

CROW LANGUAGE TEACHERS' VIEWS OF THE INCORPORATION OF THE
WRITTEN FORM OF CROW IN LANGUAGE CLASSES

by

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May 18, 2005

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ABSTRACT

This study, conducted on the Crow Indian reservation in Southwest Montana, examined the incorporation of written Crow in teaching Crow language through a series of semi-structured interviews with Crow language teachers and others in the Crow language maintenance movement. The grounded theory qualitative approach yielded recommendations regarding the need for teacher training, for material development, for curriculum planning, and for expanded visibility of written language in the community. The study presents evidence to support an eclectic approach to Crow language teaching.

INTRODUCTION TO STUDY

This chapter will introduce the problem, purpose, and question of the study. It will provide background to the issues explored in the study and will address the theoretical basis for a qualitative study of the use of the written form of Crow language to teach the language in the classroom. The characteristics of the study will be outlined including a rationale for the importance of the study, the operational definitions of the study, the assumptions and limitations, and the organization of the study.

General Statement of the Problem

When I taught high school in Lodge Grass, Montana, on the Crow reservation in the late 1970's, English was the language of instruction, but between classes and before and after school, the Crow language rang up and down the hallways, throughout the playgrounds, and across the basketball courts. However, since that time, in the years that I have returned to visit my friends on the Crow reservation, I have noticed that young people there increasingly speak English instead of Crow. Even when their parents speak to them in Crow, they answer in English. This change exemplifies a trend all across Indian country, a major language shift from native languages to English.

Background of the Problem: Context and Significance

Before the European invasion of America, the native peoples of North America spoke over 300 different languages (Krauss, 1996). In 1996 as many as 200 different languages were still being spoken by American Indian peoples (Krauss), but at least 50 of

those languages are on the death list, and linguists believe that none of those languages is safe from extinction, not even the Navajo language which still has over 100,000 speakers (Skinner, 1991). Even on the Navajo reservation, tribal peoples are concerned about language loss (Slate, 1993). The factors responsible for this dramatic language shift include American Indians' attitudes and feelings toward English, toward Euro-American culture, and toward their own languages and cultures. These elements are also barriers to language renewal. However, many concerned American Indian parents and teachers believe preservation of native languages offers clear advantages for their children. The Crow tribe of Montana has tenaciously held on to their culture and their language despite the encroachments of Euro-American society, but tribal members and tribal educators are concerned because many of their children and students are no longer speaking Crow.

Crow Country: The Setting for this Study. “Crow country is exactly in the right place. It has snowy mountains and sunny plains; all kinds of climates and good things for every season.... Everything good is to be found there.” So spoke Arapooish, a Crow chief, to Robert Campbell of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company some time in the 1830’s (cited in Medicine Crow, 1992, xxi). When the Crow tribe was confined to reservation lands beginning in 1870, they were able to remain on a portion of that “good” country that Arapooish had described some forty years earlier. Today, what is left of the original Crow country makes up a 2.28-million-acre reservation in southeastern Montana (Yarlott, 1999). Three mountain ranges grace Crow land: The snowy peaks of the Big Horn Mountains mark the southern boundary; to the east are the Wolf Mountains; and the Pryor Mountains form the third range on the Crow reservation. The Yellowstone River flows just north of the reservation while two other large rivers, the Big Horn River and

the Little Big Horn River traverse its boundaries. Crow Agency, Lodge Grass, and Pryor comprise the three largest towns within the Crow reservation, while Billings and Hardin, Montana, and Sheridan, Wyoming, are the three largest communities bordering Crow country. In February 1995, the Crow tribe consisted of 9,155 enrolled members—72% of them residing within the reservation (Bryan, 1996). However, even as the population of Crow people rises, the percentage of young people who speak Crow language is declining.

Statistical Data on Crow Language Use. In a 1970 study of Crow language use in schools on the Crow reservation, Dracon (1970) found that 82% of the students spoke Crow as their first language. Even more significantly, Dracon concluded that there was no evidence that Crow language use was diminishing: 82% of first graders spoke Crow as their first language, and 79% of twelfth graders were primarily Crow speakers.

Just 25 years later in 1995, another survey was completed (Sharon Stewart-Peregoy, personal communication, November 21, 1997). This study found that among Crow children from ages 3-19, only 25% were fluent in Crow language. In that 1995 study, 50% of the children's parents spoke Crow, and 85% of the grandparents spoke Crow. In other words, in 20 years there has been a 50% drop in Crow speakers, generationally a major shift. Even more alarming is that there are only about 10 families with young children (2-10 years old) where the children speak Crow as their first language in the home. Until the recent past, Crow students came to school with strong Crow speaking skills; however, today most students arrive with weak or non-existent

skills. Since many parents still speak the Crow language, these school-age children understand some Crow but do not speak it (Stewart-Peregoy).

Bilingual Experience and Language Loss in Crow. Dracon's 1970 study was completed to gain funding for a bilingual program that was supposed to promote children's fluency in both Crow and English as well as to promote pride in both cultures. In conducting preliminary research on the topic of Crow language maintenance, I interviewed Sharon Stewart-Peregoy in 1997 when she was the bilingual director for Lodge Grass Schools. She told me that bilingual education was a dismal failure. Crow language was ignored in the schools because there was a misunderstanding that use of Crow would hamper students' success in school. In that interview Stewart-Peregoy said, "Our children don't speak Standard English, nor do they do well in school because they do not have the cognitive base in their primary language [Crow] in order to excel when they transfer into the second language [English]. We have limited proficient Crow speakers and limited proficient English speakers." In fact parents who wanted their children to be primary Crow speakers frequently held their children out of Head Start because they believed that there was so much emphasis on English that their Crow speaking children were losing those skills (Stewart-Peregoy).

English became the official language of government in Montana through legislation passed in 1995 by the Montana state legislature. The sponsors of the bill introduced it to encourage immigrants to use English instead of relying on their native language ("Make English Official," 1995). According to Stewart-Peregoy, this action angered Crow tribal members who believed that the bill was an assault on their attempts

to preserve and revitalize their own language. In response to the legislature's actions, the Crow tribal council passed a resolution adopting the "Crow language as the official language for the Crow reservation including all schools on or adjacent to the reservation." The English-only legislation created a renewed sense of urgency on the part of some Crow educators to redouble their efforts to preserve Crow language and culture.

Psychological Factors in Crow language Loss. Stewart-Peregoy found that many Crow children are reluctant to learn and to use their language. She pinpointed identity problems and lack of self-esteem as sources of this lack of interest. Stewart-Peregoy observed, "Head Start has not been culturally relevant." She declared that by fourth grade, "Through texts and through the media, the children learn that it is not good to be Indian."

Another factor in Crow language loss is created by Crow speakers themselves. Some Crow children resist speaking Crow because fluent speakers make fun of these novice speakers who feel intimidated and finally give up. At one language conference on the Crow reservation, teachers were discussing how to incorporate Crow language into the curriculum (Shane Doyle, personal communication, November 19, 1998, and March 14, 1999). One teacher was demonstrating a language teaching strategy to the group, using some tribal members who were not fluent in Crow. When the novices would make a mistake, the audience would burst into laughter. The teacher finally stopped the mock lesson and had the students explain to their fellow teachers the negative impact that the laughter had on their learning. Another stigma associated with Crow language is voiced by children who feel that speaking Crow is old-fashioned.

In order to promote intergenerational transmission of Crow language, Stewart-Peregoy envisioned a comprehensive, culturally relevant program where the schools form partnerships with parents, with the community, and with the family to increase the status of the language and to increase youths' understanding of what it means to be Crow. As of today, this program is only partly in place on the Crow reservation.

Elements of Traditional Teaching in Crow Culture. Stewart-Peregoy wanted to find a solution to the language problem that would reflect Crow thinking and Crow culture. She decided that any solution had to come from *Ashemmaleaxia*, the traditional educational system of the Crow people. The *Ashemmaleaxia*, literally "As driftwood lodges together," is the Crow clan system. Traditionally that system provided teachers from the kinship relations on the mother's and father's sides of the family. Since the clan system is still intact on the Crow reservation, this structure would be an ideal approach to teach Crow language and culture.

In the traditional Crow system, clan relations were mentors. Values, customs, traditions, and skills were passed down generation to generation one-to-one. Learning was individualized and democratic. For example, if a child demonstrated an ability to play the flute and a desire to learn the skill, a mentor took on the task of teaching him the skill through oral transmission of knowledge and through modeling.

Stewart-Peregoy believed that this method would provide Crow children with self-esteem as well as provide them with a compelling reason to learn their language. The school's part in this plan would be to provide a culturally relevant learning environment. Further, she believed that since bilingualism in Head Start had contributed

to the language shift, another strategy should be applied, a strategy which would emphasize the primacy of Crow language. She chose to recommend a strategy of "immersion."

Proposed K-12 Crow Language Program. When Sharon Stewart-Peregoy and Head Start Coordinator Mary Horn discussed the language shift among their people, they decided that an immersion program would be the best way for schools to participate in the revitalization of Crow language among young people. They decided to establish a pilot Head Start class (ages 3-5) to test the immersion strategy. But both women believed that they had to approach this project through Crow cultural protocol. That meant going through the clan system. They invited the clan elders to a feast and fed them according to Crow custom. Then they explained the situation with the Crow language and revealed the idea to test immersion. The Crow elders agreed with them.

The educators envisioned a timeline that would provide their students with a solid cognitive base in Crow before the students were introduced to English in the schools. First, children would participate in a full immersion class in Head Start. Crow would be the only language spoken in the classroom. The Head Start class lasts 5 hours per day, 4 days a week. Children who do not speak their home language would be in a stage called the comprehensible input stage for about the first eight weeks. In this stage non-Crow speaking students would become familiar with the language. They would be continually listening and obtaining information from verbal and non-verbal cues and from hands-on activities. With native speaking students in the classroom, that time might even be

shortened. After about 8 weeks, the children would be able to be full participants in an immersion class.

Teachers would continue to use Crow language as the medium of instruction through fourth grade. In fourth grade, teachers would introduce Standard English, but Crow would continue as the medium of instruction. Once the students had a strong cognitive base in their primary language, the transition to bilingualism would begin. However, parents who wished to continue their children in a class where Crow was the medium of instruction would be able to do so up through twelfth grade.

This ambitious program has not yet been put into use. With the encouragement and support of parents, the Lodge Grass school began an immersion Head Start in Spring 2000, but this program is not currently in operation. Stewart-Peregoy stressed the importance of parental commitment to the program, echoing Fishman's call for "intergenerational transmission" (p. 187). She hoped the immersion model would be maintained in Head Start and that the program would then be expanded to include kindergarten but pointed out that parents must request such a class.

Current K-12 Language Programs. Right now in the K-6 program not all teachers are Crow speakers. However, each class has instructional aides who are Crow speakers. Their job is to suggest ways to incorporate Crow language into the curriculum and to help the teacher carry out these strategies. According to Stewart-Peregoy, "Some of the administrators need to be educated about immersion. They don't understand the principles behind the process." She explained that the program is still in the development stage as she and others create the materials and design the curriculum. Stewart-Peregoy believed,

"If we don't get an immersion program on the Crow reservation, the language will be dead in 15 years."

In the Lodge Grass school system, junior high students may elect to participate in a Crow language class. The status of this class is similar to that of a foreign language class such as Spanish. These junior high classes are taught at an introductory level. Lodge Grass High School offers Crow I and Crow II. Crow language and culture has at times also been incorporated into other courses such as the history and government class at Lodge Grass High School, and several of the English and music teachers have cooperated in an interdisciplinary approach to incorporate Crow language into some of their lessons. The amount of Crow language and culture incorporated into classes seems to depend on the interests and knowledge of the individual instructors.

As of fall 1997, Crow language has been offered at the Pryor schools in grades K-12. After the Crow tribe passed a resolution declaring Crow as the official language for all schools on or adjacent to the reservation, Hardin Middle School began to offer a Crow language and culture class. Loretta Three Irons (personal communication, March 15, 1999) teaches the Hardin Middle School class. She incorporates the same materials used in the Lodge Grass schools, ones developed by Little Big Horn College and by the bilingual project. Three Irons focuses on Crow culture as much as Crow language because she believes the two are inseparable. Frequently her Crow students lack knowledge of their culture as well as language skills when they enter her class. She does not use immersion techniques in her classes but has used the Total Physical Response method (defined on page 17) as a teaching strategy.

St. Charles Mission School offers Crow language and culture classes in grades K-8. The St. Charles' Crow language program recognizes the central importance of the clan system in Crow culture and incorporates it into the language classes. St. Charles sponsors clan day where children gather with their clan elders for feasting and ceremonies. The children are given their Crow name by their clan elders and in turn honor their clan elders by feeding them. Crow language is spoken in all parts of the ceremonies.

Current Crow Language Tribal College Programs. One element of the Little Bighorn Tribal College's mission statement is preservation of Crow culture. To meet this goal, the college offers a degree in Crow Studies, and part of that program is a series of language courses that emphasize Crow reading, speaking, and writing. The Kellogg Foundation had funded a program called Learning Lodge at Little Big Horn College that linked language revitalization efforts at all the Montana reservations. This strategy enabled tribes to share information about language revitalization, but the program reached the end of its funding.

Other Methods for Promoting Crow Language. In order to promote Crow language outside the classroom in all the informal areas where language use takes place, Stewart-Peregoy recommended that all entities on the Crow reservation promote the Crow language. She offered the example of the Crow Mercantile which already displays signs in the store in Crow language, and a laundromat in Crow Agency whose street sign is in Crow language. Stewart-Peregoy said, "We need to see more Crow in our environment." She gave examples such as signs in Crow in the hallways of the schools,

Crow language television and radio stations from the tribal college, and Crow-language street signs as possibilities.

Crow Teacher Development for Bilingual and Immersion Classes. For a comprehensive language revitalization program to work in a school system, the teachers have to agree with its goals and the methods, and they must be trained in the teaching techniques of immersion and bilingualism. According to Stewart-Peregoy, some non-Indian teachers, as well as some Indian teachers who did not speak Crow, feared that their jobs might be in jeopardy. Others objected to the philosophy of the program.

To allay these fears and apprehensions, the Lodge Grass school system at times has offered community education courses for the teaching staff. Non-Indian teachers may take Crow language classes through an extension program from the tribal college. These classes count toward teacher re-certification. Crow-speaking teachers learn Crow reading and writing through a reading and writing tribal college class. Another Crow language class has been offered to community members, but not for college credit.

Crow After-school Program and Other Special Programs. Another component of the revitalization plan has been an after-school cultural and language enrichment program modeled after the traditional clan mentoring system. One program focused on singing in Crow language. Darren Old Coyote, a founding member of the Black Whistle drum group, taught Crow singing and dancing at Lodge Grass School as a regular elective during the school day. On Wednesday evenings, groups of young people gathered with older singers to learn Crow songs including pow wow songs and Crow hymns. Other programs included traditional arts and crafts. In spring 1999, Old Coyote organized a

Crow Indian Music Conference, which Old Coyote envisioned as an annual event (McCleary, 1999). Old Coyote invited 25 elders to the event. It included old ceremonies such as the cooked meat ceremony which had not been performed since the early 1960s. Old Coyote explained, "Nobody knows why they quit doing it, nobody put the effort into keeping it going," (cited in McCleary, 1999). Old Coyote's students demonstrated some of the dances involved in the ceremony. The conference included music from all elements of Crow culture: secular, religious, and everyday-life dances and songs such as childhood lullabies. The program consisted of the migration story, tobacco society songs and dances, the pipe ceremony, announcing and praise songs, the cooked meat ceremony, flute music, Crow Christian hymns, Crow lullabies, the daytime dance, the Crow hop, parade dance songs, warrior society songs, warrior homecoming songs, the Shoshone dance, a victory dance, doorway songs, push dance songs, and handgame songs. Crow students in sixth grade through high school from all the reservation schools attended the conference (McCleary, 1999). This music conference has been held each year since its inception, but its future as well as the future of the other language and culture programs is uncertain. Old Coyote has since left the school system for a job in the Crow tribal administration.

In another innovative strategy, Crow students and other tribal members donned traditional regalia and reenacted an ancient battle between Crows and their traditional enemies, the Sioux. Videos produced by a professional film crew portrayed the battle with narration in Crow language and in English. The film became part of the materials for teaching Crow language in the classroom.

Another element of the Crow language revitalization plan was to create a summer language and cultural immersion program for young people. This four-week-long experience includes a week of camping in the Big Horn Mountains. This mountain camp replicates traditional Crow practices with campers grouped by clan and with announcements and wake-up calls passed along by a traditional camp crier. All of these programs are built around apprenticeships and the clan system and emphasize use of Crow language in the context of the activities.

At a tepee and tent encampment near the “star falling down place,” Crows began a language immersion camp in 2001 (Pease-Pretty On Top, nd). Sponsored by a federal school-to-work program, the camp embraced three goals: to heighten awareness of Crow land and water among Crow students in the fourth to eighth grade; to use a total language immersion approach during the camp for Crow language learning; to develop lesson plans for teachers that could be replicated in the classroom. The camp moved twice more to other locations on Crow lands, following an ancient migration path, as students, teacher trainees, instructors, elders, advisors, and guest presenters participated in the Crow language immersion experience. Since many of the students were not fluent Crow speakers, most of the presentations were in English; nevertheless, participants attempted to use the Crow language as much as possible during the camp. Crow speaking students paired up with non-speakers to form “learning partnerships” (Pease-Pretty On Top, p. 56) while non-fluent science teachers worked with translators for discussions about Crow water and land.

Use of Crow Written Language in the School System. Textbooks used in the past in the public school system on the Crow reservation propagated mainstream values and culture, gave minimal attention to Crow culture, and completely ignored Crow language according to former Lodge Grass elementary teacher Shane Doyle. As the Crow tribe begins to incorporate Crow language instruction into the school system, they will need to continue to develop their own materials. No textbook publisher would develop materials for so small a population; there is no profit. In the Lodge Grass school system, instructors use materials developed by the Bilingual Material Development Center in the 1970s and early 1980s. These materials consist of readers with topics on subjects such as biographies of leaders and chiefs and legends and tales from the tribe's oral traditions. Classes also have a Crow reading and writing guide and tapes from an oral language project. Four recently produced Crow language readers are based on readers' Crow language proficiency rather than on grade level. These materials do not reflect the dominant culture; instead they are written to promote the traditional values of Crow culture. In the Crow model, textbooks are supplemented by community members, the traditional repositories of knowledge and values (Stewart-Peregoy).

Problem Addressed in this Study.

Currently Crow language teachers are expected to include instruction in the written form of Crow language as part of the curriculum, and the teachers have been issued textbooks in Crow language to be used with their students (Stewart-Peregoy). The problem addressed in this study is that Crow language teachers' views of the use of

written Crow in teaching the language are not known. However, anecdotal data indicates that some teachers may be very resistant to using the written form of the language.

Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this study is to examine Crow language teachers' views of the incorporation of the written form of Crow in language classes on the reservation.

Question

How do Crow language teachers and others involved in the Crow language revitalization movement view the integration of the written form of Crow language into the curriculum in the public schools on the Crow reservation?

Theoretical Basis of Study

Researchers studying the use of writing systems in language revitalization programs need to be aware of the attitudes that the people hold toward writing. The best way for researchers to detect these attitudes is to conduct qualitative studies. Literacy is a topic that can best be understood through what Bielenberg (1999) calls an "ideological model" which "concentrates on the social practices of reading and writing." He states that "these practices are socially embedded, that literacy is a socially constructed practice and thus has different meanings for different groups" (p. 104). Qualitative studies are especially valuable where researchers want to explore a phenomenon in its natural setting and where they are attempting to construct a complex picture of that phenomenon based on the meanings that people bring to it (Creswell, 1998). In a qualitative study, the

researcher conducts extensive interviews that reveal the attitudes and meanings that the speakers of the language hold concerning the written form.

Importance of the Study

The Crow language survived even though Crow people were forced to give up their nomadic way of life and live on a reservation. The Crow language survived the starvation and sickness that accompanied the destruction of the traditional Crow lifestyle. The Crow language survived in spite of several generations of hostile educational policies in mission schools and in public schools. Why then is Crow language in danger now that these threats to it no longer exist to the degree that they used to? Language speakers at some level make a choice not to speak a language. There has been a shift of values among many Crow children (and their parents), so that Crow language is no longer cherished. A Crow acquaintance of mine explained it this way. He said, "I think the Crow kids got together and decided not to speak Crow any more." My friend's explanation may be too much of a conspiracy theory, but to a degree it reflects the reality of the Crow language situation. If the Crow people want to maintain their language, they must provide an environment where their children's values shift back to treasuring Crow language and culture.

Can the dramatic shift from native language to English be reversed? The alarming statistics of language loss in recent years seem to indicate perhaps not. Language classes in school are only part of the solution; language must be spoken and valued in the home and in other contexts. Since the Crow tribe still retains a large number of Crow speakers, their goal for language revitalization may be achievable.

Will the efforts of Crow language proponents be enough to cause the Crow language to once again echo down the hallways at Lodge Grass High School? I remember the urgency in Sharon Stewart-Peregoy's voice when she said that if the Crow tribe does not have a comprehensive program including immersion in place, "The language will be dead in 15 years."

The Crow tribal council has endorsed a culturally relevant curriculum. In 1998 a strategic plan was developed by a bilingual taskforce and education committee; the plan was presented at an educational summit in the summer of 1998. What place should writing have in the curriculum as it is developed by the bilingual task force and education committee?

Definition of Terms in the Study

Ashemmaleaxia

Ashemmaleaxia is the traditional educational system of the Crow people. The *Ashemmaleaxia*, literally "as driftwood lodges together," is the Crow clan system. Traditionally that system provided teachers from the kinship relations on the mother's and father's sides of the family (Watts, 2000). Since the clan system is still intact on the Crow reservation, this structure has been endorsed as an ideal approach to teach Crow language and culture.

Fluency

Fluency must be measured on a continuum because language speakers can possess varying degrees of fluency. For the purposes of this study, a fluent Crow speaker

will be defined as someone who can carry on a conversation in Crow language for a half hour without resorting to English.

Immersion

Immersion will be defined as an environment in which only the indigenous language is spoken. Language immersion programs use the Native language as the language of instruction for part or all of each day. The goals of immersion programs differ depending on the culture's and community's needs, but generally they have some goals in common: fluency in both the majority language and the Native language, development of pride in the Native language and culture, and the acquisition of skills and knowledge in content areas required by state curriculum standards (Yamauchi & Ceppi, 1998).

Total Physical Response

Total Physical Response (TPR) will be defined as a language teaching method in which language learners begin with a silent period where they physically react to commands by the teacher. The vocabulary at this level includes verbs such as “run” and “give me,” and nouns such as “door,” and “banana.” Teachers introduce new words and structures within the “framework of items taught in previous lessons” (Cantoni, 1999, para. 3). This method is most useful for beginning language learners.

Passive Speakers

Passive speakers will refer to language users who have some knowledge of vocabulary and grammar in the target language but who are reticent about speaking the language. For example, Crow children who answer in English when their parents speak to them in Crow may be passive speakers if they understand the words but are reluctant to

speak. This term could be confusing because it refers to people as *speakers* when they may not be speaking the language. Other terms, such as *passive language users* have been suggested as an alternative. In this study, I will use the term *passive speakers* because it is part of the terminology of the discipline, even though I acknowledge that the term is somewhat misleading.

Assumptions and Limitations

One limitation of this study is that it is primarily focused on describing the use of written Crow language in teaching the Crow language on the Crow reservation. However, it was anticipated that other related topics would arise in the course of the interviews, and that is exactly what occurred. The grounded theory methodology allows the researcher to examine local conditions in detail. On the other hand, a multi-site study of different tribal groups and their use of written language would broaden this study but might make it less helpful to consumers of the study who are primarily interested in the conditions and results in a single language group, the Crow people. The detailed knowledge created by the study of this particular language group may lead to theoretical insights that are useful as a basis for generalizations beyond the original study. Another limitation of the study is that I did not interview language learners nor did I interview community members such as elders unless they were part of the formal education system as teachers or classroom aides.

Organization of the Study

Chapter Two will present a review of the literature, and Chapter Three will describe the qualitative methods used in the collection of the data. The results of the data

will be presented and analyzed in Chapter Four, and I will discuss the broader implications of the study in Chapter Five.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will review the literature of the problem. The criteria for the selection of the literature will be presented. Themes in the literature will describe the current understanding of the problem and previous research of the problem. A concluding section will summarize the literature of the problem.

Criteria for Selection of the Literature

I began my literature review for this study by using the following tools:

- a. Academic Universe ASAP using the terms: Native Americans and Languages.
- b. ERIC using the terms: su=language maintenance and kw: Native and kw: American and kw: written and ke: language.
- c. The library's dissertation data base: OCLC First Search kw: American Indian kw: language kw: preservation kw: Native American kw: writing.
- d. Native American Resources for the Southwest Region
<http://www.sedl.org/pubs/lc02/3.html>
- e. Center for Indian Education <http://coe.asu.edu/cie/diss.html>
- f. Native American Studies Collections
<http://www-sul.stanford.edu/depts/ssrg/native/nativepm.html>
- g. Society for the Study of Indigenous Languages of the Americas
<http://www.ssila.org/>

h. The Siouan Languages Bibliography

http://puffin.creighton.edu/lakota/siouan_language.html

i. Native Americans: Theses and Dissertations Completed at the University of South Dakota on Native American topics

<http://www.usd.edu/library/circ/nativeamerican.shtml>

j. Teaching Indigenous Languages

<http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/TIL.html>

As I researched the literature connected to my question, I found many articles and some books on indigenous language maintenance and revitalization, but little has been written on the Crow language. Read (1978) conducted a sociolinguistic study of Crow language maintenance; his research focused on the efforts of a bilingual program begun in the 1970's on the Crow reservation. Irvin (1995) examined the effects of the Crow Act of 1920 on Crow language and culture mobilization in public schools. Dracon (1970) studied the extent of spoken Crow among students on the Crow reservation, and Chesarek (1976) described bilingual Indian education in Montana. As I conducted the literature review, I also began to look for other sources on my topic. Consequently, I interviewed Crow tribal members fluent in Crow language in varying degrees to help connect the literature on language revitalization to the particular situation as it exists today among the Crow people.

Theories of First Language Acquisition

My study explores the use of written Crow in teaching the language in school. To arrive at an understanding of this issue, it is helpful to examine the nature of first and

second language acquisition including their psychological, biological, and cultural components. The key issue in the research on first language acquisition concerns the theory of the innateness of language which proposes that language learners are born with innate knowledge of the structure of language (Gass, 1997). Sometimes referred to as the nativist theory of language, the innate explanation is most prominently championed by Noam Chomsky.

Chomsky argues that children cannot possibly acquire their knowledge of the rules of syntax by the limited data they take in. Chomsky uses this “poverty of stimulus” theory to conclude that children innately possess knowledge of a universal grammar, so they innately understand, for example, that a sentence’s structure depends on the relationship between phrases rather than on linear word order (Shanker, et al., 2001). The nativists point out that infants could never construct a grammar of their language based on the limited exposure that they have to the language, so to become a language speaker, they must possess, at birth, abstract concepts or at least “learning biases” about the structure of language (Shanker, et al., para. 3).

