

## **UC Berkeley**

### **Survey Reports, Survey of California and Other Indian Languages**

#### **Title**

"Without Our Language We Will Cease to Exist as a Unique People"

#### **Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7598j7w5>

#### **Author**

Gardner, Stelomethet Ethel B

#### **Publication Date**

2009

## **“Without Our Language We Will Cease to Exist as a Unique People”**

STELOMETHET ETHEL B. GARDNER  
*Stó:lō (Coast Salish)*

Language is central to cultural identity. Language enhances self-esteem and pride which promotes effective social adjustment. Language expresses the world view of its speakers, i.e. the uniqueness of a culture in terms of food, housing, clothing, methods of travel; how the world was created; the interaction of plant, animal, bird and human life; ways we organize our society, games, songs, dances and art. Language is the principal means by which culture is brought together, shared and transmitted to successive generations (Leon 1988:2).

### **1. Language is Culture, Culture is Language**

The Stó:lō community adopted the above mission statement in 1988. Siyámtelot, otherwise known as Shirley D. Leon, in the paper *Language is Culture, Culture is Language* asks, “Why bother retaining a language which is no longer a viable part of modern Indigenous lifestyles?” Her rhetorical question reflects the current state of Stó:lō Halq’eméylem. She reiterates the contents of the mission statement quoted above and lists some of the benefits of ‘why bother’: “... can be crucial to physiological well-being, a sense of self-esteem, and social development.... [I]ntellectual growth and educational achievement flow from the ability to have command of more than one language” (Leon 1988:6). The elders of the Stó:lō community agree with a similar view regarding the importance and benefit of retaining the Stó:lō Halq’eméylem language. Siyámtelot quotes this view:

*Our language embodies a value system about how we live and relate to each other. It gives a name to relationships among kin, to roles and responsibilities among family members, to ties with broader groups. There are no English words for these relationships because, in general, social and family lives are different from ours. If our language is destroyed, these relationships break down and will inevitably destroy other aspects of our way of life and culture, especially those that describe man’s connection with nature, the Great Spirit, and the order of things. Without our language, we will cease to exist as a unique people (Leon 1988:7-8).*

The elders’ statement, “Without our language, we will cease to exist as a unique people,” implodes in my mind as a Stó:lō person who is acutely aware of the critical state of our language. The implications of what that statement means

concerns me deeply. That critical state, according to Bauman's (1980) classification, shows how Halq'eméylem is verging on obsolescence in that

- only a few older adults speak the language fluently
- the language is not taught to children in the home
- the number of fluent speakers declines as the population increases
- English is the preferred language in most situations
- there are minimal literacy skills among fluent speakers.

Obsolescence is the stage before extinction in Bauman's classification which includes *flourishing*, *enduring*, *declining*, *obsolescent* and *extinct* languages. Only a handful of fluent speaking elders are involved in the language work, so what we do now as a language community is crucial to determining whether we reverse the process, or allow Stó:lō Halq'eméylem to become extinct.<sup>1</sup>

We are the Upriver Halq'eméylem people. Our language is one of three dialects of Halkomelem, a member of the Salishan language family. Twenty-three languages of this family span an area extending over southern British Columbia, Washington, northern Idaho, western Montana, and northwestern Oregon. Kinkade (1992) divides it into five branches:

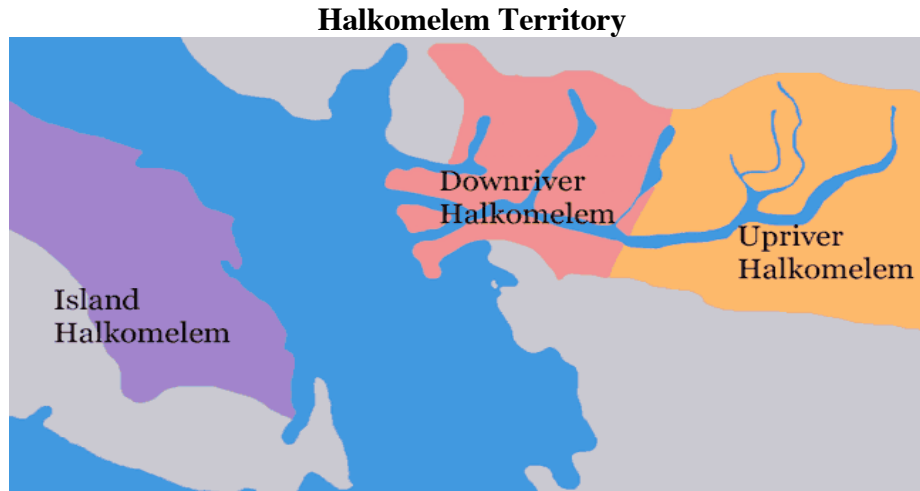
1. Bella Coola
2. Central Salish  
Comox/Sliammon, Clallam, **Halkomelem**, Lushootseed, Nooksack, Pentlatch, Sechelt, Squamish, Straits Salish, Twana
3. Interior Salish  
Coeur d'Alene, Columbian, Kalispel/Flathead/Spokane, Lillooet, Okanagan/Colville, Shuswap, Thompson
4. Tillamook
5. Tsamosan  
Lower Chehalis, Upper Chehalis, Cowlitz, Quinault

Halkomelem,<sup>2</sup> of the Central Salish branch, is closely related to its neighbor to the north, Squamish, and its neighbors to the south, Nooksack and Straits. It is divided into three principal dialects: Upriver, Downriver and Island.

---

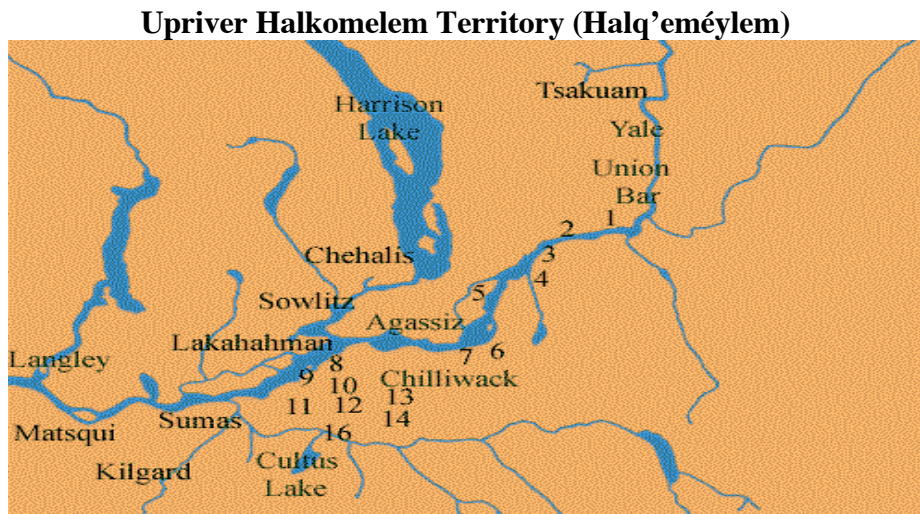
<sup>1</sup> David Crystal states that since we can now make a true assessment of the extent of language death, and the possibility that we might have only one language in the world in a few hundred years, proposes that it is this generation that can make a difference, to either "sit back and do nothing..." or "to act, using as many means as possible to confront the situation..." (2000:165-166).

