-50) %
- Proficient: (51-75) %
- Advanced: (76-100) %

Receptive scores: A,B,C
- Novice: (0-100)
- Intermediate: (0-100)
- Proficient: (0-100)

Expressive scores: D,E,F
- Novice: (0-100)
- Intermediate: (0-100)
- Proficient: (0-100)

**Reading Section (4th-12th)**

The following table (Table 2) summarizes the assessment of reading skills in the different levels of proficiency: (a) novice level: word associations and understanding
simple description; (b) intermediate level: reading comprehension and understanding descriptions; (c) proficiency level: main idea and understanding intentions; and (d) advanced level: reads to compare or contrast and understand cultural conventions and customs.

Table 2

*Assessment of Reading Skills*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story</th>
<th>Proficiency Level</th>
<th>Reading Skills Tested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 <em>Gidi</em></td>
<td>Novice low reader</td>
<td>Recall, word associations, understanding simple description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 <em>Bee Na’ anishi</em></td>
<td>Intermediate reader</td>
<td>Supporting details, comprehension and understanding descriptions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 <em>Azhni’iih</em></td>
<td>Proficient reader</td>
<td>Main ideas, making inferences, understanding intentions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 <em>Ma’ii Bitah Honiigai</em></td>
<td>Advanced reader</td>
<td>Generalization, understanding cultural conventions and customs, comparison or contrasting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Writing Section (4th-12th)**

The following table summarizes the assessment of writing skills in the different levels of proficiency:
Table 3

Assessment of Writing Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Grammar or vocabulary</th>
<th>Style</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Novice</td>
<td>Copies simple text with limited understanding</td>
<td>Incomplete use of appropriate words, phrases, and sentences</td>
<td>Lacks planning in writing structure</td>
<td>Jumbled, inappropriate details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>Writes simple notes with short sentences</td>
<td>Attempts correctness with some diacritical errors.</td>
<td>Attempts summary and sequential organization with familiar topic</td>
<td>Careless, development of accuracy relevant to content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>Writes understandable messages using established writing pattern.</td>
<td>Writes clear, appropriate and difficult syntax in summaries.</td>
<td>Evidence of paragraph structure with some pattern of organization.</td>
<td>Generally good work, but facts may be unsupported, or repetitions of clichés may be apparent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>Confident and enjoys writing with fluency; few common errors.</td>
<td>Skilled use of variations in syntax in terms of content.</td>
<td>Well organized paragraphs; clear topic and use of comprehensible and logical details.</td>
<td>Important, interesting, and well thought out compositions appropriate to assignments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Educational Assessment Instrument

The validity of the educational assessment instrument is that it measures the true knowledge-base of an individual in the perspective of knowing about your Navajo culture, custom, tradition, and the oral communication/speaking of the Navajo language.
The reliability of the assessment instrument is very consistent in measuring expected outcomes across all grade levels for the past 10 years as required by New Mexico Department of Bilingual Education.

The second instrument was the Language Use Survey (Figure 1), developed by the researcher in collaboration with colleagues. Responses were based on a Likert-type scale in which respondents were asked about the extent of use, learning or relearning, and the importance of the Navajo language use. The rating had 3 response choices from very important, don’t know/doesn’t matter, or not important.
Date: __________________

Who are You? (circle one)  Student ___Parent ___Grandparent ___ Educator__

Please circle your response to the following statements:

A. Very Important . . . . B. Don’t Know/Doesn’t Matter . . . . C. Not Important

1. I prefer to speak English all the time.
A. Very Important . . . . B. Don’t Know/Doesn’t Matter . . . . C. Not Important

2. I prefer to speak Navajo all the time.
A. Very Important . . . . B. Don’t Know/Doesn’t Matter . . . . C. Not Important

3. I prefer to speak both languages (Navajo & English).
A. Very Important . . . . B. Don’t Know/Doesn’t Matter . . . . C. Not Important

4. We need to learn and speak our Navajo language.
A. Very Important . . . . B. Don’t Know/Doesn’t Matter . . . . C. Not Important

5. I want my immediate family members to speak Navajo.
A. Very Important . . . . B. Don’t Know/Doesn’t Matter . . . . C. Not Important

6. Our Navajo language is very important to us.
A. Very Important . . . . B. Don’t Know/Doesn’t Matter . . . . C. Not Important

7. We need to preserve/save our Navajo culture, language, and heritage.
A. Very Important . . . . B. Don’t Know/Doesn’t Matter . . . . C. Not Important

Please add any comments you have about the use of Navajo and English in the schools in the spaces below:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________

Figure 1. Language Use Survey

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection began on April 24, 2011, and was completed February 9, 2012.

All data gathered from the school sites were treated with confidentiality. A sequence of
procurement process took place where (a) a request for the retrieval of the District’s Navajo Language Proficiency Assessment test data for SY 2004-2009 and Language Use Survey were both approved by the CCSD School Board superintendent and the CCSD School District president (Appendices C and D); (b) approval was gained from the Office of Research Integrity and Assurance of Arizona State University, Social Behavior Internal Review Board (Navajo Nation Human Research Board) approved the research study on April 5, 2011 (Appendix E); and (3) the Navajo Nation Health Research Review Board (NNHRRB) approved the research study on April 19, 2011 (Appendix F).

On May 25, 2011, the school district provided the researcher with the Navajo Language Proficiency Assessment test data. The test data consisted of final test results from SY 2004-2009 for each grade level in the 3rd, 7th, and 11th grades. The following steps were a consultation with the Director of Bilingual Education on retrieving the test data for school years 2004-2009, which included (a) all recorded aggregated test scores for all third graders from Ojo, Kirtland, Ruth N. Bond, Nizhoni, Nataani Nez, Newcomb, and Naschitti Elementary Schools; (b) all seventh graders from Kirtland, Tse’ Bit Al’, and Newcomb Middle Schools; and (c) all 11th graders from Kirtland, Shiprock, Career Prep, and Newcomb High Schools; (d) the determined yearly average scores for the three grade levels; (e) disaggregated test scores for the three grade levels; and (f) the graphed yearly average scores for each grade level to establish trends. Each school had a student population with similar demographic characteristics in relation to socio-economic status and the proportion of English language learners.

The second sample for the language survey was completed by February 9, 2012. The following steps for distributing and administering the language use survey were by
(a) traveling to various locations within the Northern Agency of the Navajo Nation to solicit Navajo individuals to fill out the survey; (b) providing research information and confidentiality of all information received; (c) informing participants that no names would be used (unidentifiable) in their responses; (d) distributing 100 language use survey to 25 students (3rd through 11th graders), 25 parents, 25 grandparents, and 25 educators (administrators & teachers) within the Northern Agency of the Navajo Nation (Appendix G); (e) recommending an immediate retrieval of language survey or next day retrieval; and (f) categorizing and calculating responses after each retrieval. The language survey was distributed to people at public places, social gatherings, local chapters, casinos, and schools.

Data Analysis

Test results were analyzed using students’ scores in the 3rd, 7th, and 11th grades in the bilingual education program. The yearly average test scores from the 3rd, 7th, and 11th grades were calculated into percentages from 0 to 100% for school year 2004 through 2009. The students were categorized in accordance to the level of performance: novice (0-25), intermediate (26-50), proficient (51-75), and advanced (76-100). Graphs were designed to show trends of Navajo language use. The survey responses were calculated as the percentage of responses from the 100 participants, then disaggregated into the four groups of participants: students, parents, grandparents, and educators.
CHAPTER 4
Findings and Research

The purpose of this study was to examine Navajo language proficiency among children in schools on the Navajo Nation and gain the opinions of students, parents, grandparents, and educators about the use of Navajo language at school and home. In the school district selected for this study, the students’ performance on the Navajo Language Proficient Assessment provided data on which to assess the extent to which there has been a loss of Navajo language usage. The language use survey provided data to assess the perceptions of Navajo language usage at school and home.

The research questions that guided this study were as follows:

Question 1 asked, *What trends have occurred on the results of the Navajo Language Proficiency Assessment administered over five years to school-aged children on the Navajo Nation.* The following subquestions to Research Question 1 are listed as follows;

Subquestion 1: Did results vary by students’ grade level?

Subquestion 2: Did results vary by year the test was administered?

Research Question 2 asked, *What are students’, parents’, grandparents’, and educators’ opinions about the use of the Navajo language at home and at school?* the following subquestion to Research Question 2 follows:

Subquestion 1: Did results vary by each of the groups surveyed?

