RECIROCITY AND LANGUAGE WORK:
CONSIDERING THE ROLE OF THE OUTSIDER LINGUIST

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Dedication
Acknowledgements
Abstract

Since the early twentieth century, non-Indigenous linguistic researchers have been studying languages spoken by the Indigenous Peoples in North America and participating in linguistic fieldwork within Indigenous communities (e.g., Woodbury 2011; Rosenblum & Berez-Kroeker 2010; Crowley 2007; Floyd 2018). In undertaking these endeavors, some linguists not considered members of their communities of research – or “outsider” linguists – tended to prioritize the needs and desires of their own research without actively identifying or taking into account those of the local language community. Historically, this linguist-focused framework in North America has led to unethical research practices resulting in extractive, exploitative language work that disadvantages Indigenous Peoples (e.g., Davis 2017; Leonard 2017; Shaw 2001).

Recent conversations concerning ethics in linguistic fieldwork have turned instead toward advocating for collaborative, community-based methods in linguistic research with Indigenous Peoples in North America. This shift has prompted many linguists working with Indigenous languages to prioritize methods that are inclusive and collaborative, and that foreground the wants, needs, and expertise of those traditionally considered to be simply research ‘consultants’ or ‘participants’ (Leonard 2017; Czaykowska-Higgins 2009). Many Indigenous scholars have also spoken out in support of this trend toward ethical research, urging that linguists rely upon the “four Rs” of relevance, responsibility, respect, and reciprocity to guide them in their work (Kirkness & Barnhardt 2001; Carjuzaa & Fenimore-Smith 2010). These four Rs, considered the baseline standard for research involving Indigenous Peoples, serve to stimulate the
relationship-building process across cultures and guide researchers toward ethical research practices with and within Indigenous communities.

In this dissertation, I consider the role of the outsider linguist in language work and explore how outsider linguists can best leverage one of these elements – *reciprocity* – to form more ethical practices in linguistic research with Indigenous Peoples in Canada. Despite the field’s growing recognition of ethical responsibilities in research, explicit discussions of reciprocity, especially details about forming and maintaining reciprocal relationships with Indigenous research partners, are often minimal in or absent from the products of linguistic research done by outsiders. Furthermore, negative precedent set by years of previous practice in the field can mislead outsider linguists who may be struggling to discern how to best apply emerging ethical standards to their work.

To address this disparity, I focus specifically on the concept of reciprocity in order to discern how outsider linguists can better incorporate reciprocal practices into their work with and within Indigenous communities in Canada. Guided by an Indigenist methodology, I conducted qualitative, semi-structured interviews to elicit and record the perspectives, experiences, and insights of Indigenous and non-Indigenous language workers in Canada. During these interviews, I asked each participant about their personal experiences in language work, inquiring how reciprocity (or lack thereof) factored into the connection, development, and maintenance of research relationships between outsider linguists and Indigenous communities. I also asked explicitly what sorts of actions participants feel outsider linguists should be doing to ensure that their language work with Indigenous communities was ethical and reciprocal.
Based on insights from participant interviews, I identify and discuss three major themes that emerged from the qualitative data:

1) Comments on reciprocity as an abstract concept within language work.

   Participants viewed relationality as paramount in considering reciprocity in language work with Indigenous communities in Canada, noting that reciprocity cannot exist outside of a relational structure.

2) Obstacles that prevent outsider linguists from practicing reciprocity in language work.

   Participants identified several hindrances within the structure of academia that prevents outsider linguists from forming reciprocal relationships with Indigenous communities in language work and maintaining these relationships long-term.

3) Explicit recommendations as to how outsider linguists can foster reciprocity in their work.

   All participants contributed suggestions to how individual outsider linguists can better practice reciprocity in language work. The responses ranged in topic, but all were concrete steps that outsider linguists can take to practice language work more ethically and effectively with and within Indigenous communities in Canada.

   Relationality emerged as a paramount value in considering reciprocity in language work with Indigenous communities in Canada, and participants noted that reciprocity cannot exist outside of a relational structure. Relying upon the knowledge and perspectives shared by participants, I demonstrate how relational reciprocity in
language work can be best understood in connection to other important “R” words such as respect, responsibility, and relevance. I consider how each term is connected to reciprocity as applied in language work and provide some critique as to how these connections can be better leveraged to improve language work done by outsider linguists.

