REVIVAL OF THE MUSCOGEE CREEK LANGUAGE THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE INTEREST GROUP

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FINAL DISSERTATION DEFENSE
OUTLINE

- Review of Introduction/vliceckv
  - Problem Statement
  - Significance of Study
  - Research Questions/vpohkv
- Literature Review
- Methodology
- Results
- Conclusions/respokat
- Recommendations
Why?

7 Generations
PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

- Worked with a Native American community since 2009
- Began working with the Native Youth in 2013
- Noticed an increase in English and a decrease in Creek
- Sparked an interest in a Language Immersion Program on a different reservation
INTRODUCTION
Muscogee community comprises of Natives from North America.

Muscogee Creek Language is facing extinction in Florida.

Migration and urbanization reduced the use of the language.

Increased use of American English has contributed to the decline.

70% of the Muscogee community live in regions in US.
The study intends to create an interest group.

The interest group would help to revive the Creek language.

The research shows the reasons why the language is declining.

The scope is revival of the native language in Florida.

Language preservation method will be to develop an Indigenous Language Interest Group.
The Muscogee Creek Language is heading towards gradual extinction and, in addition, seems to be progressively diminishing in the region of Florida in North America.
The significance of the study is to assist in the preservation of Native American language/culture through the development of an interest group to work towards building their language skills.

- Development of good relationships between the language instructors and interest group.
- Adding to the body of knowledge on language decline.
- Development of language-revival interest group in Florida.
1. What meaning does language extinction have on the Creek culture?

2. What factors have led to the loss of the Muscogee Creek Language in Florida?

3. What factors have contributed to good relationships between instructions of the Muscogee Creek Language and their Native American students?
The younger generation lacks interest in learning the Creek language.
The middle generations uses English more than Creek.
The elder generation uses the Creek language more often.
The elders may be willing to teach younger generation.
Language development groups may have a positive effect on community and may gain support to revive of the Muscogee Creek Language.
Almost 2% of the Creek Peoples in Florida speak the Creek language.
LITERATURE REVIEW

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The spread of the smallpox in 1585 led to high mortality rates.

Before the French-Indian War (1763) English was foreign language in the Southeast region.

The plagues of the 18th/19th century affected the Muscogee Creek population thereby effecting the language.

Intermarriages with other communities contributed to loss of identity.

An interest group is essential to revive the language.
Decline of the Muscogee Creek language can be contributed to the decrease of the population due to European plagues. The language has Spanish and English vocabularies. Originated in Alabama and Georgia, favored in Florida and Oklahoma. Muscogee is part of Muskogean language family.
METHODOLOGY
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory provides steps of language revival and restoration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Socialization connects different people in the community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationship with elders brings understanding to the language learner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connected learning unites instructors with students</td>
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<td>Professionals guide through the restoration processes</td>
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Methodology

Post-positivism was chosen as a research philosophy.

Descriptive research design was used in the study.

The population of the study comprised 5-25 participants.

The participants were between 18-80 years old.

The instructors would be of Muscogee Creek descent

Sample will be a snowball framework

Primary qualitative data was collected.

Thematic analysis for qualitative data was used in data analysis.
PROCEDURES

- Face-to-face audio-taped focus group
- Interviews will be semi-structured
- Researcher will include approximately three open-ended interview questions
- Consent form and questions provided to participants before interview
RESULTS

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Overview of Results

- The study focused on three areas including:
  - Impact of language extinction on the Creek culture?
  - Factors leading to loss of Muscogee Creek Language in Florida?
  - Factors leading to good relationships between instructors and students.
Distribution of Themes

- Existing Resources: 5
- Teaching Style: 3
- Family unit: 1
- Parent-child relation: 4
- Interest: 2

Five Themes
Language extinction had an impact on the Creek culture.

Language extinction would have an affect on the community.

A decline in the Creek speakers would lead to extinction of the language.

Language defines how people interact.

Extinction of language would change customs and traditions.

The loss would lead to loss of identity.