Research Question 3 asked, *To what extent is performance on the language assessment instrument explained by survey responses?*
To answer these questions the Central Consolidated School District’s Navajo Language Proficiency Assessment was utilized to establish the trends for Navajo language usage among school-aged children. The first procedure was the retrieval of 5 years of educational data from SY 2004-2009, at grade levels 3rd, 7th, and 11th. The second procedure was to distribute a Language Use Survey to 25 students, 25 parents, 25 grandparents, and 25 educators (teachers and administrators) asking about their perceptions of Navajo language usage among Navajo people. Last, methods of analyzing and describing the data are discussed.

Central Consolidated School District’s Navajo Language Proficiency Assessment is an assessment instrument developed internally and was revised extensively during the summer of 2002 by the Bilingual Education Department that primarily consisted of the bilingual program director, bilingual teachers, consultants, and parents from across the district. Both the reading and writing components were added to the test at that time. Previously, it only consisted of oral testing; receptive skills, and expressive skills. The revisions were made based on the work of Omaggio Hadley (2001) in *Teaching the Language in Context*.

**Results of the Navajo Language Proficiency Assessment**

**Results for Third Grade**

Table 4 shows the third grade assessment data by level of proficiency with an accompanying graph (Figure 2) that illustrates the five-year average. The combined total of the intermediate and novice levels for each year showed an average of 81% for SY 2004-05, 85% for SY 2005-06, 83% for SY 2006-07, 90% for SY 2007-08, and 92% for
SY 2008-09. There is 11% increase in the five-year span from 81% in SY 2004-05 to 92% in SY 2008-09 on Navajo language loss.

The third grade assessment data for the past five years clearly illustrated that there was a high percentage (46%) of students at the intermediate level. In the intermediate level, students were more receptive to their Navajo language than speaking, reading or writing, which was very limited in Navajo language usage. The next highest percentage was 40% of students were at the novice level. Being at the novice level meant you did not speak the Navajo language; used inappropriate word usage, phrases, and sentences, and had a hard time understanding the Navajo language. If you were functioning at the novice level, you actually lost your Native Tongue or Mother Language. Combining the intermediate and novice levels showed that nearly 90% of third graders were on the verge of losing their Navajo language. A mere 12% (percent) of third grade students were at the proficient level. These students could write, speak, and understand the full context of the Navajo language. Only 1% of all third grade students were at the advanced level. These students could write and speak their Navajo language fluently and could write a well-organized composition in their Navajo language.
Table 4

*Third Grade Assessment Data*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novice</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Novice</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Novice</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Novice</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Novice</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL %</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 2. Third grade assessment scores*

**Results for Seventh Grade**

The combined total of the intermediate and novice level for each year for seventh graders showed an average of 91% for SY 2004-05, 98% for SY 2005-06, 97% for SY
2006-07, 92% for SY 2007-08, and 94% for SY 2008-09. There was a 3% increase in the five-year span from 91% in SY 2004-05 to 94% in SY 2008-09 on Navajo language loss.

As seen in Table 5 and Figure 3, seventh grade assessment data for the past five years illustrates that there was a high percentage (54%) of students at the novice level. The data revealed that these students did not speak, write, and/or understand their Navajo language. Over half of the seventh graders were at the novice level. The next highest percentage, 41% of students, were at the intermediate level. Again, at the intermediate level you are receptive to the Navajo language spoken but are not speaking, writing, and reading in Navajo. Combining the novice and intermediate levels, 95% of seventh grade students were on the verge of losing their Navajo language. Only 5% of seventh graders tested were at the proficient level. These students could perform their writing sentences with some error, speak Navajo fluently, and read Navajo in context. There were no students performing at the advanced level.

Table 5

*Seventh Grade Assessment Data*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novice</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Novice</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Novice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 3. Seventh grade assessment data

Results for Eleventh Grade

The combined total of the intermediate and novice level for each year for 11th graders showed there was average of 76% for SY 2004-05, 82% for SY 2005-06, 81% for SY 2006-07, 82% for SY 2007-08, and 72% for SY 2008-09. There was a 4% decrease in the five-year span from 76% in SY 2004-05 to 72% in SY 2008-09, indicating improvement in Navajo language acquisition. There was a 5% increase in the proficiency level for the 11th graders from 18% for SY 2004-05 to 23% for SY 2008-09.

As seen in Table 6, the 11th grade assessment data for the past five years illustrated that half of the students were at the intermediate level. Again, these students are receptive to the Navajo language but with very limited ability to speak, write, and read the Navajo language. The performance indicator at the intermediate level was no better than the novice level, as the next highest percentage (29%) were at the novice level.
level. A total of 80% of 11th grade students were at the novice and intermediate levels.

The data revealed that there were 10 to 15% less at the novice and intermediate levels. This was also an indication of more students merging into the proficient and advanced levels of the Navajo language acquisition. There was an increased percentage of 11th grade students at the proficient level in Navajo language usage and 3% of the students were at the advanced level.

Table 6

*Eleventh Grade Assessment Data*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novice</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL %</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overall Responses

Table 7 shows the overall responses to the survey questions. The results for all 100 people surveyed included questions asking about their perceptions as to the importance of the Navajo language: Survey Question 6 asked, *Our Navajo language is very important to us*; and Survey Question 7 asked, *We need to preserve/save our Navajo culture, language, and heritage*. For both items, 96% of all surveyed felt it was “very important.” For Survey Question 4, *We need to learn and speak our Navajo language* and Survey Question 3, *I prefer to speak both languages (Navajo and English)*, 93% and 92% respectively responded that they were “very important.” The next highest percentage (89%) was found on Survey Question 5, *I want my immediate family members to speak Navajo*. These high percentages indicated that the Navajo people do have a
major concern and awareness on how important our Navajo language is to our society as a whole.

The results also showed that for Survey Question 1, *I prefer to speak English all the time*, nearly half (43%) indicated that those surveyed did not mind speaking English all the time. There was a low percentage (16% or less) who responded “not important” to all seven questions, which would indicate that they believed that everything in life, even the Navajo language, was not important.

Table 7

*Results for All Surveys*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Doesn’t Matter</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I prefer to speak English all the time.</td>
<td>41/100 = 41%</td>
<td>43/100 = 43%</td>
<td>16/100 = 16%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I prefer to speak Navajo all the time.</td>
<td>66/100 = 66%</td>
<td>29/100 = 29%</td>
<td>5/100 = 5%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I prefer to speak both languages (Navajo or English).</td>
<td>92/100 = 92%</td>
<td>2/100 = 2%</td>
<td>6/100 = 6%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. We need to learn and speak our Navajo language.</td>
<td>93/100 = 93%</td>
<td>4/100 = 4%</td>
<td>3/100 = 3%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I want my immediate family members to speak Navajo.</td>
<td>89/100 = 89%</td>
<td>10/100 = 10%</td>
<td>1/100 = 1%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Our Navajo language is very important to us.</td>
<td>96/100 = 96%</td>
<td>2/100 = 2%</td>
<td>2/100 = 2%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. We need to preserve/save our Navajo culture, language, and heritage.</td>
<td>96/100 = 96%</td>
<td>3/100 = 3%</td>
<td>1/100 = 1%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total percentage divide by 7 questions =</td>
<td>573/7 = 82%</td>
<td>93/7 = 13%</td>
<td>34/7 = 5%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N = 30*
The student data indicated that 88% of students preferred to use both languages (see Table 8). The next two high percentages, both 84%, were in response to questions Numbers 6 and 7: Survey Question 6 inquired, *Our Navajo language is very important to us*; and Survey Question 7 asked, *We need to preserve/save our Navajo culture, language, and heritage.* The responses showed that the students were concerned about and supported the need to preserve the Navajo language and culture.