Based on these findings, I propose that outsider linguists adopt a framework of relational reciprocity when engaging in research relationships with Indigenous communities in Canada. Perspectives emerging from the interviews in this study suggest that reciprocity in language work is about working to improve interpersonal relationships in the field. Interviewees emphasized the importance of honoring community protocols and practices, engaging in active community-building, and taking the time to know one’s place in research relationships in order to truly honor reciprocal relationships in language work. At the heart of the reciprocal relationship remains the willingness to listen and respond to the needs of others, even if these needs fall outside of the traditional roles set for outsider linguists.
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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AILDI</td>
<td>American Indian Language Development Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBLR</td>
<td>Community-Based Language Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIHR</td>
<td>Canadian Institutes of Health Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CILLDI</td>
<td>Canadian Indigenous Language and Literacy Development Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CITI</td>
<td>Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CoLang</td>
<td>Institute on Collaborative Language Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CURA</td>
<td>Community-University Research Alliances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICLDC</td>
<td>International Conference on Language Documentation &amp; Conservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRB</td>
<td>Institutional Review Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LD&amp;C</td>
<td><em>Language Documentation &amp; Conservation</em> journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSA</td>
<td>Linguistic Society of America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NILI</td>
<td>Northwest Indigenous Language Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSERC</td>
<td>Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCAP</td>
<td>Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REB</td>
<td>Research Ethics Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSHRC</td>
<td>Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSILA</td>
<td>Society for the Study of the Indigenous Languages of the Americas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRC</td>
<td>Truth and Reconciliation Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAI</td>
<td>Utility, Self-Voicing, Access, and Inter-Relationality Research framework</td>
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Since the early twentieth century, non-Indigenous linguistic researchers have been studying languages spoken by the Indigenous Peoples in North America and participating in linguistic fieldwork within Indigenous communities (e.g., Rosenblum & Berez-Kroeker 2010; Crowley 2007; Floyd 2018). In undertaking these endeavors, some linguists not considered members of their communities of research – or “outsider” linguists – tended to prioritize the needs and desires of their own research without actively identifying or taking into account those of the local language community. Historically, this linguist-focused framework in North America has led to unethical research practices resulting in extractive, exploitative language work that disadvantages Indigenous Peoples (e.g., Davis 2017; Wilson 2008).

Conversations in Linguistics concerning research ethics in linguistic fieldwork have recently turned instead toward advocating for collaborative, community-based methods in linguistic research with Indigenous Peoples in North America. This shift has prompted many outsider linguists working with and within Indigenous communities to prioritize methods that are inclusive and collaborative, and that foreground the wants, needs, and expertise of those traditionally considered to be simply consultants or participants in research (Leonard 2017; Czaykowska-Higgins 2009). Many Indigenous scholars have also spoken out in support of this trend toward ethical research in Linguistics, urging that linguists rely upon the “four Rs” of relevance, responsibility, respect, and reciprocity to guide them in their work (Kirkness & Barnhardt 2001; Hermes et al. 2012). These four Rs, considered the baseline standard for research involving Indigenous Peoples, serve to stimulate the relationship-building process across cultures and guide outsider researchers toward ethical research practices with and within Indigenous communities (Carjuzaa & Fenimore-Smith 2010).

In this dissertation, I explore the role of the outsider linguist in language work with and within Indigenous communities in Canada by focusing on one of these four Rs – reciprocity. Traditionally within Linguistics, reciprocity in language work has been expressed as linguists returning the products of research to Indigenous language
communities at or towards the completion of research objectives. This framework of “giving back” to Indigenous communities in this way has emerged as a common byproduct of the conversation surrounding research ethics in Linguistics, with the idea of giving back becoming almost synonymous with reciprocity in research produced by outsider linguists (Rice 2011; Woods 2017). However, this framework of “giving back” as the practice of simple resource return is problematic and can contribute to the continued exploitation of Indigenous Peoples (e.g., Shaw 2001; Leonard 2017).