<sup>2</sup> Halkomelem is an Anglicization of the Upriver term for the language. Due to different names for the language in different dialects, this Anglicization is adopted to avoid favouritism when speaking about the whole language.



from Gerdts and Compton [www.sfu.ca/halk-ethnobiology](http://www.sfu.ca/halk-ethnobiology)

The Upriver dialect is spoken from as far as Yale down to Matsqui in the lower Fraser Valley of southwestern British Columbia. The Downriver dialect is spoken in the Vancouver Metropolitan area, and the Island dialect is spoken on southeastern Vancouver Island from north of Saanich Arm to Nanaimo (Elmendorf and Suttles 1960:1). Halq'eméylem is used when referring to the language from the Upriver perspective, and is further broken down into five sub-dialects, including Sumas, Pilalt, Chilliwack, Chehalis and Tait (Gerdts 1977).<sup>3</sup>



from Gerdts and Compton [www.sfu.ca/halk-ethnobiology](http://www.sfu.ca/halk-ethnobiology)

Index: 1 Chawathil, 2 Skawahlook, 3 Ohamil, 4 Peters, 5 Seabird Island, 6 Popkum, 7 Cheam, 8 Skway, 9 Squiala, 10 Skwah, 11 Aitchelitz, 12 Kwawkwawapilt, 13 Yakweakwioose, 14 Skowkale, 15 Tzeachten, 16 Soowahlie

<sup>3</sup> Gerdts' thesis indicated four dialects of Upriver: Sumas, Chilliwack, Chehalis and Tait; however, later descriptions include Pilalt.

## 2. Halq'eméylem Origins

Our Stó:lō origin stories tell us that we have lived on our land since *time immemorial*, while western science dates the earliest occupation of North America to approximately 15,000 years ago (Thom 1996a, 1996b). Stó:lō origin stories are centered on *Xá:ls* who brought order into the world, and *Xá:ls* changed people into animals, plants and stones back and forth, and “and [many] Stó:lō have a special relationship to these natural resources, for they considered them their ancestors.”<sup>4</sup> They are stories about how we became fully human and connected to the world as we understand it today.

Nine thousand years ago salmon was an important food staple alongside land mammals, which made our ancestors distinct from other cultures in the New World and beyond. Our Stó:lō culture developed from a hunting-gathering lifestyle dependent upon fresh catches of fish and wildlife to complex communities of people, with social status and ranking systems, regional trade networks, and elaborate artistic and ritual life. The Stó:lō developed social classes, formed through inter-married family groups that gained wealth by controlling access to the best fishing, hunting and gathering locations. Radiocarbon dating, in the mid-1950's placed the origin of the Salish people at the Lower Fraser Valley Canyon. Evidence showed that people moved from the coast into the interior as the salmon shifted up the inland waterways (Carlson 2001).<sup>5</sup> Kroeber (1999) dates Proto-Salish at 3,000 years ago based on differences in phonology and morphology; Swadesh (1950) dates it at 6,000 years ago based on his glottochronological study.

Early in the nineteenth century the Chilliwack people lived up the Chilliwack River in the mountains and spoke a dialect of Nooksack. Logjams caused the Chilliwack River to change its course and to flow north into the Fraser. The Chilliwack people then moved into the valley, and by the middle of the nineteenth century they had some twelve villages and started abandoning their original language for Halkomelem (Galloway 1985:416-418, also cited in Suttles 1990:455-456). By the 1940's the Nooksack language was largely replaced by adjacent Upriver Halkomelem, the northern dialect of Northern Lushootseed, or English.

## 3. Stó:lō Halq'eméylem Today

Stó:lō organization today consists of a Stó:lō Nation Government which includes nineteen of twenty-four First Nation Bands within Stó:lō territory, as follows:<sup>6</sup>

|            |                |            |
|------------|----------------|------------|
| Aitchelitz | Skawahlook     | Scowlitz   |
| Chawathil  | Seabird Island | _____      |
| Cheam      | Skowkale       | *Yale      |
| Kwantlen   | Skway          | *Union Bar |

---

<sup>4</sup> Quotation from Thom 1996b. Some people may dispute the Stó:lō belief that plants, animals and stones could be considered ancestors of the people (Brent Galloway 2002, p. c.).

<sup>5</sup> In Plate 5, the coastal origin of Salish people is discussed.

<sup>6</sup> This list of Bands is from the Stó:lō Nation Government House Brochure, October 1996.

*Without Our Language We Will Cease to Exist...*

|                 |              |                             |
|-----------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| Kwaw Kwaw Apilt | Soowahlie    | *Peters                     |
| Lakahahmen      | Squiala      | *Chehalis                   |
| Matsqui         | Sumas        | *Skwah                      |
| Shxw'ow'hamel   | Tzeachten    |                             |
| Popkum          | Yakwekwioose | (*Independent Stó:l̓ Bands) |

*Stó:l̓*, our Halq'eméylem word meaning "River," is the collective name for all people whose Aboriginal Right it is to speak the Halq'eméylem language. Today, *Stó:l̓* traditional territory covers an area of approximately 1.7 million hectares along the lower 190 kilometers of the Fraser River. The Fraser River and fishing are at the heart of *Stó:l̓* culture.

Prior to European colonization it is estimated that there were 10,000 to 30,000 Halq'eméylem speakers (Carlson 1997:141), which declined to about 1,300 by 1928. Today the *Stó:l̓* population has steadily risen to the level of about 5,700 by 1993 (ibid:165-166), but with only a handful of elders who speak the Halq'eméylem language fluently. English is used predominantly. In 1991, the entire First Nation and non-First Nation population in *S'ólh Téméxw* (ibid:53) in *Stó:l̓* and Musqueam territory, was recorded at 2.7 million, and was projected to increase rapidly within the following ten years.

Our *Stó:l̓*, or River, culture, Halq'eméylem and its direct ancestors evolved for 10,000 years in the *Stó:l̓* area (ibid:164), and within 200 years of European contact, our Halq'eméylem language was nearly completely annihilated from ever being a spoken, functional thriving language again. For 200 years, the colonizers tried to make us forget who we were, in effect to make us all *st'áxem* (ibid:90) "worthless people" who do not know our history. But despite the hardships of the past, we can now aspire to become *smelá:lh* (ibid:90) "worthy people", who know our history, who know our language. The *Stó:l̓* are nearly 6,000 people strong now, a force to carry forward a legacy of 10,000 years of cultural development and change on *S'ólh Téméxw*, the land of the River People.

#### **4. Halq'eméylem Revival**

A key group of people in the *Stó:l̓* community are working to reverse the process toward language death, despite the fact that Halq'eméylem has been identified (Foster 1982) as one of the many Aboriginal languages in Canada headed for extinction. We have a handful of older adults who speak Halq'eméylem fluently; three of them can also write in the language. These key people strive to revive the language with a determination that defies all predictions of extinction. These people have been active participants in the work of the Skulkayn Heritage Project of the early seventies, the Coqualeetza Education Training Centre, and in the *Stó:l̓* Shxwelí Halq'eméylem Language Program.