Table 8

**Results of Student Survey**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Doesn’t Matter</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>N = 25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I prefer to speak English all the time.</td>
<td>6/25 = 24%</td>
<td>15/25 = 60%</td>
<td>4/25 = 16%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I prefer to speak Navajo all the time.</td>
<td>17/25 = 68%</td>
<td>6/25 = 24%</td>
<td>2/25 = 8%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I prefer to speak both languages (Navajo or English).</td>
<td>22/25 = 88%</td>
<td>1/25 = 4%</td>
<td>2/25 = 8%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. We need to learn and speak our Navajo language.</td>
<td>19/25 = 76%</td>
<td>3/25 = 12%</td>
<td>3/25 = 12%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I want my immediate family members to speak Navajo.</td>
<td>17/25 = 68%</td>
<td>8/25 = 32%</td>
<td>0/25 = 0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Our Navajo language is very important to us.</td>
<td>21/25 = 84%</td>
<td>2/25 = 8%</td>
<td>2/25 = 8%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. We need to preserve/save our Navajo culture, language, and heritage.</td>
<td>21/25 = 84%</td>
<td>3/25 = 12%</td>
<td>1/25 = 4%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Results of Parent Survey**

As shown in Table 9, in response to Numbers 4, 6, and 7, Question Number 4 asked, *We need to learn and speak our Navajo language*; Question Number 6 asked, *Our
Navajo language is very important to us; and Question Number 7, We need to preserve/save our Navajo culture, language, and heritage that all parents (100%) agreed that it was very important. This indicated that the parents were supportive of their school-aged children speaking their Navajo language. The next highest percentage, 96%, showed that parents preferred to speak both Navajo and English, an indication of support for bilingualism. The lowest response (52%), or of least of concern, was Item Number 1, I prefer to speak English all the time.

Table 9

Results of Parent Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Doesn’t Matter</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I prefer to speak English all the time.</td>
<td>13/25 = 52%</td>
<td>8/25 = 32%</td>
<td>4/25 = 16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I prefer to speak Navajo all the time.</td>
<td>17/25 = 68%</td>
<td>7/25 = 28%</td>
<td>1/25 = 4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I prefer to speak both Languages (Navajo or English).</td>
<td>24/25 = 96%</td>
<td>0/25 = 0%</td>
<td>1/25 = 4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. We need to learn and speak our Navajo language.</td>
<td>25/25 = 100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I want my immediate family members to speak Navajo.</td>
<td>24/25 = 96%</td>
<td>1/25 = 4%</td>
<td>0/25 = 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Our Navajo language is very important to us.</td>
<td>25/25 = 100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. We need to preserve/save our Navajo culture, language, and heritage.</td>
<td>25/25 = 100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results of 25 parents

Total
Results of Grandparent Survey

The results of the grandparents’ survey data showed for Questions Number 4, 5, 6, and 7: Survey Question 4, *We need to learn and speak our Navajo language*; Survey Question 5, *I want my immediate family members to speak Navajo*; Survey Question 6, *Our Navajo language is very important to us*; and Survey Question 7, *We need to preserve/save our Navajo culture, language, and heritage*, all agreed that it was very important (Table 10). The next highest percentage, 92%, was in response to *I prefer to speak both languages (Navajo and English)*. This response would indicate that they were in support of the bilingual programs in schools.

Table 10

*Results of Grandparent Survey*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Doesn’t Matter</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I prefer to speak English all the time.</td>
<td>6/25= 24%</td>
<td>12/25= 48%</td>
<td>7/25= 28%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I prefer to speak Navajo all the time.</td>
<td>16/25= 64%</td>
<td>9/25= 36%</td>
<td>0/25= 0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I prefer to speak both Languages (Navajo or English).</td>
<td>23/25= 92%</td>
<td>0/25= 0%</td>
<td>2/25= 8%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. We need to learn and speak our Navajo language.</td>
<td>25/25= 100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I want my immediate family members to speak Navajo.</td>
<td>25/25= 100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Our Navajo language is very important to us.</td>
<td>25/25= 100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. We need to preserve/save our Navajo culture, language, and heritage.</td>
<td>25/25= 100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results of 25 grandparents
Results of Educators’ Surveys

The results of the educators’ surveys indicated that for Questions 6 and 7:

Question Number 6, *Our Navajo language is very important to us*; and Question Number 7, *We need to preserve/save our Navajo culture, language, and heritage* 100% were in support of the importance of Navajo language usage and preserving Navajo culture (see Table 11). Most educators (over 90%) supported the preference of speaking both languages, learning or re-learning the Navajo language, and wanted their immediate family members to speak the Navajo language. About two-thirds (64%) felt that speaking English was appropriate for Navajo people.

Table 11

*Results of Educators’ Survey*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Doesn’t Matter</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I prefer to speak English all the time.</td>
<td>16/25 = 64%</td>
<td>8/25 = 32%</td>
<td>1/25 = 4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I prefer to speak Navajo all the time.</td>
<td>16/25 = 64%</td>
<td>7/25 = 28%</td>
<td>2/25 = 8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I prefer to speak both Languages (Navajo or English).</td>
<td>23/25 = 92%</td>
<td>1/25 = 4%</td>
<td>1/25 = 4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. We need to learn and speak our Navajo language.</td>
<td>24/25 = 96%</td>
<td>1/25 = 4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I want my immediate family members to speak Navajo.</td>
<td>23/25 = 92%</td>
<td>1/25 = 4%</td>
<td>1/25 = 4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Our Navajo language is very important to us.</td>
<td>25/25 = 100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. We need to preserve/save our Navajo culture, language, and heritage.</td>
<td>25/25 = 100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results of 25 educators

Total
CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

At this point and time I am deeply disturbed and concerned that our Navajo school-aged children are on the verge of losing their Navajo language (Native Tongue) and nothing is being done at all levels of our Navajo Nation Government. I have personally experienced the gradual decline of our Navajo language loss during the mid 1950s through the early 1970s when I was attending the Bureau of Indian Affair (BIA) schools just as the way Crawford (1996) described. Not only were we eventually told not to speak our Navajo language at school or else face severe consequences, but we were also actually forced to speak English all the time. But in the mid 1970s the concept of speaking only English became less relevant and a new concept of high academic achievement for all students became a new motto in the school systems on the Navajo Reservation. The English-only teaching concept became a priority in the schools and Navajo culture became an option not a priority. These two major changes in our school systems on the Navajo Reservation started the decline of our Navajo language usage on a daily basis that eventually lead us to a gradual demise of our Navajo language usage among our school-aged children and present-day parents.

My personal experience continued into my professional years as a teacher for 16 years and 10 years as a school administrator from the 1980s to 2012. I realized during my teaching years that our school-aged children were not communicating in Navajo; all communications were in English. It became more evident during my administrative years when I assessed our District’s Navajo Language Proficiency Test that there was a major decline in the Navajo language usage among our school-aged children; testing was
provided every academic year, recently quarterly. The District’s Bilingual Department has also expressed a deep concern that our Navajo students are not interested in learning or re-learning their Navajo language per bilingual teachers.

Consequently, the Navajo students are having a difficult time communicating in their own Navajo language. Today, the majority of the school-aged children, Kindergarten through the 12th grade are not fluent speakers in either Navajo or the English language. We are at a crossroads to either stay the course of losing the Navajo language, or we can do something about it. Our Navajo citizens need to take appropriate actions or initiatives to bring the Navajo language back into the midst of Navajo society as the primary language of the Dine’ people.

Restatement of Problem

The purpose of this study was to examine Navajo language proficiency among children in schools on the Navajo Nation and gain the opinions of students, parents, grandparents, and educators about the use of Navajo language at school and home. The testing instrument used to collect test data was the District’s Navajo Language Proficiency Assessment. Three grade levels, the 3rd, 7th, and 11th grades, took the Navajo Language Proficiency Assessment starting School Year 2004 and ending School Year 2009 to establish a five-year progressive or regressive trend in the Navajo language use among our school-age children. The targeted outcome was to collect the five-year test data. The culminating test scores and results were categorized into one of four performance level: novice level (0-25), intermediate level (26-50), proficient level (51-75), and advanced level (76-100).
Secondly, the language use survey was distributed to 25 students (K-12), 25 parents, 25 grandparents, and 25 educators (administrators and teachers) that consisted of seven questions on the importance of Navajo language use at home, school, and the community. All the participants of the research study went to school and lived in the Northern Agency of the Navajo Nation.

**Research Questions**

The research questions that guided this study were as follows:

1. What trends have occurred on the results of the Navajo Language Proficiency Assessment administered over five years to school-aged children on the Navajo Nation?
   
   Subquestion 1: Did results vary by students’ grade level?
   
   Subquestion 2: Did results vary by year the test was administered?

2. What are students’, parents’, grandparents’, and educators’ opinions about the use of the Navajo language at home and at school?
   
   Subquestion 1: Did results vary by each of the groups surveyed?

