



FNEL 448B 2018: **Progress Report**

We thank the Heiltsuk community for welcoming and allowing us to work with them on their ancestral and unceded territories once again.

Wuálas ġiáxsiḵa!



Under the auspices of the 2016 MOU signed between the Bella Bella Community School (BBCS), the Heiltsuk Cultural Education Centre (HCEC) and the First Nations and Endangered Languages Program (FNEL) at the University of British Columbia, a small group of three Heiltsuk and three non-Heiltsuk students registered at UBC participated in a week-long intensive course to further assist in community language goals in Bella Bella.

This year's course was the third iteration of a series of community-based courses in Bella Bella made possible with support from the Remote Community Based Learning Fund, a joint initiative of the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre and the Centre for Community Engaged Learning.

This invaluable sponsorship directly facilitated the further development of our community-based partnership, supported in-person communication and the practical collaboration that we need to maintain our ongoing commitments through the academic year.

This report outlines the advancements in our work not just during our week in Bella Bella, but also throughout the last academic year, along with some structured reflections on future initiatives and areas of possible improvement.

Students:

Bridget Chase : Linguistics, Creative Writing & Masters of Business Management
Ben Chung : First Nations and Endangered Languages & Linguistics
Annie Guerin : First Nations and Endangered Languages
Maria Martin : Indigenous Teacher Education Program (NITEP)
Sheila Reid : Indigenous Teacher Education Program (NITEP)
Liz Wilson : Indigenous Teacher Education Program (NITEP)

Instructor:

Mark Turin : Associate Professor (Anthropology & First Nations and Endangered Languages)

Community Partners & Participants:

Jennifer Carpenter (HCEC); Robyn Humchitt (HCEC); Angie Peers (BBCS)

Elders (present for recording):

Liz Brown; Marina Humchitt.

The class visit to Bella Bella was scheduled to run from 2-8 July, 2018.
Report finalized on Monday, September 17, 2018.

For this class visit, the team (students & instructor) focused on logistical and relationship-building work in order to be in a stronger position to continue supporting projects from the



Lower Mainland during the rest of the year. Prior to departure, the team members proposed trying to bridge the ‘silo-effect’ that can hinder communication between stakeholders and learners alike with regard to language development and programming. To that end, while in Bella Bella, the team simultaneously tackled multiple tasks while attempting to remain cohesive and meet with community partners as a group. An important difference between the 2018 course and the 2017 course is that the Bella Bella Community School was not in session during our visit this year. This had both positive and negative aspects (e.g. faster internet connection, quieter recording spaces, but regrettably less frequent interaction with youth / students).

Initially, the team divided into loose pairs with separate, if at times overlapping, goals. Sheila (along with her sister Aly Reid who participated but was not officially enrolled) and Bridget explored the issue of bringing the language back into the home through re-vernacularisation. With assistance from Rory, who already began work in this field, they developed QR code templates with corresponding recordings for Heiltsuk colour terms. These templates are ready to be uploaded for easy use by learners through the Heiltsuk Language & Culture Mobilization Partnership website to hear the language in the home for everyday items. A beta-version demonstration was shared during our community open house at the school on our final day.

Liz, Maria, and Mark worked on logistics and planning for presentations, including to Chief and Counsel. Liz set up short ‘meet and greets’ with community programs like Sásm House (Children’s centre) for Bridget to learn more about what youth want and how they use existing tools (if at all). Maria was integral in the hosting of the open house as well as planning and connecting non-Heiltsuk members to necessary people in the community during time back home.

Ben focused his time on better understanding Heiltsuk grammar, and throughout the week worked with Jennifer to better translate linguistic jargon and concepts for non-specialized audiences. He also assisted with storybook editing with the Elders and Robyn.



(Discussing Recording & Storybooks with Marina Humchitt; photo by Aly Reid, July 2018)



The final result of his work culminated in three brief guides to interpreting John Rath's *Facts and Philosophy in Determining Lexical Class Membership* (n.d.) that include an analysis of important particles and deictic markers in Heiltsuk. These aspects are highly salient in sentence construction.

Annie paired up with Robyn to work through best practices for making future recordings and review possible audio equipment that could benefit the Centre using equipment that she had rented in Vancouver. Sample recordings were made with Marina Humchitt with the assistance of Robyn and Ben. Comparing sound files, Annie determined that attachable LAV microphones and an audio interface are necessary to maintain high fidelity sound integrity. With the assistance of Bridget, Annie was also able to manipulate, clean and prepare audio from various audio files for Angie Peers, a new language teacher in the BBCS, to support her classroom-based curriculum.