The Coqualeetza Centre conducted a great deal of the earlier work with the *Stó:l̓* elders, of documenting the language and developing language and culture resources for teaching. The linguist Brent Galloway, together with a team of elders, produced the writing system, the first linguistic grammar of Halq'eméylem, a 50-

page grammatical sketch, a 3,000-word list and a 15,000-card dictionary and teaching materials. Adult courses, including three teacher training programmes for ten fluent speakers, were offered through a local college. The teacher training programmes included Edna Bobb, Nancy Phillips, Elizabeth Phillips, Tillie Gutierrez, all of whom became Halq'eméylem teachers and introduced the new writing system in the classroom. This led to local language courses for adults and children, but predominantly in the Band Schools.

Two issues became evident. First, the school programs were highly influenced by a linguistic approach. This type of programme, which stressed pronunciation, vocabulary, and sentence patterns, failed to promote a strong understanding of the cultural aspects inherent in the language. Second, the elders were in the classrooms teaching the young children, but the parents were not able to reinforce the language at home. Thus, the language was not being transmitted and reinforced naturally from one generation to the next.

The Stó:lō Shxwelí Halq'eméylem Language Program began in 1995 as an endeavour to educate adults who would become fluent in Halq'eméylem, and who would pursue a course of study leading to a teaching certification. Shxwelí means *spirit* or *life force* in Halq'eméylem (Carlson 1997:55), and denotes a level of deep importance afforded the language renewal effort. By teaching the adults, the Shxwelí program is addressing the missing link, the inter-generational gap evident in the previously mentioned school programs. However, we know very little about what learning the language means in the context of these peoples' lives – how they use it in the community; how they value it; how the language relates to the Stó:lō culture today. By examining the lived experience of the people, we can learn how the *spirit* or *life force* of the Stó:lō is reflected in their use of Halq'eméylem. In 1997 and 1998, I became more intimately aware of the language renewal effort while taking Halq'eméylem linguistics classes with the Stó:lō Shxwelí Halq'eméylem Language Program located at the Coqualeetza grounds in Sardis, British Columbia, Canada.

My reasons for enrolling in the courses initially were purely selfish; I wanted to learn the language of my people, the Stó:lō. However, while observing my peers and learning some of the intricate meanings of Halq'eméylem words through the elders, I was touched deeply. Sitting in a class of 25 Stó:lō people who were determined to learn the language to eventually become Halq'eméylem language teachers impacted powerfully on my sense of identity, on my understanding of what it means to be Stó:lō. Among my classmates, I discovered a reflection of myself that I had experienced only with my immediate family. They resembled me in many ways, in their quiet respectful accommodation, their easy laughter, and their mannerisms. They knew my relatives and shared with me what they knew about them. I was among kin who were as deeply concerned about reconnecting with our language, culture and identity as I was. I became interested in knowing more about what they were experiencing in learning Halq'eméylem and in being involved with the language revival work. I determined that I wanted to contribute to the Halq'eméylem renewal effort in some way. That became the work of this study.

## **5. Research Method**

My entire study is truly an heuristic investigation, an internal search for understanding the phenomenon of how learning Halq'eméylem can provide a key to understanding my Stó:lō identity and worldview. Moustakas (1994:17-18) describes heuristic research as

*... a process that begins with a question or problem which the researcher seeks to illuminate or answer. The question is one that has been a personal challenge and puzzlement in the search to understand one's self and the world in which one lives. The heuristic process is autobiographic, yet with virtually every question that matters there is also a social – and perhaps universal – significance...*

*Heuristics is a way of engaging in scientific search through methods and processes aimed at discovery; a way of self-inquiry and dialogue with others aimed at finding the underlying meanings of important human experience.*

Issues of identity and worldview and how these are reflected in Aboriginal languages have been emphasized strongly as reasons why we might want to focus a great deal of energy, time and commitment to reviving Halq'eméylem. Thus, in my heuristic search, I investigated three topics related to these issues, incorporating personal reflections, literature and conversations with others. First, I explored what happened in the rise and demise of our language, and how what happened affected this Stó:lō person's life and identity reflected first in bewilderment and ambivalence and then in a growing pride in our Stó:lō heritage and language. In exploring my own experience from my earliest memories of Halq'eméylem to my developing passion to learn more about my people's language, I began to develop an understanding of a Stó:lō worldview by examining how Halq'eméylem expresses best the Stó:lō's relationship to the land, to S'ólh Téméxw. I discovered how *we, our word and our world* blend intimately and spiritually. I examined more closely how our culture, our identity and our worldview are embedded in words of the Halq'eméylem language to illustrate how Halq'eméylem brings these aspects into focus. These explorations stemmed from my need to know and understand what happened to our language in its demise and rise, to understand what the elders mean when they say "language is central to cultural identity and expresses the worldview of its speakers," and to understand what is meant when they say "language is a gift from the creator."<sup>7</sup> By understanding these concepts, it became clearer how Halq'eméylem expresses intricate cultural nuances important to the Stó:lō. Understanding these concepts were important to this research in order for me to understand the background context of my co-researchers and myself, and to provide a backdrop upon which to depict our experiences.

The co-researchers in my study included nine remarkable people who were, or have been, associated with the Skulkayn, Coqualeetza, and Shxwelí programs, and who were dedicated to reviving the Stó:lō Halq'eméylem language. My main

---

<sup>7</sup> "Language is a Gift From the Creator" was the theme for a special issue of the *Canadian Journal of Native Education*. The theme is drawn from a quotation by Chief Mike Mitchell (Mitchell 1989:1).



research question was the following:

- What does language renewal mean in the lives of the people whose language is being renewed? In this case, people of the Stó:lō community.

This study was designed to tell the story of a community's drive to revive their language despite predictions for its extinction, to document what this effort means to a community of people who believe that without the language they will cease to be a unique people, and finally, to illustrate how this revival effort directly affects people's lives. I depicted how specific events in the context of people's lives illustrated what is meant by "language is central to cultural identity," how "language enhances self-esteem and pride which promotes effective social adjustment" and the ways "language expresses the world view of its speakers." As such, my intention was to reveal the ways in which language revitalization delivered the promises declared in the Stó:lō Halq'eméylem Language mission statement.

I wanted to know what language renewal *means* to people and to their lives, what *inspires* people to learn "a language that is no longer a viable part of modern Indigenous lifestyles," and to reveal how the language *identifies* who we are in a contemporary context, how it reflects our *worldview* today. Thus, by examining meaning, value or inspiration, identity and worldview, I aimed to connect the use of Halq'eméylem to a contemporary cultural context.

Documenting what Stó:lō Halq'eméylem language renewal means in the context of people's lives contributes to the dearth of knowledge on language revival. Little is written about how individuals who make up the community are affected by the effort, about what inspires them against all odds, and in what ways language revival might restore wholeness to a community. By conducting this study, I wanted to reveal to the community the fruits of their labour, and to inspire other communities to revive their own languages despite the difficulties and barriers they might face.