3. To what extent is performance on the language assessment instrument explained by survey responses?

**Literature Pertinent to the Study**

The literature review chapter focuses on previous research relevant to the loss of Native American languages in Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and the United States. The second part of the chapter focuses on the process of revitalizing or the preservation of Native languages in the United States through language immersion projects and or bilingual/dual instructional programs.
I like the statement made by Dr. Richard Littlebear, President of Chief Dull Knife College, Lame Deer:

We still have great responsibilities to the youngsters of today, to the elders who are still with us today, to those who are yet journeying toward us and, especially, to those elders who have journeyed on. This present generation of fluent speakers needs to honor all the preceding generations of speakers of their languages by strengthening those languages so that they remain viable beyond the seventh generation. The really sad aspect is that if we do nothing to save our languages, we are depriving those generations who follow us of the privilege and joy of speaking our languages and of having their own true identities that come with them. (cited by Pease-Pretty On Top, 2003, Introduction, p. 6, para. 4)

Crawford (1996), considered an expert/historian on indigenous languages, did an in-depth research on Native language loss, specifically citing external factors of the U.S. Government’s cultural genocide through boarding schools; and the internal factors including language shifts within language communities themselves. His perceptions were formed over the past 20 years that among young Navajos there has been a rapid decline in the Navajo language use; this was evident to Crawford while writing about bilingual education in the early 1980s. Crawford (1986) observed and noticed the encroachment of Western ways of thinking and values causing language shifts in the various communities of the four Indian reservations he visited on-site.

Pease-Pretty On Top (2003), who researched 50 tribal locations, noted five compelling reasons for a Native language immersion program/project for any tribe in the United States: The first compelling reason had to do with a lifetime commitment by those who recognize the serious rate of language loss and who recognize the need for language restoration. The second compelling reason was the status of Native American children and youth who are among the poorest achievers all American ethnic groups. The third reason has to do with Native language immersion being an effort that strengthens and
rebuilds the Native community. The fourth reason is that culture and language teaching and participation positively correlate with Native student retention rates. The fifth has to do with Native leaders who foresee a world in urgent need of Native perspectives as to areas of child-rearing, natural resources management and family and community development.

Jackson (2008) did a recent research study on reading comprehension using the dual language, full immersion, and sheltered immersion instructional programs for Navajo students attending Navajo Nation public schools. The outcome of the study indicated that students who are instructed in two languages in the dual language program have better reading scores than those students who are instructed in English-only in the Sheltered English Immersion program.

Batchelder and Markel (1997) presented the results of their research survey on Navajo language and culture studies as being a part of the school’s every day curriculum and found that majority of the participants supported the implementation of the Navajo Tribe’s mandate to teach Navajo language and culture in school. To further support the initiative, Public Law 101-477, the Native American Language Act makes it clear that “traditional languages of Native Americans are an integral part of their cultures and identities” (Native American Languages Act, Public Law 101-477, Findings, (3)). The law goes on to say that there “is convincing evidence that student achievement and performance, community and school pride, and educational opportunity is [sic] clearly and directly tied to respect for, and support of, the first language of the child or student” (Native American Languages Act, Public Law 101-477, Findings, (6)).
Results of the Study: Research Question 1 and Subquestions 1 and 2

There were two components to my research study. The first was an analysis of five years of assessment data pertaining to the District’s Navajo Language Proficiency Assessment to establish a progressive or regressive data trend on the loss of Navajo language use among our school-aged children. The second was the use of a language survey to discover the opinions of our Navajo people as to Navajo language use at school, home, and community.

The first major question posed by the study was What trends have occurred on the results of the Navajo Language Proficiency Assessment administered over five years to school-aged children on the Navajo Nation? Overall, the five-year assessment data for the 3rd, 7th, and 11th grades show a gradual decline when assessing the Navajo Language Proficiency Assessment data. The specific results are presented so as to answer Subquestion 1, Did results vary by students’ grade level? and Subquestion 2, Did results vary by year the test was administered?

Third Grade Assessment

Third grade assessment data indicated a massive cluster of 84% of students falling into the categories of novice and intermediate levels in SY 2004-2005 and accumulated to 94% by SY 2008-2009, a 10% in five years. In the proficient level the data indicated 16% in SY 2004-2005 and 6% by SY 2008-2009, a 10% decline in five years. A mere 2% showed for SY 2005-2006 in the advanced level.

Seventh Grade Assessment

Seventh grade assessment data indicated a massive cluster of 92% of students falling into the categories of novice and intermediate levels in SY 2004-2005 and
increased to 94% by SY 2008-2009, a 2% increase in five years. In the proficient level the data indicated 8% in SY 2004-2005 and 6% by SY 2008-2009, a 2% decline in five years. There were no students at the advanced level throughout the five years.

**Eleventh Grade Assessment**

Eleventh grade assessment data indicated a massive cluster of 78% of students falling into the categories of novice and intermediate levels in SY 2004-2005 and decreased to 38% by SY 2008-2009, a 40% decrease in five years. In the **proficient** level the data indicated 18% in SY 2004-2005 and 24% by SY 2008-2009, a 6% increase in five years. A mere 4% showed for SY 2004-2005 but the percentage was at zero from SY 2005-2009.

**Results of the Study: Research Question 2 and Subquestion 1**

The second research question asked, *What are students’, parents’, grandparents’, and educators’ opinions about the use of the Navajo language at home and at school?* The answer to this question is presented by answering Subquestion 1 to this question, *Did results vary by each of the groups surveyed?*

The language survey clearly indicated that the Navajo present-day parents and grandparents responded in full support of the preservation and the importance of our Navajo language at 100%. They responded that our Navajo way of life includes our Native language; that without our Native language we have no culture. A contrasting response by the students and educators confirmed that being bilingual is beneficial to our Navajo people because we live in a dual society that requires both languages. At-large, our Navajo people foresee their children and grandchildren getting the needed education to survive in today’s competitive society. With that said, our younger generation needs to
be proficient in English language usage, writing, reading, and to excel in work-related skills. In retrospect, English language acquisition is a way of modern-day life, and Navajo language acquisition is pertinent as to the preservation of our Navajo culture.

The primary focus of our present-day parents and grandparents should be to teach and encourage their children to learn or re-learn their Navajo language. We have this tendency that someone else is going to do it when there is no someone else. The language survey indicated that an overwhelming over 90% of our school-age children want to learn and speak their language; they strongly felt that our language was very important in preserving our Navajo culture. The wants and needs of speaking and preserving our Navajo language is very evident among our Navajo people, but the questions are still how, when, where, why, and what if? A reasonable explanation is that our society has evolved into the daily life of the western world. This is a success story for the U.S. Government in assimilating our Native people. However, the total blame cannot be placed on the government. The majority of the Navajo people, especially the younger generation, like the western life style. In a true reality, the educational and individual philosophies across the Navajo Nation maintain a great emphasis on being highly educated, being competitive individuals, and being self-sufficient in our modern society. It seems that the modern-day necessities outweigh the emphasis of our cultural values. The survey also indicated that majority of the educators’ responses supported bilingualism, as the majority of the Navajo population are bilingual and are comfortable living in a dual society.
Results of the Study: Research Question 3

The next major question posed by the study was *To what extent is performance on the language assessment instrument explained by survey responses?* Our Navajo language assessment data clearly indicated our school-aged children are on the verge of losing their Navajo language. The supporting evidence from the language survey that was administrated to 100 Navajo individuals on their perceptions of the Navajo language use indicated a majority of our people perceive our Navajo language is of high importance and we need to speak it to preserve it for our future generations.

Conclusions

The biggest question is how are we going to convince our Navajo people that our language loss is very evident and what type of strategic plan do we have in place, or is there any? We need to understand what identifiable resources we have within our communities, schools, and the Navajo Nation Government.

Joshua Fishman (1991), a world renown expert on sociolinguistics, viewed minority-language maintenance embedded in a more general attempt to maintain traditional cultures. He asked that minority-language activists to “view local cultures (all local cultures, not only their own) as things of beauty, as encapsulations of human values which deserve to be fostered and assisted (not merely ‘preserve’ in a mummified sense)” (p. 33). Fishman worked from three value positions: (a) The maintenance and renewal of native languages can be voluntary; (b) Minority rights need not interfere with majority rights, and (c) “bilingualism is a benefit for all” (pp. 82-84).