Through an interview-based qualitative study, I investigate how reciprocity surfaces in language work and question how outsider linguists can best leverage reciprocity to form more ethical practices in linguistic research with Indigenous Peoples in Canada. Despite the field’s growing recognition of ethical responsibilities in research, explicit discussions within Linguistics about forming and maintaining reciprocal relationships with Indigenous research partners are often minimal in or absent from the products of linguistic research done by outsiders. Furthermore, negative precedent set by years of previous practice in the field can mislead outsider linguists who may be struggling to discern how to best apply emerging ethical standards to their work. To address this disparity, I focus specifically on the concept of reciprocity to question how outsider linguists can better incorporate reciprocal practices into their work with and within Indigenous communities in Canada.

1.1 Objectives

The process of linguistic research generally begins by identifying and asking a research question, a prompt that both defines the main premise and guides the unfolding of the research. The final outcomes of the research normally provide some kind of answer or response that either satisfies or relates back to the original research question. In choosing to explore reciprocity in language work, I realized that my dissertation topic would not reflect the kind of subject matter typical of dissertations within Linguistics. In order to justify my choice of topic during the initial stages of this work, I formulated a research question early on that would reflect the more traditional research process:
How should outsider linguists practice reciprocity in language work with and within Indigenous communities in Canada?

While this question is very much in the spirit of this study, I realized as the project unfolded that this rigid framing of asking and answering a research question did not appropriately convey my intentions for the outcomes of this work. Rather than seeking a single answer to a single question, this study was designed to uncover multiple answers to multiple questions with the goal of cultivating practical recommendations to shape best practices within language work.

As a result, the investigation of reciprocity in language work as described within this dissertation looks to satisfy four primary objectives:

1) To develop guidelines and/or recommendations that will aid outsider linguists in practicing appropriate, ethical, reciprocal language work with Indigenous communities in Canada.

2) To improve the conduct of outsider linguists who partner with Indigenous communities in Canada

3) To advocate for relational reciprocity as an approach to language work.

4) To stimulate discussion that can contribute to and improve reciprocal practices within the discipline of Linguistics.

I describe each objective in further detail within the following subsections.

1.1.1 Develop guidelines and/or recommendations

The primary objective of this study on reciprocity in language work is to aid outsider linguists in practicing reciprocity in language work with and within Indigenous communities in Canada. To this end, I conducted qualitative, semi-structured interviews with Indigenous and non-Indigenous linguists and language workers who engage with Indigenous languages and communities in Canada. Within these interviews, I asked participants to share their own experiences, perspectives, and insights about reciprocity.
in language work in order to identify what sorts of values and actions can be attributed to positive reciprocity in language work. In considering these contributions, I aim to develop guidelines and/or recommendations that outsider linguists can use to improve their practices and engage in appropriate, ethical, reciprocal language work with Indigenous communities in Canada.

I began this study on reciprocity as a result of my own less-than-fulfilling experiences as an outsider linguist in language work with Indigenous languages and communities in Canada (described in more detail in Chapter 2). As an up-and-coming linguist new to fieldwork, I strived to combine my academic skills, interest in Indigenous languages, and my burning desire to put good into the world in a way that would be beneficial for Indigenous languages and communities in Canada. However, these early experiences with language work left me feeling as though I had done the opposite; I was overwhelmed with disappointment, embarrassment, and a feeling as though I had taken from communities instead of doing the “giving back” I had so hoped to do. In ruminating upon these feelings post-fieldwork, certain questions began to emerge. What went wrong? What had I missed? What did these communities actually need from me? How could I do better the next time around?

These questions first led me to the concept of reciprocity more generally, then to the exploration of how it is conceived of and practiced in language work more specifically. Through my experiences engaging with Indigenous cultures, I realized that my own internalized notion of reciprocity (the “do unto others what you would have done to you” formula imprinted upon me by my Catholic upbringing) was not going to be appropriate nor sufficient to ensure reciprocal language work with Indigenous communities. I needed a new roadmap to reciprocity designed specifically for outsiders like me; finding none within the literature in Linguistics, I decided to develop one through the undertaking of this study.