Chomsky calls this language system a Language Acquisition Device (LAD). This language system allows children to identify and categorize the language part of human experience. Then this system helps children to develop the complex ability to comprehend and produce language. The nativists point out that since children universally acquire language skills in stages, it follows that language is neurobiologically determined and is controlled by maturation levels (Shanker, et al.). The nativists claim that the language system is no different from other complex biological systems such as the immune system or the visual system (Shanker, et al.). The nativist view has been

bolstered by the identification of a “language gene” in 2001 by researchers in England. Discovered through research into a severe language disorder, the gene, called FOXP₂, may be more evidence that humans’ language capabilities are hardwired into the machinery of the mind (Trivedi, 2001).

Not all language theorists march in lock step with the nativists. An alternative view of language acquisition comes from some linguistic anthropologists (Shanker, et al.). This viewpoint, described as “a social interactionist perspective” (Gass, 1997, p. 2), posits that language cannot be understood without examining social interaction. These non-nativists claim the development of linguistic and cognitive abilities is dependent, at least in part, on social interaction. They argue that infants learn language to communicate with others, and language is embedded in a social context from the beginning of the language learning process (Shanker, et al.). Using field studies, linguistic anthropologists investigate the ways that children learn to participate in their culture through language (Shanker, et al.). Non-nativists view the child as developing communication skills by participating in activities with others. The child and the others involved in this joint activity continuously change and regulate this interactive process.

Shanker uses a cross-cultural comparison of the semantics of proper names to support the claim that language is more than innate. Nativists argue that proper names are the same thing in all languages, and the nature of proper nouns is coded in every human mind. According to the nativist view, an infant classifies a common noun as a proper name as a result of a mental representation that she associates with that term, but the manner in which the word is used is irrelevant to its status as a proper name. Nativists

believe that children make the leap to referentiality when they reach a biologically preordained stage of development.

On the other hand, Shanker believes that children must be acculturated into a particular culture before they can master the use of a proper name in their linguistic community. Shanker compares the practice of naming in Anglo-American culture to naming in Navajo culture to find out the kinds of things that children must learn when they learn what a name is. Although there are similarities in naming in both cultures, naming is more socially structured in Navajo. One difference between the two cultures lies in the use of names in greetings; another difference is in the Navajo use of ceremonial names; a third difference lies in the religious prescriptions about using names in Navajo culture. Also the process of naming a child is very different for Navajo people. Shanker concludes that when children learn to use proper names, they are learning ways to manage social relations, the social hierarchy, and the role that proper names play in their community's social practices. The non-nativists conclude that to learn the language of one's culture is to learn the values of that culture, and any attempt to explain language out of the context of culture will fall short.

Related to the issue of the innateness of language is neurobiological research that suggests that the human brain is hard-wired to acquire language through particular stages of development. An infant's brain is filled with neurons equipped to be integrated into the circuitry of the brain by connecting to other neurons. Researchers believe that the experiences of early childhood determine the brain's wiring and use of the neurons. In this view, the "language gene" or genes determine the brain's main language circuits, but

experience (environment) shapes the trillions of connections that the neurons make (Begley, 1996).

The influence of the environment begins in the womb where the fetus is constantly exposed to its mother's voice (Cowley, 1997). Researchers studying French and Russian newborns found that four-day-old infants differentiated between the sounds of their language and the other language, sucking more actively when they heard their own language. By 6 to 10 months, children begin to focus on the phonemes of their language and lose their ability to distinguish phonemes of other languages. By seven months, children begin to understand how their language uses phonemes to create syllables. At the same time children begin to recognize the metrical patterns of their language (Cowley).

Children begin to connect words to meanings by the time they are one year old. At the age of 2 years, they possess a vocabulary of 1,000 to 2,000 words and can string together phrases such as "no nap" or "bottle juice" (Cowley, 1997, para.10). These phrases become sentences such as "I don't want nap" or "I want juice" by the time children are between 2 and 2½ years of age. Children begin to demonstrate their knowledge of function words and of rules for expressing tense by the time they are 3 years old. At the same time, children are discovering that changes in word order can drastically change meaning: for example, "The eagle eats the mouse" and "The mouse eats the eagle."

Some researchers believe that there are time limits to the brain's capacity to make those neural connections responsible for language learning, and those time limits affect children's ability to learn and to use their language. These researchers base their theory

on evidence from vision experiments that have shown there is a limited interval in which circuits can connect the retina to the visual cortex. They argue that cognitive abilities are similar to sensory abilities. When a child hears the phonemes from her culture again and again, a connection forms between the neurons from her ear and her brain's auditory cortex. Kuhl (cited in Begley, 1996) found that by "12 months infants have lost the ability to discriminate sounds that are not significant in their language, and their babbling has acquired the sound of their language"(para 9). Huttenlocher (cited in Begley) reported that between 20 and 24 months, children learn language faster when they hear more words. Apparently, the sounds of words cause neural circuitry to expand.

Theories of Literacy Acquisition

In a child's first language, acquisition of written language competency (literacy) follows acquisition of oral skills. Within the research on literacy, the most divisive issue has been between those who promote phonics as the ideal way to teach reading and those who promote whole language as the best way to teach reading.

The purpose of phonics instruction is to teach readers generalizations that will enable them to sound out a word from its spelling. Phonics instruction usually teaches words out of context and without reference to their meanings. Phonics enthusiasts believe that knowledge of the sounds associated with the letters of the alphabet helps readers to identify words (Smith, 1994). Krashen (2002) explains that phonics theory is based on a "skill-building hypothesis" in which a child learns to read by "learning sound-spelling correspondences" through "explicit instruction, practice and correction" (para. 1). In 1967, Chall (cited in Collins, 1997) found that children who were systemically taught

phonics outperformed those who were not taught those skills. In 1990 Adams (cited in Collins) examined reading studies and came to the same conclusion that Chall had reached earlier—systematic phonic instruction in reading programs produced better readers than instruction without phonics. A *Time* magazine article reports that “70% of children can learn to read no matter how you teach them but they will read more quickly if they are taught phonics, and without phonics the remaining 30% may have real problems,” although the author of the article does not cite the source of the statistics (Collins, para. 5).

According to one of the founders of the whole language movement, Kenneth Goodman, whole language refers to “a belief system that grounds one’s teaching” (qtd. in Collins, para. 8). Krashen explains that whole language involves “instilling a love of literature, problem-solving and critical thinking, collaboration, authenticity, personalized learning, and much more”(para.4). Goodman’s research leads him to believe that readers use meaning and context to guess a word instead of relying on phonics. He concludes that teaching readers to rely on the context of a word rather than its spelling will improve their reading fluency. Krashen characterizes whole language as based on a “comprehension hypothesis” that focuses on “providing students with interesting, comprehensible texts.... [T]he job of the teacher is to make them more comprehensible” (para. 1). Krashen disputes much of the research that purports to demonstrate the superiority of phonics instruction over whole language instruction. In his review of recent studies, he finds that phonics’ rules are complex and sometimes difficult to teach. Furthermore, he asserts that whole language instruction “does very well” compared to phonics instruction (para. 49).

Goodman, Krashen, and other proponents of whole language connect their pedagogical principles to Chomskyan nativist theories of innate language structure (Mellow, 2000).

In 1998 the National Research Council released a report on teaching reading. Commissioned by the departments of Education and Health and Human Services, the research concluded that teachers should use a variety of strategies, including phonics and whole language, to teach reading.

Second language acquisition is more closely related to my study than is first language acquisition, but the issues prevalent in the research of first language acquisition such as ideal language-learning time periods, the innate nature of language, and the importance of social interaction bear upon second language acquisition as well.

Ideal Language Learning Time Periods

Has the window of opportunity closed for language learners after their early childhood? Certainly the earlier children begin to learn a second language, the more likely they are to be successful. Researchers Kim and Hirsch (1997) found that children who are learning a second language do not use the same part of their brain as adults who are learning a second language. Hirsch offers one explanation: "When language is being hard-wired during development, the brain may intertwine sounds and structure from all languages into the same area" (para. 5). However, once that critical period passes and the wiring is accomplished, a new part of the brain must take over management of a new language (Kim & Hirsch). Language learners' pronunciation skills seem to be affected by critical learning periods. As a result, adult learners frequently retain a stronger accent from their first language when they speak their second language than do child learners.

On the other hand, adult language learners have strategies available to them that are not available to infants learning their first language. Adults already possess a language that they can use to compare to the one they are learning as they master the structure rules of the second language. Adult learners are able to use the written form of the target language as a learning tool; whereas infants learning their first language cannot.

Critical-period-theory has several important implications for teaching Crow language. It implies that Crow language curriculum should begin with a full-scale immersion program in Head Start. More importantly, parents should expose their infants to Crow language at home before they begin Head Start. Critical-period-theory might explain why high school language learners may have trouble with Crow language pronunciation. This pronunciation problem may not be too prevalent among Crow language learners because so many Crow children hear Crow spoken at home even if they are not fluent speakers themselves. To compensate for any loss of Crow high school students' language capacity, Crow language teachers might take advantage of these learners' abilities to use literacy as a learning tool and to compare and contrast grammar structure between their first and second language. If it is true that school-age language learners do not have access to some parts of their brain's language learning abilities, an eclectic approach to teaching Crow language that takes into consideration variety in learning styles might be most effective because learners would be compensating in a variety of ways for the loss of certain language capacities.

Innate Nature of Language

The theories supporting the innate nature of language also impact second language acquisition. Gass (1997) points out that if learners are to achieve full competence in a second language, they must have available to them the same knowledge about language structure that first language learners have. In other words, second language learners face the same challenge that first language learners face: They do not have access to this knowledge from input alone. Of course, adult second language learners do have access to the grammar structure and lexicon of their first language when they attempt to learn a second language.

Mellow (2000) identifies two paradigms for first language acquisition: emergence and construction. He explains that the nativist theory fits the emergence paradigm because, according to the nativists, language emerges from the brain and is determined by a language acquisition device (LAD) that contains a universal grammar inherent in the brain. Three second language teaching pedagogies are also rooted in the emergence paradigm: immersion, whole language, and communication-based (Mellow). Immersion pedagogy uses the target language as the language of instruction. In this model, second language skills emerge as the learner is immersed in the language. Similarly whole language and communication-based pedagogies also view language as emerging from the learner's innate language system (Mellow).

The innate theory has also impacted those second language acquisition pedagogies that focus on the forms of language rather than on its functions (Mellow).

One component of the innate viewpoint is that the universal grammar contains basic forms or structures of language. Form-based, second language pedagogies include grammar-translation, skill building, and phonics. Each of these pedagogies treats language as a collection of skills to be practiced and mastered. They focus on learning forms rather than on communicating meaning. The innate theory has been adopted by the whole language advocates and the phonics advocates, both of whom employ elements of the nativist theoretical model in their pedagogies.

Innateness theory also has important implications for teaching Crow language. However, unanswered questions associated with the innateness theory may call for an eclectic approach to teaching Crow language. For example, do adults lose access to their innate universal grammar because they have passed the critical time limit for recourse to the language acquisition device? If they do, Crow language teachers may need to help their adult learners create the grammar of the language that they cannot receive from input alone. This might be accomplished by teaching grammar in the classroom. On the other hand, if high school Crow language learners still have access to their innate universal grammar, there may be no need to emphasize forms and structure of language. Then instructors can employ a whole language approach to teaching without spending so much time teaching grammar. Perhaps an eclectic approach to teaching Crow language is the best course to follow. Learners need to be exposed to some grammar in the classroom, but only as much as they need to communicate. At the same time, the Crow language classroom should provide an immersion environment for learners, and oral communication competence should be a higher priority than grammar or writing competence.

Social Interaction Perspective on Language Acquisition

The social interaction perspective has also impacted second language acquisition pedagogy. There are several second language teaching strategies that connect to social interactionism: total physical response, the natural approach, communication-based, immersion, and whole language. These teaching pedagogies all focus on language as communication. They all promote the teaching of language in its context (culture). They all emphasize the importance of learning the values of the target language's culture. They all downplay the importance of teaching forms and structure.

The social interaction perspective plays a part in the explanation of the obstacles to second language learning. An even greater obstacle to second language learning than critical time periods may be the obstacle created by the psychological and emotional attachments among older language learners to their first language and culture (Gass, 1997). Affective barriers may also derive from the "social and psychological distance"(p. 17) that learners feel about the target language and culture. The social interaction perspective compels language teachers to consider and to contend with these affective obstacles.

Barriers to Language Revitalization

Many barriers block the revival of native languages. One barrier originates in the parents' views toward their native language. They may believe that the only way for their children to succeed in the "white man's world" is to give up their language and assimilate into white culture (Freeman, Stairs, Corbiere, & Lazore, 1994). According to Gwen Falls Down (personal communication, April 28, 1996), former Crow Head Start teacher, some

parents on the Crow reservation objected to Crow language being taught in Head Start for just that reason. Sometimes parents do not attempt to teach their native language to their children at home because the parents have been lulled into thinking that the school is handling the teaching (Freeman et al., 1994). Parents may believe that immersion classes in the native language will inhibit their children's mastery of other school subjects (Freeman et al., 1994). Some Cherokee parents believe that their children will be held back academically or socially because they speak Cherokee (Brooks, 1992).

According to Darrell Kipp (personal communication, April 2, 1997), director of the Piegan Institute on the Blackfeet reservation, parents who have converted to Christianity may object to the teaching of native languages because they think that tribal religions are also being taught in language programs. Kipp believes the concept that native languages are worthless has been ingrained in the minds of some tribal people.

These negative views of native languages may stem from the inculcation of assimilationist values forced on parents and grandparents at boarding schools when they were young (Freeman et al., 1994). As children at the boarding schools, they were forbidden to use their language and taught that Indian ways were inferior to those of the white man. Even though many of the students in the boarding schools stubbornly hung on to their languages, this experience may have induced shame into those students, so they raised their own children to speak English (Crawford, 1996).

Demographic factors may be responsible for weakening people's ties to their tribal languages and may also be a barrier to language revitalization. When tribal members marry outside their culture, their children frequently are raised in an environment where English is the primary language of the home. Tribal members may have to leave their

reservations to find work. They may settle in areas and raise their children in an English-speaking environment (Crawford, 1996).

The omnipresence of the dominant culture may impose another set of barriers to language renewal. Since tribal peoples are economically dependent on English, they may not be eager to learn their native language, or they may not see the utility of learning their native language (Freeman et al., 1994). Where a wage economy replaces an agricultural economy, job opportunities are frequently only open to those fully proficient in the dominant language (Crawford, 1996).

Tribal languages, which were used to transmit Indian values, have been replaced by English because English language skills and concepts are vital to survival in the dominant culture (Friesen, Kootenay, & Mark, 1989). American Indian scholar Vine Deloria (cited in Skinner, 1992) points out that the Euro-American model of education can inhibit native language learning because one of the Euro-American model's goals is to train workers, and this model separates knowledge into distinct categories of professional specialization and personal growth. According to Deloria, traditional Indian education did not separate these two categories nor was its primary purpose to train workers; its most important function was to pass on the tribe's whole culture.

Complicating any attempt to revive languages is the transitional state of tribal cultures. According to Richard Littlebear (1989), this cultural transition is shaped "by alien organizational systems, by high technology, by alcohol, by drugs, by ambiguous values, by exploding populations, by erosion of language and culture, and by a shrinking world which brings new demands that impact daily the remotest villages and reservations" (p. 1). Even on remote reservations, television is accessible through satellite

dishes, and movies are accessible through videocassette recorders and DVD's. One Crow parent remarked to me that many teenagers in Lodge Grass are more interested in adopting African-American fashions, language, and music that they see on television rather than in learning their own language and traditions.

Frequently American Indian children absorb the racist attitudes of the dominant culture through their association with non-Indian children. Emerson Bull Chief (personal communication, November 6, 1998), a Montana State University graduate and fluent Crow speaker, went to school in Hardin, which borders the reservation. He said, "When I was in [school in] Hardin, I had a lot of friends who were not Crow. I felt ashamed to be Indian by the way they made me feel."

Suzanne Iron (personal communication, November 6, 1998) echoed this viewpoint: "Crow children think it makes them better to not speak Crow." She tied this reluctance to learn or speak Crow to economics: "I think it's being white. They have more money than Indians do. And Indian children believe that if they act white and dress white, they will fit right in."

Those Indian people who try to be bilingual and bicultural may find themselves caught between the two cultures (Brooks, 1992). Learning English and adopting elements of the dominant culture may be seen as a rejection of the home culture by others on the reservation, and non-Indians may not give credence to those who try to maintain ties to the home culture. There can be psychological stress from switching back and forth (Brooks, 1992).

Language shift may represent a shift in values. James Crawford (1996) identifies several values from the dominant culture that are reflected in a choice to speak English

rather than the native language: (1) individualism, "putting self-interest ahead of community interest"; (2) pragmatism, "worrying about what works, not about defending principles that may seem old-fashioned or outmoded"; and (3) materialism, "allowing spiritual, moral, and ethical values to be overshadowed by consumerism" (p. 58).

In spite of these psychological barriers, many Indian people believe proficiency in their native language as well as in English offers benefits to bilingual speakers.

Benefits of Language Revitalization

One advantage that ability in native language gives the speaker is access to participation in ceremonies and understanding of other elements of that person's culture including kinship relationships and the culture's humor which may be only expressible in the native language (Skinner, 1992). According to Freeman et al. (1995), some Mohawk speakers affirm that their language connects them to the matrilineal clan system, teaches their interrelationship with nature, and reinforces respect for all parts of existence. For these Mohawks, language is the medium for communicating with the Creator (Freeman et al., 1994). Crow language gives the speaker access to aspects of the culture only expressible in Crow language. Francine Washington (personal communication, November 6, 1999) and Suzanne Iron said that ceremonies such as the sweat lodge and the Sun Dance contain elements difficult or impossible to translate to English. Fluent Crow speaker Joe Stewart (personal communication, October 30, 1998) pointed out that tribal council meetings, hand game tournaments, and pow wows are all conducted in Crow language. The Crow tribal constitution states that office holders must be fluent Crow speakers. Stewart said, "Crow language is one the basic tools to be a tribal

member.” Emerson Bull Chief explained that in Crow culture there are kinship relationships expressed in Crow language for which there is no exact English equivalent. Understanding the language, stated Stewart, enhances appreciation of Crow humor. Bull Chief and Joe Stewart affirmed that their language connects them to the matrilineal clan system, and Suzanne Iron added that her language is her medium for communicating with the Creator.

When parents pass on these elements of culture to their children through language, the children learn the value placed by the parents on these components. Although speaking one's language is not the only characteristic of tribal identity, this skill will strengthen tribal identity. Some Indian traditionalists even argue that the only way that indigenous cultures will live on is for native languages to be perpetuated (Friesen, 1989). Angela Hill (personal communication, March 14, 1999) stated, “If we [the Crow people] lose our language, we will have lost who we are as people—who we are as human beings.”

Ability to speak a language in addition to English may offer children advantages in cognitive development. Bilingualism has been shown to strengthen cognitive development and enhance academic performance (Littlebear, 1989). One reason for this benefit is that bilingual children appear to be more "cognitively flexible" and better at analyzing linguistic meaning than children who only speak one language (Reyhner, 1989, p. 99). In fact studies have shown that knowledge of a native language can actually enhance English learning skills (Reyhner, 1989).

When children learn the essential values of their culture such as respect and thanksgiving, they may be more likely to act accordingly and be psychologically

healthier (Freeman et al., 1994). A study done in the Six Nations demonstrated that children who had gone through an immersion program were better adjusted than those taught in English (Freeman et al.).

Darrell Kipp, director of the Piegan Institute, along with other researchers conducted an informal survey of self-esteem among Blackfeet sixth graders to see if language and culture had any effect on feelings of self worth. The researchers asked the children to identify the meanings of common Blackfoot words such as *Pikuni* (Blackfeet) and phrases such as *Poohsapoot* (Come here), words and phrases that English speakers tend to use and understand. Kipp and the others wanted to find out how much of the language was still present in the community.

At the beginning of the interview, the researchers would ask, "Oh by the way, are you Indian?" Almost 90% of the respondents exhibited negative body language: a shame response and a fear response. The exceptions were the children who were self-aware of their tribal identity; they gave a positive response.

Then the researchers taught the children some Blackfoot sign language and some phrases in Blackfoot. They instructed the children to sit up straight, to bring their hand up to their chest and point to themselves and say, "*Misto*" (I). Then the children were instructed to bring their hand up to their cheek and rub the cheek with rotary motion as if they were putting on lotion (That is the traditional Blackfoot sign for *ourselves*.) At the same time they were to say "*Abscapee Pikuni*" (am Blackfoot). Then they were to put their right hand in front of themselves palm down and sideswipe off to the right while saying "*Sukap!*" (Good). The whole sequence signified, in a combination of sign and oral Blackfoot, "I am Blackfoot and that is good." Kipp explains, "We could see a

physiological change; it's called brain switching. And you convey to them that being an Indian is good, and then you ask the child, 'Are you Indian?' They go through the routine, and you have a different kid there."

Last, ability to speak one's native language can give Indian children stronger interpersonal relationships with elders and thus act as a glue to hold families together. Bilingual children are able to speak with their grandparents in their own language (Nicholson, 1989). Crow speaker Lila Bullchief (personal communication, April 7, 1999) explains that her grandparents speak Crow, and when she speaks English to them, they pretend they do not understand. Lila stated her language is "a window to the past."

Darrell Kipp points out that in Indian country there is a commonly heard expression, "Respect our elders"; however, at the same time, there is elder abuse on reservations just as there is in the dominant society. Kipp claims that if the child is taught to say in Blackfoot, "I love you," and that child goes home and says to Grandma, "I love you," the child is responding to language, but the child is also internalizing all that emotional support implied in the cultural value, "Respect our elders."

Indian people are attempting various strategies to reverse language shift including immersion schools, whole language teaching, use of computer technology, and native language classes in public schools.

Ways to Stabilize Native Languages

Crawford (1996) argues that even though external pressures are important in promoting language shift, the speakers of the languages themselves are finally responsible for preserving or abandoning their language. Parents and children choose

whether or not to speak it at home. Political and religious leaders choose whether or not to use the language in ceremonies and in political gatherings. Workers in institutions such as schools and social service centers choose whether or not to speak the language at work (p. 57).

When communities agree that their language is a precious resource and that they must work to preserve it, their first question is frequently "What works?" Linguist Dr. Joshua Fishman's (1996), response is "intergenerational mother-tongue transmission" (p. 187). Richard Littlebear exhorts parents more directly that the best way to save native languages is to "speak your language, teach your children in your home."

Fishman claims that re-vernacularization of a language requires that potential speakers must believe that they are gaining something from speaking the old language. According to Fishman the "beloved" language may be taught in school; however, there must be ample links between the language and the outside world in those informal interactions outside of school that form the vast majority of a speaker's language use. The "beloved" language must offer the speaker status-gain, friendship-gain, and affection-gain (p. 193).

Of all the language acquisition theoretical models, social interaction theory may be the most applicable to teaching Crow language because it focuses on language in the context of culture. If the Crow people want to maintain their language, they may have to provide an environment where their children's values shift back to treasuring Crow language and culture. The social interaction paradigm implies that a Crow language program should be locally developed and implemented so it reflects and promotes Crow culture. The Crow language program should be situated firmly within the home and the

clan, so that educational efforts in the school complement the use of Crow language in the community. Teaching pedagogies that emphasize real communication should be the primary focus of instruction. These pedagogies include immersion, total physical response, the natural approach, whole language, and the communication-based approach. Teaching strategies that connect Crow language to Crow culture should be integral elements of the language program. For example, students could create dialogues that reflect realistic communication situations in Crow culture, and teachers could employ the traditional Crow learning strategy of storytelling as a way of using language in the context of culture.

The History of Writing Systems in Native American Languages

Before Europeans invaded this continent, only the Mayans possessed the tradition of a writing system that was a “visual recording of actual language” (Hinton, p. 242, 2001). In addition to the hieroglyphic writing system developed by the Mayans, many other cultures in the Americas have also communicated ideas through visual systems. For example, Plains tribes created “winter counts” drawn on buffalo hides. These “texts” kept track of important events through pictures symbolizing the events (Hinton, 2001). Petroglyphs (carved symbols on rocks) and pictographs (painted symbols on rocks) also communicate ideas. These symbolic systems vary widely in their structure, in their geographical placement, in their meaning and purpose, and in their age which ranges from the ancient past to more recent times. For example, relatively recently Navajos described Kit Carson’s 1863-64 military campaign against their people through petroglyphs inscribed on rocks (Hinton, 2001). A third form of an ideographic system in

a “pre-literate” culture is the Nutall Codex created by the Mixtecs of Mexico. This codex records the history of Eight Deer, an ancient hero of the Mixtecs. The difference between the Mayan writing system and the rest of these examples is that only the Mayan system represents language. Nevertheless, these other systems fulfill many of the functions of writing: they “record history, stories, and songs; keep accounts; send bills and letters; make maps; have signatures; and do virtually everything else that we use writing systems for” (Hinton, 2001, p. 242).

Two tribal groups developed writing systems in the first half of the 19th century, the Cherokee and the Cree (Hinton, 2001). Sequoyah, a Cherokee, finished creating the Cherokee syllabary in 1821, and the Cree system was developed by a missionary, Reverend James Evan. Both of these systems are still in use today. The Cree system has spread to Inuit and to other Algonquian languages in Canada. It has a large body of literature that is still growing, and literature written in the Cherokee syllabary extends back to 1828 when the first issue of a Cherokee newspaper, *Tsa la gi Tsu lehisnunhi* or *Cherokee Phoenix*, was printed (Hinton, 2001). In more recent times, written systems for many native languages have been created. The Crow writing system was developed in the 1970’s, primarily by Raymond Gordon, a linguist and missionary.

Using Writing to Teach Indigenous Languages

Some educators and parents involved in the Crow language revitalization movement argue against the use of written materials in the classroom. Others in the indigenous languages movement share this attitude. Language educator and tribal elder Dick Littlebear (2000, p. 20) said, “I believe that Cheyenne language is sacred and holy

and came from the Great Spirit.” Then he asked the rhetorical question, “Did it come from Ma’heo’o as isolated words, in neatly written form?” For Dr. Littlebear the answer clearly is no, the Creator did not mean for Cheyenne language to be written down. Littlebear argues that “our language must be taught orally.” Littlebear’s viewpoint represents one side of the argument among Native language revitalization experts over whether or not written forms of their languages should be used in teaching the language.

For some involved in language revitalization movement, written language is an important tool in language teaching (Bennett, Mattz, Jackson, & Campbell, 1999). They point out that learners have different learning styles and that Native Americans who are visual learners would benefit from this teaching tool. They claim that written language helps teachers teach complex grammar and syntax, that it offers a “sequence for presenting new language material moving from easier to harder” (Bennett et al., para 12). Proceeding from speech to a written form, teachers can use writing to reinforce concepts introduced in speech. Written forms provide a mnemonic device for learners, a method for studying by oneself, an opportunity to analyze language, and a way to create new sentences (Bennett et al.). Written language provides additional ways to incorporate the language into the community through newspapers, street signs, business signs, labels on products—all of which would heighten its visibility and use in the community. In spite of these advantages touted by some in the movement, there is a great deal of resistance to the use of written language.

