

Syilx Knowledges: A Decolonial Strategy

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Abstract:

This paper will present the context of the depth of on-going language loss as a result of Canadian education policy and the effort of the Syilx Okanagan Language Speakers to create a path toward the revitalization of Nsyilxcn as a language in use. The Nsyilxcn language is on Canada's list of most endangered languages. The chapter will discuss the various challenges, successes and achievements of the Okanagan Language Association and the En'owkin Centre to engage with the community on language initiatives. It will thus provide an overview of the different areas of research, development and revitalization in the Syilx communities, through a multi-layered and comprehensive approach to language recovery. This includes the development of a Nsyilxcn language Teacher Training program, which has resulted in the certification of Nsyilxcn Language teachers now working in many schools, a community-based adult language learning certificate and diploma program, partnered with the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology, which is currently adding many new speakers annually, and a local Syilx Communities Chiefs Advocacy of language in everyday use initiative. In collaboration with the Indigenous Higher Learning Association, En'owkin Centre is currently leading a province-wide initiative for an undergraduate degree in Aboriginal Language Fluency for all Aboriginal language groups in British Columbia. Recently, the Minister of Advanced Education approved the Nsyilxcn Language Fluency Degree at the University of British Columbia Okanagan.

Key words: Assimilation politics, Nsyilxcn, Syilx Okanagan, Enowkinwixw, En'owkin Centre, Decolonial strategy