It is my hope that the investigation of reciprocity in language work as described within this dissertation will serve as a model for outsider linguists like myself who wish to engage intentionally with the concept of reciprocity as applied to language work. By providing concrete recommendations as to how outsider linguists can better incorporate
reciprocity in their work, I hope to provide a roadmap that can guide outsider linguists toward ethical and reciprocal research practices with and within Indigenous communities in Canada.

1.1.2 Improve the conduct of outsider linguists

Another objective of this study is to improve the conduct of outsider linguists who partner with Indigenous communities in Canada. As described in Chapters 4 and 6, outsider linguists practicing within the Western academic tradition have a well-earned reputation of using extractive, linguist-focused methods when engaging in language work within Indigenous communities in North America. The effects of colonialism, which are ongoing and ever-present in modern Canadian society, can be seen in language work through the persistence of linguist-focused work that fails to take into account the rights and needs of Indigenous communities (McIvor 2013).

By exploring reciprocity within the context of language work and discussing it explicitly within this dissertation, I hope to inspire other outsider linguists to critically examine their own practices in language work. I urge outsider linguists to consider how their research methods may knowingly or unknowingly be contributing to the ongoing exploitation of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, and I advocate for reciprocal frameworks, rather than those that are wholly linguist-focused, to be adopted by outsider linguists working with and within Indigenous communities in Canada.

1.1.3 Advocate for relational reciprocity

A third objective of this study is to advocate for relational reciprocity as an approach to language work. Within this dissertation, I highlight two dimensions of reciprocity: the abstract and the practical. The latter speaks to the more action-based interpretation of reciprocity as interpreted by the primary objective of this dissertation as described in section 1.1.1. The former, in contrast, frames reciprocity as more of an abstract concept, a value that can guide or influence an individual or a situation. In this dissertation, I urge that both interpretations of reciprocity be applied within language
work; in this subsection specifically, I consider the more abstract interpretation of reciprocity and advocate that outsider linguists to adopt a frame of relational reciprocity as a methodology and approach to ethical language work with and within Indigenous communities in Canada (see Chapter 7 for more on relational reciprocity).

Because reciprocity is a complex concept influenced by cultural underpinnings, its definitions and expressions can shift when applied by different individuals within specific contexts (see Chapter 4). However, the complexity of reciprocity is also evidenced by its intimate ties to other similar values such as relationality, respect, responsibility, and relevance (Kirkness & Barnhardt 2001; Leonard 2021; also see Chapter 7 for further discussion). This multiplicity inherent in reciprocity inspired me to investigate the concept of reciprocity as applied to language work, especially in the context of relationships between outsider linguists and Indigenous communities in Canada; however, as described in Chapter 6, I argue that some tenets of relational reciprocity could be applicable to ethical language work in any region of the world.

1.1.4 Stimulate discussion and improve Linguistics

The fourth and final objective of this dissertation is to stimulate ethical discussion that can contribute to and improve reciprocal practices within the discipline of Linguistics. In Chapter 4, I outline the progression within Linguistics from the more linguist-focused practices characteristic of the discipline’s earlier days up to the more collaborative, community-based frameworks common in today’s modern linguistic research. I intend for this reciprocity-focused dissertation to join and support Linguistics’ progression toward ethical practices in language work, to act as a single small shove propelling Linguistics toward embracing relational and reciprocal methods.

In this dissertation, I argue that we as outsider linguists working with and within Indigenous communities in Canada have a responsibility to conduct ourselves in a way that counteracts extractive legacies and honors protocols set forth by Indigenous Peoples. We have a responsibility as linguists who work with Indigenous Peoples and languages to ensure our research is designed to both respect the language and bring benefit to the community. It is my hope that this dissertation will help to normalize
conversations like these for improvement in relationships, research, and the field of Linguistics.

Finally, I have chosen to study reciprocity as practiced by outsiders in language work because I feel that, as outsider linguists who engage with Indigenous languages, we have a responsibility to use our skills to counteract extractive, colonial legacies inherent to our field of study and actively support the reclamation and revitalization initiatives of Indigenous communities. Kovach (2021) argues that, through the research-policy-practice cycle, research has enormous power to generate influence reaching far beyond the confines of academic disciplines:

“Policy and programming grow out of research. While the influence of research methodologies is not always visible in the research-policy-practice cycle, the influence of research methodology on how research questions are asked, to whom, the findings that are found, and whether knowledge will be shared with communities cannot be understated. Methodology influences research outcomes. Research outcomes create policy. Policy generates programs. Programs guide practice. It turtles all the way down.” (Kovach 2021: 11–12).