Those who oppose the use of the language argue against it for a variety of reasons. Some see it as a poor pedagogical strategy. They claim that teaching the written form of the language takes away valuable time in the classroom that could be used for

practicing oral memory and conversation (Bennett et al., 1999). They say that the imposing, lengthy words and confusing symbols turn learners away from the language because they believe it will be too difficult to master (Littlebear, 2000). Another kind of argument comes from those who, like Dick Littlebear, see the written form as a violation of the sacred and cultural traditions associated with their beloved language. Some traditionalists are concerned that allowing a written form to flourish will threaten some religious practices whose efficacy depends on outsiders not knowing or having access to them (Bielenberg, 1999). For many traditionalists the written form of the language is associated with missionaries, anthropologists, and representatives of the United States government. They point out that the written form has been developed by non-Indian scholars and so is inappropriate and unnecessary for Indian people to use. It is linked to the systems that have oppressed and exploited them (Bielenberg). Among many Indian cultures, the spoken word has immense sacred power (Zepeda 1995). Words have the power to heal (through prayer, for example) or to harm (through lies and broken promises, for example). So any action that alters the oral tradition in the radical way that writing does is seen as meddling with dangerous forces. When elements of the traditional culture, for example stories and ceremonies, can be written down, power transfers from elders who have kept the oral traditions alive through memory and who are valued as cultural repositories, to those who can write and read.

Summary of the Literature of the Problem

While a great deal of literature exists on native language regeneration and revitalization, little has been written about the Crow language revitalization movement.

No studies have been conducted concerning the use of written Crow in the language classroom, nor have Crow language teachers been surveyed as to their feelings and beliefs concerning the written form of Crow. This gap in the literature is an important one to fill, and the grounded theory qualitative paradigm is an ideal way to collect this information.

METHODOLOGY

Understanding Crow language teachers' views of the incorporation of the written form of Crow will help bilingual coordinators and curriculum directors to develop a coherent plan concerning its use in the classroom. In order to describe the Crow language teachers' viewpoints, I used the grounded theory approach to conduct a qualitative study. This chapter describes the theoretical basis, the population, the instrument and the research design of the study.

The Qualitative Paradigm

Qualitative (also known as naturalistic) researchers examine a human or social problem by recording detailed views of informants in a natural setting. The naturalistic researcher uses words to record the multiple realities of the participants in the study and to construct a complex, holistic portrait (Creswell, 1994). Naturalistic researchers interact with their informants, recognize that their studies are value-laden, and report the values connected to the information they gather as well as their own biases and values (Creswell, 1994). Qualitative research is based on inductive logic. Rather than setting the limits of the research in advance, the qualitative researcher allows the categories to emerge from the informants. The qualitative researcher develops theories or recognizes patterns from the information gathered in the context-bound study (Creswell, 1994).

The choice of a particular qualitative paradigm depends on a variety of factors; perhaps the most important factor is the nature of the question that is the center of the researcher's inquiry. My research question is as follows: How do Crow language

teachers view the integration of written form of Crow into the curriculum in the public schools on the Crow reservation?

Grounded Theory

As I searched for a qualitative paradigm to use as the basis for my research, I came across the tradition of inquiry called grounded theory (Creswell, 1998). Grounded theory seemed to match the goals of my study. According to Creswell, the purpose of a grounded study is to generate a theory about a “particular situation...in which individuals interact, take action, or engage in a process in response to a phenomenon” (p. 56). Grounded theory investigators conduct interviews and field observations, categorize the data, and develop theories or hypotheses concerning the situation.

According to Creswell (1998), grounded theory data analysis begins with open coding in which the investigator forms categories and sub-categories of information about the topic being studied. Next the investigator conducts axial coding, reconfiguring the categories based on a “central phenomenon” and exploring the causes, the effects, and the context of the phenomenon. Then through selective coding, the investigator determines a “story line” and writes a story that weaves together the categories identified in the axial coding. At this point the researcher may present hypotheses or conditional propositions.

Grounded theory studies were first described by Glaser and Strauss who contend that “theories should be grounded in data from the field especially in the actions interactions and social process of people” (cited in Creswell, 1998, p. 56). The purpose, methodology, and goal of a grounded theory inquiry fit my research question. My

question fit the qualitative paradigm for other reasons as well. My topic is one in which only a limited amount of exploratory research has been conducted. The variables had not been clearly defined by past studies, and there was no theory base to work from.

Furthermore, I was interested in exploring the multiple constructed realities of the Crow language teachers and in focusing on the context that may shape the use of written Crow in the classroom.

Researcher Positionality

Qualitative researchers must come to an understanding of their own biases, values and beliefs, and of the ways these attitudes impact their research. They should explain their attitudes to their audience, so the audience will be aware of these important aspects of the contextualized experience described in the study. In qualitative studies the researcher does not play the role of a “detached and neutral observer” (Piantanida & Garman, 1999, p. 139). “At the heart of the [qualitative] inquiry is the researcher’s capacity for encountering, listening, understanding, and thus ‘experiencing’ the phenomenon under investigation” (p.140).

I am a non-Indian, which clearly limits my ability to experience the phenomenon I am studying; however, I have had a long-lasting and close connection to Crow culture. I have worked in Indian education for the last 25 years. For several years in the late 1970’s, I taught high school English and coached at Lodge Grass High School on the Crow reservation; then I taught on the Blackfeet reservation before I became a college teacher at Montana State University.

I was married to a member of the Crow tribe, and my children are enrolled tribal members. When I lived on the Crow reservation, I became interested in the Crow

language. As I witnessed its diminished use among the succeeding generations of Crow children, I became alarmed because I believe that languages are, in a sense, living beings, and the loss of a language is as devastating as the loss of a biological species. My Crow friends and family frequently demonstrate their love for their culture and their language. But it is not just Crow people who will suffer if their beloved language is lost. I believe that the world will also be poorer if the Crow language were ever to be lost. Campbell (1997) explains that the loss of a language means the loss of the “intellectual heritage of all that could have been learned through that language about linguistic history, human values, cultural and verbal art, oral literature and that particular society’s way of organizing and coping with its physical and ideological world” (p. 16). I bring this background and these values to this study.

Population and Selection of Subjects

The population for the study included Crow language teachers in grades 4-6, in middle school grades 6-8, and in high school grades 9-12 on or bordering the Crow reservation. Those schools include Crow Public Elementary School, Hardin Middle School, Hardin High School, Lodge Grass Middle School, Lodge Grass High School, Pryor Middle School, and Plenty Coups High School. To provide additional data, I interviewed a former Crow language teacher who currently teaches fifth grade, and a kindergarten teacher who has developed language materials for teaching the Crow language. I also conducted interviews with the Crow language teachers at Little Big Horn College and with two non-Crows who have been intimately involved with the Crow language maintenance movement, one of whom is a linguist who helped develop the

written teaching materials for Crow language, and the other has been instrumental in writing some of the grants that have sustained the teaching of Crow language in the schools. However, all data from these college interviews has been clearly labeled and categorized separately in the results section of the study, in order to preserve distinctions among the various grade levels.

I encountered a methodological problem while I was attempting to bring this study to completion. During my preparation to undertake the study, I devised a consent form for the subjects to sign in which I promised them that I would protect their anonymity by using pseudonyms. In the course of writing the draft of the results section, I encountered a dilemma. Some of my respondents have written journal articles, texts, or other teaching materials that I refer to in the literature review and elsewhere in this study. I realized the potential confusion that would be caused if I were to employ a pseudonym for subjects in the results section but refer to them by their real name in the reference section where I listed their texts and articles. However, I would be committing an even more egregious and confusing blunder if I were to use pseudonyms in the reference list. To avoid this confusion, I decided to ask the respondents if I could have their permission to use their real names in the results chapter. I called them by phone and followed up my call by mailing each of them a revised consent form accompanied by a memo explaining my change in plans (See Appendix A). I discussed with the respondents the advantages and disadvantages of using their real names. The subjects unanimously agreed to permit me to identify them by name. I reviewed the text, omitting any references to specific respondents whenever their comment could potentially cause a problem for them. As it happened, there were very few places where such a possibility existed. The use of actual

names in this document will benefit future scholars attempting to understand the historical development of the Crow language preservation movement as it unfolded in the late twentieth century.

Methods

I obtained the data for the study from a series of interviews using pre-developed survey questions. I added to the survey questions and revised them in two ways. If the course of the interview opened up new lines of inquiry, I asked follow-up questions not in the original survey. I also varied the questions depending on the person being interviewed. For example, the questions directed to the material developers were somewhat different from those directed to the college teachers which, in turn, varied slightly from those directed to the other teachers (See Appendix B for list of questions for teachers).

The study included interviews with teachers who have taught the language, a linguist who was instrumental in creating the original teaching materials, and an educator who has participated in the language movement. The study has allowed patterns to emerge from the data which will help Crow language teachers and coordinators modify their approach to using the written form of Crow language in the classroom. The major limitation of the study is that I did not interview language learners, nor did I interview community members such as elders unless they were part of the formal education system as teachers.

Because the total number of Crow language teachers is so small, I interviewed every current teacher. My first step was to contact the former curriculum director at

Lodge Grass Schools for a list of the current Crow language teachers at the middle schools, the high schools and at the tribal college. Then I contacted the teachers by phone to schedule the interviews. I conducted the interviews when possible in the school. I was concerned about the small number of subjects in my pool of respondents, so during the interviews I practiced the “snowballing” strategy whereby I asked the interview subjects to give me the names of additional possible interview subjects. That is how I expanded my group of subjects to include some who have taught or are teaching Crow language in the elementary schools as well as material developers and a grant writer.

Dependability

Qualitative research is judged on its dependability, trustworthiness, and transferability. Qualitative researchers admit that naturalistic inquiry is instrumentally unreliable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Instead, to establish the credibility of their inquiry, they substitute dependability for reliability. They argue that the replicability required by quantitative methods assumes a naive realism that there is one unchanging reality to serve as a standard of reference. On the other hand, the qualitative paradigm assumes multiple realities. Naturalistic researchers argue that humans, including the informants and the researcher, change over time; they may make mistakes because of carelessness or because they are tired. At the same time, the nature of the study itself changes during the course of the inquiry. New themes and insights may emerge; the direction might change as insights obtained during the course of the study come to light (Lincoln & Guba).

In order to achieve dependability, Lincoln and Guba suggest that naturalistic investigators adopt a variety of strategies. One strategy is to use overlap methods, a kind

of triangulation which may be more effective in establishing validity. Another strategy is to employ two teams to conduct the inquiry independently. Called step-wise replication, this tactic is flawed because in a qualitative study, the two teams' inquiries might diverge in different directions. Lincoln and Guba propose that an inquiry audit is the most effective method for establishing dependability. In this strategy, an inquiry auditor analyzes the process of the study as well as the data findings, interpretations, and the recommendations. Lincoln and Guba also recommend that qualitative researchers keep a reflexive journal in which they record the daily activities involved in the research, any reflections and speculations about the project, and decisions concerning the methodologies of the study. Such a journal would be helpful to the researcher during the project and to the inquiry auditor during the audit.

This study achieved dependability by a limited use of the concept of the inquiry auditor. I worked with the following people to conduct an ongoing inquiry audit of my research: my doctoral committee; Mike Jetty, Office of Public Instruction; Henri Mann, Native American Studies faculty member at Montana State University, and Sharon Peregory-Stewart, former curriculum director at Lodge Grass. Since none of them had the time to conduct the entire audit, I relied on those people to audit different parts of the process. For example, when I was designing the survey questions, I submitted them to my inquiry auditors who suggested revisions. In addition I kept a reflexive journal during the study. The journal helped me to create an audit trail of my research processes and decisions and to produce an account of my methodology.

Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1995) explain that the qualitative paradigm employs the concept of credibility instead of internal validity in establishing trustworthiness. The quantitative paradigm assumes that there is one reality and that the findings of the study are supposed to be in a one-to-one relationship with that tangible reality. However, this naive realism is in direct contrast to the assumption made by the naturalistic inquirer that there are multiple constructed realities. Therefore, there is no ultimate measure to which qualitative researchers can turn in order to justify their results. Naturalistic researchers can establish credibility of their work by making sure that they have depicted the multiple constructions accurately. They must make sure that the findings and interpretations of the inquiry are believable to those (the subjects of the inquiry) who have constructed the realities. Also, naturalistic researchers avoid making cause/effect claims in their findings.

I established the trustworthiness of my study by returning to my subjects to check with each of them in order to make sure that I was truly reflecting their views, perceptions, and ideas in the results section. First, I conducted the interviews, studying the data as I gathered it; then I read the data in its entirety after transcribing it onto a computer. Next I imported the data from the interviews into Nvivo, a software program which facilitates qualitative research projects. I re-read the data again and again using Nvivo to code the data, creating categories and identifying key concepts and themes as they emerged from my readings. I used Nvivo to cross code information and connect the ideas and themes from the different interviews. Nvivo also allowed me to annotate the

text through hyperlinks. Some themes were categorized into “trees” that showed hierarchical relationships, and others were categorized into “free nodes” without a relationship to other categories. After I carefully reviewed the coded categories, I chose the themes and subthemes that I used as the basis for organizing and writing the results section. After I wrote the results section, I returned to my respondents and asked them to read the results to allow them the opportunity to respond to my perceptions and to verify my thematic observations. I also gave them the opportunity to add to or revise their information. After providing them this opportunity, I returned to the data and incorporated their information; next I revised my thematic observations based on this additional information.

Transferability

The quality of representativeness prized by the quantitative researcher and essential to generalizability depends on the concept of naive realism. However naive realism is antithetical to naturalistic inquiry because of the idea of multiple constructed realities that is central to the qualitative paradigm. These realities emerge during the qualitative research process. Therefore, naturalistic researchers focus on transferability rather than generalizability. Furthermore, transferability depends both on the context of the original study and the context to which the findings are applied. While naturalistic researchers are responsible for illuminating the context of the original study, they cannot be responsible for the context to which the original findings are applied. That responsibility belongs to the person making that application elsewhere. Lincoln and Guba caution that persons who apply results from a study to another context must gather

enough evidence of contextual similarity to be confident of their comparison. The authors suggest that small studies of the second context be conducted to verify that the results are transferable. Qualitative inquirers must provide “thick, rich description” of the context of their study, so that someone attempting to transfer the findings to another context can make an informed decision about the applicability of the information.

I addressed transferability by providing a “thick, rich description” of all aspects of the inquiry. In that way I have provided other researchers with all the necessary information for them to decide if the context of my study is transferable to the context of their study.

Chapter Summary

The problem this study examined was that the views of Crow language teachers concerning the use of the written form of Crow in the classroom were unknown. Therefore, this study has attempted to answer the following question: How do Crow language teachers and others involved in the Crow language revitalization movement view the integration of the written form of Crow language into the curriculum in the public schools on the Crow reservation?

I obtained the data for the study from a series of interviews using pre-developed survey questions. The population of this study included the Crow language instructors at middle schools and high schools that have Crow language programs, the Crow language instructors at Little Big Horn College, a grant writer, and two material developers, and two elementary school Crow language teachers. This study’s methodology incorporated grounded theory qualitative research design.

RESULTS

Data Collection

In April and May 2004, I made several trips to the Crow reservation to interview seven Crow language teachers and one linguist. I interviewed one more Crow language teacher and her husband, a former school administrator on the Crow reservation, in Bozeman—for a total of 10 subjects. They are a diverse group. Eight of them are Crow tribal members who are or have been Crow language teachers. Their teaching experience ranges from kindergarten through college. The other two respondents are non-Indians who have been active in the Crow language movement. One of these two has been an administrator and grant writer for the Crow language movement, and the other is a linguist who helped to train the first cadre of Crow language teachers. All of the respondents are middle-aged or older, six in their fifties and three in their sixties and one in his seventies. All but two are native speakers of the Crow language. Some of the interview subjects have participated in the Crow language teaching movement since the written form of the language was first developed while others came into the movement later. The group includes every current Crow language teacher at every middle school and high school on or near the reservation, as well as all of the current college Crow language teachers. The group also includes several current and former elementary school Crow language teachers (see Table 1).

Table 1

Crow Language Teachers

Teachers	School	Grades/Courses Sp 2004
Dale Old Horn	Little Big Horn College	Crow Language I and II
Jennifer Flatlip	Little Big Horn College	Conversational Crow
Loretta Three Irons	Hardin Intermediate and High School	Crow Language and Culture to grades 7-12
Reggie Spotted Horse	Lodge Grass 7-8 and High School	Crow Language and Culture to grades 7-12
Rose Chesarek	Pryor 7-8 and Plenty Coups High School	Crow Language and Culture to grades 7-12
Liz Pretty On Top	Crow Public School	Crow Language and Culture to grades 4-6
Rafaelle He Does It- Realbird	Lodge Grass Elementary School	Kindergarten
Johnann Yarlott	Crow Public School	Fifth grade

Crow Language Interview SubjectsLittle Big Horn College Teachers

Dale, 58 years old, has taught Crow language and culture at Little Big Horn College, the tribal college at Crow Agency, since 1971. He also is a renowned pow wow and rodeo announcer. He speaks Crow as his first language and is highly fluent in written

Crow. Although he has had no formal training in language teaching, Dale earned a masters degree in linguistics and was instrumental in the development of the written form of Crow. He states, "I'm probably one of the pioneers of written Crow. I was part of the team of individuals who established the Crow orthography." Dale married a non-Crow, and his children are passive Crow speakers. They understand the Crow language but respond to Crow language by speaking English. I meet Dale for our interview in his office in the new Cultural building on the Little Big Horn College campus. Dale is tall and broad-shouldered. He wears his hair in a long, thick braid and carries himself with pride and self-assurance. His voice, a deep powerful baritone, complements his self-assured carriage.

Jennifer, 55 years old, has taught Crow language and culture at Little Big Horn College for the past six years and also works in the education department for the Crow tribe. Before teaching at the tribal college, she taught Crow language to high school and middle school students at Plenty Coups School and St. Charles Mission School. Jennifer comes from the generations of Crows who began their own schooling speaking no English. She says, "Entering first grade... I did not know one word of English, and none of us in our class did, and yet we survived that." Although she has had little formal training either in linguistics or in language teaching, she has always had a passion for teaching, and that passion led her into the profession. "I was real interested in what the teacher said, and so I became kind of an interpreter for the students." She says, "That must have been my first inspiration to become a teacher because I was teaching English to my fellow students." She describes the way that schools during her childhood actively tried to destroy the Crow language. "We were not allowed to speak our language at any

time during the day, even at recess or even at noon time. If they heard us, they would slap the palm of our hand with a yardstick.” Fluent in written Crow, she has attended workshops on teaching Crow language put on by Little Big Horn College, by the bilingual program in the public schools, and by Montana’s Office of Public Instruction. She says that when she was learning to read in Crow language, one stumbling block for her was the struggle to transfer the orthographic representations of the English phonetic system to the Crow phonetic system since some of the same letters were used to represent different sounds in the two systems.

I meet Jennifer in her office in the old hospital at Crow Agency. The building now serves as the offices for the Crow tribal administration. When I first come into her office, I present her with a braid of sweetgrass, as I do with all of the interview subjects. She smells it to check its freshness, smiles, and says that she will use it. Crow people burn sweetgrass, smudging themselves or their surroundings for purification. During our interview, Jennifer speaks in a soft voice but with a great deal of conviction. She shows her strong feelings for her beloved language as we discuss the future of Crow. Tears well in her eyes as she describes the immense problems associated with maintaining the language. Halfway through our discussion, the tribal chairman, Carl Venne, knocks and comes in to invite us to lunch. A group in the building is selling Indian tacos to support an independent basketball team’s travel to a tournament in Denver. She mentions later that the current chairman is very supportive of Crow language.

Middle and High School Teachers

Loretta, 52 years old, teaches Crow language and culture at the middle school and the high school in Hardin, Montana, a border town adjacent to the Crow reservation.

Loretta has taught Crow language for 10 years, and prior to that she taught four years as a regular classroom teacher. She speaks Crow as her first language and is also very fluent in written Crow. Loretta began as a bilingual aid in the early 1970s. Her foundation in written Crow came from short courses in the linguistics of Crow language taught by Ray Gordon and G Hubert “Hu” Matthews, two linguists who helped in the development of the written form of the language, but she did not take part in the development of written Crow. Since then, Loretta has taken seminars and workshops on language acquisition and on teaching native languages sponsored by the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) and the Montana Association of Bilingual Educators (MABE). She greets me in the Hardin Middle School office with a soft handshake, characteristic of many Crow people, unlike the typical, hearty, white man’s grip. I interview Loretta in her tiny office at the Hardin Middle School. The office, the size of a walk-in closet, is crammed with materials for teaching Crow.

At 69 years of age, Reggie is the oldest of the cadre of Crow language instructors. She is in her last year of teaching when I interview her in her classroom at Lodge Grass School. It is lunchtime, and she is preparing for her afternoon classes, teaching Crow language and culture to middle school and high school students. She has taught kindergarten through 12th grade for 28 years. For the past 10 years she has taught Crow

language and culture to grades 7 through 12 at Lodge Grass High School. A native speaker of Crow, Reggie says she is not completely fluent in written Crow but can read it. She has taken Crow language courses through Little Big Horn College and has participated in language teaching workshops, most recently in spring 2004.

Reggie has seen the diminished use of Crow language in her own family. Her children speak the language, but her daughter-in-law does not speak Crow, so Reggie's grandchildren are passive speakers of Crow language. They understand the language but do not speak it. She is in the process of dismantling her classroom for the summer when we talk, but she digs through the boxes next to her desk and produces examples of the signs in Crow that she hangs on her classroom walls. I also notice large family tree posters produced by her students; however, the content of the posters is in English not in Crow.

Rose, age 63, teaches Crow language and culture to seventh and eighth graders and at Plenty Coups High School in Pryor, Montana. Rose has been teaching for 39 years beginning at the Saint Xavier Mission School in 1965. She has taught at almost every school on the Crow reservation as well as on the Yankton Sioux reservation when she was a Catholic nun. She also taught Crow language at Montana State University. She began teaching in Pryor in 1984 and has taught every grade at the school. She also served as the elementary principal for 11 years. This year for the first time she is teaching Crow language and culture to grades 7 through 12. She has always used her Crow language in her teaching. "It's not like you were supposed to teach Crow language. Back then, there were no bilingual programs in the 60's, but we were using our language to help the

children because back then the majority of kids came in with no English background at all. So I would be in there helping the certified teacher.”

Of her most recent experiences she says, “This year is the first time ever that I was sent to the high school, seventh grade through twelfth grade, and this is a totally new experience for me. I have been teaching every day for nine months with high school students, and I love it.” When asked about her training in Crow language teaching and Crow language structure, she says, “We were pretty lucky.” Linguists worked with her and other Crows “day after day” in federally funded programs. This instruction began in 1970 when several Montana State University faculty members and other educators secured funding to begin a bilingual program on the Crow reservation. She and other prospective Crow language teachers took classes at MSU and studied at a University of Oklahoma Summer Institute of Linguistics. She also has taken classes and workshops held on the Crow reservation and at native language conferences. Through her training, she has earned many graduate credits, and the first two chapters of her doctoral dissertation gather dust on a shelf in her closet. Concerning the workshops that she continues to attend, Rose says, “I still look for modern day things—some things new or different we could add on to our teaching.” Rose has also written Crow language materials to be used in the classroom.

I interview Rose and her husband Steve in Bozeman at the International Traders coffee house. She and Steve are in town to attend their daughter-in-law’s graduation from Montana State University. Steve accompanies her to the interview and contributes extensively to the conversation.

Steve, husband to Rose, has worked in Crow education off and on for more than 30 years. He was a school administrator on the Crow reservation and helped to write some of the grants that have sustained the Crow language movement since its inception. He also has worked in the Crow tribal administration in the tribal court system. Steve, a non-Indian, has limited fluency in Crow. He states, "I can read Crow because I have learned the phonological rules, so that most Crow speakers around me can understand everything I am reading. But I have no idea what I have just said." He and Rose wanted their children to speak Crow. Rose comments, "After Steve and I were married, I began to use a lot of English in the home. But again we kept it so that we could speak Crow at home and use it with our children. And our children spoke nothing but Crow until they were four."

Rose and Steve wanted their children to continue developing their Crow language skills. Steve says, "We put them in Crow speaking homes for babysitting while we were working during the day."

Rose remembers, "One night my little boy came home and said, 'The ball!' and I said, 'What is he saying. That's not what I want him to do,' so we went back to the babysitter the next day and asked, 'Why is he speaking English?' They replied, 'We have visitors who come in and your kids are blond and fair skinned and they start speaking English with them.'"

Steve adds, "We actually had to encourage babysitters to stay with Crow--not to switch over and use English."

Rose remarks that the children "left Steve behind" in their Crow language development.

Elementary School Teachers

Johann, 51 years of age, teaches elementary grades at Crow Public School in Crow Agency. Currently she is teaching fifth grade. She no longer teaches Crow language, but from 1983 to 1990 she was the Crow language instructor for kindergarten through sixth grade. Johann did not speak English when she entered first grade at a Catholic school, but she and her classmates were not punished for speaking Crow. She states, “We spoke to each other in Crow all the time. Most of the children when I was going to school spoke Crow, and we would speak Crow to each other, but nowadays they [Crow students] speak English to each other.” Johann was not among the group that developed the written form of the Crow language. She gained her fluency in written Crow and in language teaching by taking workshops and short courses from the Crow language developers through a federal bilingual program while she taught at Pretty Eagle school on the Crow reservation. Her training lasted about 6 to 8 weeks, and she earned college credit for the classes. She struggled when she began. “The first time I saw the written Crow, I had a hard time learning.” She was taught the phonics of the language as well as Crow language structure. Later on she took additional Crow language courses. She “would take the basic format of the teaching” she received and “apply that to [her] students.”

Like the other Crow teachers, Johann struggles to maintain the Crow language in her own family. She always spoke Crow to her children when they were growing up. She remembers when her son started high school, “he would come home and start to speak English and my husband would get after him: ‘You can speak English at the school, but

when you come home, you speak Crow because we are all Crows here, and I want you to speak Crow to us,' so he encouraged speaking Crow."

She says, "My grandson has not forgotten his language even though he has a non-Indian teacher. The older people really like him. He is the only one [in his class] that speaks Crow...When we are at the store or something, he'll speak Crow to us and these older people will just stand there and listen to him. They want him to keep talking, but he'll kind of look at them and then shy away." She says the elders like her grandson because their own grandchildren do not speak Crow.

