

“There is no word for ‘extinct’ in the Ktunaxa Language. Let’s keep it that way!”

Language Retention – Efforts, Challenges and Our Future

Our Vision Statement

- Tax na ku?in Ktunaxa [a] ukqa ?aq[a] smaknik? ?a-ki kaqa si[a] paxa ?at ki- [À] xa ?at ku [À] xa [a] ya-kxakna [a] a ku?inna [a] a ?aq[a] smaknik? ku skiki [a] qawiyna [a] a ?at ku [À] cxana [a] a ka ?akuqakwa [a] a Tax na ku [À] [À] inawismakniy [a] a nas ku [À] qa [a] ?itki-k [À] a [a] a ?a [a] ka ?aqa [a] ta [a] a na?sk [À] xa [a] qaki-kawi [À] ikimik ki?ins kawi [À] kin qapsins ?a-ki [a] ?aq[a] smaknik?is.
- *Strong, healthy citizens and communities, speaking our languages , and celebrating who we are, and our history, in our ancestral homelands, working together, managing our lands and resources as a self-sufficient, self-governing Nation.*



Culture

- Residential schools
- We know all the names for places in our Traditional Territory
- Salmon
- Hunting and gathering
- Elders and youth

Education System

- Children aren't learning at home anymore
- Compartmentalized teaching
- We had words and language for everything we did

Issues we face

- Limited resource
- \$\$\$
- Funders don't understand the language families
- Having to apply for funding
- Bridging the gaps in learners' levels
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- Limited resources causes competition within the nation.



Other challenges

- “You can teach children in a classroom, but when they get home their parents ask, ‘What did you learn today?’ in English. That should be asked in Kootenai.” - Leo Williams
- Ceremonies & protocol
- Limited teaching of our kids our traditional ways – natural language lessons.

Hope for Our Future

- 2 strong language core programs in K-8
- 4 Ktunaxa Instructors at the College of the Rockies – 2 teaching Ktunaxa 101 and Ktunaxa 102 online
- Technical resources
 - Internet in all communities
 - Videoconferencing
 - IM – Ktunaxa font on iPhone



20 years of Learning

- 1st hand experience as a beginner and now teaching. Remember feeling good about picking up new words /phrases.
- Bring ideas on new tools and methods
- Teaching my children and family at home.
- Now teaching students at college and try to be encouraging in all interactions and correspondence.



Students Outcome


- Grades vs. language retention
- Correct pronunciation
 - Pronunciation of the sounds can change a word considerably.
 - It's not just about saying the right words, but about saying the right words correctly

World View

- Our language places us in the world. Our way of being comes first, followed by the linguistic skills of relaying that sense to others.
- We can teach students to say Kootenay words, but teach a way of seeing the Ktunaxa is



So....?

“Qapsin kin
?itki·k  i  a  i  a  kin
?uni·ki nawsanmiyitki?”

Questions? Comments?

- Melanie Sam, B. Mgt.
 - Director, Traditional Knowledge and Language Sector, Ktunaxa Nation Council
 - MSam@Ktunaxa.org
- Don Sam, B. Sc., MBA
 - Instructor, College of the Rockies
 - DSam@COTR.bc.ca