## **6. A Very Special Wild Strawberry Patch**

The story of Stó:lō Halq'eméylem language renewal is meant to be more than a documentation of facts. The story intends to serve as an act of "making special" (Kenny 1996:94) the meaning of Halq'eméylem renewal in our lives today by crafting it as an aesthetic experience.<sup>8</sup> In the presentation of my research, I resonate the aesthetic "qualities"<sup>9</sup> of *beauty*, *celebration*, *triumph* and *power*, qualities of Stó:lō Halq'eméylem language renewal manifested in the lives of my co-

---

<sup>8</sup> As detailed later, the idea of incorporating aesthetic experience in my research was highly influenced by Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis's method of *The Art and Science of Portraiture*, a method that explicitly "combines systematic, empirical description with aesthetic expression" (1997:3).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 90

researchers. “Wild strawberries” is a metaphor that weaves throughout this research on what Halq’eméylem language renewal means to the Stó:lō in the context of their lives today. “Wild strawberries” is borrowed from the Cheam people in S’ólh Téméxw. The Halq’eméylem name for Cheam is *Xwchiyó:m* or *Chiyó:m* and translates as “where there are always wild strawberries.”

## **7. Gathering Wild Strawberries**

“Gathering wild strawberries” refers to how I approached acquiring and presenting the richly shared experiences of my co-researchers, the nine Stó:lō people who participated in our study. They shared generously, and with enthusiasm, the sadness, hope and joys of Halq’eméylem language work, all bundled into an hour to an hour-and-half of interview time each. My emotions stir every time I re-read through each “poetic monologue,” reliving how each person disclosed to me their innermost thoughts about their involvement with Halq’eméylem renewal.

My research stemmed from wanting to understand my own life experience, but learning Halq’eméylem linguistics in a class of Halq’eméylem revivalists served as the catalyst for arriving at my topic. I was in awe of these people who were persevering to learn whatever they could of the language. They understood that they were learning something very precious and that they would be shouldered with the responsibility of carrying this learning to others. This class included some twenty people, mainly women. Elders usually presided in these classes; they were Yómalot, Ts’áts’eloxwót, younger elder, Tseloyóthelwet (Shirley Julian) and sometimes Xwiyólemot (Tillie Gutierrez). The classes were part of the Simon Fraser University (SFU)/Secwepemc Cultural Education Society’s Halq’eméylem Linguistics Proficiency Certificate Program taught variously by Strang Burton (sometimes co-facilitated with Martina Wiltschco), Brent Galloway, Susan Russell, and Suzanne Urbancyk. I knew Burton from our collaborative work at the University of British Columbia where I was employed as the Associate Director of the First Nations House of Learning. He was doing post-doctoral studies there at the time, and suggested that I participate in the course offered in Sardis.

In the fall of 1997, I was travelling by bus from Vancouver to Chilliwack once a week to participate in the linguistics class. I sensed immediately that my classmates knew they were participating in something special, something unique, and timely. Students would bring food to share. A great deal of reverence was shown toward the elders who were always ready to receive hugs and exchange smiles and laughter. Students addressed each other in Halq’eméylem, “*Láw! Lichexw we éyo?* (Greetings! How are you?)”; a common response was “*Ts’ats’el éy! (Very good!)*”. It was a class like no other in which I had ever participated, and I looked forward enthusiastically to this weekly trip. After I began my research, I continued to participate in Halq’eméylem linguistics courses.

Conducting my research on Halq’eméylem language renewal required following specific protocol with Stó:lō Nation. Accompanied by a letter dated February 10, 1998, I sent my research proposal to Gwen Point, the Education Manager of Community Development for Stó:lō Nation. On September 9, 1998,

Gwen invited me to Stó:lō Nation to meet with her and others who would compose my steering committee.

My first instructions were to exercise sensitivity in working with the elders so that their time and energy would not be taxed. They were often called upon to share their rare knowledge of Halq'eméylem and Stó:lō culture. Secondly, I was asked to submit a description of my research project to the Stó:lō Archives, which was approved by the Executive Director of Stó:lō Nation's Aboriginal Rights and Title Department. Third, I was asked to request my co-researchers to sign a consent form to have their taped interviews submitted to the Stó:lō Archives, and finally, that I submit a copy of my final research paper to the Archives. I had little contact with the "steering committee" regarding the development of my paper, other than receiving instructions at the initial meeting.

My research into the issues of Stó:lō identity and worldview intensified when I was hired by Stó:lō Nation in November 1999 as Education Manager to replace Gwen Point, who was on a two-year leave from her position. My new responsibilities included overseeing the work of the Stó:lō Shxwelí Halq'eméylem Language Program. This was a great opportunity for me to be immersed in the topic of my study, to see how people were using the language more broadly and to participate in and observe community activities, some of which are referred to throughout this paper. Being in the community allowed me to become familiar with a number of individuals who were involved in a broad range of activities in Halq'eméylem language renewal. From these individuals, I selected my co-researchers.

From September 1998 to July 2000, I delved into researching several topics to set the context for my research. First, I set the socio-historico-politico context, and discovered how to treat as metaphors the concepts of *st'áxem*, "lower-class people," or "worthless people who do not know their history" and *smelá:lh*, "upper-class people" or "worthy people who know their history." I use these as metaphors for the effects of Canada's practiced government assimilation policies, and our efforts to transcend their effects through language and cultural revitalization. To determine what it means "to know our history," I explored Stó:lō people's worldview defined by our traditional relationship with S'ólh Téméxw (Our Land), and the interrelatedness of Stó:lō people, language, land and identity. I then examined how Riverworld, or Stó:lō worldview, permeates the Halq'eméylem language, as defined by our ancestors and their relationship to Riverworld. I discovered that reconnecting with our Halq'eméylem language is the link that can serve to bring wholeness to understanding our Stó:lō identity and worldview. The inclusion of the co-participants in my investigation served to depict how our identity and worldview are manifest in a contemporary cultural context through language revitalization.

My research approach was highly influenced by the work of Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis's method called **The Art and Science of Portraiture** (1997:xv), which seeks to blend art and science to capture the richness, complexity and dimensionality of human experience. In particular, I was drawn by portraiture's focus on a narrative style and its intention to make the research accessible to a

wider audience, and uses a language that is not coded or exclusive.<sup>10</sup> Portraiture concerns itself with supplying rich contextual description, and makes explicit that “voice is the research instrument, echoing the self of the portraitist.”<sup>11</sup> In portraiture, empathy and reciprocity with the co-researchers is central to representing their lives as authentic and legitimate to the participants themselves.<sup>12</sup> Portraiture presents the data in a way in which the participants can proclaim, “This is who we are. This is what we believe. This is how we see ourselves.”<sup>13</sup> An aesthetic whole in portraiture means that the research resonates with the researcher, with the actors and with the audiences, achieving a standard of “authenticity,” portraiture’s response to “validity.”<sup>14</sup> For the research on Stó:lō Halq’eméylem renewal, resonating with the researcher means that I will have written a credible and believable story about my topic; resonance with the co-researchers means that they will see themselves, their images and experiences mirrored in the “poetic monologues,” and in the discussions about them; and resonance for the readers means that they will be able to say, “yes, of course, now I understand better what it means to the Stó:lō people to revive their language!”

I draw on Kenny’s concepts of “humans as aesthetic” to establish the nature of the relationship between myself as researcher and my participants as co-researchers in this study. In this concept, the assumption is made that “as one moves toward beauty, one moves toward wholeness.” This assumption befits my research of what Halq’eméylem means in the lives of people who are working to revive it to bring wholeness to their lives as Stó:lō people, to reconnect with their Stó:lō aesthetic. I used a creative expression format, *poetic monologues*, as a medium for involving the reader in a dynamic of “play.” The “poetic monologues reflect a “transformation into structure” what the co-researchers shared, a creative expression format designed to engage the reader in the lived experiences of the co-researchers.