I interview Johann in her fifth grade classroom at the end of the day. I notice a few Crow words on the walls of the room, but most of the words and sentences on the blackboards and on the bulletin boards are in English. This is a not a Crow language classroom, but almost all of the students are Crows. Her husband waits outside the building while I conduct the interview. Afterwards, I go out to greet him. I had met him the summer before, and now I am bringing him at his request a load of sweat rocks that I have collected in Bozeman. Crows come to Bozeman to gather rocks for their sweat lodge ceremonies because the lava rocks they love to use in their sweats are plentiful in the Gallatin valley. They call them "education rocks" because of their proximity to Montana State University.

Liz, 52 years old, is the Crow language and culture teacher for elementary grades at Crow Public School. She has a perky, youthful appearance, speaking rapidly and enthusiastically about her students and her commitment to Crow language. A teacher in grades K-6 for 20 years, Liz began as a classroom aid and then for seven years taught in

the bilingual program. She was the K-6 Crow language instructor for five years, but for the past two years she has taught fourth through sixth grade.

Fluent in written as well as spoken Crow, Liz received her formal training in Crow language and in Crow language teaching methodology in the early 1980's from courses taught by the Crow language specialists and by the linguists who developed the written form of the language. Although she speaks Crow at home, her granddaughter, whom she has raised, is a passive Crow speaker. Liz says, "I speak Crow to her and she understands it, but she responds back in English. She gets too embarrassed to talk Crow to me." Liz and I speak in her office at Crow Public School. Her bookcases are filled with multiple copies of Crow readers developed by the bilingual education program in the 1970's. She explains that she maintains a class set for her students to read in school, but a shortage of materials keeps her from giving students books of their own.

Raffaella, age 54, is a Lodge Grass Public School elementary teacher who has taught kindergarten and first grade for the past 22 years. The day I interview her turns out to be somewhat chaotic. Raffaella's aid is absent, as is the special education teacher, so we conduct the interview in her classroom, and during part of the discussion, her students are there doing seatwork. Occasionally Raffaella has to interrupt our talk to remind the students to keep working or to help one of them with a question. She intersperses English and Crow in her directions to the students. Raffaella is also suffering from a cold this day. She brushes off my offer to come back another time saying that this issue is very important to her and she wants to talk to me.

Unlike the other Crow language teachers, Raffaella has not taught Crow language as a subject in the classroom, but she says, "I use it in my teaching all the time." Very

fluent in written and spoken Crow, Raffaella has also taught Crow language phonology, grammar, and sentence structure to prospective Crow language teachers in workshops and short courses. She, along with Rose Chesarek, has also written the most recently published Crow language reading books. Raffaella's mother (now deceased) was one of the pioneers in Crow language education and in the development of Little Big Horn College. Raffaella explains her background in Crow language teaching: "My training? I really don't know. My mother was into the Crow language. I just grew up with it, and it just came naturally. As far as [teacher training] classes...just a few that Little Big Horn College has and the rest is self-taught from my family." Since she teaches only the youngest learners, her classroom is decorated mostly with pictures, but it also has posters with words written in the Crow language. She is quite interested in written Crow language material development and has even taken proposal writing workshops to attempt to find funding for such projects.

Crow Language Material Developer

In addition to the teachers, I interviewed G Hubert "Hu" Matthews because he was instrumental in the development of the written form of the Crow language, he trained many of the current teachers, and he had a hand in writing many of the Crow texts. He is still living near the Crow reservation and is still active in the Crow language movement. Hu, in his seventies, is a linguist and retired linguistics professor who has taught at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Montana State University-Bozeman, and Eastern Montana College (now Montana State University-Billings). Hu earned a doctorate in linguistics from the University of Pennsylvania then taught at the Massachusetts Institute

of Technology for 17 years before coming to Crow country in 1972. I had met him briefly several years earlier at Crow Fair where he had set up a booth promoting his Crow Bible Translation project. But his name had come up repeatedly over the years as I was exploring Crow language. Hu is the author or co-author of several of the seminal Crow language texts. The interview takes place at the old Boys and Girls Club building (now the Apsáalooke Visitor's Center) in Crow Agency. I enter the small foyer of the building and can hear Crow and English being spoken behind a closed door. I knock, and he answers the door. Hu's sharp gaze is framed by rimless glasses that rest on a hawk-like nose beneath a high forehead and a shock of thinning white hair. Behind him seated on one of two chairs in the room is an older Crow man. There is a tape recorder and a laptop computer on the table. I apologize for intruding and introduce myself. Hu waves off my apologies and introduces me to the Crow who is working with Hu on the Bible Translation project. Hu explains that they are at the end of their session. The Crow shakes my hand, nods goodbye, and leaves. Then Hu offers me the seat where the other man has been sitting.

The Origin and Development of Current Written Form of Crow

Jesuit missionaries in the late 19th century first recorded Crow language in writing. They used English orthography to write down word lists including Crow names (Read, 1978). Anthropologist Robert Lowie developed the earliest writing system for Crow language that remains today, even if only in dust-covered volumes ferreted away on the shelves of linguistic libraries. Author of several ethnographies of Crow people including *The Crow Indians* (1935), Lowie also published a language text entitled *The*

Crow Language (1939). Two other Lowie books, *Crow Texts* (1960) and *Crow Word Lists* (1960), were published posthumously by his widow.

Hu Matthews explains the problems with using Lowie's version of Crow as a writing system. "There are lots of sounds that we produce [in English] that are not really significant, like the *t* in the word *take* is different than the *t* in the word *steak*. As far as understanding, that is not a significant difference. But it is a constant, definite difference." According to Matthews, Lowie's version included those differences "that are not significant" and, as a result, "it has so many of these extra things" which made it "hard to read." Matthews draws a parallel: "You know there once was a phonetic society that thought phonetics was very important, so they got to writing letters to each other phonetically and after a while it all broke down because nobody could read it easily because there were so many symbols. Lowie's system was like that; it was too much."

Whereas Lowie attempted to write down Crow language in order to record and understand Crow culture, linguist and Bible translator Raymond Gordon came to Crow country in 1966 to translate the scriptures into Crow language. Gordon developed the basic structural and orthographic rules used today for the Crow writing system. He published his system in the *International Journal of American Linguistics* (1972). Gordon chose to design a practical system using the English alphabet rather than using phonetic symbols, so materials could be typed on a typewriter in order to make the language easier to write (See Table 2). His system was based on what Steve calls "one-to-one mapping." Each sound in Crow was matched with an orthographic symbol, so that there would be no confusion about multiple pronunciations of a letter.

Table 2

*Crow Orthography**Crow Consonants:* b ch d h k l m n p s sh t w x ?*Crow Vowels*

Crow Letter	Sound	Crow Word	English meaning
a	hut, <u>a</u> vailable	<u>a</u> pté b <u>a</u> lee	his liver money
aa	f <u>a</u> ther	<u>á</u> she	river
e	be <u>t</u> , che <u>ck</u>	ch <u>e</u> kkeek	it clicked
ee	ba <u>d</u> e, <u>a</u> ble	d <u>e</u> eshe	tongue
i	b <u>i</u> t, l <u>i</u> st	dich <u>i</u> k	he hit
ii	b <u>ea</u> t	íile	blood
ia	are <u>a</u>	bía	woman
o	bo <u>o</u> t	baaló	bead
oo	bo <u>o</u> t	óope	tobacco
u	pu <u>t</u>	h <u>u</u> ché	wind
uu	bo <u>o</u> t	úuxe	deer
ua	Nash <u>ua</u>	bu <u>á</u>	fish

Note. Adapted from *Crow Language Learning Guide*, by E.C. Kates, & H Matthews, 1990.

In 1970 at Montana State University in Bozeman, Rose and Steve Chesarek, along with Sally Old Coyote and John Dracon, wrote a grant to fund bilingual education in Crow language. The goal of the bilingual program was to facilitate the development of English language skills in Crow learners because the vast majority of Crow students

came to the public schools speaking Crow but not English. So the written form of Crow was to be the doorway to English literacy, and not necessarily a tool to preserve and perpetuate Crow language.

Rose remembers, “Back in 1970 when we were here on campus at MSU [Bozeman]...they were recruiting staff to go down to Hardin to start this bilingual program, and at that time Dale Old Horn and I were students here. They recruited us as the first bilingual teachers there.... I loved it.” That summer Rose, George Reed, Jr., Doris Rides Horse, Steve, and Dale participated in the Summer Institute of Linguistics at the University of Oklahoma. According to Steve, the students took “classes in literacy instruction in native languages and classes in linguistics.” The trip was organized by Gordon who was still working at Crow Agency. Rose says, “He is the one who also took us to Norman University of Oklahoma to learn how to write children’s books in our own native language. We spent the whole summer learning how to put little books together. I have learned a lot from him about how to teach reading whether it’s in English or in Crow.”

The following year, 1971, Dale Old Horn and George Reed, Jr. studied linguistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. There they met Hu Matthews who was teaching linguistics. Matthews states, “I had been working with Indian languages that are related to Crow for a number of years, and Dale and George came over to MIT for a year, and because it was Crow, of course, I was very interested because, as I say, I had been working with native languages, Hidatsa, which is quite close [to Crow language].”

Matthews goes on to say, “I came to Crow country on a sabbatical in 1972. I am still here. I fell in love with the Crow people. I fell in love with my Lord. I found a wife; everything changed. I love this country, so here I am.”

From 1972 to 1975, the two non-Indian linguists Gordon and Matthews, driven by their desire to spread Christianity; the linguistically trained Crow teachers, motivated by their love of Crow culture and Crow language; and their non-Indian allies, worked together to refine Gordon’s system and create written materials to be used in the classroom. Asked about disagreements among the pioneers, Dale says there were none: “When you study a language, the language is what it is. If you are trained well enough to recognize it, okay, it’s like saying, ‘That’s a coffeepot, oh yeah, that’s a coffeepot.’” He explains, “As far as the technical aspects of it, there was hardly any difficulty, merely deciding what convention we were going to use.” They based their decisions on which convention was “the most efficient.”

The most significant revision to Gordon’s system came from George Reed, Jr. According to Dale, “We looked at it from the standpoint of the allophonic distribution of the language and decided to use one letter to represent the allophonic distribution....In terms of vowels, we said, ‘Okay, let’s just write the short vowels with single vowels, and the long vowels with double vowels.’”

Matthews explains Reed’s change further: “In the pronunciation of the language there are two kinds of accents. There’s one which we call the rising accent and the falling accent.” Gordon’s system did not easily distinguish between those two. According to Matthews, “The reason he didn’t distinguish them very well was because he wrote the long vowels as vowel colon, and George Reed suggested that we write them as vowel

vowel. Just double the vowel; then it would be possible to put the accent over the first or the second of these two vowels in a long vowel. If it is put over the first, then that would signify falling accent, and if it is put over the second then, that would signify the rising accent. Falling and rising refers to the tone of the voice—pitch.”

Gordon had used a colon to indicate vowel length, and the group noticed that readers of the writing system experienced problems when the colon was used to indicate length. Matthews states, “They always seemed to read along and then stop; they had trouble getting past that colon somehow, but as soon as George introduced this way of writing it went quite smoothly after that.” Matthews concludes, “I presume it [the difficulty] had something to do with the fact that in English the colon is punctuation.” (For example, the word in Crow language for the Crow people themselves is spelled *Apsáalooke* using the revised system. Under Gordon’s original spelling, the word would look like this: *Apsá:lo:ke.*)

Standardization of Crow Language

Written language standardization is an issue for several of the respondents. Raffaele would like to see all teachers fluent in the spelling of written Crow so that one standardized form would exist and “kids would learn it.” She sees inconsistent spelling in the Crow community as a result of the lack of knowledge about the correct spellings of words. She says, for example, “You see the word ‘*aho*’ a lot for ‘thank you.’ That is using the English alphabet. It should be ‘*ahóo*,’ accent on the first ‘*o*,’ but everywhere you see it as ‘*aho*,’ and that is wrong. If they only knew the phonics.”

According to Rose, the Crow language movement has had fewer debates about pronunciation than have occurred among the Blackfeet because a much greater percentage of the Crow population still speak their language than on the Blackfeet reservation in Montana. She says, “We have not lost the language.” The Blackfoot confederacy is divided into three major sub-groups, many of whose members live in Canada. These differences also can cause pronunciation debates. Rose also points out that the Crow language does not have “different dialects like the Sioux” who have three dialects. Steve points out that when minor variations in vocabulary do occur among Crow speakers, such disagreements are resolved by “talking it over.” Rose quotes Hank Old Coyote, now deceased, one of the Crow language pioneers. He would say, “These kids say it differently, but it’s okay. We don’t correct them. They say it differently than the way we used to.” Rose says, “Every now and then, I’ll hear somebody say ‘I think that is the wrong pronunciation, and this is the way it’s supposed to be said,’ but it’s no big thing. They just let it go.”

Steve points out these disagreements depend on “how sophisticated people are about language change. People that have worked together with this stuff and have been around other linguists enough recognize that there is change going on all the time, but I think sometimes when somebody comes to it from a lay person’s viewpoint or whatever, they are a little more dogmatic about it.”

Hu Matthews also speaks about the advantages of one standardized form for written Crow. He believes that some teachers use a slightly different written form of the language than he does. He calls the different form “Father Randolph’s version,” referring to Father Randolph Gracyzk, the Catholic priest in Pryor who is the most active linguist

working with the Crow language. Hu says, “I would prefer to have one form, [but] it is not going to be standardized from above. If literacy becomes a big thing, pretty soon one [form] will win out over another. I would just as soon let it go that way. And it wouldn’t be difficult. You could almost do it by machine to transfer one writing system to the other almost. It doesn’t really bother me too much.”

Generally the teachers are happy with the orthography; however, several have noticed problems that students have experienced with the writing system, and some have made changes in it as they teach the forms to their students.

Reggie finds that sometimes students balk at the long words in Crow language, but usually the “kids will sound it out.” Rose believes that “98% of that orthography is fixed, and it’s been written since the seventies.” However, she feels there are places where improvements can still be made.

Rose comments on the interference that arises with the use of English letters for the Crow writing system. She believes “you learn how to read only once in your lifetime, and what you have learned, you apply to the next language you are going to learn.” Adult learners have problems because “they already learned how to read in English and all the English sounds are there, and then they want to go back and read Crow; sometimes they will use English sounds instead of Crow sounds.” Hu has taught literacy to “at least a couple dozen” Crow speakers. He finds that they “have had little trouble in learning to read” using letters from the English alphabet. “They see it over and over again and pretty soon they are reading.” Hu says the correspondence between the letter and the sound is “certainly better for Crow than English orthography is for English.”

When she began to teach older learners at Plenty Coups High School who were already literate in English, Rose “had to change a couple of things with the current writing system,” and she hasn’t “told the linguists yet.” In words formed by joining two morphemes where the first one ended in *sh* and the second one began with *sh*, the language developers deleted the first *h* so the combined form would be *ssh* rather than *shsh*. The *sh* is not written twice, but it is to be pronounced twice. Steve elaborates on this change in the orthography that Rose has incorporated into her teaching of the written form of Crow. He says that Rose “was noticing when she is dealing with second language learners she has to go back so the kids are conscious that there are two things joined together in a single blending that ends in *sh* and another that begins in an *sh*.” In Crow the second *sh* is omitted when the morphemes are combined. But at the level that Rose was teaching “she finds it more convenient to spell that out a little more deliberately and fully, so they know the constituent parts of the word, and so they know where that form is coming from--it’s a compound or whatever.” According to Steve, the changes that Rose has made for her students create a “more elaborated version and not as efficient a version and probably a native speaker who is getting pretty good at it wouldn’t even worry about it or even bother about it.” But this change helps remove a barrier for the second language learner.

Origins of the Crow Language Texts

Most of the written Crow materials available and used today were created in the 1970’s and early 1980’s. Very little has been written recently. The group of pioneers who wrote those materials includes some who have been interviewed as part of this research

and are still active in the Crow language movement such as Raffaelle He Does It-Real Bird, Dale Old Horn, Rose Chesarek, and Hu Matthews. But others have also played key roles in the creation of written materials over the years including Marlene Walking Bear, Mary Helen Medicine Horse, Euna Rose He Does It, George Reed, Jr, Henry Old Coyote, Barney Old Coyote, Raymond Gordon, Elnora (Sally) Old Coyote, Edith Kates, Richard Chadwick, Joy Toineeta, Lawrence Big Hair, George Takes Gun, Arnie Bends, Sharon Stewart-Peregoy, and Father Randolph Graczyk (See Appendix C for a list of Crow language materials).

In the introduction to his book, *Music and Dance of the Crow Indians* (1999), Dale explains the origin of the bilingual movement. In the late 1960's, Barney and Henry Old Coyote testified before Congress about the "richness of the Native American cultures" (p. 3). In the resulting bill enacted into law, Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1968, Native American languages were included as part of bilingual education. Next Dr. Elnora Old Coyote, Dale, Steve, John Dracon, and others wrote a grant to fund a Bilingual/Bicultural Program for Crow Agency Public School as part of the Hardin school district.

According to Rose, in the early 1970's the Crow population entering first grade was overwhelmingly made up of Crow speakers with few or no English speaking skills. The stated goal of the bilingual program that began in 1974 was to improve the early education of these non-English speaking children by teaching them in the language in which they were most comfortable, Crow, and then transitioning them to English. Written Crow was to be a tool to help Crow speaking children to be more successful in public

school. Parents had to volunteer their children to be part of this ambitious bilingual program. (After Steve read a draft of this chapter, he mentioned to me that he and many of the Crows who participated in the bilingual program from its inception believed that instruction in Crow language would strengthen the Crow students' skills in other coursework including their mastery of English language. The teachers' viewpoint reflects the research that indicates there are cognitive benefits from bilingualism.)

Rose says, "That was a tough decision for parents to make to [have their children] learn to read and write Crow before English in a public school. I did the knocking on the doors with the counselor to see which parents would volunteer their kids to take Crow reading instead of English, and out of 75 possible students, we had 15 kids who came in to the program." At the beginning, Rose remembers, "It was Dale, Joy [Toineeta] and I. We had so much fun just being able to write and make books." Rose taught the children in the morning, and the students attended regular classes in the afternoon. An English-as-a-second-language teacher also taught the children in the afternoon. Rose's duties as the Crow teacher expanded: "About two months into this program, the Crow regular classroom teachers got together and asked if I would teach in math also because this whole group didn't do so well in math." She thought it over and, "I said, 'Oh, well, I'll give it a try' so I taught reading Crow, and then I taught math to first graders." She explains the math component: "So I took their regular math books, and I conversed about them in Crow. The symbols like writing 2 or 3, all the symbols are the same; it was mostly oral math as I went through that book." The program seemed to be a success. Steve says that in the achievement tests these children scored higher in math than those who were in the regular classes.

In the Crow reading class, Rose remembers the children were “reading 100 miles an hour in Crow, just booklet after booklet. By Friday I would run over to the lab and Sonny Joe [George Reed, Jr.] and Dale and Joy were cranking out materials and by the next Friday the kids were done reading them.” Steve says, “I think to support her one classroom there were 5 or 6 professional staff people heavily involved in materials development and really just staying ahead a week or two ahead of the kids so that there would be enough materials for them to have for the following week.”

The experimental class lasted one year, but no research was ever conducted to assess its overall effectiveness. According to Dale, “A shortage of qualified teachers was a critical problem faced by the program” (p.5). Rose left the program when Steve took a position in the Wyola School District.

Steve says, “There wasn’t anything being done institutionally to get a second person ready. What that meant was that these kids were going to go into the second grade without any transition or follow up, or if she [Rose] went with the kids to the second grade, there wouldn’t be anybody picking up the first graders and starting another year with the experiment.” But Crow language material development continued for a short while after the end of the experimental class.

Not only were materials developed at Crow but in other communities on the Crow reservation as well. According to Steve, “There was a fairly large lab staffing group through the mid 70’s at Crow Agency, and a number of local spin-off projects were created with spin off grants at Wyola, Lodge Grass, St. Xavier, and Hardin.”

Hu also wrote materials at Crow Agency: “I worked with the [bilingual program] until about 1976 and then went over to Pretty Eagle School, and they had a bilingual

program, and I worked there. But most of the bilingual materials including the Crow stories and so on were done at Crow Agency.” Hu carried on his own project, to translate the Bible into Crow language. “I came back from Bozeman in 1982 and started working full time translating the scriptures into Crow, and I have been at it ever since.” Much of the work that Ray Gordon and Hu have completed has been funded by the Wycliffe Bible Translation Project.

Few of the educational materials developed at that time are in use today. Jennifer explains, “Those readers are some place in closets in somebody’s house. There is no central location on all the materials. Bilingual out of Hardin District still has something. We don’t have disbursement of all that kind of stuff. I think they’ve become kind of archival.” And Johann sheds more light on their whereabouts. She says there was a fire in the building in Crow where the books were stored, so “everything they could salvage they took to the district office in Hardin about in 1985.”

After the flurry of writing and publishing in the 1970s, Rose says, “There hasn’t been anything developed for elementary children at all. There is some in Crow by Tim McCleary and Dale Old Horn at the adult level, but for early for elementary kids for 20 years nothing has been published.”

Training for Crow Language Teachers

Critical in the education of the cadre of Crow language teachers is the development of language teaching skills, and within the constellation of language teaching abilities is the use of the written form of Crow language as a component of language teaching. The state of Montana recognized that native language teachers may

have to come from the communities rather than the state college and university teacher training programs because the content of native language classes is culture and language, content not taught at the college level but instead residing within community members. The state created a special category of teacher certification, Class 7 Certification, which would recognize and validate that knowledge, so that those members of the community could teach in the public schools. To qualify to be certified as a Class 7 American Indian Language and Culture Specialist, the teacher must be recommended by a tribal chairperson or other designated official and must meet the tribal standards for competency and fluency (OPI, 2004). This policy has lessened the difficulty in finding native language and culture teachers on Montana reservations, but the problem remains in K-12 schools that these teachers receive little training in language teaching nor in writing their language. The situation has been slightly different on the Crow reservation from other Montana Indian reservations. Since there are still so many Crow speakers among the population over 40 years of age, there has been less difficulty in finding Crow language speaking teachers among those who have undergone teacher training through the state university system. The K-12 teachers I interviewed were certified to teach as regular classroom teachers rather than through the special culture category except for Liz. Dale, who teaches at the college, is not certified, but at tribal colleges no certification is needed for teachers to teach Native languages.

An inherent problem in teaching a native language is that the traditional teacher training programs at the universities do not include training in teaching native languages. Universities do not offer the courses. I wanted to find out if these teachers had had general training in language teaching principles, practices, methodologies and curriculum

development. I also wanted to find out if the teachers had any training in teaching Crow language and specifically in teaching written Crow. Finally I wondered what these teachers would say are the needs for training teachers in teaching the written form of Crow. The teachers I interviewed varied in the amount of their training in language teaching and in the amount of their training in teaching the written form of the language. Almost all received the bulk of their training years ago through the Crow bilingual program, some as far back as the early 1970's and the rest in the early 1980's. One had earned a masters degree in linguistics, and another had taken quite a bit of graduate coursework in linguistics. More recently, most had participated in workshops on teaching Native languages and on teaching the written form of Crow, and some of them had been involved in teaching the workshops to the others. Almost all of them spoke up for the need for much more training.

Little Big Horn College Teachers' Preparation and Training

The two tribal college teachers came to their teaching positions with very different backgrounds but with no formal language teaching training. Although Dale has "no training in language teaching per se," he earned a Masters in linguistics in the early seventies, and he participated in the University of Oklahoma Summer Institute of Linguistics attended by the other Crow language pioneers also in the early seventies. In addition he has also taught in-service, Crow language workshops to other native language teachers. His background is reflected in his teaching style. In his classes he emphasizes grammar structure and a linguistic approach. The other Crow language teachers look up to him for his expertise in linguistics, but another teacher in the cadre mentioned that

Dale's background in linguistics and his approach to teaching the language is somewhat intimidating for teachers who lack that background. Dale has high expectations of his students and uses linguistic explanations in his classes.

Jennifer, the other Little Big Horn College teacher, holds a certification to teach elementary school, but has had no formal training in language teaching. She has participated in a few language workshops and seminars to learn more about teaching Crow language and more about the written form of Crow, but almost all of these workshops occurred in the early 70's during the formative years of the Crow language movement. She says, "As far as formal training, I've had minimal. I have to say that a lot of it is self-taught because I'm a teacher and it's expected of me to teach Crow in the classroom, so then it's like, 'You're going to teach Crow' and do it."

One problem with obtaining additional training is funding. Jennifer says, "Little Big Horn College offers some of the Crow classes, but you have to pay to get the credit and such, so a lot of it is self-learning." She goes on to say, "When I was here [teaching] at the Crow Public School [an elementary school] in the seventies, the bilingual program was developing the written Crow, and so we would have little workshops where they would show us the written Crow, and at that time it was the beginning stage of written Crow, so I had that background."

Middle and High School Teachers' Preparation and Training

The high school and middle school Crow language teachers also vary in the teacher training they have received. Reggie, in her last year of teaching at Lodge Grass High School, is a veteran teacher with 28 years of experience, mostly in elementary

school and junior high school. She has taught Crow language to grades 7-12 for the last 10 years. She describes her training: “When I was going to college one summer they tested us, and I took a Crow language test; we had to translate a short story in Crow, and I had a good grade on that, an A. And that was around 1974-5.” She says, “In the ten years that I have taught [at the high school level] I have gone to Crow language workshops and any others I can go to. I just came back from one last week.” She finds that the workshops “really help” especially for “new things that come up.”

Loretta, another middle and high school Crow language teacher, is also a veteran teacher having taught for 14 years. For the last 10 years she has taught Crow language to high school and middle school students. Her earliest training in teaching Crow language, especially the written form of Crow, came in 1970 when she was a classroom bilingual aid with the bilingual program at Crow Agency. She took classes from Raymond Gordon and Hu Matthews “going through the Crow alphabet, some of the rules, the written Crow, so a lot of that was my foundation in the written Crow.”

More recently she has had “not that very much, just here and there, workshops on language teaching here and there, language acquisition. You know, three credits or two credits, over like a two-week period, to try to cram two credits into two weeks or three-day workshops.” She says the classes are offered “though the school district here, OPI [Office of Public Instruction], and MABE [Montana Association of Bilingual Educators].” When I interview her, Loretta has just returned from one also attended by Reggie and other Crow language teachers. It took place in Billings, about 60 miles from Crow Agency, and focused on several of Montana’s native languages rather than just the Crow language. She thinks the training provided at that workshop was beneficial and

would help other Crow language teachers. She says, “It was on language process. There were lots of activities, and I am using those right now in my classroom.” The instructor explained the language development process which proceeds from listening to speaking and finally to writing. Then the presenter demonstrated activities that help students master skills associated with the various stages of the language development process.