Together, the majority of the team met with Ayla Brown for a short presentation on the potential language authority (e.g. Hałzaqvł Revitalization Framework) and its goals for the future. Other scheduled meetings included with staff and participants at Niñuáǵaiłas (Elder's building), Health centre, Qqs Project Society, and in extension, Koeye camp.



(Mark presenting at Ninuagailas; Photo by Maria Martin, July 2018)

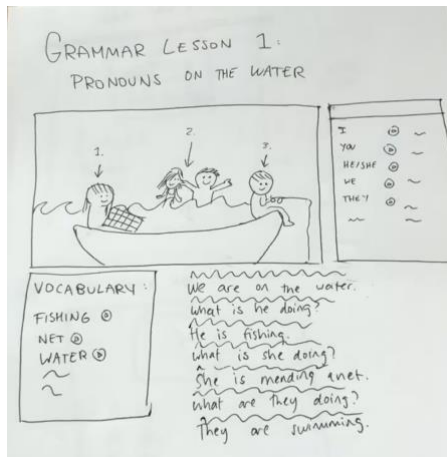
We were very fortunate that the whole team was invited to meet with and present to Chief and Council for an emotional and profound exchange on our shared work and future hopes for our partnership with the Heiltsuk community. The outcomes of this important meeting included a unanimous vote by the counsellors present in support of the development of a Heiltsuk language smartphone App as well as a for-credit Heiltsuk language course at UBC. The five members of counsel present at the meeting in the church were: Marilyn Slett (Chief Councillor), Jess Housty, Leona Humchitt, Valerie Humchitt and Pauline Waterfall.



Moving forward, we hope to integrate these efforts into current and ongoing projects. The integration of the QR code project into a web format, a learner’s guide to linguistic terminology and Heiltsuk grammar alongside additional audio (both healed legacy recordings as well as new recordings) are all possible projects that the entire team hopes can be collaboratively developed in the near future.

Our goal for our own website is for it to be easier to navigate and more useful for those hoping to learn the Heiltsuk language and engaged in this process of revitalization and healing. During the open house, Ben installed approximately the Unicode keyboards on **thirty** phones, tablets, and laptops that attendees had brought, and we all witnessed community members expressing their joy at seeing (and hearing) the dictionary online. With the assistance of Robyn, we imagine that the online dictionary will provide an excellent foundation for a future App.

We witnessed a growing momentum in language revitalization work across the community (cf. Hálʔzaqv̄la Revitalization Framework), an interest in our partnership from many quarters, and we hope to build on this momentum in the coming academic year (2018-2019).



(Drawing plans for Digital Conversational Heiltsuk I; beta-design by Bridget Chase, photo by Ben Chung)

Regarding the documents produced by and housed in the HCEC, Bridget and Ben have determined that *Conversational Heiltsuk I* may be the best option for the next document to host online, pending audio healing or re-recording. The storybooks need additional attention as a result of dialectal variation and translation, which Robyn will lead with Elders in Bella Bella. Moreover, *Conversational Heiltsuk I* most closely mirrors or has the potential to mirror how Rory Housty teaches the language in his classes. For these reasons, it may be the most immediately useful for learners to practice with. Other immediate goals are to add the clearest possible Heiltsuk voices, including female, pronouncing the sounds and words of the Alphabet Chart, and the possible addition of a ‘Precious Voices’ section to honour earlier language work and archival recordings that can host a selection of important scans of HCEC materials with complete metadata. The Alphabet Chart and audio is intended to be a foundational a tool for learners to understand and hear the unique sounds of Hálʔzaqv̄la as transcribed by John Rath in the



10,000 word Hílzaqv̓la dictionary. Robyn and Jennifer will be integral at this stage of work to ensure open and responsive communication between parties. Although While Ben will be on exchange in Sweden for the next academic year, he will remain active in the workflow of the website and material review and development while abroad.

As always, we are grateful for the opportunity to work and reside however briefly in Heiltsuk territory and were blessed to witness the development of the new Longhouse and be welcomed to Koeye. We look forward to deepening our partnership and realizing our collective goals as outlined in the MOU, in particular: “recording an extensive body of oral traditions, narratives, and discourses, and . . . promoting and assisting in the development of Heiltsuk language instruction programs [and] maximizing use of available and emerging technologies to promote the preservation and access to Heiltsuk language materials.”



(Off to Kvai/Koeye; photo by Jennifer Carpenter, July 2018)