I asked each co-researcher who participated in my study to share the limited time we had together to talk about their life experiences, their thoughts, their dreams, and about their motivation in their work as Halq’eméylem revivalists. I coined the term ‘revivalists’ only after having interviewed them all. They chose, with a great deal of enthusiasm, to participate in this academic exercise, and I was honoured that they did. The co-researchers chose where we would meet to interview, their home or mine or elsewhere. They were comfortable with me, and spoke freely, with an outpouring of detail I had not expected. I laid out my plan to each of them, explaining as carefully as I could the nature of the phenomenon I was trying to understand. Each person led the way from there with only a little prompting from me at intervals. I receded in the background and listened intently as their voices flowed forth loud and clear.

The presentation of the co-researchers’ words, isolated from my own interaction

---

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 10

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 85

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., pp. 148-149

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 193.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., pp. 245-247.

with them, lay bare for the reader the essence of what each co-researcher shared. I call them “poetic monologues”.<sup>15</sup> Although the “monologues” were derived from our interaction, I call them so because they reveal, in essence, the co-researchers’ own search for understanding the phenomenon they were asked to talk about - their experience. Speaking about their experiences as they did was as much, if not more, for their own sake, as it was for mine. I qualify the monologues with “poetic” because each “monologue” represents a unique character and style that is reflected in the diction and vernacular of each co-researcher. Collectively, we ponder how people are experiencing Halq’eméylem language revival work by examining our individual experiences.

| <b>Parents with Children</b>     | <b>Junior Elders</b>                      | <b>Senior Elders</b>                 |
|----------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| Katelíla<br>Koyalemot<br>Tyrone* | Xwelíxwiya<br>Kwósel<br>T’ít’elem Spá:th* | Épelel<br>Siyàmiyatéliyot<br>Yómalot |

The Sto:lō participants fall into three categories equally distributed: Elders, Junior Elders, and Parents with children at home. Of the nine, only two (\*) are male, one Parent and one Junior Elder. (There are no living Male elders who are fluent speakers doing active language work.) Of the Parents, Katelíla and Koyàlemót teach in an organized setting, while Tyrone is actively learning, informally teaching his children, and promotes Halq’eméylem language work in the Stó:lō community. Of the Junior Elders, Kwósel teaches the language at Seabird Island Community School, and T’ít’elem Spath teaches the community Halq’eméylem classes to adults. Junior Elder, Xwelíxwiya teaches more informally, at every opportunity, to whomever is willing to learn. The Elders’ group includes Épelel, Siyàmiyatéliyot and Yómalot. Épelel is the youngest of the three elders and is training to become a highly fluent Halq’eméylem language teacher. Siyàmiyatéliyot is one of the very few fluent Halq’eméylem speakers who also knows how to write Halq’eméylem. Yómalot, the most senior of the three, works diligently to share her vast knowledge of Halq’eméylem. It is important here to acknowledge Ts’ats’elexwót (Elizabeth Herrling), Xwiyólemot (Tillie Gutierrez), and Tseloyóthelwet (Shirley Norris), three other Stó:lō elders who are also making significant contributions to the Halq’eméylem renewal work. It is wonderful to be writing all these Halq’eméylem names in this paragraph. Halq’eméylem naming is increasingly gaining momentum in Stó:lō communities, giving prominence and validation to this important aspect of our language.

The experiences of this set of co-researchers span the era of community driven Halq’eméylem renewal efforts: the Skulkayn Project of the early 1970s, then the Coqualeetza Cultural Education and Training Centre, which also began in the 1970s

---

<sup>15</sup> The fully edited transcriptions can be found in my dissertation, Tset Hikwstexw Te Sqwelteltset, We Hold Our language High: The Meaning of Halq’eméylem Renewal in the Everyday Lives of Stó:lō People, from which this research report is derived.

*Without Our Language We Will Cease to Exist...*

and continues today, and more recently, the Stó:lō Shxwéłí Halq'eméylem Language Program. Three linguists are mentioned at various points in the “poetic monologues.” They are Jimmy Harris, who conducted work on Halq'eméylem in the 1960s, and has been volunteering with Stó:lō Shxwéłí in helping to develop the Intensive Halq'eméylem Language Fluency Program; Brent Galloway, who has been working on the language since 1970 conducting work with the Coqualeetza elders and the Stó:lō Shxwéłí Halq'eméylem Program; and Strang Burton, who currently works with Stó:lō Shxwéłí and has taught some of the linguistics courses. Each participant in our study will have had a variety of experiences in any combination of the above-mentioned initiatives. Halq'eméylem language work has also been conducted extensively in community schools in Chehalis and Seabird Island. The Chilliwack School District, where many Stó:lō children attend, has been highly supportive of the Halq'eméylem language work, and is very much looking forward to hiring teachers being produced as a result of all the efforts. Other Halq'eméylem language initiatives have been established in the First Nations communities of Kwantlen, Skwah, Matsqui, Sumas, and Chawathil, and possibly others. The Halq'eméylem language renewal momentum is growing. The following table will be useful to the reader in understanding how the Halq'eméylem language “movement” evolved.

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| 1969         | <b>Canada's White Paper Policy.</b> A government document introduced by Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau, which proposed to extinguish special rights for Indians. Aboriginal communities across Canada joined forces in opposing the implementation of this policy.   |
| 1972-1974    | <b>Skulkayn Project.</b> The earliest community-driven project established to document and preserve Halq'eméylem. Elders were audiotaped talking about Halq'eméylem language and Stó:lō culture.   |
| 1973-present | <b>Coqualeetza Cultural Education and Training Centre</b> conducted extensive work with Stó:lō elders on Stó:lō history, culture and language. Produced materials for community language efforts.  |
| 1995         | <b>Early Skowkale Halq'eméylem Immersion Program.</b> This precursor to the Stó:lō Shxwéłí Halq'eméylem Program aimed to train teachers with Halq'eméylem fluency in six months. It produced the community language courses: Halq'eméylem Levels I-IV.   |
| 1995-present | <b>Stó:lō Shxwéłí Halq'eméylem Language Program.</b> Delivers community language programs and trains Halq'eméylem language teachers. Students in this program have taken any combination of Halq'eméylem levels I-IV, the <i>Halq'eméylem Linguistics Proficiency Certificate</i> , the <i>Native Adult Instructors Diploma (NAID)</i> , and the <i>Provincial Instructors Diploma (PID)</i> , and other courses and workshops. Many of the participants now teach Halq'eméylem. |

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| Sept<br>2001        | <b>Intensive Halq’eméylem Language Fluency Program (IHLFP).</b><br>Established to help future teachers become <i>highly fluent</i> in Halq’eméylem and to learn how to teach this type of program. The initial program was delivered five hours a day, five days a week.  |
| Dec<br>2001         | <b>Developmental Standard Term Certificate (DSTC) in Halq’eméylem Language and Culture.</b> Incorporates much of the prior work into an accredited teaching certificate recognized by the British Columbia College of Teachers. Developed with many community stakeholders, Stó:lō and other, in partnership with Simon Fraser University’s (SFU) Faculty of Education. |
| Jan-<br>Dec<br>2003 | The teacher education component of the DSTC was delivered to Stó:lō language teachers.  |
| Jan-<br>May<br>2004 | The DSTC participants completed a Bridging into Education program to prepare them for entry to SFU’s Professional Development Program.  |

The Stó:lō Nation Developmental Standard Term Certificate (DSTC) in First Nations Language and Culture, in a landmark decision by the British Columbia College of Teachers, was officially approved for delivery on December 6, 2001. On January 25, 2002, Stó:lō Nation celebrated this historic event in a traditional witnessing ceremony with feasting, drumming, singing and speeches. Fifteen participants began the education component of this program, which ran from Jan-Dec 2003, and many of them are ready to undertake studies toward full professional teacher certification. The co-researchers in this study have participated in some or all of these activities.