Of the three high school/middle school teachers, Rose has the broadest and deepest background in Crow language teaching and training. She has taught for 39 years, and like many of the other teachers, her experience ranges from kindergarten through 12th grade. Of course, not all of those years were spent teaching Crow language. She taught on the Yankton Sioux reservation and at every school on the Crow reservation except for Fort Smith. She has served as an elementary principal and has also taught Crow language to college students and to Crow language teachers. Currently she teaches seventh through twelfth grade. Teaching this age group is a new experience for her. Her training began as part of the earliest group of pioneers, and she continues to take opportunities to improve her teaching skills. In the early years, she says, “We were pretty lucky to have linguists working with us day after day after day. And then there were bilingual grants bringing in courses that would give us credit for what we were doing along with the linguists, so if I add up my credits for linguistic training it’s just like a second master’s degree.” Her instruction included classes in syntax and phonology and in teaching literacy in native languages. At MSU Bozeman, she taught a Crow language sequence and a methods class for language teachers. However, this class has not been taught at the university since that time. Of her recent training, she says that “over the years there have been language

teaching workshops from people like Steven Krashen” including the course in Billings just weeks before the interview.

Rose explains her system for training Crow language teachers. “I walk them through Crow history in terms of modern-day children.” She explains to them “what they are going to confront today in a classroom on the reservation.” Then she trains the teachers “in the Crow sound system in contrast with the English sound system, so if a child is not learning some phonology, it calls for phonics instruction, and if the child has a problem related to the Crow language, then the teacher can go back and work on it.” She discusses “the family structure, the clan system, the religion, and some of the political aspects that separate families in the classroom.” She also explains learning styles and provides examples of materials that teachers could use in the classroom.

Elementary School Teachers’ Preparation and Training

Two of the Crow language teachers I interviewed are strictly elementary teachers with no experience teaching Crow at a higher grade level. Johann teaches a “regular” fifth grade class at Crow Public School. The Crow language component of her curriculum is taught by Liz, who comes into the class on a weekly basis. Johann has, however, taught Crow language in the past to grades K through sixth from 1983 to 1990. She remembers that when she was first introduced to the written form of Crow, she had some difficulty learning it, even though she was completely fluent in Crow language. Her training took place at Pretty Eagle School through the federal bilingual program. She says, “They had a good program over there; we had to take classes. They taught it in each subject area, like for the math teacher’s aids.” The training lasted for about 6 or 8 weeks.

Her instructors began with phonics, teaching the vowels and the consonants; then how to put the letters together to make words. She says, “The method worked pretty well.” In a refresher course later on, Johann learned how to use the handouts and the curriculum that been developed. When she began teaching the language at Crow Public School, there was a Crow language curriculum in place that “went along with the curriculum of the school district” and books had been printed to be used in the classroom. She developed her lesson plans using the materials from the bilingual program.

The current Crow language teacher at Crow Public School, Liz, has taught for 20 years, first as a classroom aid in the primary grades and then in the bilingual program. For the last seven years she has been the Crow language teacher for grades kindergarten through six; however, the past two years she has teaching only fourth, fifth, and sixth grades. Liz’s training in Crow language teaching methodology came in the early 1980’s from Hu, Dale, and others including Euna Rose He Does It and Mary Helen Medicine Horse, the author of one of the versions of *A Dictionary of Everyday Crow*, first printed in 1979 and then re-done in 1987. These teachers were responsible for the training of some of the other current teachers as well.

Raffaella has taught kindergarten and first grade at Lodge Grass School for the past 21 years. Although she has not taught Crow as a subject in the classroom, she frequently uses it in her teaching. She also is the co-author, along with Rose Chesarek, of the most recent Crow reading materials. Raffaella has taught Crow language for teachers at Lodge Grass and at Little Big Horn College off and on for the past 20 years. She learned to read and write Crow at home from her mother, Euna Rose He Does It, who was one of the pioneers of the Crow language movement. Raffaella says, “My training? I

really don't know. My mother was into the Crow language. I just grew up with it, and it just came naturally. As far as classes go, just a few that Little Big Horn College has, and the rest is self-taught from my family.”

Teachers' Recommendations for Training

The interviewees list a variety of different needs for Crow language teacher training. These include instruction in the structure of language, in its grammar with special attention to phonics, in the language development process, in Crow vocabulary. One of the respondents believes that teacher attitudes towards the written form need to be addressed. Several mention the importance of increasing the amount and regularity of training. They recommend more training in technology and more exposure to new ideas and new directions because of changes in the kinds of learners.

Hu had been involved in training of teachers in the written form of Crow beginning in 1970 until he retired to devote his life to translating the Bible in 1982. He taught Crow literacy to Crow speaking teachers at schools on the reservation, at Eastern Montana College in Billings and at Montana State University in Bozeman, instructing them in reading and writing including structure of the Crow language. As far as training goes, Hu believes Crow language teachers “should understand the structure of the language, its grammar.” According to Hu, “What I am saying is true of any language. Crow is not unique this way. You should really understand how the language is put together, how it works, how it expresses things. And given that, then I would talk about orthography, but first the structure of the language definitely. Then it's up to the educators to figure how to present this to others.”

Dale sees teachers' attitudes toward the written form of Crow as an obstacle to be overcome during teacher training: "I would have them get over their negative comments about the language in its written form by teaching them properly." According to Dale, some teachers "are resistant because they have not learned" the written form of Crow. He believes in the importance of having the teachers practice reading "until it becomes second nature to them." He also underscores the benefits of increasing their Crow vocabulary, so "they would stop saying things like 'we can't say that in Crow,'" as well as the benefits of improving their vocabulary in English. Similarly, Raffaele would like to see all teachers learn the standardized spellings of Crow words.

Jennifer says that today "as far as professional training or professional development there's hardly anything out there, and when I talk to other teachers who are teaching Crow, a lot of times they don't have that training over and over again or that development over and over again. That opportunity is very limited." She did mention a course provided by Rose Cheserek that lasted for about four weeks which reinforced what she already knew about reading and writing Crow language. Jennifer "definitely" supports more training: "Just as in everything, if we get more training, then we improve the quality of teaching." She also sees the need for training in using technology to teach Crow language.

As far as further development of her language teaching skills, Reggie would take some courses in linguistics of the Crow language. She says, "That would help me write the words although I can pretty well sound out and then write those." She recommends that Crow language teachers "should go to all the workshops possible for languages, not only for Crow but for the different languages as well, because there's always an idea

from each and every one of them. You can always just use it in Crow or any other language for that matter.”

Loretta believes that she needs even more information on the language development process, but she feels “pretty good” about her background in developing materials and activities for her language classes. Loretta believes that future Crow language teachers would benefit from training in reading and writing Crow.

Rose says, “I still look for modern day things, some things new or different we could add on to our teaching,” but her husband Steve points out that “not as many things have been available to the other language teachers for those kinds of trainings.” Rose sees the need for “continuous training.” She “looks for new ideas” and “wants to see what the younger generations are bringing into the classroom” that she can use to try to keep up to date.

Steve describes the sea change in Crow language use that may impact the training required of teachers nowadays. “Most of the work that was done through 1990 in bilingual education on the reservation was targeted at kids who spoke Crow as their first language. Before, we were gearing up the people to work with those kids.” One goal of the bilingual program was to help the students make the transition from first reading in Crow to reading in English. According to Steve, “Rose’s background was in reading, and she actually taught the first group of kids who learned to read first in Crow in an experimental class in Crow Agency and that was planned to be a prototype for what would develop in bilingual programs on the reservation.”

The program did not last, however, and by 1990 the number of Crow speaking students had dropped so low that it wasn’t the main thrust of the program any more.

According to Steve, “from a training standpoint what has probably happened since the mid 1990s anyway is that the overall task is changing because most of the kids now come to school speaking English as their first language, and while they may have high comprehension in Crow, they don’t speak it themselves.” He concludes, “In many ways the job has changed, and we very well may want to look at a different set of training experiences for that purpose. To date no one has put a program together that’s had that focus, so people who have taught the language have sort of brought their own background and experiences.” Steve believes that teachers must now “start from scratch rather than coming out of a program that is really supporting them and nurturing them to be Crow-as-second-language teachers.”

To train Crow language teachers today, Johann would use the same method from which she learned. “At first I would teach them the way they taught me--the consonants, the vowels. They have to see that’s how it’s done, step by step; then I would put the handouts together and give them quizzes to see how far they were in their language. I would develop something from there with step one the phonics part of it.”

Liz believes that she and other teachers could benefit from “different kinds of training such as having more lessons to be presentable to the children.” Liz points out that “each grade level is different” requiring different kinds of training. She also believes the “Crow language teachers must know the phonetics of the Crow alphabet, and that would give them the confidence to go into the classroom and teach.” She emphasizes that training must occur “not just once a year or twice a year. They need extensive training.” She says, “I didn’t get the concept of the Crow language myself when I first took up a class, but it was mandatory. It was part of my job, and I had to do that. At first I thought,

this is just ridiculous; this is all nonsense, you know, and why can't they just use the English phonetics. That would be a lot easier." But "then as time went by I would just sit there because I had to take those classes, and all of a sudden, it just clicked, and this does make sense, you know."

Crow Language in the Classroom

One important aspect of written Crow language in the classroom is the question of the place of written Crow in the curriculum of Crow language classes. According to Crow language pioneer Barney Old Coyote (personal communication, April 11, 2003), speakers need 500 hours of classroom instruction to master a second language. Stephen Greymorning (2001) calculates that children in the Hawaiian Punana Leo immersion preschools achieved fluency in 400 language contact hours, so the amount of instruction in Crow is critical to students learning the language. Moreover, it is important to know the extent of instruction in written Crow. The amount of instruction in Crow language and in the written form of Crow seem to depend on several factors: the age level being taught, the instructor's preferences, the school administrators' attitudes about the importance of the language, the educational policies mandated by the federal government, specifically "No Child Left Behind," and the content the teacher is required to teach.

Crow in the Classroom at Little Big Horn College

Both Dale and Jennifer teach Crow language at Little Big Horn College, but their course content, their teaching styles, and their use of the written form of Crow differ in some respects.

Dale teaches the Crow language linguistically focusing on the structure of the language. In the first part of the course, students learn the sounds of the Crow language through a study of the students' Crow names. Then the class studies Crow phonetics through the introduction of Crow orthography, connecting the letters to the sounds they represent. Students then move on to learning the sentence structure of four sentence types: declarative, imperative, interrogative, and exclamatory. Dale emphasizes word order, nominative and objective case, plural forms and so on. Dale says, "In a typical day the students put their assignments on the board; then I will read them, and we identify sentence types, sentence parts, and the morphemes."

Jennifer teaches "conversational Crow, and it is for students who are scared to death to speak Crow or read and write Crow, and who've not ever taken that risk to fail or say a word wrong." Her class lasts for 90 minutes. She begins the semester by developing "a trust relationship with them." She discusses cultural issues and their connection to language. "For instance, last week we were talking in English about the earth and the plants" and their cultural importance. Then she introduces the Crow words for the roots, plants, and trees. She drills the students on the Crow words; then she returns to the cultural significance of the plants, including their medicinal or other use. She gradually incorporates more Crow language into the discussion. She brings in samples "because if they don't have the sample, they don't have anything in their bank of language if it's not tangible." She wants them to feel it, to smell it, to see it, so they really understand the Crow meaning. Jennifer writes the written form of the words on the board, so students associate the sound to what's written. She says, "I really push consonant with vowel, consonant with a vowel, the phonetic approach," orally drilling syllable by

syllable. In another lesson, the students listen to lullabies and try to figure out the words. Then Jennifer writes the words on the board, and the students make the connection between the written words and their sounds in the lullabies. Jennifer says they become “engaged” in the process of learning to read the words, to say the words, and to sing the words. The final product of the lesson includes their learning a Crow lullaby.

Dale administers five objective tests during the semester. For example, on word tests, he grades the students on letter identification and letter order and students can earn partial credit. “If they make one mistake in a word, that doesn’t mean that the whole word is wrong.” Students learn written Crow all the time in the classroom and everything of their homework is written down as well. When they come to class, they write the homework on the board and read it aloud too. Students take a comprehensive test at the end of the term.

In Jennifer’s class, the students make a 60- to 90-second oral presentation for the midterm. They must also turn in a written version of the oral presentation. Food is the topic of the midterm, and the context is a supper with each dish prepared by the students and shared with the class. Jennifer explains that for these reticent speakers speaking 90 seconds is a long time, so students can earn a pass if they can continue for at least 60 seconds. She remembers one young man who “has difficulty just getting up in front of people. He began in Crow language saying, ‘I brought this kidney. Here it is. Eat it.’ He was under the limit, so then he repeated it, and then he said in Crow, ‘It tastes really good raw, but it tastes good like this cooked too and here is some salt.’ By expanding it, he met his sixty seconds by really pulling it out.” For the final in Jennifer’s class, she requires the students to write a reaction paper on how the Crow language can be preserved. She

also tests the students on the phonetics of the Crow alphabet. They provide examples of Crow words using various consonants and vowels that she supplies in the test.

Rose is also involved in testing at the tribal college. She administers an oral challenge test for students who want to earn college credit for the Crow language class without taking it. The students must translate the English version of a Crow story into Crow language. They are given a storybook and a tape recorder and must translate for a certain number of minutes. Then the tapes are sent to Rose who evaluates their fluency.

Current Reading Materials at the College Level

Dale incorporates the written form of Crow language into every lesson and every aspect of teaching the language. He uses several texts: *The Crow Language Learning Guide* written by Edith Kates and Hu Matthews in 1979, *The Dictionary of Everyday Crow*, and a 100-sentence corpus. Students also have access to a CD that contains all of the Crow language forms, the *Crow Language Learning Guide*, the 100-sentence corpus, and a supplement to *The Dictionary Of Everyday Crow*. For her classes, Jennifer copies sections from an older book on the different Crow chiefs as well as texts of Crow lullabies, and she has her students purchase a copy of the Crow dictionary. Students read out loud from the text on the Crow chiefs; then, the students discuss the words and the stories. She makes extensive use of other handouts as well.

Although Dale believes the current materials are “adequate,” there is room for a great deal more. He would like to see “further description of the grammar. In Crow Language I, we barely scratch the surface of the grammar of the Crow language.” He also would like more written texts: “readers, stories, even just a conversational Crow corpus.”

He believes that written Crow language should be infused in texts across the curriculum at the tribal college in the form of “an applied technology corpus.” Written Crow should be used in “range management at the Bureau of Indian Affairs.” Dale explains that students

will have cause to know what the plants are, and let’s say, for instance, you are a policeman, you will learn how to do conflict management and appropriate things to say in such situations. Let’s say you are an EMT in a trauma situation. What do you say? Let’s say you are a nurse. How do you ask where it hurts? How do you describe the pain? How do you convey to the individual what you have discovered instead of spitting out Latin that nobody understands? Let’s say you are teaching math. What are the Crow math concepts that are better and more relevant to the individual? It goes on and on, botany, ornithology, biology. Things of that nature.

Jennifer says that more written material “is the cry of the Crow language teachers. We had a meeting in November of last year, and many of the teachers came together. Over and over again they said, ‘Where are all the written Crow books?’ We wish we had more funding for more materials development. As far as the lay teachers and common people, there’s been no development of materials.” Jennifer would like to develop powerpoint materials to use in class as well. She also sees the need for more communication with all of the other language teachers to develop more materials.

Crow in the Middle School and High School Classroom

At middle school and high school, Crow language classes last longer during the day and meet more times per week than in elementary schools. Also as would be expected, more time is spent learning the written form of Crow language.

At Lodge Grass Middle School, Crow language classes meet two times each week for a quarter, and three times per week for the next quarter; then students change to a different elective at the semester break. The Lodge Grass High School Crow classes meet every day of the week all year long. Only 16 students were in the middle school class at Lodge Grass, whereas 59 participated in the high school classes. At Lodge Grass the middle school class content consists mainly of vocabulary words. Students learn names for body parts, names of animals and so on. Students in both the high school and middle school also learn Crow culture through doing crafts and reading books, such as *Plenty Coups*, written in English.

At the high school, students who have taken Crow I can take Crow II, but the two groups are mixed together, so Crow II students actually take the same class again. The more advanced students act as peer teachers to the beginning students. The high school students work with the written form of Crow from the beginning of the year which commences with vocabulary work, and then by the end of the first term, students begin to make sentences and read aloud in Crow.

When I visit Reggie's high school class, the students are finishing large posters of their family trees. The posters include pictures of family members, students' Crow names, and their Crow clans. Crows frequently receive a name in addition to their birth name. This additional name is often given to them by a clan elder and is often passed

down through generations in the family. Reggie finds that using the pictures as a mnemonic device is very helpful in assisting the students to remember the Crow words for terms such as *older brother*, *grandmother*, and other family relations. However, in the posters I see, all the words are in English. The students also spend a great deal of time at the end of the semester working on crafts. Students are exposed to the written form of Crow from the beginning, but focus on it more in the latter half of the year. According to Reggie, students seem to understand much more Crow than they produce orally. The walls of her classroom are festooned with the family tree posters, but she also has some words in Crow language on her walls labeling the calendar and the clock and so on. She makes extensive use of handouts in her lessons and in testing. She tests the students on each unit from the books and again at the end of the year. Students are asked to translate words or fill in the blanks on the tests. She says, "When I first came, there was nothing in here at all, so I made those" [pointing to some handouts]. She shows me an example of one of her tests and the handout to accompany it: "Like this is one of my tests. And I will give them a study sheet, and I will give them a regular test of just the sentences but the translation is taken out. This was taken out of a bilingual [text], and it is all Crow and they have to find the right words to put in there." She also uses oral testing as a refresher before the written tests. "I have the students say it to me, and then I ask them what does it mean, and then I have them write a short sentence or just give me a sentence in Crow."

While the student population at the Lodge Grass schools is almost entirely made up of Crows, Hardin High School has a much larger minority of white students (see Table 3). Although almost all of her students at Hardin are Crows, Loretta estimates that less than half of the students in her Crow language classes are fluent in Crow language. At

Hardin Middle School, Crow language is an elective that the students take every day for one semester, and Hardin High School's Crow language class is a full-year elective. At the middle school, the Crow language class lasts every day for 45 minutes, and the high school classes are 55 minutes long.

Table 3.

American Indian Enrollment at Crow Language Teachers' Schools 2003-04

Institution	Total enrollment	American Indian	American Indian proportion
Little Big Horn College	320 ^a	303 ^a	94.7% ^a
Plenty Coups High School	64	63	98.4%
Pryor 7-8	24	24	100%
Hardin Middle School	362	230	63.5%
Hardin High School	485	280	57.7%
Lodge Grass 7-8	84	83	98.8%
Lodge Grass High School	178	178	100%
Crow Agency School	233	231	99.9%

Note: Data on K-12 schools from *Montana School Fall Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity 2003-04 School Year*, by Office of Public Instruction, 2003. Retrieved December 12, 2004 from <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/PDF/Measurement/rptEnrByReo2004.pdf> . Data on LBHC from *United States Department of Education Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System*. National Center for Education Statistics, September, 2004. Retrieved December 12, 2004, from <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d02/dt219.asp>
^aData is from 2002-2003 for LBHC.

At Hardin Middle School, Loretta organizes her lesson plans following the chronological order of the language learning development process in humans. She begins with listening activities. Next the students learn to reproduce the sounds through oral activities. Then she introduces the written form of Crow through 10-item word lists. When I visited the middle school, her students were working with the numbers 1 through 10. She explains to me, “After I introduced the written form of the number words, I set up an activity where they had to decode using the different syllables of the word. Like for *one*, I gave them the written form, and I told them to tear it up into those syllables, and I had them pile them up. I gave them thirty seconds or whatever to spell number *two* in Crow, and they could after doing all of that process.” She introduces the written form only after extensive listening and oral activities.

At both the middle school and the high school, Loretta incorporates Crow culture into the language classes providing a context for the Crow words and Crow concepts she is teaching. “I will try to relate whatever word we are working with to our Crow way of life. At the beginning of the school year, for example, we worked on opposites--good and bad choices--good and bad. I relate it to the warriors of long ago, our ancestors, the warriors. Their medicine called for a certain protocol. And if they didn’t follow a certain protocol; then there were consequences, and I tell the kids, you know, you can find that today. Classroom rules or school rules, if you make the wrong choices, there are consequences.” She finds that “the kids really like my class” because she relates Crow history and culture to the language as well as to their lives today. Her high school Crow language class is only an introductory level course. She says, “At the high school, it’s only for introduction to Crow and that’s it, and the kids want more, like Crow Language I

and Crow Language II.” She uses written Crow more frequently in the high school.

“Some kids really pick up it fast, and right now some of them can write Crow.”

The vast majority of students in seventh and eighth grade in Pryor and at Plenty Coups High School are Crows. Few white students attend the high school (see Table 3). Rose teaches two Crow language classes in the middle school with 11 students in the seventh-grade class and 18 in the eighth-grade class. In her two high school classes, there are 18 students in one and 20 in the other. Rose estimates that a few students are fluent speakers of Crow, that 75% of each class are passive speakers, comprehending Crow but not speaking it, and the remaining 20% do not know Crow language at all. However, Rose cautions that more students may be passive speakers of Crow than are readily apparent when surveys of language use are undertaken. She says some of the passive Crow students are “afraid to use it if the other kids are around.”

At the beginning of the term, Rose spends three or four days evaluating the students, testing their oral and written language skills. Then she divides her classes into three categories—fluent speakers, passive speakers, and non-Crow speakers—and targets each group with different lessons. She says, “At the beginning, I don’t spend so much time with the written form of Crow because we are learning the basics.” By the second semester, she increases the amount of reading and writing. Students read aloud and discuss the meaning of the passages as they go along, so they make the connection between meaning and sound rules.

Each class focuses predominantly on conversational Crow primarily learning the language through oral practice. In a 50-minute class, she teaches oral and written Crow for 30 minutes, and the rest of the class time is devoted to teaching Crow history.

She explains her daily use of the written form of Crow: “Every night I write my lessons and what I am going to teach in Crow. And then I use an overhead projector, and I write it on the overhead projector. The kids write every day too. Whatever I write, they re-write it because I don’t reprint it for them. If I [were to] do that, then they won’t [write it themselves]. I don’t give them handouts with the stuff already written until after I am done writing and practicing; then I will give them a handout that they can use to study for the test.”

Rose sees some language interference from students’ first language when they learn to read a second language. She believes that “you learn how to read only once in your lifetime, and what you have learned you apply to the next language you are going to learn, and this is where adults have problems because they already learned how to read in English, and all the English sounds are there. Then when they want to go back and read Crow, sometimes they will use English sounds instead of Crow sounds.”

Rose assesses the student’s skills both through oral and written exams, testing the students every week. She says, “You have to test them every week. If they don’t get it, or if they miss something, you go back and make sure they get it and then move on to the next. The tests are all written in Crow.” She explains that the school requires teachers to turn in a grade every Tuesday to determine eligibility for school activities, so she gives the students a test Thursday which determines the report on the following Tuesday. Students who do not know the language at all are tested orally. “I take them into my other room, I give them the Crow, and they read it to me, or I ask them a question in conversational Crow, and I say, ‘The answer is in front of you, pick one.’”

For Rose it is critical that the students are exposed to as much Crow language as possible. “When I am going to be gone from my class, I request a native speaker who can come in and tell stories. I line up my own subs from the community, somebody that comes in that’s comfortable with kids and can tell them stories in Crow and then tell them in English again, so they hear both. They enjoy that.” She describes another issue with Crow language. “Male and female language is different.” So she models male language for the boys. “This is how the men say it, and I change my voice to make it deeper.” (She laughs.) “There is no adult in there to hear me, to tease me, so I just change my voice everywhere for them to understand what I am doing.” She also brings in male speakers.

Steve says, “Over the years, the people who teach the language have found that they need to stay in the language for an extended period. When Rose had that little reading group in Crow Agency, the first graders came up to her about the end of October and asked her, ‘Do you know how to talk English?’ she figured that that was a pretty good indication that she was doing well.”

Rose adds, “I was so happy that she asked me that question.”

Current Middle and High School Reading Materials

The three middle and high school teachers employ some of the same texts in their classes. At Lodge Grass High School, Reggie uses the *Crow Language Learning Guide* and *Reading and Writing in Crow* (created in 1979 by Richard Chadwick and Hu Matthews). She also has a class set of *The Dictionary of Everyday Crow*, but doesn’t allow her books out of the classroom for fear that they will disappear. Reggie makes her own handouts using some of the old materials as the basis for them. Reggie would like to

see Crow immersion classes for all ages, and texts developed that would accompany those classes.

Loretta has developed her own activities in the years she has taught the language in the Hardin schools. When she first started, she had to make her own materials and come up with her own activities. She uses many different strategies to teach her students listening skills and oral speaking skills including music games and visual activities, and she finds written Crow as a useful tool in some of these activities.

According to Loretta, there are few materials for the age group she teaches. “When [the] bilingual [program] was in the school district in 1970’s, most of the materials they developed were geared toward lower [ages] or adults, and none for middle school or high school age.” The only text she uses is the *Dictionary of Everyday Crow*. Loretta also uses an audiotape of warrior society songs with accompanying texts created by Dale Old Horn and Barney Old Coyote. For the Crow culture component of the class, Loretta employs *The Way of the Warrior*, an anthology of oral stories collected by Barney and Hank Old Coyote, translated into English by them, and edited by Barney’s granddaughter, Phoenicia Bauerle. Loretta says, “The kids are fascinated with the warrior ways.” Another English text used by Loretta is *This is Crow Country*, by Rick and Susie Gratz. Loretta sees a need for more materials geared toward middle school and high school. She would like to see more handouts developed. She would also like to work with the other language teachers to create a comprehensive curriculum that reaches in scope and sequence from Head Start all the way to the college level.

Rose allows her students at Plenty Coups to check out copies of the Crow dictionary. She also uses some of the older materials as well as the booklets that she and

Raffaella have recently published even though they are primarily targeted at elementary students. Rose makes frequent use of overheads and handouts that she creates. She teaches Crow history in English using texts such as the as-told-to biographies, *Plenty Coups* and *Pretty Shield*. She says, “They [the students] go chapter by chapter, real slow, doing a little research as we go along, reading between the lines.” *Plenty Coups* teaches the students how men became warriors, and the students read *Pretty Shield* “to learn about the women of the past, how they were treated and the life of a Crow woman. She brings in other material “to fill in the gaps.” Steve adds, that “it’s impossible” to teach Crow history and culture in Crow language at this level because “most the kids aren’t fluent enough in Crow to be taught that subject matter in the native language.” Rose believes that the reading in English strengthens the students’ English reading and writing skills because they are motivated to read and write about their culture, whereas the activities in the students’ other classes are not as interesting or as challenging. Rose says, “When I came into the classroom, there was nothing that you can pick up and teach from.” She would like more materials including readers for high school students, grammar books and a revised dictionary. “Our dictionary is not perfect. There’s a lot of stuff it is missing, but it’s useful when it comes to spelling.” She suggests other teachers keep word lists to add to the dictionary.

Rose points out another problem with materials at the high school level. She would like to see more opportunities for collaboration and communication with the other high school Crow language teachers, so they are all aware of the materials used and content taught at the other schools. “Sometimes I get Lodge Grass kids who come and live in Billings and go to school in Pryor, and they do move around, so when my kids

leave, I discover they are over there in Hardin in Loretta's class. So they go back and forth throughout the year." One reason for the lack of communication, according to Rose is "we are all separate districts with separate superintendents."