Jon Reyhner (2007) related the fact that in November 2006 Arizona voters passed Proposition 103 making English Arizona’s official language. South Dakota passed theirs
in 1995. Louisiana’s 1811 law is the oldest of these, and Arizona’s is one of the most recent. He also mentioned that English as the official state language is also found in the passage of English for the children’s propositions passed in California, Arizona, and Massachusetts between 1998 and 2002 that severely limit the use of non-English languages in the schools. In the process, the Arizona public schools offering Navajo language immersion programs for children whose parents want them to learn Navajo have been hampered by Arizona’s Proposition 203.

But in contrast, Congress in 1990 passed the Native American Languages Act in support of the preservation of Native American languages. Congress found in this Act that “the status of the cultures and languages of Native Americans is unique and the United States has the responsibility to act together with Native Americans to ensure the survival of these unique cultures and languages” (Native American Languages Act, Public Law 101-477, Findings, (1)) and made it the policy of the United States to “preserve, protect, and promote the rights and freedom of Native Americans to use, practice, and develop Native American languages” (Native American Languages Act, Public Law 101-477, Declaration of Policy, (1)). This Act also declares that “the right of Native Americans to express themselves through the use of Native American languages shall not be restricted in any public proceeding, including publicly supported education programs” (Native American Languages Act, Public Law 101-477, No Restrictions, SEC 105).

The findings of this study identified the loss of Navajo language usage and understanding among our school-age children. It is also evident through our language survey that our Navajo language is of high importance and a need to preserve/revitalize
our language is essential to the next generations. We are at a crossroad of language renewal or extinction. Which road are we going to chose?

The road to language renewal/revitalization is heavily favored by our Navajo people at-large. It is favorable because we have the human resources to revitalize our Navajo language. The primary human resources are the majority of our present-day parents and grandparents still fluently speak Navajo. Also, we have a high percentage of Navajo educators who are bilingual who can read, write, and speak Navajo.

The results from the above assessment data revealed that the 11th graders did very well within five years by decreasing 40% from the novice and intermediate levels. The decreased amount was distributed to the proficient level from 18% to 24%. These findings may indicate that the high school students were more serious about Navajo culture and language than the lower grade levels. The other reason is the student’s grade. To maintain a good average grade, the student had to do well in the Navajo cultural study; the district made foreign language study (including Navajo study) a letter grade; before that it used to be pass or retake or fail. The assessment data also revealed that if the SY 2004-2005 served as baseline data, there may have been a high percentage of students in the novice and intermediate levels from the start. But the assessment data does reveal that only a small percentage of students were functioning at the proficient level and none at the advanced level.

The data suggested we are on the verge of losing our Navajo language among our school-age children. The analyzed assessment data should answer our question on the Navajo people becoming aware and acknowledging the present status of our Navajo language; we should look in our own backyards, playgrounds, malls, social gatherings,
schools, and public meetings to see what language is being used by our Navajo people. I am the first person to say that our Navajo language is not being used on a daily basis for our younger generation to be exposed to their Native language.

**Recommendations**

1. **Establish a Navajo-only concept, speaking and communicating in Navajo all the time, that would benefit the Navajo population at home and community.** Ideally, the Navajo-only concept can be started with the adult or fluent speaker of Navajo first, and then the non-speakers can have more exposure to the language first-hand. The Navajo-only concept is very simple in nature; the emphasis is to speak Navajo as much as possible—no punishment.

2. **Include the elderly present-day grandparents and parents as the primary resources in the acquisition and maintenance of our Navajo language.** They need to understand that our younger generation is no longer speaking their Native language. We are the caretakers within our communities who have the responsibility and obligation to help our own children learn their Navajo language at home and in a broader scope the community. They need to hear it from our local leaders, educators, activists, and other parents in the preservation/revitalization of our Navajo language. All social events at the community level should be Navajo language-oriented and less English.

3. **In the school setting, we need to have active parent groups, educators, and school board members to initiate or support the bilingual and/or immersion programs to teach our Navajo language in the classrooms at all grade levels.** A culturally relevant curriculum on Navajo culture and language study would really intensify the teaching and learning outcomes of our school-aged children.
4. *The Navajo Nation Government should be in the forefront of the language preservation or revitalization process.* We have local community representatives (council delegates) to bring about the awareness on the loss of Navajo language among our youth to the Navajo Nation President and council delegates. In the process, they can enact policies or provisions to address the crisis at-hand. They also have the authority to collaborate and network with other organizations, entities, and school districts to ratify or modify school curriculums relevant to Navajo language and culture study. They can even sponsor seminars, workshops, or even conferences to showcase the loss of Native languages and the revitalization processes among the Native tribes. They can also use the mass media system on the Navajo Nation to telecast or televise this phenomenon/crisis on our Navajo language loss amongst our youth. In reality, Native people have a tendency to wait and see who can do it; we have a dependency problem due to the U.S. Government doing everything for us. This is where our Government needs to be more intuitive, creative, problem-solvers, and to independently resolve the crisis at-hand.

**Implications**

The broad scope of the study clearly illustrates the loss of our Navajo language among our school-aged children, and the five-year trend demonstrates a drastic decline is evident. There are strong signals from our people that our Native language is of high importance in our traditional life and the preservation of our Navajo language is essential to our present-day and future generations.

Today, the biggest challenge we are confronted with is the Arizona’s English-only mandate, with some schools serving 95% Native American students. This mandate is actually a barrier to academic progress for our Native American students in the
acquisition or maintenance of our Native language in the home, school, public, and community. But we have the American Native Language Act (1990) that supports the Native Americans in the preservation, speaking, and maintaining their native language. Realistically, we do have bilingual programs within our school system that are funded through Title VII but insufficient to provide adequate bilingual programs for all our Navajo students at all grade levels. Jackson (2008) had a strong question: Why do our schools, especially on the Navajo Nation, continue to accept the assumed research of immersing students in English when it is at comparative levels of dual and full immersion programs? She also emphasized there are added benefits to pursuing the dual language mode of instruction where Navajo students gain academic language, self-confidence to speak and interact among traditional and contemporary lifestyles, and be able to converse and carry on in the native language with elders.

**Recommendation for Further Research**

The study did made a conclusive statement that we are on the verge of losing our Navajo language use among our school-aged children. The first recommendation would be to continue this research and expand it into other large public schools and boarding schools in order to obtain a larger sampling size to further validate the loss of Navajo language among our school-aged children across the Navajo Nation.

The second recommendation is that we need to pursue the road to language renewal and to start working on a strategic plan that will provide guidance and clarity to implementing a language revitalization program model for our Navajo people. Of course, there will be criticism about this recommendation. In-retrospect this could be the first
stage of a rude awakening where people will present their differentiating viewpoints and then understand this is a crisis at-hand.

The third recommendation is the need to answer some questions. To make further analogy of the Navajo language loss among the school-aged children, there is a need to answer an array of research questions as to the loss and preservation of the Navajo language. The first question asks, *How can the Navajo Tribe substantiate a reliable educational assessment data that will predict the loss of Navajo language usage and understanding among school-age children?* The Navajo Nation Government (Department of Education) can spearhead the development of a Navajo Language Proficiency Assessment for all the schools to administer across the Navajo Nation on a quarterly or annual basis. This will also justify a large scale sampling to validate Navajo language loss among school-aged children with a lot more consistency.

The second question asks, *How can the Navajo Tribe devise a valid language survey questionnaire that will provide a true perception of the Navajo language usage among the Navajo people?* Again, the Navajo Nation Government (Department of Education) can strategize and develop a relevant language survey to evaluate the true perceptions made by the Navajo people on the preservation or revitalization of our Navajo language. A government survey has more political emphasis that people respond to better than individuals soliciting survey responses.

The third question asks, *How can the Navajo people realize the urgency and the devastating effects as to the loss of our Navajo language among our school-aged children, which in the process brings about a permanent loss of the Navajo language for our future generations?* The Navajo Nation needs local leaders, educational leaders,
cultural leaders, and parents who have the responsibility and obligation to be in the forefront advocating on key issues affecting their children’s educational process and cultural emphasis at home, school, and community. We are at the crossroads of language renewal or extinction; there is only one option and our Navajo people need to know and understand that option.

The fourth question asks, What justification would ratify there is a loss of Navajo language and the extinction or renewal of the Navajo language? This study determined that there is a Navajo language loss among the school-aged children along with other studies referencing a decline of Navajo language speakers among the Navajo population.

The fifth question, or directive, is what is done to empower the Navajo people to intervene and resurrect the processes of enriching and preserving the Navajo culture and language? One essential element is educating or re-educating our Navajo people on the Navajo tradition and cultural values.