### 8. Dessert of Wild Strawberries

I began this labour of love in 1998 to tell the story of Stó:lō community’s drive to revive our Halq’eméylem language despite predictions made for its extinction, to document what Halq’eméylem revival means to a community who believe that without our language we will cease to be a unique people. My questions were aimed at finding out what Halq’eméylem renewal means in the context of the participants’ lives. More specifically, I set out to determine how events in the context of peoples’ lives illustrate what is meant by the following points:

- language is central to cultural identity
- language enhances self-esteem and pride, which promotes effective social adjustment
- language expresses the worldview of its speakers

These promises, promulgated in the Stó:lō Halq’eméylem language mission statement, indeed, have shown to be manifest in the lives of the Halq’eméylem revivalists as illustrated in their “poetic monologues.” The co-researchers’ stories in this study have shown how strongly they feel about learning the language, how it

*Without Our Language We Will Cease to Exist...*

transformed their lives from *st'áxem*, not knowing who they were as Stó:lō people, to *smelá:lh*, growing in knowing their Stó:lō identity and worldview through language revitalization. Their stories have shown how the Halq'eméylem revivalists bravely transcended their fears, anxieties and insecurities associated with the language work. Their stories have illustrated their intense commitment, sacrifice, and tremendous personal effort to learn and teach Halq'eméylem, to use it in their daily lives, and to transmit it to the next generations. They have shown a deep reverence and spiritual understanding of the precious Halq'eméylem knowledge over which they have become stewards.

Historical developments, such as Canada's assimilation aim, and the demise of our language and cultural traditions, are reflected similarly in each co-researcher's story. I coined the term "*st'áxem* effect," to refer to the effect on Stó:lō people when we do not know our history, do not know our culture; and how the *st'áxem* effect hurts our sense of identity. "Becoming *smelá:lh*" refers to reconnecting with our history, language, and culture to rebuild a strong sense of identity in being Stó:lō, "becoming worthy." The "poetic monologues" reveal how reconnecting with our Halq'eméylem language through the various means illustrated can serve to bring healing to our community, to bring pride in our identity, strengthening what it means to be Stó:lō, to be "people of the River." For a long time we did not know how it was, or why, that even though our skins were brown, and we were called "Indian," we spoke "that white language (Yómalot)." Even "white" people had no idea of what had happened to us. They would ask, "Do you speak your language (Koyàlemót, Xwelíxwiya)?" The situation was confusing for everyone. We are coming out of a dark era, acknowledging and facing what happened to our language and culture, and our rightful Stó:lō identity is resurfacing. As Xwelíxwiya states, "It just has to burst through!"

The elders have watched the world of Halq'eméylem diminish swiftly before their very eyes, swiftly slipping away to be replaced by English. Of all the participants, the elders, who have once seen the language flourish, are the most skeptical that it will become fully revived again. Siyàmiyatéliyot has been involved in the work of Halq'eméylem renewal for thirty years and has witnessed only a few people become moderately fluent speakers of Halq'eméylem. Siyàmiyatéliyot and Yómalot have seen people struggle with uttering even a few words and phrases in Halq'eméylem. Nonetheless, they never fail to give themselves to the work of Halq'eméylem revival; they never give up.

We can be grateful to Yómalot and Siyàmiyatéliyot who shared their experiences of how they managed to "put it [Halq'eméylem] away (Siyàmiyatéliyot)," despite the residential schools' aim to make them forget Halq'eméylem, and to forget that they were Xwélmexw (First Nation). Because of their tenacity, their "stubbornness (Yómalot)," we have been able to arrive at the level of development in Halq'eméylem revival we are at today. The elders were determined to keep Halq'eméylem alive inside their minds and hearts, while it swiftly slipped away all around them. We raise our hands in thanks and respect to them for their great feat.



The elders are the main source of inspiration for the Halq'eméylem revivalists who are picking up the language, to "put it away" in their own minds and hearts for future generations to come. The new Halq'eméylem revivalists, all who are learning Halq'eméylem and transmitting what they know to others, look to the elders for solace when the cause seems unattainable, or difficult. They are ever inspired at how the elders never quit though difficulties may arise. These few elders who remain who are fluent in Halq'eméylem will be gone one day soon. This knowledge strikes fear in the hearts of the ones charged with carrying the language forward. The Halq'eméylem revivalists will then be on their own. They are the ones who will bear responsibility for taking the breath of our language from the remaining fluent elders and breathing it into the young ones coming up. This realization saddens the hearts of those who have gained so much from the elders, who yet feel like babies, worried whether they can stand alone without the support of the fluent elders. It is they who must now stand up and support the legacy of the elders and ancestors, though at this time they may feel wobbly in the knees. "It's a race against time," says T'ít'elem Spá:th, who is learning what he can of the language. Nonetheless, the spirits of our ancestors and elders will carry on in the Halq'eméylem revivalists through work conducted over the past thirty years to preserve the voices of our ancestors on tapes and CDs, now available in the Stó:lō Nation Archives.

The Junior Elders, baby boomers, are the warriors, promoters, supporters, champions of the language work. They have lived long enough to be wise, and to direct that wisdom to work for the common good. The younger Halq'eméylem teachers look to them for their leadership and experience. They may not have the benefit of gaining full fluency in the language for themselves in their lifetime, but they will be good role models and show the younger ones that it is worth their time and effort to learn Halq'eméylem and to be proud of it. In many ways, they have come to terms with the hurts of the *st'áxem* effect. They can be patient with the time it takes to remember and honour the legacy of language and culture passed on by the elders and ancestors before them.

The Parents with children at home are the most hopeful for a future that will include Halq'eméylem being spoken by their children and grandchildren. These are the ones who will be carrying the responsibility for the revival of intergenerational transmission of Halq'eméylem as they teach their children in the natural settings of their homes. They are bursting through the old *st'áxem* stereotypes with a passion, so their children and grandchildren will know who they are as Stó:lō people, as people of S'ólh Téméxw.

As each Halq'eméylem revivalist grows in the language, it creates a ripple effect of first an acknowledgement that our language is worth speaking, then arriving at a place of being able to put those first words on our tongues, and healing our sense of who we are as Stó:lō people. All of their efforts have come together, to establish "a movement afoot (T'ít'elem Spá:th)" "to pick it [Halq'eméylem] up," to "hold it up again (Tyrone)."