Crow in the Elementary Classroom

At the elementary level, the classes meet less often than in the higher grades, each class is shorter in duration, and students work less with the written form of Crow than in the higher grades. At Crow Public School, almost all of the students come to the school speaking English as their only language although there are some students who are passive speakers, understanding some Crow but not speaking it. Steve says that in the 1995 survey that he and Sharon Stewart-Peregoy conducted, less than 10% of those entering elementary school were fluent Crow speakers. Johann reports that Crow Public School enrolls about 215 students, and of those, she estimates that only about 5 students are fluent in Crow language.

Liz reports that she meets once a week with her students in fourth through sixth grade. Each class lasts 30 minutes. For example, on Tuesdays Liz goes into Johann's fifth grade class to teach Crow language. Johann is a former Crow language teacher who is now a regular classroom teacher. Johann would like to incorporate Crow into her class during the rest of the week rather than just waiting for Liz to come in on Tuesdays, but she feels so much pressure from the "No Child Left Behind" policies that she does not allot any additional time for Crow in spite of the fact that she, as a former language teacher, would be highly qualified to teach Crow language. She says, "I would like to use more Crow in the classroom if I had more time every day, but I never have time, and this

No-Child-Left-Behind stuff is really stressful now.” Johann does use Crow occasionally; for example, she might say, “Let’s go outside,” in Crow to the students.

Liz divides her half-hour class into two 15-minute segments. For the first segment, she teaches the phonics of the Crow alphabet, the students de-code; they sound out new words including numbers, colors, and names of animals. In the last 15 minutes, they do a worksheet that reinforces the first half of the class, or occasionally they color pictures on handouts that have Crow color words and other Crow terms. She also uses some simple stories. In fourth, fifth, and sixth grade, Liz repeats the same material so that through repetition, the students become more confident in their language skills. She incorporates the written form of Crow in the handouts and through story books. She does not test the students, but she monitors their progress for her records “so we know we aren’t wasting our time.” Liz is not just the Crow language teacher for grades 4 through 6; on Fridays she makes home visits as a student advocate for the school. There is another Crow language teacher for grades K through 3.

Like Johann, Raffaella is a regular classroom teacher, and in her classroom at Lodge Grass Elementary School, she attempts to incorporate Crow language whenever she can. Her classroom walls are decorated with pictures of colors, shapes and objects labeled in Crow language. She writes Crow words on the board for the students to sound out. However, she spends the vast majority of the time teaching beginning reading in English.

Although Crow Public School was the site of the first experimentation with the use of Crow in the classroom as part of the early bilingual program, today the language is barely a part of the curriculum. Johann likes the idea of having two Crow language

teachers. Currently Marie Lincoln teaches the younger children, and Liz teaches the older students. But Johann says her young son has already surpassed what is being taught to his age group in first grade, so Johann “would mix the students up; not keep them all in one grade, but have the more advanced level go together in multi grades, and the beginners learning together even if they are different age levels.” Liz thinks that Crow language should be a daily class with 45-minute periods for the older students and 30-minute periods for the younger ones. She says it should be “just like we had to learn the English language, and we had phonics every day when we were going to school.”

Raffaella believes that more emphasis should be put on learning and using the oral and written forms of Crow in the Crow language classes “instead of all this trying to get into an arts and crafts type thing, or, you know, an Indian club taking off here and there. These dance trips are nice, but I think we need to focus more on the academic things.” She would like to see a central location for all of the Crow written materials. She has a collection of the materials that she has developed along with those used by her mother. She says, “I have them in boxes, in crates, and one of my goals is some day to get all that open, all of them and get them filed, so people can use them; that is one of my intentions--to do that.”

An immersion Head Start program is another need for Crow language learning programs among the youngest students. Johann mentions that the Lodge Grass school system had a Crow language immersion program to which she sent her grandson. She says “Everything was in Crow, and he really liked that.” But the program no longer exists. She would like to see Crow immersion programs available in every community.

Current Reading Materials at the Primary Grade Level

At the primary grade level, Liz occasionally uses portions of stories from the bilingual materials, but with so little time to spend with the students she just cannot focus on reading skills to the extent that the children are comfortable reading in Crow. And today the population of Crow children entering the schools is primarily English speaking with many fewer Crow speakers. Liz appreciates the materials that were developed but would like to see some more closely focused on the current population in the elementary school. She says, "I think the materials that we have now are very good, but I would like to see some new materials that would benefit these children, more different stories than the written ones that we have, traditional stories and modern stories." Liz would like to see a Crow curriculum developed for all ages.

Raffaella, who has developed materials recently, believes new material is needed "especially in the kindergarten or the pre-reading levels or beginning reading series." One of Raffaella's goals is "to write a phonics book for Crow" accompanied by tapes. Raffaella is working on a calendar that will be written in Crow for teachers to put up in their classrooms.

Sharon Stewart-Peregoy, who was curriculum director for the Lodge Grass schools in 1999, asked Rose to take manuscripts of ten stories that had originally been written down years before by Joy Toineeta and put them together to be published. Rose and Raffaella collaborated to create these "new" texts designed for primary students. Rose says, "The major writing was done by Raffaella and me. Raffaella is a very good writer, and she and I can just sit and type away." Rose explained their writing process: "Raffaella and I went through and reedited this old one that was focused at the adult

level. Now we changed the focus to little kids or beginning readers, so the language is at their level rather than adult level.” She and Raffaele made a minor change in the orthography to make the readings more accessible to young readers. Rose says, “But we didn’t even bother to get approval or anything. We just went ahead and changed because she and I, we teach every day. I am using these readers currently. I don’t know who else is using them.”

Other Issues to Consider in the Materials Development

According to Steve, when Crow language material developers are creating materials from the oral traditions, they must consider disputes about the authenticity of different versions of a story. Sometimes these disputes can slow down the process because the developers “debate endlessly over it. ‘It should have been this person or that person’ and such and such. Unless you get a Crow author sitting down and writing that type of thing in Crow themselves and then taking the risk of putting it out there, those are difficult texts.” Steve says the process can be “extremely inhibiting.” On the other hand, Steve describes the situation in Rocky Boys where elders were the ones who originally developed the written materials. Steve says, “They were hired directly by the schools. They were already literate in the Cree syllabary, and they had a number of priorities about what they wanted to see get into Cree. And certainly no credibility issues when they wrote it. Everybody said, ‘That has got to be the official version because it is coming from those elders.’”

Since the Cree materials were from credible sources, were core cultural materials, and were only available in Cree language, “the junior high and high school kids found

those things to be highly motivational. They wanted to read those texts and that was one of the reasons for learning Cree.” Steve goes on to say, for cultural texts the Cree material developers “would make a point not to translate some of those things into English. There were a couple of times when we were at conferences, and they would lose one of them. Somebody would pick one up and say, ‘This is great,’ and walk off with them, so they would go to great lengths to get it back because they felt these things had a particular sacred importance, and they weren’t interested in seeing them in the wrong hands or in the wrong situation.” Steve says that Crow elder and language developer Barney Old Coyote is “the person who has the most flexibility in looking at and talking about those things.” According to Steve, Barney “recognizes that you have got as many versions as you have storytellers, and you are never going to get complete agreement. If your task is to, somehow by committee or whatever, to say this is the right version of something, you just spin your wheels endlessly.”

Rose and Steve discuss other sources for Crow language materials. Recently a Crow, Phoenocia Bauerle, edited a collection of Crow warrior stories that had originally been recorded in Crow language. Bauerle published the stories in English, but Rose says, “The book should have been written in Crow, and it isn’t.” Steve points out that Bauerle was probably interested in finding an English speaking audience for the materials, but these materials would have been ideal to publish only in Crow because they were credible, new, core cultural materials, of high interest to young Crows, and would then not be available in English which would have spurred Crows to want to read Crow, so they could have access to these stories. Rose comments that these materials would have been easy to write down in Crow language because they were already in spoken Crow.

She says, “As a translator, one of the very frustrating challenges is to change something from English to Crow. There is so much meaning lost. It is terrible because you have to make up your own as you go along, but when it is oral or taped Crow, you can start dictating and writing and it goes pretty fast.” On the other hand, “if you get a little first grade primer in English, and then you try to translate that into the other language, that’s when I find it very frustrating.”

In addition to issues of authenticity, materials developers make decisions about the inclusion of English in the materials. The early reading materials developed by the bilingual program included an English translation of the Crow story at the end of each booklet. But in the most recent materials created by Rose and Raffaella, Rose states, “We deliberately left out the English translation. It’s a crutch. They will go to the English, so let’s let them read in Crow first.”

Teachers’ Perceptions of Technology in Teaching Crow

Many of the teachers mention technology as a useful tool for language teaching. Most of the teachers bemoan the fact that they have so little access to technology in their current teaching environment. All of them tout the benefits of technology and would like to find additional ways to incorporate computers, video recordings, and audiotapes into their classrooms.

At the tribal college, Dale makes use of music audiotapes and audio CD’s. He would like to see more CD’s and a language laboratory with “carrels where the students can go and listen to the language.” Jennifer uses an overhead projector in her classes along with audiotapes, and she wishes she had the time to develop powerpoint lessons.

Jennifer describes a computer she envisioned when she taught kindergarteners at Saint Charles Mission School near Pryor: “I would write a letter and the computer would say that letter, and I would write a Crow word, and the computer would say the Crow word back to my students, and that has never been developed.” She says, “Some people have said we are going to design a CD rom, and when we put it into a computer, the computer will put these sounds together and then when we write a word, the sound will come out. Even though the technology is there, there’s not a person that is putting it together.”

Loretta also uses audiotapes in her classroom and would like to see more CD’s created so “kids can plug it in, and this is how you start writing Crow.” Reggie uses the overhead projector and employs a computer to make the signs she has on her classroom walls, but does not use audio tapes nor is she allowed to let the students have access to computers. She says, “I can’t let the students use my computer because I guess they were sending emails to different schools with words that are not very presentable, so they told us not to let the students use them unless it’s a computer class where the teacher is just watching them all the time.”

Rose uses overheads, a tape recorder, and several movies about Crows. But she is unhappy with the lack of technology supplied by the school: “When I say tape recorder, it is just one little beat up tape recorder that is mine that I took to school. There is nothing in my class room. I couldn’t even get my computer running. There is no computer.” She sees many possibilities with computers: “You can do language lessons, and kids can sit to it and learn from it. It’s all available, but there is none in our school. They are not even looking, trying it at all. It’s frustrating.” Rose also mentions some videos in Crow language that Steve and others developed years ago. Steve says, “There were a couple

videos that were storytelling sessions, and those, four or five of them, were shot in the film and TV studio in Bozeman. What we would do is have a Crow storyteller and a small audience of kids, and we don't know for sure where those things ended up. They might have stayed in the training programs here [at MSU]. Other than those, there weren't a whole lot of those kind of materials that were kept over here [in Bozeman]."

Steve has several other ideas for technological innovations in teaching Crow. To work on oral comprehension and listening skills while at the same time conducting writing instruction, he suggests, "interactive language models where you get conversation, whether it is video-recorded or whatever, between Crow speakers in a context the kids can follow. There are not things like that available. Like a written dialogue and something that could be heard orally too. Those are pretty standard in most language teaching classes." Steve also envisions the possibility of an on-line dictionary that would help to get more of the language into the dictionary in a much speedier manner. "We have been kicking around the idea that one of the things the Hawaiians have done is to put their dictionary on-line and set up some strategies for various professionals that are working with the language to have some control over corrections and additions. Most people use it as a read-only thing but with quick access, so it's available to anybody." This on-line dictionary could be easily revised, but changes would be controlled by language professionals who would have a procedure in place for revising. This kind of dictionary would help "to get around the problem of constantly updating the current dictionary that's out there and has been through two or three editions."

Liz's fourth- through sixth-grade students use computers to "type in their own stories in English"; then Liz helps "them translate it, and they would type it in, and take it home." Johann would like to see "some type of computer program where you could actually hear the language." She adds that "the written form could be put in there, too, and then you could just develop something and put it on CD. It would be just like those phonics CDs and math CDs. Like now they have those I-books. What if we could put those in there and then we could just show them to the children."

Crow Language in the Community

Spoken Crow Language

In their surveys of Crow language use conducted in 1975 and 1995, Steve Chesarek and Sharon Stewart-Peregoy discovered some unusual demographics regarding language use. Although they expected to find the highest rate of Crow language use among children where both parents were Crow speakers, they found that the highest percentage of homes where Crow was being transmitted to the younger generation actually "came out of single-mother situations, and it may be that those kids were being raised by primarily by grandparents while mothers were working, but we don't know for sure, because there wasn't any way to tell that," reports Steve.

According to Steve, another factor that seems to impact children's use of Crow language is the development of cluster housing on the reservation. Steve says this phenomenon "put a whole group of people together in the same area, so the kids are getting a lot more playmates who interact with each other in English rather than in Crow." This change in living conditions has moved people out of more rural, isolated

situations where there are multiple generations living in the home. Steve says, “All of a sudden people have their own homes, and it’s probably also been a factor in terms of just simply the kinds of social activities that families are more likely to be involved in, and they are no longer in the rural setting.” When these housing tracts were implemented, “nobody saw it coming; they wanted to get new housing.” Then when the cluster housing was first built “there was back migration. Once you get the housing, you get people coming back from Billings and places like that who are coming from an English environment, and they become factors in language learning.”

Rose sees a connection between fluent Crow speaking students and the Native American Church. She finds that “the Native American Church, the peyote group, is the most fluent group.” Students whose families practice the peyote religion are more likely to speak their language and to know and respect their Crow culture. Steve adds that it may not just be family participation in the Native American Church that causes the children to be more attuned to their culture, “but the fact that those tend to be the most traditional people and the ones that are most involved in hand games and in other cultural activities, and they are more self-conscious about the preservation of language and culture. Some of the other [Christian] religious groups have been almost anti-language.” Many traditional cultural activities “are conducted in Crow language” and have “a lot of multi-generation action going on at those kinds of events,” so children in those families have many more opportunities to hear and speak Crow.

Rose points out that in traditional families, oral use of the Crow language occurs in many multi-generational settings. For example “they have a sweat bath and they have a feast; all those stories would still go on in Crow. All the men would be in group, and you

could kind of listen to them, and their jokes, and the old stories. They just sit there and they chat.” In ceremonies such as those conducted by the Native American Church, participants “spend all night with each other, even the day before preparing it all together, all night and the next day, all day until the afternoon, and it’s all in Crow.” According to Steve, in these situations “the younger people are seeing older people having a lot of knowledge and prestige based on their language and cultural experiences, more so than you would in a secular situation.” Rose believes that “as long as those kinds of religions are intact, the language will be there.” She mentions other similar traditional, cultural activities such as “the tobacco society, individual medicine opening, and the sweat bath.” She says that as long as those ceremonies are practiced “the language will be there but if one of them is gone, the language is going to be gone.” Rose points out that in these social domains where Crow language is used “you don’t see written there. It’s all oral, all oral stories, oral singing.” Steve adds that this oral use of Crow in religious contexts is quite different from a formal written translation of the Bible into Crow.

Transgenerational Transmission of Crow Language

Dale explains that the best method for maintaining a language is transgenerational transmission. Dale cites sociolinguist Joshua Fishman’s idea that language must be spoken at home “across the dinner table.” Dale says, “If it is not spoken at home, you know, we are just treading water.” Dale would like to see more “Crow women speaking to their children again.” He believes that “our language breakdown has been because Crow women are no longer talking Crow to their children.” Dale would like public schools on and near the reservation to expand their Crow language offerings. “In the

public schools they should not just have a Crow hour; the Crow language should be integrated throughout the curriculum so all classes are taught bilingually. So in math class we have some Crow concepts taught in Crow.” For Dale, “Vocabulary covers that whole issue.” Hu echoes Dale’s view, saying, “What I really think is that parents need to encourage Crow with their kids and use it.”

Jennifer does not believe that Crow will survive unless the education system plays a major role. She says, “It scares me terribly; we can’t just think that Crow is going to happen in the home. I know it’s not going to. It’s going to happen in education systems more and more, and so the schools are our link, a great link, to preserving the Crow language.”

Johann notices a difference between the way the language has been passed down in her family compared to her sisters’ families. She says her grandson speaks Crow because “we all speak Crow at home.” But none of Johann’s nieces and nephews speaks Crow even though all of her brothers and sisters are fluent in Crow. According to Johann, her sister sent the children to Head Start and “that’s when they started speaking English.” After their Head Start experience “they didn’t go back to speaking Crow any more.” That is what Johann’s other sisters also said. Johann’s husband was also insistent that the children speak Crow. Johann remembers, “When my son started high school, he would come and start to speak English. My husband would get after him: ‘You can speak English at the school, but when you come home, you speak Crow because we are all Crows here and I want you to speak Crow to us.’ He encouraged speaking Crow, so that’s why my grandson speaks fluent Crow.”

Reggie sees the effects of interracial marriage on the transgenerational use of Crow language. Her son married a non-Indian so Reggie's grandchildren do not speak Crow although they understand some. This situation is not limited to a few families according to Reggie: "And that's where a lot of the kids are these days. The parents don't speak Crow to them in the home, and I think if they did, they would speak more Crow, but a lot of parents don't."

Written Crow Language in the Community

Currently the written form of Crow language barely exists in the community. The local laundromat and another business in Crow Agency have their business signs in Crow, but the only other place that Crow words can be found outside of the schools is on the street signs in Crow Agency, and Jennifer, Dale, and Liz point out that the street signs are spelled incorrectly and contain culturally inappropriate words (See Figures 1-4).



Figure 1. Crow Agency Laundromat Sign in Crow Language.



Figure 2. Crow Agency Store Sign in Crow Language



Fig. 3. The Corner of CAP DRIVE and MAKATA* ST.



Fig. 4. The Corner of DAKAKE ST and BUTCHECHE* AVE

Hu is working on a project that he hopes will be accepted by the community. He is “taking the text of the Bible and putting it into Crow.” He has completed about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the New Testament and several hundred verses of the Old Testament. He says, “If I ever finish with the New Testament, hopefully, the churches will use the translation. They already are to some extent.” He would like to print the book, distribute it, and “have a great big celebration.” He says, “I am looking at all of the churches. I give them the stuff that I have translated and that has gotten into print, and they ask for more.”

He says, “One nice thing about the Bible is that people will read it more than once. People who love the Bible will read it a second time, whereas most of the other materials in Crow are for young people, and once you have read it you are not likely to read it again which means to me that a multitude of materials needs to be produced. It would be nice if we had a newspaper with at least some Crow on it. Sarge Old Horn, Dale’s brother, had a newspaper once, but it didn’t last very long, but there was stuff in Crow. It would be nice if we had that again.” Rose echoes this thought: “They have a daily newspaper that comes out in Crow Agency, and there should be a section in there in Crow language for people to read, and fun things to do, a page that would be for some Crow writers to put some things in there.”

Rose frequently is asked by community members for help with writing in Crow. “People would call me and ask ‘Would you translate this for me’ or ‘Could you write this down for me. Just the other day someone came in and said, ‘Could you write Congratulations to the Graduate in Crow for me.’”

Steve adds, “Probably the place where we are seeing the most widespread use of written Crow is in obituaries. Names and clan relationships—those are things people

want to preserve, so they get in the newspaper, and they will go seek out people like Rose or Loretta or Dale to help them make sure that they get the Crow name spelled correctly. If you look out in to the walk-around world for where you see things in written Crow, there is really very little out there except for those types of things.”

Steve mentions that part of the problem with adding the written form of Crow to the community is “what it takes to motivate people to put the time into it.” He says, “People tremendously underestimate how much start up time it’s going to take to get enough content to sustain even a column in a newspaper or a radio show, but once those things start, they snowball.”

Steve suggests other uses for written Crow in the community: “If you look at the places in public where Crow is still the medium of communication even putting those things into written Crow would make a big difference. Court proceedings almost entirely take place in Crow, and they are video recorded but they are not transcribed, so there is no written record.” He also points out that the tribal courts and most school board meetings in the reservation districts take place in Crow language, and they are typically tape recorded, but the minutes are put in English which is the same with tribal council minutes. He believes these opportunities would be a good place to add written Crow to the community “because somebody probably could develop transcription skills to put those things into Crow pretty quickly.”

According to Steve, Father Randolph Graczyk of Pryor “has a grammar study that is in press right now, and he has been working for a number of years now on a dictionary that will be much more extensive than the one that is published now.” Steve’s idea of an

on-line dictionary would make the information available to anyone in the community with a computer.

Another issue arose in the discussions regarding community acceptance and use of the written form of a language. Steve maintains that the purpose for which a written form is used can determine its level of acceptance. He describes comments from Robert Thomas of the University of Arizona. Discussing Cherokee literacy, Thomas compared the issue to lessons learned from the Bible. Says Steve, "It's a Biblical thing 'When I was a child, I played with child's toys, and when I became an adult, I put away childish things.'" According to Steve, Thomas was making the point "that if your purpose in your literacy is to be a transitional over into English or over into some language, it's a childish thing, and the adults who are involved in it, get only as involved in it as the program requires to do those little kid things." Steve is referring to a situation such as the original Crow bilingual program, the purpose of which was to use Crow as a transitional tool to move speakers into English fluency. Steve explains the breakthrough came in Cherokee literacy when the written form "became a serious tool for adults" during

the trail of tears when people were separated and isolated and very afraid that their traditions were dying out because the elders were literally dying out on this journey. They had people they needed to communicate with back in the Carolinas. By then, they were looking at things like a daily newspaper in Cherokee where they had a serious buy-in from the adult population about how you might use literacy, and it became the basis for a pretty effective multi-lingual educational system for a number of years. The purpose of that literacy had become their own

purpose for their own group, and it wasn't like many of the early bilingual programs, a bridge to English.

Steve goes on to mention serious adult functions for written Crow that might cause the community to buy in to literacy in Crow language. "There are things right now that are adult functions that have never been dealt with in terms of literacy: tribal council meetings that go on almost entirely in Crow that are recorded in Crow, but then somebody will sit down and translate to get an English set of minutes. They haven't gone that next step to saying, 'Well, if we said it in Crow, and we recorded it in Crow why don't we get it written down in Crow and keep our record that way' because that's what actually was said, rather than filtering it through English." Steve points out that one area where Crow is spoken is the tribal councils, and that is a problem for "guys who are serious politicians, and they get up, and they want to talk to the tribal council, but they don't speak Crow." As a result, "At least for some of the kids, there is a real sense of loss when they have grown up without the language."

Hu sees a limited need for the written form of Crow language in the community. "Grammar books and stories written by people here" would be valuable. However, he does not see much utility in translating English books into Crow other than the scriptures. Hu says the scriptures are essential: "You see the scriptures speak to my heart. They do it best in my language, and that is why I want the scriptures in Crow, but most books are not of that sort, but I would hope that we have some authors among the Crow who would write in Crow."

Steve discusses the limited ways that written Crow is used and contrasts that to the way the written form of Navajo has gained acceptance among some Navajo speakers.

He uses the example of Joy Toineeta, another of the pioneers in the use of written Crow. She was “the first to use the written form of Crow as her own tool.” In the early literacy classes, Joy “would be taking her notes in Crow and things like that that you consider a full use of literacy. She would actually sit down and compose things in Crow rather than back translating from English.” He explains that there are phases that people go through as they are developing new literacy. For children on the Navajo reservation who have gone through immersion schools such as Rock Point and Rough Rock and have actually grown up reading and writing Navajo, “it’s a natural tool for them to express themselves. There’s apparently points you get to in your literacy skills, and we just have not seen very many folks get that far along. That has a big impact on what kind of materials gets produced and how much written Crow gets used by people.”

Dale sees many places in the community where Crow language would be appropriate: “We ought to have a television station that uses the Crow language; we ought to have a radio station that uses the Crow language; we ought to have pop artists that use the Crow language.” However, he disapproves of the “off the cuff, off the wall” way the Bureau of Indian Affairs attempted to incorporate Crow language into the street signs in Crow Agency. “A group of laborers who were working for the road department had no real cultural interest nor did they have an interest in the language. Like this street over here they translate *Makata* Street*.” [See Figure 3.] The road department is attempting to spell the word for *Child Street* since the street goes past the school, but *Child* is correctly spelled *Baakáate*. “There is a street down there they call *Bala* Street* [which should be spelled *Balé*], *Wood Street*, and they are trying to emulate *Elm Street*, *Maple Street*, *Oak Street* using Anglo perception.” He points to the street outside his

window to give an example of how Crow values are twisted to promote the Anglo-oriented BIA hierarchy while corrupting the original Crow meaning of a word: “That street over there [misspelled in the sign as *Butcheche* Street*], they are trying to say *Bacheeítche Street*, but they are referring to the superintendent. That’s a convolution of ideology there. *Bacheeítche* means *Chief*. It’s a respected title in the political hierarchy of the Crow nation; then to use it to name the *Superintendent Road*? You see how misapplied and misguided that is.” Loretta also dislikes the misspelled, inappropriately named *Butcheche* Street*. [see Figure 4.] Loretta says the spelling is closer to the Crow word for *my foot* than for *chief*. She says, “They should ask someone, or look in the dictionary.”

Teachers’ Perceptions of their Students’ Attitudes toward Crow

When I ask about attitudes toward the written form of the Crow language, the subjects’ responses come in a variety of avenues. They discuss their own feelings, and they describe their students’ attitudes. Some of them include in their answers the attitudes of the community toward the written form of Crow and toward Crow language in general because their students’ views mirror the larger community’s perceptions. Some also comment on attitudes of other teachers and the attitudes of the administrators.

College Students’ Attitude toward Crow Language

At the college level many students “take Crow language because it’s required, not because they are interested,” says Dale. He traces this negative attitude to the history of “succumbing to the assimilation process and agreeing with our oppressor.” He states that

he can “go down the roster of the students” and describe their “broken families” and the “dysfunctional behavior” that results from this shattering of the culture.

For Dale it is not a language learning issue as much as it is a “mental health issue.” Some of his students suffer from the trauma caused by neglect or physical and mental abuse, and “they establish behavior patterns to either cover up or try to forget but you never really do.”

Dale uses many techniques to help them to get past this stumbling block. “I use a lot of humor. I use self-deprecation; that makes them comfortable.” He instills cultural pride, giving them “reasons why they should be proud of their culture rather than being ashamed of it.” Dale points out to the students “the emaciation processes used by imperialist government.” He explains, “The strongest imperialist government in the world has always been the Anglo government, England and America, and they take an arrogant approach to all other cultures.”

Dale responds to the reluctance of some of his students to learn the written form of Crow by explaining to them “that to speak well is coupled with being able to read well and it’s a truism in this country if you are well spoken you are well respected.” He tells them “the written form will help us to analyze the parts of the language that we need to critically think about,” and Dale says, “They see the logic readily.”

The students in Jennifer’s conversational Crow language class tend to be the ones who are most anxious about speaking the Crow language. Jennifer states, “They are scared so they revert to English right away because they don’t want to be intimidated.” She points out that using English orthography causes confusion for some learners “because we grew up with the English’s phonetic system and were geared to read in the

English phonetic structure.” She says that sometimes non-Indians in her classes grasp the written form more quickly while Crows are “a little more hesitant” because “they are looking for the transference of the exact sound.”