**Final Statement**

I would like to restate that I am a product of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools that started in the mid 1950s and ended by 1972. I went through the Government’s assimilation process with a mindset to finish my education and help my people. Today, I have three children who have college educations, two are teachers and one in a business accounting job. I am proud to say that I am a bilingual person with an attribute of speaking fluent Navajo and English. I am in full support of the dual/bilingual and full immersion programs presently being utilized in the school system across the Navajo Nation where our Navajo students are receptive and speakers of our Navajo
language. I strongly feel that the teaching and learning of our Navajo culture and
language comes from the home and community.
REFERENCES


Marika, R. (1999, May 6). [Testimony taken at Yirrkala, as cited in House of Representatives, Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs], Canberra, Australia.


**DINÉJÍ SAAD BEE NAALKAH**  
Diné Language Proficiency Test  
Summary Score Sheet

Name: __________________________  
Primary Language: __________________________

Grade: K, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, Navajo I, or Navajo II.  
School: __________________________  
Examiner: __________________________  
Date: __________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre / Post Test Scores</th>
<th>Grades:</th>
<th>K / 4th</th>
<th>1st / 5th / 8th</th>
<th>2nd / 6th / N-I</th>
<th>3rd / 7th / N-II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PART I. ORAL SECTION**

A. Commands
B. Pronunciation
C. Comprehension I
D. Translation
E. Oral Responses
F. Comprehension II

**Total Oral Score:**

**Oral Proficiency Level:**
- Novice: (0-25)
- Intermediate: (26-50)
- Advanced: (51-75)
- Proficient: (76-100)

**Oral Gain or Loss:**

Receptive Scores: A, B, C
Expressive Scores: D, E, F

**PART II. READING SECTION**

**Reading Proficiency Level Score:**

**Reading Proficiency Level:**
- Novice: (1)
- Intermediate: (2)
- Advanced: (3)
- Proficient: (4)

**PART III. WRITING SECTION**

**Writing Proficiency Level Score:**

**Writing Proficiency Level:**
- Novice: (1)
- Intermediate: (2)
- Advanced: (3)
- Proficient: (4)
### A. Receptive: Commands. Koninidh nidishnigi, t'āk yak'ēñ'ijii dooleš.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examiner's Navajo Statement</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Student Physical Response (English Interpretations)</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yāsiiž.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Stand up.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dab naátsiínah.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sit back down.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yādylch'ilí.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Raise your hand.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Díid nitiib.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pick this up.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nishii bidiniichilí dóó níilch'ilí.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Touch your nose and close your eyes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Náaltsoos nidiitsoós dóó náaltsoos.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Pick up the paper and turn it over.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre - Post</td>
<td></td>
<td>Grade:</td>
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<td>Total Points: 16</td>
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<td>Date:</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Score:</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### B. Receptive: Pronunciation. Stikh'ēnįį'įįnįįntii.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examiner's Navajo Statement</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Student's Response (English Interpretations)</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tó.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Repeats Tó, [water]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Béeso.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Repeats Béeso, [money]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lįį' nooljįįjįį.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Repeats Lįį' nooljįįjįį, [The horse is galloping]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T'įįžįį adigoh.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Repeats T'įįžįį adigoh, [The post is butting]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Léécha'įįį'į algal.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Repeats Léécha'įįį'į algal, [The dog is eating]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T'įį t'ér'déé' ayóógo dees'įį'az.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Repeats T'įį t'ér'déé' ayóógo dees'įį'az, [It was very cold last night]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre - Post</td>
<td></td>
<td>Grade:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Points: 16</td>
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<td>Score:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### C. Receptive: Comprehension I. Baa yáshá'įį'įį bídílíchilí.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examiner's Navajo Statement</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Student's Response (English Interpretations)</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yistlí bídílíchilí.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Points to the sock.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Háíi akee' a'té?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Points to the foot.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Háádígįįgįį a'tééd níí?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Points to the girl.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Háíí béésh yee hálhé'nįį?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Points to the person making a phone call.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Háádí áláníh ánítso?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Points to the largest basket.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Háádí bóbónlíhíh náhhálíh?</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Points to the leader.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre - Post</td>
<td></td>
<td>Grade:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Points: 16</td>
<td></td>
<td>Date:</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Score:</td>
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</table>
### D. Expressive: Translation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examiner’s English Statements</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Student’s Navajo Responses</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Total Points: 16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tó.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Grade:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bééso.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Date:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black horse</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lii’ hzhin.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Score:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stinky goat</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>T’il’é néíchón.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The dog is eating.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Léécha’i ayá.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was very cold last night.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>T’óó’déé’é ayóogo deek’ naa.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

### E. Expressive: Oral Response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examiner’s Navajo Statements</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>English Interpretations</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Total Points: 16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Haash yinilyé’?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>What is your name?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Grade:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dikwíłsh nináhábi’?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>How old are you?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Date:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ha’át’il dóóme’ii nii?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>What are your classes?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Score:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Máá’ii halgo baa hane’ leh?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>When are coyote stories told?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diné bódahmaa’t’ai bít’i sinilígii díi’ go baa hóóle’.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Explain four items on the Navajo Nation flag.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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### F. Expressive: Comprehension II

<table>
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<th>English Interpretations</th>
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<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Total Points: 20</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nghiichí lá hahooó’é’?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Describe your home environment.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Grade:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ch’iyáán níí bok’iílí h’ baa hóóle’.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Describe one of your favorite foods.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Date:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ha’át’il bínáhítña léécha’i mih’át’iin leh?</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Explain why a dog would bark.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Score:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ki’ baa hóóle’.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tell about clanship.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diné’é hóóle’ la’ baa hóóle’.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Tell a Navajo story.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Díí na’asheb’u’á’ííli baa hóóle’.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Describe this picture.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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86
Name: ______________________

**Gídí**

1. mósí
   a. ljj’
   b. Gídí
   c. tsídii
   d. dibé

2. ch’iyáán
   a. chídí
   b. tsé
   c. atsj’
   d. ližhin

3. bikádínish’iji’
   a. Altso ifyá’.
   b. Hooghan góne’
   c. bikanishúá.
   d. ch’éêh

4. ayá
   a. alhosh
   b. atsj’ yiyá.
   c. yiyaadi
   d. anáálwod.

5. ba’niltsood.
   a. Ch’iyáán baa niká.
   b. Gídí wolyé.
   c. Ayá dóó alhosh.
   d. Gídí yóó’ifyá.

Go on if fewer than 2 errors
Name: ______________________

**Bee Na’anishi**

Jonah Wilson

1. **Ha’át’ii baa hane’?**
   1. (a) (b) (c) (d)
   
   a. Béésh áłts’ózi hadá’ák’eh binázt’i’ l’eh.
   b. Bee na’anishi al’aça áť’éego bee na’anish.
   c. Béésh áłts’ózi al’aça ádnat’éego bee na’anish.
   d. Il adaalkaali t’óó ahayóí al’aça áť’é.

2. **Ha’át’ii il adaalkaali bee bił adaalkaal?**
   2. (a) (b) (c) (d)
   
   a. Bee atsidi bee na’anish.
   b. Il adaalkaali tsin bił adaalkaal.
   c. Bee atsidi t’óó ahayóigo sinil.
   d. Il adaalkaali bee atsidi bee bił adaalkaal.

3. **Tséníł hait’éego choo’j?**
   3. (a) (b) (c) (d)
   
   a. Hooghan góne’ bee hoozdooh.
   b. Tsénił chizh bił sinil.
   c. Tsénił tsin bee k’įįlmmih.
   d. Tsénił dóó chizh hólóogo yá’át’ééh.

4. **Béésh áłts’ózi hait’éego bee na’anish?**
   4. (a) (b) (c) (d)
   
   a. Béésh áłts’ózi hadá’ák’eh binázt’i’ l’eh.
   b. Béésh áłts’ózi hooghandi hóló.
   c. Béésh áłts’ózi ayóogo deení.
   d. Béésh áłts’ózi dóó tsin hwec hólóogo nizhóní.

5. **Háit’éego haghandi łíj’ doo yaah adoolwoł da?**
   5. (a) (b) (c) (d)
   
   a. Ti’oh ádino, łíj’ doo yaah adoolwoł da.
   b. Chidi sizíjgo, łíj’ doo yaah adoolwoł da.
   c. Béésh áłts’ózi sílággo, łíj’ ádín doolceł.
   d. Haghan biná’ázt’i’go, łíj’ doo yaah adoolwoł da.