1.2 Audience

In the interest of full disclosure, I admit that the parameters of this study are at least partially due to my own positionality (see Chapter 2). I have chosen to center outsider linguists because it is a role I have taken on many times and am very familiar with, and I have chosen to focus on language work in Canada because it is the country in which much of my language work with Indigenous Peoples has taken place. As a result, the primary audience for this dissertation is outsider linguists who find themselves involved in language work of all forms with and within Indigenous communities in Canada (see Chapter 3 for explicit definitions of outsider, language work, and other terms).

It will become clear throughout the progression of this dissertation that the observations made in this analysis of reciprocity also skew toward the experiences of outsider linguists working in and/or supported by academia and academic structures.
Again stemming from my own perspectives, I frequently make observations about reciprocity in language work as practiced by graduate students within Linguistics, though I and other participants also refer occasionally to practices within Anthropology (see Chapters 6 and 7). While graduate students will likely not have the power to effect some of the institutional or structural changes suggested in this dissertation (on their own, at least), many of the recommendations provided by participants can easily be adopted by graduate student outsider linguists and incorporated into their linguistic research and language work with and within Indigenous communities.

Finally, the recommendations made within this dissertation are also directed toward those who supervise students, whether in Linguistics courses, linguistic fieldwork, dissertation projects, or general academic advancement. While students can model reciprocity individually in their own work (and should – see Woods (2017)), they generally lack the necessary power to influence change on the systemic level in academia. In order to dismantle the structural roadblocks preventing reciprocity in language work between students and Indigenous communities in language work, those in positions of greater power, such as faculty and supervisors, should engage with these recommendations and confront these concerns within the context of their own departments and institutions (see Chapters 6 and 7).

1.3 Overview of dissertation chapters

In this introduction, I have outlined the study described in the following chapters.

Chapter 2 outlines my own positionality in regard to this study on reciprocity in language work. I divulge information about my personal and professional background, then describe the language work experience that has inspired and influenced this study on reciprocity in language work.

Chapter 3 includes explicit definitions of key terms that emerge throughout the dissertation. I consider definitions for terms such as reciprocity, linguistic research, language work, Indigenous, and outsider and provide some context for how each term will be used throughout.
Chapter 4 engages in a critical literature review that explores reciprocity as conceived and practiced within the discipline of Linguistics. I review dominant paradigms within linguistic research and consider how each may or may not lend itself to reciprocity. Finally, I consider reciprocity as interpreted and practiced by institutions and individual researchers.

Chapter 5 describes the framework supporting the dissertation research. I begin by outlining the parameters of an Indigenist methodology and outline how I implement it within this work. I then review the research process, including the methods, criteria for participation, and participant recruitment. Finally, I review the process of obtaining informed consent and consider the benefits emerging from this study of reciprocity.

Chapter 6 presents the qualitative data supporting this study through the retelling of each interview as its own complete story. For each participant, I recount their key insights and articulate their recommendations for outsider linguists in practicing reciprocity, providing liberal quotations to support each assertion. I conclude with a brief overview of the eight interviews, noting some overarching similarities between them.

Chapter 7 includes an in-depth discussion of the themes presented in Chapter 6. I provide an analysis of reciprocity in language work within the context of relationality, demonstrating how relational reciprocity in language work can be best understood in connection to other important “R” words such as respect, responsibility, and relevance. I consider how each term is connected to reciprocity as applied in language work and provide some critique as to how these connections can be better leveraged to improve language work done by outsider linguists.

Chapter 8 explores possible future directions for this work, including possible next steps for the study and potential avenues for disseminating the recommendations. Finally, I consider how to leverage the perspectives provided by participants to expand and extend the benefits of the study to include Indigenous communities in Canada.