In order to break through her students’ anxieties about speaking the language, Jennifer develops a “trust relationship” with the students by discussing cultural issues. She says, “I baby them with kid gloves.” The result is, according to Jennifer, “The Dean of Students was saying to some of the students, ‘You take this language class from Jennifer. You’ll feel so comfortable that you will want to speak Crow.’” Jennifer says that one of her students picked her for the best teacher award saying, “When Jennifer was teaching Crow language, I felt so comfortable in there that it was okay. I was so immersed in that security, in that trust, that I began to read, and I began to speak Crow, and I began to do that where in years past I was an English speaker but I heard Crow.” Jennifer believes that making her students comfortable “seemed to be a key, a link, to trying Crow.”

Associated with this culturally based learner resistance are other attitudes. Dale says some Crows have been taught by fundamentalist Pentecostal preachers that “the language is the language of the devil.” For Dale an “ideological fractionation” has taken place in the “mentality of the people that are in these religions.” These Crows “preach against Crow ways and equate being Crow with being devil worshippers.” These “rigid” fundamentalists preach that “Indian medicine is the work of the devil.” According to Dale the “craziest thing” is “sometimes the very same people who preach against Crow will tell you in Crow what they feel. They don’t even realize their own hypocrisy.”

Hu, a Bible translator whose goal for employing the written form of Crow is to spread the Christian doctrine, has also interacted with the Pentecostals. When he finishes a section, he gives the translations that are in print to the churches, “and they ask for more.” Hu says, “I have come up against one church that is very suspicious of it all. One pastor put it that way. He says if it isn’t King James Crow, then he doesn’t want it. I don’t know what he means. When he said this, that was the first time I knew that King James spoke Crow.” Hu goes on to explain, “The pastor is a white, but the Crows are very polite, so when I give them something, they thank me for it and act very interested. I don’t know that they use it. Actually I know that some do. And some are Pentecostal.”

Learner resistance derives from other attitudes as well according to Dale. Some fluent Crow speakers argue against the written form saying that the language was not written down in the past so it should only be oral today. Some of these Crow speakers who “resist learning to read in Crow had difficulty reading English anyway. Those were the ones that gave us difficulty. The ones who failed in school were resistant to having Crow language used in school because they equated their failure to speaking Crow.”

Dale says some students and community members believe that “the language of success is English. In order to succeed in business, you have to speak English.” They argue that “the language is holding us back. Crow has no use. They say, ‘If you want to remain Crow, we’ll put breechcloth on you and send you out to the hills; then you can be Crow out there.’”

According to Dale, the “arrogant and bigoted” Anglo culture promotes these dysfunctional attitudes. He points to the English-only law enacted in Montana several years ago which is still there in spite of the efforts of Native Americans in the state

legislature. “They tried to get it repealed the last session; it died. Montana fully supports this bigotry. They have written bigotry into law.”

Jennifer says some people initially resist the written form “because they won’t know how to read it. And what is written is foreign to them.” Another situation in which students may not be comfortable with the written form of Crow occurs when Crow speakers learning the written form do not know “some of the translations for some of the words because they don’t hear them any more.”

She says her students “don’t have a lot of experience in oral reading. They see the written form, and they don’t have as much experience, and so they’re reading it slower and more phonetically.” As a result, their reading is “more labored; it isn’t as quick and automatic.” At this point in the interview, she imitates a very slow, syllable by syllable rendering of a sentence, followed by a faster version of the same sentence in Crow using regular intonation. When the readers “read very precisely,” the language seems to lose the expressiveness that is in conversational Crow. When people hear the labored oral reading, they complain that the written language is too structured according to Jennifer.

Middle and High School Students’ Attitudes toward Crow

All three of the high school and middle school teachers see a positive attitude toward Crow language among their students. Loretta says of her students, “They think it is important preserving the language, but yet they don’t speak the language.” It is the end of spring semester, and Loretta sees students who entered her fall class as non-Crow speakers “trying now to really speak Crow. I would not say they are fluent, but at least

they are trying and pronouncing some of the words correctly, and they are really proud if they do.”

Reggie says that although some of her students are “reluctant to speak Crow,” she believes “the kids would like to speak Crow, but anymore the parents don’t speak Crow to them and that might be a drawback.” Sometimes parents tell Reggie that their child is speaking more Crow after enrolling in her class. As a result, the parents will sometimes then increase their use of Crow with the child outside of class.

Rose’s students “love the Crow language.” She says their feelings are reflected in the fact that her attendance is very good in her Crow language and culture classes. She says, “They will come to me and say, ‘I will be gone for a couple of days. Do I have homework? Can I take something home?’” Or her students will return from an absence asking for the makeup assignments.” Steve believes that Rose’s students may sign up for her elective classes because “at least for some of the kids, there is a real sense of loss when they have grown up without it [Crow language].”

Elementary Students’ Attitudes toward Crow Language

The elementary teachers also see positive feelings toward the Crow language among their students. Johann says that her elementary students “really liked” learning the language in school when she was a Crow language teacher. Liz affirms this viewpoint: “The kids love the Crow language. They look forward to my coming in, and five minutes before my class starts, the kids peek in and say, ‘Liz, are you coming to my class.’ They look forward to those classes and some of them say ‘I wish we could have

Crow language every day. How come you don't have your own classroom? If you had your own classroom, we could put up our materials.' You know, they go on and on."

Johnann notices a change in their attitudes when the students graduate from the elementary school in Crow Agency and go to Hardin to the middle school. "They say the words in Crow when they are in here in the classroom, but as soon as they leave, they leave it in here. They are made to be ashamed of their language." She says this change is caused when "their peers and probably some teachers, too, just laugh at them." Johnann thinks that parents are critical in instilling the desire for their children to speak Crow.

According to Johnann, some parents say that speaking the language at home is undermined by the education system. "My sister says that when she sent her children to Head Start, that's when they started speaking English. They spoke Crow until they went to Head Start. And they didn't go back to speaking Crow any more. That's what my other sisters say, too, about their children. They went to school, and they never went back to speaking Crow after starting school because they said most of their friends speak English so why should they [speak Crow]." Johnann pulled her own grandson out of Head Start because he was used to speaking Crow, and the teachers were teaching in English. She says he continues to speak Crow even after entering elementary school because the family speaks Crow at home.

Crow Teachers' Perceptions of Attitudes of Other Teachers/Administrators

Some of the teachers expressed the view that the Crow language programs lack support from other teachers and administrators. One of the teachers complains about administrators who do not see the language as important. Raffaelle wishes that more

regular classroom teachers were interested in putting Crow into the classroom. “I don’t know if they are not interested or maybe they don’t care. I have a lot of materials, but they just don’t ask for them that much. I don’t push it on them.”

Dale bemoans some educators’ lack of understanding about the nature of second language learning in the classroom. Dale was criticized by a tribal college administrator and a teacher who “both claimed that I was failing with Crow Language I. I asked the question, what am I failing?” The reply was that Crow students do not come out of the class speaking Crow. Dale responded to them, “You are exactly right when you look at the college curriculum. For any language field you must have 600 to 640 contact hours, 600 to 640 hours of instruction and still you cannot promise fluency. And are we going to expect the same levels of fluency with only 45 hours of instruction? Totally unrealistic. They are looking for the quick fix. There’s no such thing as a quick fix in learning.”

Jennifer and Loretta would like to see Crow language have at least the same status as other languages in the public schools. Jennifer states, “It should be a requirement for the school to have this. The office of instruction is saying this is a foreign language, and it could be incorporated into the school system, and the schools have to respect it. The schools have to believe that it is just as important as anything else.” Loretta says, “At the high school they have Spanish I, Spanish II, French I, French II. We could have Crow I and Crow II if we had a curriculum. It boils down to that curriculum. And who is going to do it? Who has the time?”

Crow Language Teachers' Attitudes toward Written Crow

The teachers at all grade levels express positive attitudes toward the written form of the Crow language.

Tribal College Crow Language Teachers' Attitudes

At the college level, both Jennifer and Dale describe the written form as a useful tool. Dale comments that “Anglo-American pedagogy always uses the written form. You’re going to be taught in written forms anyway, so why not take advantage of a new learning device.”

Jennifer says, “The written form is really critical in saving the language.” She claims the written form accelerates language learning from grade school through college. She says, “The visual written on the board gives them a good base to connect, and I think the language is ingrained deeper when they hear it.” When she worked with junior high students, those who already spoke Crow recognized the words quickly when she wrote them on the board, and those who had limited Crow speaking ability, “were able to say the same thing as the Crow speakers. They had that advantage, so they took more chances to speak Crow because it [the written form] became kind of, not a crutch, a cheat sheet.”

Jennifer points out that “a lot of people might say that it [the language] should stay oral.” Her generation of Crow speakers relies on the oral form, and it’s been so long since they initially learned to read that they need to be retrained to learn to read in Crow. She believes that when we don’t use the part of the brain that “that has to do with the language, the cells actually grow over, and it becomes very difficult for it to come back.”

However, she believes the written form serves a mnemonic function in language learning. She explains, “We are in an age where if something isn’t written, if something isn’t right in front of us, our brain is now geared not to remember it precisely.” In fact she thinks that younger children sometimes can learn to read and write Crow more easily than older learners.

Middle and High School Crow Language Teachers’ Attitudes

Reggie, Loretta, and Rose all find value in using the written form of the language in their classes. Loretta believes that the written Crow is an important part of her pedagogical strategies, but in order for it to be a really effective tool, “the community needs to see more written form of Crow.” It should be the correct form of Crow also. She complains about the street signs in Crow Agency: “If you look at those little street signs. If those are in Crow, I can’t read some of them. I don’t know what they are trying to say and I don’t know who did those.” Reggie also points out the importance of some sort of standardization. She says of written Crow: “I think it is pretty good as long as we use the dictionary, and you know some of the words are really long, but they are able to sound out those words.”

Elementary Crow Language Teachers’ Attitudes

The elementary teachers also agree that the written form of Crow is beneficial in the classroom. Johann explains that it is more helpful in fourth through sixth grades because these students already have reading skills that they can apply to reading in Crow. She believes it is easiest to learn the language orally from being around people who speak it all the time. Nevertheless, she says that written Crow can help lead “up to

conversational” Crow in beginning Crow speakers. She introduces the written form at the elementary level by putting written words as labels on classroom objects.

Crow Language Teachers’ Views of Teaching Problems

Lack of Time

One issue that arises again and again in the interviews with the teachers is the problem of lack of time to work on Crow language projects. Jennifer, who teaches at the college and works at another job as well, says, “We are 8 to 5 workers, and so we are employed by a particular group or particular school or whatever, and there’s not a lot of time to put a lot of things together.”

Raffaelle, a kindergarten teacher rather than a Crow language teacher, who would like more time to create written Crow language materials, agrees with Jennifer. Raffaelle wonders what it would be like if she were given the time to create materials. “It’s one of my goals in life, here, one of these days, to write a phonics book for Crow and just some tapes. I have been asked a lot by people to make some, but I just don’t have the time.” She continues, “We don’t have much breaks when we are here from 8 to 4, and I have got a lot of things in my computer there. I have got a lot of unfinished materials that I need to get done. Every once in a while, if I have a break or if I have some Fridays, I can do just a little bit.” That is when she works on her calendar or other Crow language materials.

Liz also criticizes the lack of time she has available to make lessons. “I and other teachers could benefit from different kinds of training such as having more lessons to be presentable to the children. Each grade level is different, and I just never had the time to make lessons.” Raffaelle says, “Most of my time is in the classroom, and there are a few

times they have allowed us to write some things, but we need a lot of time. We need people who are doing that on a daily basis, only that, to produce materials. We really need that badly especially in the kindergarten and beginning reading.”

Lack of Funding

Raffaelle has shared ideas and worked on a few projects with Rose Chesarek, but “unfortunately we have never been able to complete any of that because of funding.” One teacher lays part of the blame on administrators, even “Native American administrators,” who don’t see the language as a big priority. That teacher remarks, “Nobody cares about the language right now. And there are just a few of us that are really concerned and would like to see a lot of materials developed for it.” Raffaelle has taken courses in proposal writing because she is “hoping that maybe there are some things we can do to get funding. But time is the thing because when you are a full-time classroom teacher, you don’t really have the time for that.” Liz sees another problem associated with lack of adequate funding. For her primary classes, she says, “I have books here that are just enough for the students. I would like to give it to them so they can take them home and read them, but we don’t have enough.”

Lack of Support from the Crow Tribe for Crow Language

Jennifer points out, “We are living in the 21st century. We are not living back in the 50’s or the 60’s, but we don’t have new materials.” She believes, “We relied on the bilingual programs too often. We relied on the federal programs to preserve our languages and to preserve our written materials. Too often we relied on the school districts maybe to house it, and so we don’t have input.” She asks, “Why can’t our tribe

take the initiative? Why can't our tribe have a whole component, a whole department right here that says this is the Crow language department? This is where we talk about the language. These are the policies. This is where we want the school boards to go and discover training." Jennifer notes that the current Tribal Chairman, Carl Venne, who is a fluent Crow speaker, supports the Crow language. Loretta also calls for the tribe to help out: "The tribe should be involved also. It should not just be up to the schools." In addition to tribal government participating in language programs, Jennifer asks for the school boards to step up. "I want the school boards to put the Crow language in the curriculum. I want it to be in every school for every Crow child." To create these programs she also recognizes the issue of funding. "Now we need to have some funding source. Things will happen with a funding source."

Need to Communicate and Share

Raffaella reiterates Jennifer's call to gather "all the Crow materials that are available on the reservation at all the different schools, so everybody could use them." She waves her arm to her crowded book shelves and overflowing cabinets in her classroom and says, "We have all those books, all these materials, all these on this computer here that nobody uses, and they just sit here."

According to Jennifer, an associated problem is lack of communication among Crow language teachers and others in the community. "We don't have that group that we could come together and we could exchange." "We don't have a unified group of people that can say you're my mentor, or I want to learn from you, or what have you done. We don't have that communication. A lot of Crow teachers are out in the field on your own,

by your own time, in your invention.” She would like to see this “resource pool of people come together” and for someone to step forward to say, “I’ll take this leadership. I’ll take over this, and you follow me.” She concludes, “We need someone to do that, and I don’t think we are there.”

Retirement and the Next Generation of Crow Teachers

All of the teachers expressed concern about the future of Crow language. Loretta believes the language is especially important because of its connection to Crow identity. Loretta asks her middle and high school students if they think Crow language will still be around when they are grandparents. She hopes they will care enough about their language to take an active part in its maintenance. Loretta sees the oral form of Crow as being more important than the written form. “Oral language is how Crow survived. According to glottochronology our language is about 2,000 years old, and orally it has been passed on to today, and we still try to pass it on to our kids. The written form was just introduced in the 70’s, and it is 30 or 35 years old.”

Liz also exhorts the next generation to “keep teaching the Crow language.” Liz encourages college students to take Crow language classes and keep the language alive if at all possible because “they say language is the voice of our culture, and I think we are slowly losing ground there.”

Loretta also is worried that there will be no one to take her place when she retires. She asks, “If we are gone, the language teachers, since we are close to retirement age, is there going to be somebody to replace us?” Jennifer becomes distraught when she discusses the future of the Crow language. She ticks off on her fingers the cadre of Crow

language teachers, lamenting the aging of her compatriots: “You know, I’m 55, and I’m at that age like Rose Chesarek, she’s older, and Regina Spotted Horse, she’s older, Mary Helen, she’s older.” She is concerned that “we don’t even have anybody to replace Dale and his knowledge. Barney, he’s an elder; Loretta Three Irons, she has one year left at Hardin High School.”

She asks “Where is the next generation?” She wants a younger person from the next generation to say, “Hey, Jennifer, we like the way you teach Crow language. I want to learn from you. I want to carry the torch.” At this point Jennifer begins to cry softly. “It is so, SO important for someone younger to want to reach up and say, ‘I want to take that baton and I want to run with it.’ I want someone to say that, but so often the younger generation is not running toward us to take the baton.” She is concerned that the Crow people “don’t have a lot of young people that value and treasure that we do speak the language and it’s so important.” She suggests that the Crow teachers form a mentoring program to develop more teachers.

Summary

In Chapter 4, I described the ten interview subjects and then gave the results of the 10 interviews, categorizing the subjects’ comments into several different topics. I summarized and quoted the subjects’ views of the written form of Crow language. All of whom see written Crow as a useful tool in the classroom. I also included their description of the origin and development of the written form of the Crow language. Since several of the respondents had participated in that process, their comments shed light on the tasks involved in writing Crow language materials. All of the respondents agreed that Crow

language materials are lacking for the current purposes for which they are being used. I gave the informants' perspectives on training for Crow language teachers. Although they varied in their own training, they all spoke up for more systemized preparation for prospective Crow language teachers. They also varied in their teaching strategies and class content. This variation depended on their own background and on the grade levels they are teaching. They also described their perceptions of use of technology in teaching Crow language and discussed the nature and extent of the written form of Crow in the community. They mentioned problems with current written Crow as it exists in their community and described ways that the Crow language could become more visible in their community. They described their perceptions of their students' attitudes toward Crow language. Younger students were more likely to have a positive attitude toward the language than the college students. The respondents also commented on other teachers' and administrators' attitudes toward the written form of Crow language. Finally I described their opinions of the critical problems facing those who want to maintain the use of Crow language. The problem that seemed most salient is the impending retirement of these teachers and the consequent difficulty of finding replacements for them.

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Crow language instructors at the public schools and at the tribal college speak from years of experience teaching the language to several generations of learners. Their views will help chart the direction of Crow language maintenance in the schools. However, prior to this study, the Crow language teachers' views of the use of written Crow in teaching the language were not known. My research question has been as follows: How do Crow language teachers view the integration of the written form of Crow language into the curriculum in the public schools on the Crow reservation? Using a grounded study as the theoretical approach for this study, I am attempting to generate a theory about a "particular situation...in which individuals interact, take action, or engage in a process in response to a phenomenon" (Cresswell, 1998, p. 56). In this case the phenomenon has been the use of the written form of Crow. I conducted interviews and field observations and categorized the data in order to develop a theory and hypotheses concerning the situation. The interviews brought forth a forest of ideas, topics, and recommendations; they point the way for future studies; and most importantly, the interviews provide concrete recommendations for improvements in the teaching of Crow language in schools on the Crow reservation.

Conclusions

My study produced a great deal of information regarding my topic, most of the data having to do with the written form of Crow, but the respondents also provided me with their views and information concerning other related topics. The results of this study

show that the Crow language teachers have positive feelings about the written form of Crow language and find it a necessary and valuable tool in teaching Crow language. However, the teachers see a lack of written materials as a major impediment to the use of written Crow in the classroom. Another obstacle is the lack of a Head Start-to-college Crow language curriculum. The educational system seems to be “treading water” in the words of Dale when it comes to producing fluent Crow speakers. According to the teachers, this lack of progress stems from a variety of sources including negative attitudes toward the Crow language in the community, among students, and among some teachers and administrators. Moreover, families are not insisting that their children speak Crow in the home. The cadre of Crow language teachers is nearing retirement, and there appear to be few, if any, Crow speakers, who are interested in “taking up the baton,” as Jennifer says.

Origin and Development of the Written Form of Crow

Although no one person was responsible for developing the written form of Crow, linguist Ray Gordon did the lion’s share of work on its creation. George Reed, Jr., made an important contribution to the orthography when he suggested that vowel length be shown by doubling the letters rather than by using a colon. Hu Matthews and Rose Chesarek have also made contributions to the system, and Father Randolph Graczyk is currently writing a grammar book and a dictionary that will be important new contributions to written Crow language materials. Almost all of the texts used in teaching Crow language were written in the 1970’s through a bilingual program that took place primarily in Crow Public elementary school.

Standardization of Written Crow

None of the interview subjects expressed the need for major revisions in the form and structure of written Crow. Most acknowledged that there are specific minor revisions to the orthography that still need to be made in order for the language to be taught most efficiently in the schools. Several complained that misspellings of Crow words exist in the community because many Crow people do not know the spelling conventions of written Crow. Perhaps the most common and commonly misspelled word is *ahóo*, frequently misspelled as *aho*, and misspellings are most visible in the street signs in Crow Agency.

Teacher Training

The current Crow language teachers differ widely in their training in the written form of Crow and in language teaching. Some have had formal linguistic training as part of the original group that began working in the bilingual program in the 1970's or through coursework at universities. Others have been trained by members of the original group. All of them currently receive some in-service training through the Office of Public Instruction, but little of this training is specific to Crow language. Most of it is in the form of more general training in teaching native languages. All of the teachers expressed the need for more training for Crow language teachers, especially in the areas of reading and writing Crow language, of teaching strategies, and of materials development.

Crow in the Classroom

As one might expect, the structure and content of the Crow language classes varies depending on the age level being taught. But even within age levels, there are

differences among the teachers in the format and content of their language classes. At the elementary level, students are instructed in Crow once per week for a half hour. Middle school students in general are provided more hours of instruction than primary students, and Lodge Grass and Pryor middle school students spend much more time in their language class than Hardin middle school students. Class schedules are similar at every high school. All of teachers felt that there needs to be a curriculum in place that lays out the scope and sequence of instruction in Crow language from Head Start to college. Such a curriculum would detail the language skills to be learned at each grade level and would include lesson plans and teaching materials. At the high schools, there is no systematic distinction between what is taught in Crow I and Crow II; in fact students in the two levels are placed in the same classes. Teachers at the middle and high school are required to incorporate a large amount of non-language centered instruction about Crow culture into their classes, but none of the teachers expressed any negative feelings about this aspect of their classes even though this practice cuts in half the amount of time spent learning Crow language.

Material Development

Almost all of the written material for the teaching of Crow language was created 30 years ago for the Crow elementary bilingual program when most of the children entering the public school system were fluent in Crow, and one purpose of the material was to help students transition to English. The original material includes booklets containing stories from the oral tradition, a dictionary, and a grammar booklet. All of the teachers interviewed express the need for additional written materials for their students.

At the elementary level, most students no longer speak Crow fluently, so new materials appropriate for this new group of students are necessary. In addition the elementary students need a beginning reading series, modern stories in addition to traditional stories, and a phonics book.

At the middle school and high school level, the teachers also desire materials designed for their students' age group including readers for high school students and a grammar text. Teachers also suggested that a revised dictionary would be beneficial.

The tribal college instructors would like to see more materials developed for their students as well. One suggestion is for more material to be developed for technical courses across the curriculum. Another idea is to create texts for conversational Crow. These might include a conversational Crow corpus and written dialogues set in contemporary settings, so students can make a direct application of the written form of Crow language to oral production of Crow.

Teachers also suggested that a materials bank be created where teachers might share their teaching materials, and they think that technology holds promise for use in teaching Crow language.

Crow Language in the Community

The last 30 years have seen a serious decline in the number of Crow students who come to school speaking Crow language fluently. The teachers listed a number of factors as causes of this decline, including the effects of racism and cultural genocide. They believe that parents are not working hard enough to promote transgenerational transmission of Crow speaking skills. Teachers also see many opportunities for adding

written Crow language into their communities including a newspaper and a radio station.

They deplore the fact that in one of the few places where written Crow is visible, the street signs in Crow Agency, the words are misspelled and culturally inappropriate.

Students' Attitudes toward Crow Language

The elementary grade teachers reported that students in the primary grades are enthusiastic, eager learners, but change as they enter middle school and become more self-conscious about speaking Crow. The middle school and high school teachers reported that generally their students have positive feelings about speaking Crow language, but one of the instructors noted that many of her students are reticent about speaking Crow. At the college level, teachers reported the most negative feelings about learning and speaking the language. This antipathy may be because Crow language is required at the college, whereas it is an elective at the high schools and middle schools. This dislike also may arise because these students are older, and, therefore, they find learning a language much more challenging than younger students do (See discussion of this factor in Chapter 2). Older students may be impacted by psychological barriers such as low esteem attached to the native language or economic factors such as the perceived lack of economic usefulness for speaking Crow language. Or they may dislike the pace of the course and demands placed on them by instructors.

Teachers' and Administrators' Attitudes toward Crow Language

Unanimously, the Crow language teachers supported the use of written Crow as a tool in their classes. Several pointed out that the purpose of their classes is to produce Crow speakers not Crow readers, so speaking skills take should take precedence over

reading and writing skills. One teacher mentioned that written Crow can lead up to conversational Crow and another said the written form gives beginners a mnemonic device to help learn the rudiments of the language. On the other hand, one teacher reported that in her building other elementary teachers do not seem to be very interested in incorporating Crow into their classes even in the form of posters and labels on the walls. One teacher stated that some administrators are unsupportive of efforts to teach Crow language in their schools.

Other Problems Related to Language Teaching

The teachers mentioned several critical issues connected with teaching Crow language. Many of them were interested in creating materials, in developing a curriculum, and in learning more about the structure of written Crow, but they believe a lack of time and lack of funding are keeping them from these activities. If they were granted more release time or paid for summer work, they would be able to devote more time to improving the quality of instruction. Teachers also listed lack of support from the Crow tribe and the lack of communication among the language teachers as other problems. Many of the teachers were concerned that they are approaching retirement, and there seem to be no younger people interested in carrying on their work of teaching the Crow language.

Impact of the Study in Terms of What Was Learned

This study yields several kinds of impacts. It provides the basis for devising future studies on the teaching of Crow language and on the written form of Crow. This study also provides information on areas where the Crow educational system needs to improve

in its use of the written form of Crow language in order to improve the Crow language courses at the schools. Certainly some elements of Crow language maintenance are outside the domain of the education system. As was stated earlier, children cannot be forced to learn Crow language. Parents cannot be forced to make Crow language the language of home. But the results of this study highlight some areas where steps can be taken to improve the language programs in terms of materials development, curriculum development, teacher training, and the attitudes of learners.

Strengths, Weaknesses, and Limitations of the Study

The study's strengths include the data gleaned from the interviews with teachers. Prior to this study, no one had ever systematically recorded their perceptions even though these instructors are central to Crow language programs in the educational system. The study points the way for other studies to confirm and expand its findings. One problem with the study is that the pool of respondents is so small. Another problem with this study is that voices of students, of the community, and of school administrators are only included in an indirect way--through the perceptions of the teachers. And this deficit should be eliminated in order to have a full picture of the use of the written form of Crow language through the eyes of all the stakeholders.

Implications

Implications for a Scholarly Understanding of the Field

Very little educational research has been undertaken regarding Crow language learning. Read (1978) looked at language maintenance within the context of bilingual education programs. He found "a high level of [Crow language] maintenance in all

domains, not only among the adult population but also at all grade levels of the school population” (p. 231). He believed that “the present pattern of habitual language use appears to be stable” (p. 231). But since his study, there has been a complete shift in the language situation among Crow people. This study and other recent language use surveys show a tremendous decrease in the number of Crow speakers among school age children. However, his findings also include some foreshadowing of what was to come in Crow language use in the next generation. He found, for example, the “the respondents reported actually speaking considerably more English to their children than to their contemporaries” (p 232), a finding reflected in the interviews of the Crow teachers who explained the decline in Crow speaking skills among the youth as a result of parents not speaking to their children in Crow. At the time of his study, Read referred to “social pressures that constrain adult speech behavior” (p. 246) causing adults to speak Crow whenever possible. Father Randolph Graczyk (personal communication, February 10, 1998), a linguist and priest on the Crow reservation, reported to me that phenomenon seems to be diminishing. Crow speakers may no longer feel so constrained to speak nothing but Crow to each other.