The language, embedded in the collective memory of Stó:lō people, feels natural to them. "It seems natural today (Tyrone)," "it wasn't anything different; it

*Without Our Language We Will Cease to Exist...*

was just the way mom said things (Épelel).” Even a few words and phrases heard in times gone by was enough to give some people a strong sense of the language and its sounds. What little was spoken, was remembered as being spoken with a great deal of pride, “when they talk, they strut,” says Xwelíxwiya. This little bit of language shone through the *st’áxem* effect in some cases, planting a seed of Stó:lō identity that with nourishment and enlightenment grew into the Halq’eméylem revivalist movement we see today.

The challenges of Halq’eméylem revival are many, but not so insurmountable that they cannot be overcome, and the learning curve is great. It is difficult to learn a language when there are so few people in the entire world one can talk to, and when there are so few easily accessible text and audio-visual resources upon which to draw. The work needs to be concentrated with much sacrifice from the ones who take it on. It’s a noble and honourable effort and often not greatly appreciated by others outside the work. It will not be fully appreciated until Halq’eméylem revival comes to full fruition. Everyone will be able to see and appreciate the beauty, power and wonder of the rich heritage embedded in our Halq’eméylem language. More people will begin to understand and appreciate the work and sacrifice of the Halq’eméylem revivalists, and the revivalists can feel full satisfaction with themselves for the legacy they are carrying forward for the elders and ancestors.

The fluent speaking elders can appreciate deeply how our Stó:lō culture and worldview is embedded in our Halq’eméylem language. This knowledge is being passed on to the rest of us today, how our land, language and selves are inextricably interrelated, how spirit permeates everything and how these concepts are expressed best in our Halq’eméylem language. When we begin to understand these precious gifts, our hearts soar, our emotions are stirred, and we feel the healing of coming to know ourselves as Stó:lō people, River people, as Xwélmexw. We become knowledgeable in how to express our love and affection for our people and for Riverways, through our songs and prayers in Halq’eméylem. We come to learn that respect is the fundamental philosophical value that ties all things into one interrelated creation. Halq’eméylem is being spoken today in this Riverworldview. People are introducing themselves using Halq’eméylem names, talking about their history, saying who they are related to, where they are from. Events are being opened with prayers said in Halq’eméylem; Halq’eméylem is used during traditional ceremonies. People in S’ólh Téméxw are addressing each other informally when they meet, and speak what they know to each other.

We have gained immensely in our understanding of how our culture is embedded in the language, yet we know that a tremendous amount has been lost, so much so that some fear that in learning to speak our language, “instead of being unique Stó:lō people, we’ll be people who speak Halq’eméylem (Tyrone).” Yes, with what was lost, we will indeed “lose a part of our identity (Tyrone).” But, on the other hand, it is not all lost, and we will surely have captured the important essences of meaning in our language. We need to come to terms with managing our ancient, yet persistent language, in a contemporary context, in a context where settler languages have prominence over ours, and in a context of global

communication where endangered languages draw little, if any, attention. Maybe our language will evolve into a kind of “Halq’eméylish” as Katelíla describes the prospect, and she is perfectly comfortable with the idea. Languages do mesh, but this does not mean that they must necessarily lose their uniqueness.

Some of the challenges to Halq’eméylem renewal refer to the new technological terms that are being created at a fast pace in our contemporary times. And though we might bemoan the ills of modern technology, it is modern technology that may be a boon to Halq’eméylem revitalization. We can now digitize the elders’ words for posterity. We can listen repeatedly to the same words and phrases over and over; we can jump around from one word or phrase to another easily on a CD ROM (i.e., Seabird Island Community School 2001). We can even see animated images that show us how our physiology works when we make certain sounds (i.e., Stó:lō Nation 2001), and we can make learning Halq’eméylem fun with games on CD ROM (i.e., Stó:lō Nation 2000). These kinds of resources have been developed. We can put Halq’eméylem on the web to create greater accessibility of the language (i.e., Gerdtts and Compton 2002). “We got technology, so why can’t we use those on-line,” says Katelíla, “So every day I check my hotmail, I’m doing Halq’eméylem, signed ‘te’ si:yaye, your friend.” We can use the technology that our children are becoming ever more expert at using; we can involve children in developing technological resources. And it is ultimately the children, their future children, and their children’s children, that we remember when we make the sacrifices that we do today, remembering the sacrifices and challenges our elders and ancestors had to make.

As a result of all the past work and sacrifice, Halq’eméylem is being taught to children on many fronts: in two Kindergarten classrooms in the Chilliwack School district; in Headstart programs; at Skwah, Matsqui, Sumas, and Chawathil Bands; and at Seabird Island and Chehalis Schools. Most importantly, we can see that Halq’eméylem is being transmitted from parent to child in the home.

*I teach my own kids. Sometimes they’re not good. I mean like I scold them.  
‘Emétlha! Emét! I would tell them, Sit down (Katelíla).*

When we first want to learn Halq’eméylem, we usually want to learn it for our own sake, to connect for ourselves a sense of who we are, to become healed and whole as Stó:lō people, as Xwélmexw, as People of the River. The greatest reward for Halq’eméylem revivalists is to see the fruits of their labour expressed in the children, who are echoing the legacy of our ancestors as they speak, pray and sing in Halq’eméylem.

## **9. Conclusion and Implications**

As a Stó:lō researcher my ruminations throughout the study were based on my personal experience of trying to understand the phenomenon of what happened to our language, and grew into a passion to delve ever more deeply into understanding what Halq’eméylem means to Stó:lō people. My own experiences mirror those of

*Without Our Language We Will Cease to Exist...*

the co-researchers in my study who also wrestled with ambivalence over the issue of identity. What did it mean to be “Indian?” We did not know any “Indian” language, or stories, or traditional ceremonies. At least, that was the case for most of us for a period of time. Many of our people today continue to struggle with these questions. We discovered we are Stó:lō, that our language is Halq’eméylem, and that there is a rich and powerful heritage attached to being Stó:lō. With this knowledge, we finally came home to the River, to the Stó:lō, and realized that we and the River are one identity. Our language tells us so.

We have gained a brief glimpse of our Riverworldview and begin to feel intimately connected to who we are as Stó:lō people, People of the River. By reconnecting with our language and culture, we can re-create Riverworldview into its meaning for us in a contemporary context. We need our *Xwelméxwqel* (language) and *Sxwōxwiyám* (traditional stories) to be made visible to our collective consciousness once again, to be learned by all our community members, and incorporated in all our educational learning environments. The young children especially need to learn the beauty and wonder reflected in our language and culture, because they are the ones who will carry this legacy of our ancestors forward for the benefit of future generations. Everyone can share our pride and connection with S’ólh Téméxw in this Riverworldview way, appreciating the Stó:lō’s contribution to the “full creative capacities of the human mind” (Mithun 1998:189). The implications of Halq’eméylem revitalization is that the legacy of invention and creativity of a Stó:lō aesthetic can continue on into the future.