Go on if fewer than 2 errors
Name: ____________________

Azhni’jih
Candilla Begeye

1. Hait’éej doxh skii do nahanish da?
   1. (a)  (b)  (c)  (d)
   a. Bichidá ádingo biniinaa doxh nahanish da.
   b. Ayóó ani’jí.
   c. Ashkii yánda ashda’á'á dah binááhái.
   d. Doo áhályáq da.

2. Doo ch’aanijikaigo daata’i ashkii bibeese ló dooleel? 2. (a)  (b)  (c)  (d)
   a. Ashkii neeznáá béeso doo bii siih da.
   b. Ashkii shíj bibeese hasht’e niyimíil dooleel.
   c. Ashkii ayóó ch’aanaagháago bii yá’át’ééh.
   d. Ashkii bibeese t’óó áhayóí.

3. Hait’éej amá łahda doh iistl’ó bii béezhózin?
   3. (a)  (b)  (c)  (d)
   a. Amá ayóó bá hózhó.
   b. Amá dah iistl’ó ch’éeh baa nahaniih.
   c. Łah, dah iistl’ó nizhónígo áyiilaa.
   d. Na’nizhoozhidi shíj dah iistl’ó łah baa nahaazníi’.

4. Hait’éej doxh skii do dinón’jí da ñít’éé’?
   4. (a)  (b)  (c)  (d)
   a. Ashkii tsox’éjgo éé’ yiil ch’idoolwoł ñít’éé’.
   b. Ashkii áltse bimá béejo yídóókiił ñít’éé’.
   c. Ashkii bichidi hólóogo nizhóní dooleel.
   d. Ashkii bidibé hólóogo yá’át’ééh ñít’éé’.

5. Ha’át’ii biniinaa ashkii yichxah?
   5. (a)  (b)  (c)  (d)
   a. K’asdddá’ yaah abí’dool’t’é’.
   b. Ashkii ayóó bicha’achx’ii’.
   c. Ashkii bich’aho dooshkeedgo nidiíchxq’.
   d. Ashkii béeso la’ néinidzin ñít’éé’.

Go on if fewer than 2 errors
Name: _______________________

Mq'ii Bil Hodiniih
Luta M. Begay, Translator

1. Hait'eego yidannigi dó dó yidlanigi há' nihtis'iis doo yil ahdinéelnaa da?
   a. Lá' daadanigni dó dó daadlanigi áshijíh likan dabiya'.
   b. Nát'oh da njil't'ohgo hájéidishjool yaah dahoo't'ah.
   c. Áshijíh likan alaáh bil iidáago nihilídi yit'iis.
   d. Àichini abe' t'éyiýa yil ayásgo, bá yá'at'ééh.

2. Hait'eego Ma'ii dibáá' nilinigii át'eeego t'áá doole'é bídih jileeh?
   a. T'óó ahayóí honaanishgo, ádaajiyoo'nah.
   b. Doo níjíinshgo t'áá altsoní hwee ádiíh.
   c. Doo ajilghalgho nízaad nahashishgo, ach'ú jileeh.
   d. Hachiidí hólóogo t'éyiýa ch'iyáán hwee hóló.

3. Teel bee hoodootl'ízhgo dó dó tó nílótíisigii át'eeego, t'áá doole'é disxóšígíi bidájinoolniil leh. Hait'eego dí dóo yá'at'ééh da?
   a. Tsé disxóšígíi ayóó ánitsogo, doo inhá yá'at'ééh da
   b. Doot'ízhíi é tse disxóšígíi bilaáhdi nízhóni.
   c. Bikáá'gi disxósh ndí biyi'í di t'óó baa'ilhgo da át'ée leh.
   d. Hayó' hajaatl'óól da hólóogo, yá'at'ééh dajííni.

4. Diné nídlínigníi hai't'éego ma'ii nahalingo t'áá doole'é íil'íjí leh?
   a. T'áá doole'é t'áadoo hazhó'o baa nitschézhkezi ádeiil'ijh.
   b. T'áadoo baa nitsidekéesi t'óó ahayóí tó nideidlíjh.
   c. Lá' ayóó hootso góó nihi dahožhóni.
   d. Ma'ii nahalingo níjiña' yádaa'a.

5. Hait'eego lá t'áá doole'é doo nhá yá'at'ééhigii ayóó bidáahji' niidlí?
   a. Bidáah niidlínigníi ayóó bídih dahóye'c'.
   b. Doo nhá yá'at'ééhigii doo lá béeso bááh líjí da.
   c. Bidáah niidlínigníi doo baa ahééh niidzin da.
   d. Doo nháyá'at'ééhii ayóó likán dóó doo naniit'ah da. Yá'at'ééhigii éi naniit'ah.
Writing: Ádaahóne’

Shizhi': ___________________________  Score: ________
B. Dinéjí Saad Béé Na'adzojí.

Writing: Díí na’ashch’ąą’įįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįįί

Shizhí': _______________________________  Score: ________

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92
C. Dinéjí Saad Bee Na’adzoji.
Writing: Díí hane’ t’áá ni altso baa hólne’

Shizhi': ______________________ Score: __________

Lééchaq’i dah diiwod

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D. Dinéjí Saad Bee Na’adzojí.
Writing: Díí naashch'ąą́gíí la' t'ąá ni baa nitsíníkeesígíí át'éego baa hólné

Shizhi': ___________________________ Score: _______
APPENDIX B

SURVEY OF LANGUAGE USE
Attachment B

SURVEY OF LANGUAGE USE

Date: ___________________

Who are You? (circle one)  Student _____  Parent _____  Grandparent _____  Educator _____

Please circle your response to the following statements:

A. Very Important  . . .  B. Don’t Know/Doesn’t Matter  . . .  C. Not Important

1. I prefer to speak English all the time.
   A. Very Important  . . .  B. Don’t Know/Doesn’t Matter  . . .  C. Not Important

2. I prefer to speak Navajo all the time.
   A. Very Important  . . .  B. Don’t Know/Doesn’t Matter  . . .  C. Not Important

3. I prefer to speak both languages (Navajo & English).
   A. Very Important  . . .  B. Don’t Know/Doesn’t Matter  . . .  C. Not Important

4. We need to learn and speak our Navajo language.
   A. Very Important  . . .  B. Don’t Know/Doesn’t Matter  . . .  C. Not Important

5. I want my immediate family members to speak Navajo.
   A. Very Important  . . .  B. Don’t Know/Doesn’t Matter  . . .  C. Not Important

6. Our Navajo language is very important to us.
   A. Very Important  . . .  B. Don’t Know/Doesn’t Matter  . . .  C. Not Important

7. We need to preserve/save our Navajo culture, language, and heritage.
   A. Very Important  . . .  B. Don’t Know/Doesn’t Matter  . . .  C. Not Important

Please add any comments you have about the use of Navajo and English in the schools in the spaces below:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

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APPENDIX C

PERMISSION LETTER FROM SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENT OF

CENTRAL CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT #22
March 11, 2011

Navajo Nation Human Research Review Board Support Office
Navajo Division of Health
P.O. Box 1390
Window Rock, AZ 86515

Dear Human Research Review Board:

This is to support Mr. Frank Todacheeny in his research study on “Navajo Nation in Crisis: Analysis on the Extreme Loss of Our Navajo Language Use Amongst Our Youth.” It is our understanding that he has requested the use of data from the Navajo Language Proficiency Assessment which we are willing to provide.

We are committed to the revitalization of the Navajo Language among our students at Central Consolidated School District, and we hope that this research will further inform our efforts towards that end. We will provide the data, as available, with the understanding that student confidentiality will not be compromised and that individual teachers or schools will not be compared publicly.

We further hope that this research will be shared with our District after it is completed so that we can be better informed in our efforts towards revitalization of the Navajo Language.

The CCSD School Board did receive and approve this request in its March 15, 2011 School Board Meeting. If additional information is needed, please contact the Superintendent at 505-598-4984.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

School Board President
Central Consolidated School District

Cc: Gregg Epperson, Superintendent
    Herb Frazier, Director of Bilingual Education

Gregg Epperson, Superintendent of Schools
APPENDIX D

PERMISSION LETTER FROM SUPERINTENDENT

OF CENTRAL CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT #22
March 11, 2011

Internal Review Board
Graduate College
Arizona State University
Tempe, Arizona

Dr. Spencer,

This is to support Mr. Frank Todacheeny in his research study on “Navajo Nation in Crisis: Analysis on the Extreme Loss of Our Navajo Language Use Amongst Our Youth.” It is our understanding that he has requested the use of data from the Navajo Language Proficiency Assessment which we are willing to provide.