“When a language disappears, so do parts of that language’s culture. Lost cultures lead to lost people. Throughout world history, this has been evident.” (P1, HT1, MG).
Various factors led to loss of Creek language in Florida.

Assimilation and family units contributed loss of the language.

Others include parent-child relationship, resources, and common schools.

Laziness also was a factor for the loss.

“Many of us stopped caring and spoke English more and Creek to the elders” (P1,HT1, MG)

“Speaking in English too much. Some become lazy and speak both together rather than holding a conversation in Creek” (P3,H1,EG)
Trust was a key factor in the relationship with instructors.

Interest and passion can boost trust.

Knowledge and the teaching style can enhance the relationship.

“Language can be difficult to learn so passion needs to be within the program” (P1)

“For interest to be generated there has to be an importance placed on the need to preserve the Creek language.” (P2)
4 out of 6 participants identified that trust one of the key factors that contributed to the development of a good relationship between instructors of Muscogee Creek Language and their Native American students.

1 out of 6 felt that language extinction had little effect on the Creek culture since traditions could still be practiced regardless of the language. The other 5 participants felt that it affected their identity since language played a major role in the culture and traditions of the Creek people.

4 of the participants who were involved in the research described language extinction as a critical element of one’s culture.
Language extinction was pronounced in the middle generation.

Extinction can be reduced through healthy social interactions.

“Foreign languages” lead to introduction of new vocabularies.

Family support was critical in developing the language.
FACTORS FOR REVITALIZATION

CREEK LANGUAGE REVIVAL

CHANGES IN CREEK LANGUAGE USE

PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP

TEACHING STYLES ADOPTED FOR LANGUAGE

FAMILY UNIT SUPPORT

EXISTING MATERIAL FOR LANGUAGE EDUCATION

NUMBER OF SPEAKERS PRESENT

ATTITUDE OF THE COMMUNITY MEMBERS

PERCEPTION AND POLICIES OF GOVERNMENT

AVAILABLE DOCUMENTATION

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AVAILABLE DOCUMENTATION
The younger generation communicated in English.

Middle generation stopped speaking Creek language to the children.

Parents used partial Creek language leading to loss.

People were teased for the Creek language.
Reviving the language could lead to development of the culture.

People needed to change their attitudes towards the language.

The older generation is critical in reviving the language.

Other factors to be considered include:

1. Number of speakers present
2. Learning materials
3. Government policies
Conclusions

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The study shows how language extinction affected the culture.

The study has been able to present anthropological account of how language extinction has affected the Muscogee Creek culture over time.

Creek language has remained unaltered among the old generation.

Extinction is a result of constant changes in the language.

These changes have been observed in the middle and the younger generations as opposed to the older generations. This suggests that the creek language among the older generation has certainly remained unaltered with so much knowledge about the Muscogee Creek culture.
Sample population could be less than expected

Non-Muscogee descendants will not be interviewed

Communication gap

Questions were linked to the aim of the study
- An comprehensive examination of the culture is essential.
- Future studies can focus on extinction in a specific generation.
- A further study is required to examine attitudinal challenges.
- Revitalization programs could improve existing literature.
Accomplishing programs such as material enhancement, language curricula and several lessons. The participants will have to continue to find interest in the language in order to enhance and fulfill their ambitions and expectation.

Explaining the complexity in the indigenous language pattern, this will help to enhance the creativity of the participants as well as helping them to figure ways on how and where to apply their knowledge in various linguistic structures.

Ensuring all the participants gain a solid insight into diverse curriculum and language acquisition according to different segments.

Helping the participant assess their activities and whether they are healthy for their ambitions/goals or time wasting.

Helping participants to understand diverse techniques and tactic in teaching in relation to various indigenous language and programs in society, to assist the participants in building their skills by creating a platform that will enable them to practice accordingly.
Qualitative Focus Group Case Study for the Revival of the Muscogee Creek Language through the Development of an Indigenous Language Interest Group

- 5-25 participated age 18-80 (6 participates from 3 different generations)
- There is hope and interest to revitalize the Muscogee Creek language
MVTO!
QUESTIONS?
References


References


References