Let’s now review Bauman’s classification that illustrated how Halq’eméylem is verging on obsolescence. *Only a few older adults speak the language fluently.* Yes, this is true for Halq’eméylem, and the few elders we have are dedicated, committed and contribute tirelessly to the revival effort. *The language is not taught to children in the home.* No, we cannot say this is completely true anymore. The most important factor in making Halq’eméylem a functional living language is transmission of the language from parent to child in the home. The Halq’eméylem revivalist parents are making this happen. A growing number of adults are learning Halq’eméylem through the community program and many of those people are teaching their children and/or grandchildren. Parents and children together in the Headstart Program are learning the language. Children who are learning the language are forcing learning on adult family members who need and want to understand what they are saying. *The number of fluent speakers declines as the population increases.* Yes, this is true at this time; however, increasing numbers of new speakers are now working to become *highly fluent* in Halq’eméylem through the Intensive Halq’eméylem Language Fluency Program. *English is the preferred language in most situations.* Yes, English continues to be the language of *use* in most situations; however, “preferred” might not be the right term here. For example, many Stó:lō youth would choose Halq’eméylem over any other language as their second language requirement in school. With greater opportunities to learn and use the language, Halq’eméylem will be the preferred language of use for many people. *There are minimal literacy skills (reading and writing) among fluent*

*speakers*. Yes, this is true. We have few fluent speakers who are also literate in Halq'eméylem; however, the movement toward creating highly fluent speakers includes literacy skills, and use of modern technology.

This study concludes that Halq'eméylem is a viable part of modern Indigenous lifestyles. The Halq'eméylem revivalists are making it happen, as they work diligently and tirelessly at reversing the trend toward its extinction. During the relatively short period of time since the Skulkayn Heritage Project was established thirty years ago, Stó:lō people have persisted against all odds to develop a multi-dimensional Halq'eméylem revival movement to "*hold our language high*." Stó:lō people are speaking Halq'eméylem throughout S'ólh Téméxw, echoing the spirit of our ancestors, echoing the spirit of the River, the Stó:lō. The Halq'eméylem revivalists' stories have shown us that learning our Halq'eméylem language reconnects us with our Riverworldview aesthetic, restoring us to wholeness as Stó:lō, people of the River. *Yú:wqwlha!* (*How beautiful!*)

## References

- Carlson, Keith Thor, ed. 2001. *A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre Ltd.
- , ed. 1997. *You are Called to Witness: The Stó:lō in Canada's Pacific Coast History*. Chilliwack, BC: Stó:lō Heritage Trust.
- Crystal, David. 2000. *Language Death*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Elmendorf, William W. and Wayne Suttles. 1960. Pattern and Change in Halkomelem Salish Dialects. *Anthropological Linguistics* 2(7):1-32.
- Foster, Michael K. 1982. *Indigenous Languages in Canada, Language and Society*. Ottawa: Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages.
- Galloway, Brent. 1985. The Original Territory of the Nooksack Language. *International Journal of American Linguistics* 51(4):416-418.
- Gerdts, Donna and Brian D. Compton. 2002. Map of Halkomelem Territory and Upriver Halq'eméylem Territory. Art by Michelle Parent. On website: Native Peoples, Plants & Animals: Halkomelem. <http://www.sfu.ca/halk-ethnobiology>. Accessed March 2002.
- Gerdts, Donna B. 1977. A Dialect Survey of Halkomelem Salish. M.A. Thesis, University of British Columbia.
- Kenny, Carolyn. 1996. The Dilemma of Uniqueness, An Essay on Consciousness and Qualities. *Nordic Journal of Music Therapy* 5(2):87-94.
- Kinkade, M. Dale. 1992. "Salishan Languages," *International Encyclopaedia of Linguistics*. Volume 3. Edited by William Bright. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kroeber, Paul D. 1999. *The Salish Language Family: Reconstructing Syntax*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Lawrence-Lightfoot, Sara, and Jessica Hoffman Davis. 1997. *The Art and Science of Portraiture*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc.

*Without Our Language We Will Cease to Exist...*

- Leon, Shirley D. (Siyamtlot). 1988. Language is Culture, Culture is Language. Ms. Sardis: Coqualeetza Cultural Education and Training Centre.
- Mitchell, Chief Mike. 1989. Language is a Gift From the Creator. *Canadian Journal of Native Education* 16(2):1.
- Mithun, Marianne. 1998. The significance of diversity in language endangerment and preservation. In *Endangered Languages*, eds., Lenore A. Grenoble, and Lindsay J. Whaley, 163-191. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Moustakas, Clark. 1994. *Phenomenological Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Seabird Island Community School. 2001. Chólóle. An interactive CD ROM.
- Stó:lō Nation. 2001. Halq'eméylem Sounds. An interactive CD ROM developed by the Stó:lō Shxwelí Halq'eméylem Language Program. Illustrated by Catherine Burton, Programmed by Jason Forseth.
- . 2000. Spirit of the Stó:lō. Interactive CD ROM designed and developed by Strang Burton.
- Suttles, Wayne. 1990. Central Coast Salish. In Wayne Suttles, ed., *Handbook of North American Indians Volume 7, Northwest Coast*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Swadesh, Morris. 1950. Salish Internal Relationships. *International Journal of American Linguistics* 16:157-67.
- Thom, Brian. 1996a. Stó:lō Culture – Ideas of Prehistory and Changing Cultural Relationships to the Land and Environment. Stó:lō Curriculum Consortium, <http://home.istar.ca/~bthom/LONGTERM-FIN.htm>. Accessed April 1998.
- . 1996b. Stó:lō Traditional Culture: A Short Ethnography of the Stó:lō People. <http://home.istar.ca/~bthom/culture.htm>. Accessed April 1998.

**REPORT 14**

**SURVEY OF CALIFORNIA AND  
OTHER INDIAN LANGUAGES**

***Language is Life***

***PROCEEDINGS OF THE 11<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
STABILIZING INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES CONFERENCE***

**June 10-13, 2004**

**University of California at Berkeley**

**Wesley Y. Leonard and Stelómethet Ethel B. Gardner, Editors**

**Andrew Garrett and Leanne Hinton, Series Editors**

Copyright © 2009  
by the Survey of California and Other Indian Languages

cover design by Leanne Hinton (Santa Barbara Chumash rock painting)



# *Table of Contents*

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| <b>Wesley Y. Leonard, Leanne Hinton</b><br><i>Introduction</i>   | <b>ii</b>  |
| <i>Conference Schedule</i>   | <b>vii</b> |
| <hr/>  |            |
| <b>Martha J. Macri, Victor K. Golla, Lisa L. Woodward</b><br><i>J. P. Harrington Project: Academic and Community Participation</i>                     | <b>1</b>   |
| <b>Ivonne Heinze Balcazar</b><br><i>Bilingual Acquisition in Kaqchikel Maya Children and its Implications for the Teaching of Indigenous Languages</i> | <b>13</b>  |
| <b>Ciwas Pawan</b><br><i>Indigenous Language Education in Taiwan</i>   | <b>26</b>  |
| <b>Michael Capurso</b><br><i>Integrating Language and Culture Revitalization into Public School Life</i>   | <b>34</b>  |
| <b>Jocelyn C. Ahlers</b><br><i>Language Restoration Before Funding: Or, What to Do Before the Grants Come Through</i>                                  | <b>48</b>  |
| <b>Stelómethet Ethel B. Gardner</b><br><i>“Without Our Language We Will Cease to Exist as a Unique People”</i>   | <b>60</b>  |
| <b>Rob Amery</b><br><i>Kurna Language Reclamation and the Formulaic Method</i>   | <b>81</b>  |
| <b>Kevin Lowe (Birri-Gubba), Michael Walsh</b><br><i>California Down Under: Indigenous Language Revitalization in New South Wales, Australia</i>       | <b>100</b> |