Chapter 9 concludes the dissertation by reviewing the study described within the dissertation as a whole.
Chapter 2: Positionality of the author

The research supporting this dissertation on reciprocity is qualitative, and in Chapter 6, I share portions of the interviews and conversations I have had with other language workers in this investigation of reciprocity. Though I have made every effort to control for my own biases where possible in this work (see Chapter 5), I admit that this work is not free from bias, as I will be the lens through which the contributions of these language workers are filtered.¹ Despite efforts to ascertain complete certainty of others' intentions, my putting the metaphorical pen-to-paper has inevitably morphed each individual's thoughts and experiences into concepts that are both graspable by my own mind and understandable within my own conceptions of reciprocity. Any analyses presented in this dissertation, though strongly influenced by what others have shared with me, are undoubtedly a product of my own conceptions and as such are subject to scrutiny. I do not pretend that this dissertation contains any absolute truths, only informed assertions worth considering and exploring.

Because I, as the primary author, have influenced the research presented here, I have designated an entire chapter to share my positionality and expose to the reader some of my more relevant biases. Recognizing my positionality is to accept that my experiences and perspectives are not default or universal, and in clarifying my own positionality in regards to language work, I hope to more accurately and honestly represent both the research findings and myself as a researcher. Reflexivity is an important exercise throughout the research process (Shulist & Rice 2019); as such, I will also intervene with additional comments on my own positionality elsewhere in this dissertation where appropriate.

It is also my hope that designating an entire chapter for this topic will emphasize and amplify the importance of including this kind of information in linguistic research. Indigenous Peoples and scholars have long recognized the importance of locating oneself within the research and within one’s sphere of relationality (Atleo 2004; Wilson

¹ Neutrality and objectivity in research is a myth, one that is often sought after and perpetuated in Western research paradigms (Nevins 2013; Carjuzaa & Fenimore-Smith 2010).
2008; Rosborough 2012; Leonard 2017; Lyall et al. 2019). Increasingly, non-Indigenous academics are also adding elements of positionality to professional publications (Rosenblum & Berez-Kroeker 2018; Lyall et al. 2019; Henke 2020). I include this chapter to set an example for others and continue this growing tradition in linguistic research.

I am Ashleigh Marie Surma (née Smith), a non-Indigenous, white settler living, working, and growing on stolen Indigenous lands that are now called the United States of America. Ancestors on my father’s side immigrated to this continent during the 16th and 17th centuries from various places in England and Germany. Ancestors on my mother’s side immigrated here from Croatia in the early 1910s, abandoning their Hrvatski for English in my grandfather’s generation. I was raised in traditional Dakota territory, lands that are now called Minnesota, and I spent most of my childhood there as well as some of my young adult years. My mother and father have always been at the forefront of my sense of self and my education; I am also a middle child with two gracious and strong-minded sisters.

I was raised as a monolingual English speaker, though was often exposed to Spanish due to the large Mexican population in our small, factory town. I was an avid Spanish learner throughout elementary, middle, and high school, and I chose to pursue Spanish as one of my majors during my undergraduate studies.² I also majored in American Indian Studies, mainly because it gave me the opportunity to take a year and a half of Lakȟótiyapi language courses. During my seven years in graduate school, I have been exposed to dozens of other languages, many of those spoken by Indigenous Peoples in the United States, Canada, and around the world. I am also currently attempting to learn Polish alongside my husband, who is re-learning the language as both a silent speaker and first-generation Polish-Canadian.

The history of colonization and forced displacement of Indigenous Peoples in the United States meant that I was not raised near an Indigenous community nor did I know much about Indigenous Peoples growing up. Some of my first encounters with

² I initially intended to double major in Spanish and American Indian Studies. However, some administrative fumbling late in my junior year forced me to demote Spanish to a minor, promoting American Indian Studies to become my sole major and primary field of study.
Indigenous peoples and languages took place during my undergraduate university experience in the homelands of the Oceti Sakowin, at Black Hills State University in Spearfish, South Dakota. My two years spent in Ȟe Sápa (‘black mountains’ in Lakȟótiyapi, commonly called the ‘Black Hills’ in English) taught me a great deal about what it meant to be an outsider in new and unfamiliar terrain.