Read treated literacy peripherally, and then in terms of bilingual education. When he conducted his study, written Crow language was seen as a tool in the transitional phase from speaking Crow to learning English; monolingual, Crow-speaking children were entering the public school system and learning English in a bilingual classroom. Since then much has changed: The student population no longer enters the school system speaking Crow; the current Crow language program’s goal is to maintain and revitalize the language, not to transition students to English. Some of his findings are true today. He

found that “very few adults are literate in Crow.” That holds true today, more than 25 years later. He says that “little progress has been made towards a building a literate tribal population” (p. 251). Still true today. He says that there is “little indication at present that Crow literacy will have any significant role in the linguistic repertoire of older students or adults” (p.251). Still true today. He recommends an approach that “builds on the Indian language proficiency that the students already have” rather than one “that sets out to revive the Indian language by teaching it to children who have largely lost it” (p. 252). Read’s prescription for language programs on the Crow reservation is no longer relevant.

Irvin (1995) studied Crow language and culture as it has been impacted by the 1920 Crow Act and other assimilationist policies. Irvin says the Crow Act precipitated the closing of all federal schools and mandated that Crow children enter the public school system where they would be a minority. Irvin maintains that this act caused the Crow people to mobilize their language and culture, and, most surprisingly, he claims that by 1978 “Crow students aged 5-17 spoke Crow and participated in Crow cultural activities at a higher rate than in 1920” (ii). In another place he states, “Data seems to confirm that Crow born in the 1930’s and 1940’s are more likely to speak Crow than those born in the 1900 to 1920 era” (p. 117). What data? There is no data about the extent of Crow language use in the 1920’s. He bases his claim about the extent of language use on a few anecdotal stories, including one that is obviously incorrect. He says, “The famed Crow warrior Thomas Laforge did not speak Crow until he was almost sixteen” (18). In fact, Laforge was a white man who came to live with the Crow people, so it is no wonder that Crow was NOT his first language, and if Irvin had examined the cover of Laforge’s as-

told-to autobiography (1928), he would have seen that the title of the book, *Memoirs of a White Crow Indian*, prominently includes the word *White*.

I do not dispute Irvin's findings that in the 1920's Crow people "had enough of Anglo, culture, lifestyle and language" (p. 98), nor his claim that Crow people began to ferociously protect their culture and language. But I do dispute his assertion that more Crows were fluent in Crow in the 50 years after 1920 than in 1920. He supplies no evidence, and the claim just does not make sense. Also, throughout the dissertation, Irvin uses Read's study as a source, but he consistently spells Read's name *Reed*.

At any rate, Irvin did not focus on Crow literacy. He did find a "high level of language maintenance" among Crows compared to other Plains tribes. He found that "by 1995, Crow were uncertain as to the long-term future of the Crow language." He went on to conclude, "However, most believe that the recent trend of language loss will be reversed. Some tribal members believe that a revival of Crow religions and Crow language is about to happen. They argue that a second mobilization of Crow language and culture is near" (p. 115). He uses the term "most" but cites one person as his source. The respondents in my study would label this viewpoint as wishful thinking, maybe even dangerous thinking because it lulls the person into believing the language is strong and vital when actually it is in trouble.

Irvin offers several prescriptions for maintaining Crow language and culture through the public school system. He begins by recommending that a Crow-centered curriculum be developed by a Crow education committee made up of Crow parents, bilingual committee members, educators, administrators, and tribal government leaders. This recommendation echoes the plea by Crow teachers in this study for a Crow language

curriculum, but Irvin goes further. He says that in the public schools “the primary language of instruction should be the Crow language” (p. 121), and English should be taught as a foreign language. Irvin recommends that by eighth grade, “English language courses should represent at least 30 percent of the curriculum” (p. 122). This view is similar to Dale’s proposal to implement Crow language across the curriculum, but is more radical than the suggestions of the other teachers whose more modest proposals seek to improve the Crow language and culture classes rather than to replace English with Crow. So far immersion has had a very limited place in Crow public schools. In recent years there has been some experimentation with immersion Head Start classes in Lodge Grass. In her interview, Johann mentioned that her son attended the immersion class in Lodge Grass, but the program lost its funding.

Irvin does not discuss the written form of Crow, nor is he specific about how subjects should be taught. Should instruction be completely oral, or should there be written texts? Irvin does not touch on these questions. He does not address the difficulties inherent in creating the materials necessary for Crow immersion classes in grades K-12. He does propose that “all educators would have to pass an oral Crow language proficiency test” (p. 127). Irvin closes his dissertation with another look at the future of Crow language in the classroom: “The recommendations given [by Irvin] could be a reality soon. The Crow tribal consensus is heading towards this educational self-determination model. Only a slightly greater degree of motivation is needed by educators and Crow tribal leaders” (p. 129). The Crow teachers I interviewed, however, are not wearing the rose-colored glasses that Irvin was peering through when he made this

prediction. Nevertheless, Irvin might be correct in that only such a radical plan would ensure the long-term maintenance of Crow language.

This study describes a very different language situation that those depicted by Read in 1978 and Irvin in 1995. Whereas Read portrayed a community in which the vast majority of elementary grade students came into the school system speaking Crow as their first language, the teachers I interviewed say that the majority of elementary students today speak English as their first language. While Irvin described a culture on the verge of a renaissance in Crow language, the teachers I interviewed are much less sanguine about the prospects for Crow language maintenance unless drastic steps are taken soon.

Leanne Hinton (2001) summarizes the arguments for and against the use of a writing system. On the positive side, she says that a writing system can legitimize the language in the eyes of people who believe that written languages are somehow superior to languages that do not have a written form. The author claims this attitude is an internalization of an erroneous viewpoint because oral languages are “every bit as complicated and expressive as languages with writing systems” (p. 239). Nevertheless, “empowerment” can arise through this “positive shift in language attitudes” (p. 240). The author also points out that a written form provides documentation for languages that are fading from existence and will provide teachers and learners who are trying to revitalize the language with a resource from which to draw. The author explains that “language pedagogy depends in part on the written word” (p. 240). Even where an oral approach to teaching the language is used, teachers may want to employ a writing system to create lesson plans and curriculum. Hinton says that a writing system will provide many

practical uses and open up new genres for the language such as newspapers, hymnals, and poetry. The teachers in this study did not mention the improved status brought on by a written form, but that is because they have no illusions about written languages being superior to oral languages. The teachers do believe that the writing system is a useful tool and would have some practical uses in the Crow community.

On the negative side, Hinton explains that English literacy already serves most purposes for writing so there may be little need for a written form of a native language. Another drawback to a written form, according to Hinton, is that when sacred teachings are written down the speakers lose control of the information, and it becomes available to those who do not have the right to it. Another problem associated with written forms is that they “decontextualize” (p. 241) language, divorcing it from the meanings associated with language performance. If a language is in danger of dying, documentation may drain resources that should be employed in producing speakers. Hinton also describes another negative attribute of written forms of language. People learn a language by hearing and speaking it not by reading and writing it, so language classes that focus on teaching written vocabulary in which the primary spoken language of instruction is English do not produce fluent speakers. Other problems associated with literacy include the time taken up with written forms. Teaching reading and writing takes valuable time that could be spent learning speaking skills. It takes time to create a written system and to produce the materials, and that time could be better spent learning to speak and understand the language. The Crow teachers voiced several of these concerns. Loretta pointed out that her purpose is to produce speakers of Crow not readers of Crow. Steve described Cree language specialists who go to great lengths to protect some written texts from falling

into the wrong hands. And I wondered, as I interviewed the teachers, whether or not some of them may be overemphasizing vocabulary-list, handout-centered teaching strategies and may be using too much English in their classes instead of focusing on oral Crow communication skills, which, if taught, would produce speakers who could carry on conversations in Crow rather than just being able to recite word lists.

Implications for Theory Building and for Developing Hypotheses

This study allows the voices of the Crow language teachers to be heard and to provide perspectives previously unknown. Their views are critical in evaluating the Crow writing system. For example, material developers can create texts for Crow language classes, but teachers are in a better position to test the materials to see if they are appropriate for the learners and useful in the classroom. Linguists can create grammars and orthographies, but teachers employing these in the classroom can spot the problems associated with their actual use and may be able to suggest revisions in the written language as Rose Chesarek and Raffaella He Does It – Realbird have done with Crow orthography. The study also provides support for the importance of written Native language as a tool in the classroom and as a component of language maintenance in the community.

The eclectic approach. One goal of this research has been to produce a theory regarding the use of the Crow writing system in teaching the language. According to Mauch and Park (2003, p. 113) “theory explains the relationships among events or facts, although not completely.” The theory proposed here is that an eclectic approach is the best method to teach Crow language. That eclectic approach to teaching Crow language

includes use of written Crow and of the language's cultural context as important tools in Crow language maintenance. The eclectic approach is supported by critical-period learning theory, by the innate theory of language development, and by social interaction theory.

The teachers' comments and their descriptions of their teaching practices lend support to the critical period language learning theory and suggest an eclectic approach might be the most appropriate method to teach Crow language. As I explained in Chapter 2, critical-period theory supports an eclectic approach that includes the following:

1. Infants exposed to oral Crow language at home.
2. Young learners immersed in Crow language at Head Start.
3. Older students' instruction to include writing, reading, and grammar.

In the interviews, the teachers also stressed these components. Teachers strongly supported oral Crow language in the home; several teachers emphasized the goal of a immersion Head Start, all incorporate a variety of strategies to impact their diverse student learners and use writing as a learning tool in an eclectic curriculum.

The innate theory of language learning also supports an eclectic approach that includes written Crow. As was explained in Chapter 2, innate theory implies that older Crow learners lose access to their innate universal grammar because they have passed the critical time period for recourse to the language acquisition device. Since that loss is likely to be the case, Crow language teachers may need to help their older learners create the grammar of the language that they cannot receive from input alone. This could be accomplished by teaching grammar in the classroom but only as much as students need to communicate. Innate theory also implies that the Crow language classroom should

provide an immersion environment for learners, and oral communication competence should be a higher priority than grammar or writing competence. Teachers interviewed in this study supported the viewpoint that they need to teach some grammar in the classroom to help their students learn the language.

Because it focuses on language in the context of culture, social interaction theory provides additional underpinning for the eclectic approach. In Chapter 2, I pointed out that the community in general and the schools in particular will have to provide an environment where Crow children's values shift back to treasuring Crow language and culture. According to the testimony of the teachers, the youngest learners still are eager to learn their language, but many of the teachers commented that as the children grow older, their values seem to shift away from cherishing their language. This phenomenon seems to demonstrate the importance of social interaction in language learning.

The social interaction paradigm implies that the Crow language program should be locally developed and implemented, so it reflects and promotes Crow culture. The Crow language teachers also stressed this goal. They want a Head Start-through-college curriculum developed by parents, teachers, and the community. Former Lodge Grass curriculum director Sharon Stewart-Peregoy commented that the clan system, *Ashemmaleaxia*, is the traditional educational system of the Crow people. The *Ashemmaleaxia*, which literally means "as driftwood lodges together," provided teachers from the kinship relations on the mother's and father's sides of the family. Since the clan system is still intact on the Crow reservation, this structure is an ideal approach to teach Crow language and culture, so that educational efforts in the school complement the use

of Crow language in the community. The use of the *Ashemmaleaxia* system also fits with social interaction theory.

The eclectic approach allows instructors to choose from a variety of teaching strategies in order to reach students who employ a variety of learning styles and who come to the classroom with a wide range of Crow language skills. An eclectic approach that includes instruction in written Crow will provide teachers with the tools to help their students construct a grammar of Crow language. The eclectic approach also provides a way to incorporate culture into the language learning process.

Mauch and Park explain, “Theory can provide a framework to generate hypotheses or questions or problem element statements” (p. 114). This study has also generated several hypotheses regarding the teaching of the written form of the language including the following:

1. Writing should be more central to the curriculum.
2. Writing helps students build their language skills.
3. Students who do not have good reading skills in English resist learning to read in Crow.
4. The No Child Left Behind Act has caused difficulties for Crow language programs in the public schools.

Implications for Future Research Studies

The first two hypotheses could be tested by comparing classes that use the writing system to classes that use a teaching pedagogy such as Total Physical Response where no writing is used. The third hypothesis could be tested by comparing the achievement levels

in Crow reading among students with strong English reading skills to the achievement levels in ones whose skills are not so strong. The fourth hypothesis could be investigated by interviews of administrators and teachers and by a comparison of student achievement in Crow language classes prior to the NCLB Act's implementation to achievement after its enactment.

This study could be expanded to other Native languages to explore teachers' views in situations that are different from the one on the Crow reservation—perhaps on reservations where there are few speakers left or on reservations that have many more young people for whom the Native language is the first language. Studies could be undertaken to test the efficacy of immersion courses and the place of writing in immersion classes.

Further studies need to be undertaken to answer the following questions regarding effective teaching practices:

1. Does too much instruction in linguistics and in reading hinder the production of oral speakers?
2. Is the energy spent creating materials, teaching reading, and so on taking away valuable time better spent on learning oral skills?
3. What is the right balance of instruction in oral language and in written language?
4. What is the influence of television on maintenance of Crow language skills?
5. How can parents make the Crow language part of the home environment?
6. How can the education system and the community impact student values regarding Crow language in order to cause students to realize the positive results of language learning?

Since this study only delved into the students' and the community's perceptions of the written form of the language indirectly through the teachers' perceptions, more studies need to be conducted in which students and community members are interviewed. Research should be undertaken with the current generation of language learners to find out how best to reach this population. Their attitudes toward the Crow language must be understood in order to develop an effective curriculum that meets their needs. Further research needs to address the question why do students enter the school system eager to learn their language, and then seem to be so resistant as they grow older.

These studies could be expanded to include an examination of Crow language use in general, employing field observations of students in classes, of people in everyday situations such as the grocery stores and at ball games; families could monitor their use of the Crow language at home.

Ellen Swaney (personal communication, January 4, 2005), Director of American Indian/Minority Achievement in the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education in Montana disseminated a draft of national research priorities and of possible topics for research in Indian education in Montana. These topics suggest other ways to expand and confirm this study. Included in the national priorities is "Native language and culture," and among the research priorities identified for Montana Indian communities are the following:

1. Study the impact of the introduction of Indian languages and cultural instruction on the long term academic success of Native students.
2. Identify culturally relevant curricula.

3. Identify specific Native intercultural communication styles and their impact on teaching and learning.
4. Develop oral language and storytelling programs with parents and extended families to build upon Native language and cultural traditions. (Assess long-term impact on college degree attainment.)

One very effective way for studies on Crow language to be undertaken is for Crow speaking, student researchers from the tribal college to conduct the research and surveys on the Crow reservation. This task would be a great opportunity for the tribal college to train its students in research methodology and at the same time to collect data to help improve language learning on the reservation.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Professional Practice and Decision Making

This study produced many recommendations for improvements in Crow language instruction, both in terms of class content and curriculum planning.

Teacher Training Recommendations. In teacher training, the teachers suggest the following improvements:

1. Develop native language teacher training courses at the state's universities,
2. Provide more frequent on-site training for the teachers in written Crow language,
3. Provide more frequent training in collaboration with teachers of other native languages.

The teachers recommend that the content of the training should include instruction in

1. Crow language structure,

2. Crow grammar,
3. The language development process,
4. Crow phonics,
5. Language teaching technology,
6. Lesson planning.

The teachers recommend that these trainings incorporate opportunities for collaboration among the Crow teachers, and that the training should prepare trainees to teach language learners who do not speak Crow and who now are the majority entering the Crow education system.

The number one priority is to train replacements for the retiring teachers. It would be optimistic to believe that one of the cash-strapped state universities could provide the kind of specific training that the next generation of teachers will need. However, at Little Big Horn College, Dale and Jennifer could spearhead a rigorous Crow language teacher certification course of study with classes and seminars taught by the existing cadre of teachers. Who knows better than they the skills needed to teach the language? This would be an opportunity for the Crow tribe to step up and provide funding to pay the teachers' salaries and the students' tuition to help perpetuate the beloved Crow language. The retirement of Reggie Spotted Horse from the Lodge Grass school in June 2004 makes this task even more critical.

To promote increased collaboration and communication among the Crow language teachers, the teachers could emulate an existing program for math teachers on reservations in Montana. Developed through the Center for Teaching and Learning in the West at Montana State University, this program, entitled Math Improvement Groups,

brings together math teachers in isolated rural communities through a listserv and chat network where they can meet online, share teaching strategies, and discuss common problems and issues (personal communication, Billie Jo Brown, January 15, 2005). Based on their responses to the question about technology, the teachers are eager to embrace the use of online technology to improve their teaching.

Material Development Recommendations. The study also revealed improvements to be made in developing written Crow language materials. The teachers suggest that materials be created for each age group and skill level. At Little Big Horn College these materials include

1. Descriptive grammar book,
2. Reader,
3. A conversational Crow corpus,
4. Crow language technical communication materials to be used across the disciplines including forestry, life sciences and math.

At middle and high school the recommended materials to be developed include

1. Reader,
2. Grammar book,
3. Revised dictionary,
4. Handouts,
5. Phonics book with accompanying tapes,
6. Videos of conversational Crow

The elementary teachers propose that materials be developed in the following areas:

1. Traditional and modern stories,
2. A phonics book with tapes,
3. Other classroom materials in Crow language including a calendar and handouts.

Some of the language teachers would like to have the opportunity to create materials either through release time from work or through participation in paid summer language institutes. A centralized materials library would give teachers access to all of the Crow language materials. Another suggestion is to create an online dictionary which could be continuously updated and revised without the costs involved in revising print editions.

The funding necessary to support material development will probably have to originate from the Crow tribe or from another funding source such as a federal agency. The need for a centralized materials library and a revisable dictionary could be met by a Crow language website where all reading materials could be available as PDF files, and the dictionary could be set up to be periodically updated.

Curriculum recommendations. The teachers called for the development of a curriculum that would range from Head Start to college. In 1998 at an educational summit, a Crow bilingual taskforce and education committee presented a plan to develop such a curriculum, but no draft of a K-16, Crow language curriculum has yet been produced although Marlene Walking Bear (1981) has created a curriculum for grades 4-6. Teachers also asked for either release time or summer funding to help write the curriculum. The teachers recommended that students need more hours of instruction and more challenging classes for advanced learners.

In order to create a curriculum and put that curriculum in place in the school system, the Crow language teachers will need the support of the public school administrators, other teachers, parents, and school boards. The current indifference or even negativity toward the Crow language in the K-12 schools, reported by several of the respondents, has meant that Crow language classes have been squeezed into a small corner of the school curriculum--a far cry from their place as envisioned by Sharon Stewart-Peregoy, Dale Old Horn, Irvin and others who recommend a curriculum centered on Crow language.

At least one of the teachers believes that this atmosphere of indifference has been, in part, created by the enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act. In 2004, all of the schools in this study failed to meet the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act: Crow Elementary, Hardin Middle School, Hardin High School, Lodge Grass Middle School, Lodge Grass High School, Pryor 7 and 8, and Plenty Coups High School. These schools are in danger of suffering from the Bush administration's sanctions against schools that fail to "demonstrate that students have made educational progress" (Howard, 2005).

Teachers and administrators at these reservation schools are under immense pressure to improve their scores immediately or risk severe penalties. If these schools fail to make "adequate yearly progress," the school is punished by increasingly stiff consequences up to having to fire most or all of the staff or having to be taken over by the state or a corporation (Fitzgerald, 2004). The goal of the No Child Left Behind Act, which is to make schools accountable for their part in children's education, is quite laudable. However, in spite of this noble goal, in practice its policies have hurt the Crow

language movement. Administrators see no immediate benefits from Crow language classes in their struggle to meet the requirements of No Child Left Behind. They are forced to focus on short term improvement in verbal and math test scores. There is no incentive to improve Crow language instruction because Crow language skills are not tested. However, there are benefits to language learning. These benefits can be measured by standardized tests as shown by research that supports the contention that studying a second language builds a learner's cognitive skills. In her study of immersion language learning, Pease-Pretty On Top (nd) provides data to support the claim that students who take four or more years of a foreign language score higher on the verbal SAT than those who do not take coursework in a second language. These findings are supported by Reyhner (1989, p. 99) who claims that bilingual children are more "cognitively flexible" than monolingual children. If only administrators were not so pressured by short term, test score numerical goals, they might more easily see the long term benefits of a rigorous language program. They would also see that Crow as a foreign language in the schools would be much easier to maintain than Spanish or French for which it might be difficult to find certified teachers in these rural areas.

The goal of a K-12 immersion program is bold but may not be feasible in public schools in the present climate created by No Child Left Behind. Instead, the model suggested by Loretta and others might be more practical. The K-12 curriculum might incorporate Crow language as a second language in the schools, but with a sequenced curriculum so that speakers could advance to fluency as they progress from kindergarten through high school. This program would be more comprehensive than the existing Crow

language program and would require more hours of instruction in the lower grades and a sequenced curriculum.

Recommendations for the Community . Teachers also made suggestions for improvement in the maintenance of Crow language in the community. They would like to see the following actions taken:

1. Correct spellings of Crow words in the street signs,
2. More monetary support from the Crow tribe for language programs,
3. A radio station with broadcasts in Crow language
4. A newspaper written all or in part in Crow
5. Minutes of tribal council meetings written in Crow language.

To survive, the Crow language must exist and flourish outside the classroom; it must be heard across the dinner table and in the community, but, as never before, the school system is being called upon to take a larger and larger role in the maintenance of the language. Jennifer said, “It scares me terribly that we can’t just think that Crow is going to happen in the home. I know it’s not going to. It’s going to happen in education systems more and more and so ... the schools are a great link to preserving the Crow language.”

As a youth, Plenty Coups, a Crow warrior and chief, fasted in the Crazy Mountains. Akbaatatdía, the Creator, bestowed upon the teenager a vision to guide the Crow people. Akbaatatdía also gave Plenty Coups a medicine helper, the chickadee (Linderman, 1930). In one part of that dream, Plenty Coups saw a forest swept away by a powerful wind. The only tree left standing after the storm was the lodge of the chickadee.

Crow medicine men interpreted the Plenty Coups' dream as foretelling the fate of the tribes who stood up to the white man. Plenty Coups' dream gave the Crow people a strategy to survive the onslaught of Europeans. Crows would survive the wind by bending with it and by employing the kind of intelligence the tiny chickadee uses to survive. Today, over 130 years after the young teenager Plenty Coups was given his portentous vision, another wind is sweeping through Crow country. That wind is the English language. The Crows are an amazingly resilient and adaptable people who now must emulate the chickadee's lodge once again to survive this new whirlwind.

Epilogue

As I write my final draft of this dissertation, a new year has brought changes to the cadre of Crow language teachers. Reggie has retired and Raffaele has taken her place as the Lodge Grass High School and Middle School language teacher. Rose still teaches at Plenty Coups, but she was asked to replace the kindergarten teacher who departed abruptly at the elementary school, so Rose is now only teaching Crow language half time at the high school and middle school. More retirements are on the horizon for this spring as Loretta finishes her last year at Hardin. In the meantime, no new language teachers are being trained by the schools to take over for the departing faculty.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Original Crow Language Teacher Participant Consent form

I, John Watts, doctoral candidate from Montana State University, am providing the information in this consent form so that you can decide whether you wish to participate in this study. It is important that you understand that your participation is completely voluntary. This means that even if you agree to participate you are free to withdraw from the study at any time, or decline to participate in any portion of the study, without penalty.

This qualitative research study is designed to document, in their own voices, how teachers view the use of the written form of Crow in teaching Crow language. As participants, you will be asked a series of open-ended questions that will be recorded using audiotapes. As principal investigator, I will be the only person who will review and transcribe the audiotapes.

In addition, to maintain confidentiality, pseudonyms will be used so that your name will not be associated with the findings. Your participation will take approximately 60 minutes. If you have questions not addressed by this consent form, please do not hesitate to ask. You will receive a copy of this form, which you should keep for your records.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Human Subjects Committee of MSU.

Thank you for your time and participation.

John Watts

Doctoral Candidate, Montana State University (406) 586-1930

CONSENT STATEMENT

I have read the above comments and agree to participate in this study. I give my permission to be audio taped, under the terms outlined above. I understand that if I have any questions or concerns regarding this project I can contact John Watts principal investigator (406-994-5847); Dr. Mark Quinn, chair of the Human Subjects Committee (406-994-5721); or Dr. Robert Carson, dissertation director (406-994-6670).

 Participant's signature

 Date
Memorandum Regarding Use of Real Names

Date: March 8, 2005

To: Raffaele, Reggie, Johann, Loretta, Jennifer, Liz, Rose, Dale, Hu, Steve

Fr: John Watts

Re: Use of real names in dissertation

I am writing this memo to ask if you would consider allowing me to use your real name in my paper rather than a false name. I would like to use your real name for several reasons. First, everybody in the community already knows who the teachers are anyway so using fake names doesn't really hide anyone's identities. Second, several of you have written Crow language texts, and it would be confusing to use a fake name for you in one place, and your real name in another place. Third, I use the real names for others who I did not interview, so it is inconsistent for me to use fake names in one part and real names in another. Fourth and most important, you all so admirable and you all have done

so much good work for the Crow language and the Crow people that you should be recognized for all of your efforts. However, I won't use your real name unless I get your permission to do so. I am enclosing a form for you to sign. Please sign it and return it to me in the stamped, addressed envelope that I have included in the mailing.

Thanks, again

REVISED CONSENT STATEMENT

I give my permission for my real name to be used in the paper.

Participant's signature

Date

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Crow Language Teacher Interview Questions

1. Please state your age.
2. Where do you teach?
3. How many years have you taught? What ages?
4. How long have you taught Crow language? To what ages?
5. Is Crow your first language?
6. Do you speak Crow at home?
7. How would you rate your fluency in spoken Crow?
Not fluent Somewhat fluent Very fluent
8. In written Crow?
Not fluent Somewhat fluent Very fluent
9. How much training in language teaching have you had?
10. What kind of training would improve your teaching skills?
11. What is a typical class day like?
12. How much time is spent each day teaching the written form of Crow?
13. Do you test the students at the end of the semester?
14. In what ways do you presently use the written form of Crow in the classroom?
15. What training in translating and teaching the written form of Crow do you have?
16. What written Crow materials do you use?
17. What training in language teaching do you have?
18. What are your feelings toward the written form of Crow language?
19. What are your views of the written materials?
20. What improvements could be made in the written materials?
21. How do you use technology in teaching written Crow?
22. What are your perceptions of students' views of language?
23. How could the written materials be improved?
24. How could the training of Crow language teachers be improved?

APPENDIX C

CROW LANGUAGE READERS AND
OTHER TEACHING MATERIALS

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