We are committed to the revitalization of the Navajo Language among our students at Central Consolidated School District, and we hope that this research will further inform our efforts towards that end. We will provide the data, as available, with the understanding that student confidentiality will not be compromised and that individual teachers or schools will not be compared publicly.

We further hope that this research will be shared with our District after it is completed so that we can be better informed in our efforts towards revitalization of the Navajo Language.

If additional information is needed, I can be reached at 505-368-4984.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Gregg Epperson, Superintendent
Central Consolidated School District

Cc: Herb Frazier, Director of Bilingual Education
Tim Kienitz, Assistant Superintendent for Academic Enhancement

Gregg Epperson, Superintendent of Schools
APPENDIX E

ASU IRB LETTER
To: Dee Spencer
ED

From: Mark Roose, Chair
Soc Beh IRB

Date: 04/05/2011

Committee Action: Expedited Approval

Approval Date: 04/05/2011

Review Type: Expedited F7

IRB Protocol #: 1103008253

Study Title: Navejo Nation in Crisis: Analysis on the Extreme Loss of Navejo Language Use Amongst Our Youth

Expiration Date: 04/04/2012

The above-referenced protocol was approved following expedited review by the Institutional Review Board.

It is the Principal Investigator's responsibility to obtain review and continued approval before the expiration date. You may not continue any research activity beyond the expiration date without approval by the Institutional Review Board.

Adverse Reactions: If any untoward incidents or severe reactions should develop as a result of this study, you are required to notify the Soc Beh IRB immediately. If necessary a member of the IRB will be assigned to look into the matter. If the problem is serious, approval may be withdrawn pending IRB review.

Amendments: If you wish to change any aspect of this study, such as the procedures, the consent forms, or the investigators, please communicate your requested changes to the Soc Beh IRB. The new procedure is not to be initiated until the IRB approval has been given.

Please retain a copy of this letter with your approved protocol.
APPENDIX F

PERMISSION FROM NAVAJO NATION

HUMAN RESEARCH REVIEW BOARD
May 11, 2011

Mr. Frank Todacheeny
Arizona State University
PO Box 925
Tucson, AZ 85714

Dear Mr. Todacheeny:

This is to advise you that Study #NRR.106 "Navajo Nation in Crisis: Analysis on the Extreme Loss of Navajo Language Use amongst Youth" was presented to Navajo Nation Human Research Review Board on April 19, 2011 and considered the initial submission of your protocol. The Board approved your protocol with the following conditions:

- Submit a consent form to be stamped and signed;
- Secure a letter of approval from Mr. Andrew Tan, Superintendent, Department of Dine Education and the Board;
- The protocol is assigned a permanent ID # NNR.11.310 to reference all documents pertinent to the study; and
- The research study is effective from April 19, 2011 to April 19, 2012 with all standard conditions.

Additional contingencies are:

The Navajo Nation Human Research Review Board has added a very important additional contingency regarding failure to comply with NNHRRB rules, regulations, and submittal of reports which could result in sanctions being placed against your project. This could also affect your funding source and the principal investigator. Under Part Five: Certification, please note paragraph five wherein it states: "I agree not to proceed in the research until the problems have been resolved or the Navajo Nation Human Research Review Board has reviewed and approved the changes." Therefore, it is very important to submit quarterly and annual reports on time and if continuation is warranted submit a letter of request sixty (60) days prior to the expiration date.

The following are requirements that apply to all research studies:

1. The Navajo Nation retains ownership of all data obtained within its territorial boundaries. The Principal Investigator shall submit to the NNHRRB a plan and timeline on how and when the data/results will be turned over to the Navajo Nation;
2. Only the approved informed consent document(s) will be used in the study;
3. Any proposed future changes to the protocol or the consent form(s) must again be submitted to the Board for review and approval prior to implementation of the proposed change;
4. If the results of the study will be published or used for oral presentations at professional conferences, the proposed publication, abstract and/or presentation materials must be submitted to the Navajo Research Program for Board review and prior approval;
5. Upon Board approval, three (3) copies of the final publication must be submitted to the Navajo Research Program;
6. All manuscripts must be submitted to the Navajo Research Program for Board Review and prior approval.

7. The Principal Investigator must submit a dissemination plan on how the results of the study and how these results will be reported back to the Navajo Nation. The Principal Investigator must share specifically how these results will generally benefit or improve the health of the Navajo people. This can be completed by:
   a. Conducting an educational in-service for the community people and health care providers on the Navajo Nation and present the findings. Provide documentation of these in-services presented.
   b. Developing educational materials for use by the health care providers and the community people and providing the training on how to use the materials; and
   c. Presenting and sharing the results of the study at a research conference sponsored by the Navajo Nation for its health care providers and the Navajo people.

8. The Principal Investigator is expected to submit documentation on 7a, b, & c.

9. The Principal Investigator must submit quarterly and annual reports as scheduled.

This approval will automatically expire on April 19, 2012 unless sooner suspended, revoked or terminated by action of the Board. A continuation of the research project may be requested by submitting a written request at least sixty (60) days prior to the expiration date to the:

Navajo Division of Health – Research Program
Post Office Box 1390
Window Rock, Arizona 86515

If you have any questions, please call the Navajo Research Program at (928) 871–6650.

Sincerely yours,

Beverly Becenti-Pigman, Chairperson
Navajo Nation Human Research Review Board

Cc: Beverly Becenti-Pigman
NRR-11.310
Chrono
APPENDIX G

APPROVAL LETTER FROM NORTHERN NAVAJO AGENCY COUNCIL RESOLUTION
NORTHERN NAVAJO AGENCY COUNCIL RESOLUTION

NNAC-01-11

SUPPORTING FRANK TODACHEENY’S RESEARCH STUDY ON “NAVAJO NATION IN CRISIS: ANALYSIS ON THE EXTREME LOSS OF NAVAJO LANGUAGE USE AMONG YOUTH.”

WHEREAS:

1. Pursuant to Navajo Nation Code, Title 26, Chapter 26, Chapter 1, Section 18, the Northern Navajo Agency Council is a political subdivision of the Navajo Nation, has the authority to advocate for the twenty (20) chapters of the Northern Navajo Agency and make appropriate recommendations to the Navajo Nation Government, Federal, State, and local entities for appropriate actions; and

2. The Northern Navajo Agency Council has been informed that Frank Todacheeny is a doctoral candidate at the Arizona State University and conducting research and dissertation towards a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership and Innovation; and

3. That the research study is in two-fold: (a) to retrieve 5-10 year test data on the Central Consolidated School District’s Navajo Language Proficiency Test from SY 2004- to SY 2010, primary purpose is to establish a 5-10 year progressive or regressive data trend on the loss of Navajo language usage or understanding among school-age Navajo children; and (2) to administer and distribute survey questionnaire to 25 students, 25 parents, 25 grandparents, and 25 educators to determine if our Navajo people have interest or concern on the importance of our Navajo language; and

4. That the test data does indicate a progressive trend in the loss of Navajo language among our school-age children, then advocacy can be made for an involvement in the Navajo language revitalization process. The response data from the survey questionnaire will also solicit how important our Navajo language is to the Navajo people, which in many ways will establish a means to addressing their Navajo language intervention in the school setting and home environment; and

5. That upon completion of the research study; Mr. Todacheeny will provide feedback to the School District and the Navajo Nation.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Northern Navajo Agency Council Supports Frank Todacheeny’s Research Study on “Navajo Nation in Crisis: Analysis on the extreme loss of Navajo Language use among youth.”

CERTIFICATION

We hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly considered by the Northern Navajo Agency Council at a duly called meeting at Cove Chapter (Navajo Nation) Arizona at which a quorum was present and a motion was made by [Name], and seconded by [Name], and the same was passed by a vote of [Number] in favor, [Number] opposed, and [Number] abstained, this [Date] day of [Month] 2013.

[Signature]
Donald Benally, Chairperson

[Signature]
David John, Vice Chairperson

[Signature]
Lucinda Y. Bohnalley, Secretary