Learning Lakȟótiyapi, one of the languages of the Oceti Sakowin, was important to my formative years as a linguist. I enrolled in two semesters of Lakota language, then served a third as a teaching assistant in a second-semester classroom. All three sessions were taught by the late Professor Rosalie Little Thunder (Kičikute Čokaŋun Wiŋ): a member of the Sicangu Lakota Nation, a tireless activist and protector of wild bison, an accomplished bead artist, and the sole Lakȟótiyapi language instructor at Black Hills State University. Rosalie introduced me to the concept of language endangerment and encouraged me to learn more about language documentation. She and I spent evenings after class, sharing stories and documenting what she lovingly referred to as “culture-specific vocabulary.” It was her intention to create plans that would both bring benefit to the Lakota Nation and help improve the vitality of Lakȟótiyapi; however, her untimely passing ended our plans prematurely. Devastated, I searched instead for graduate schools that specialized in language documentation in order to continue the same trajectory and support Indigenous languages like Lakȟótiyapi.

My search led me to the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, where I studied Linguistics with a specialization in Language Documentation and Conservation. As both a Master’s and PhD student at UH Mānoa, I have learned the inner workings of Linguistics as a discipline and cultivated skills in language documentation, all while keeping my focus on Indigenous languages in North America. Much of my own research in the pursuit of my graduate education has involved Indigenous languages spoken in Canada and Alaska, though I have focused especially on the languages spoken by northern Dene Peoples. I volunteered for five summers at the Canadian Indigenous Language and Literacy Development Institute (CILLDI) at the University of Alberta, a position that introduced me to Indigenous Peoples and languages in Canada.
CILLDI\textsuperscript{3} is a three-week-long academic session that takes place every summer at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. Each year, Indigenous scholars, teachers, activists, and language enthusiasts gather “from across Canada, primarily Alberta, Saskatchewan, and the Yukon and Northwest Territories” to attend the CILLDI summer session (Shulist & Rice 2019: 42). I first joined CILLDI in 2016 as a summer volunteer program assistant, a position that CILLDI offers to those “from all academic backgrounds and all levels of education,” the only requirement being a passion for linguistic diversity.\textsuperscript{4} Once accepted into the program, I applied for funding and flew to Canada for the first time, spending three weeks on-campus assisting in CILLDI linguistics classrooms.

\textbf{Figure 2.1.} My first CILLDI course in 2016 (left) and a multilingual sign welcoming CILLDI students (right)

CILLDI served as my first real exposure to the Indigenous Peoples in Canada, the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples and the languages they speak. The first classroom I assisted in, LING 111: \textit{Introduction to Linguistic Analysis for Indigenous Language Revitalization}, had fifteen students with six different Indigenous languages represented. Even though I’d only completed one year of my Master’s program in Linguistics and I’d only just begun learning about Indigenous Peoples in Canada, I wanted to be as useful to the students as possible, so I tried to keep up and learn as much as I could. I felt my status as an outsider so keenly that year – an outsider to Canada, an outsider to Indigenous issues, and an outsider to Linguistics as a discipline.

\textsuperscript{3} https://www.ualberta.ca/canadian-indigenous-languages-and-literacy-development-institute/
\textsuperscript{4} https://www.ualberta.ca/canadian-indigenous-languages-and-literacy-development-institute/study/internprogram.html
I kept learning and kept returning. During the five summers I spent volunteering with CILLDI – the first four in person, and the last online in 2020 during the pandemic – I learned through experience, studied hard, and made lots of friends. I also met the most wonderful man during my first year there – an engineering student who was so inspired to learn about the work happening at CILLDI that he ended up volunteering as a classroom assistant himself. Two years later, that same man became my husband, a connection that continues to draw me back to Edmonton again and again. Now, as I write this dissertation from Treaty Six Territory, Alberta feels very much like home.

In my third year at CILLDI, I met two students who were especially passionate about the revitalization of their language. After spending three weeks with them during the summer session, I was honored when they invited me to come back with them to their community as a linguist in order to document their language, a Dene language spoken in northern Canada. I spent two weeks in that community during the summer of 2018, working alongside my co-researcher to document and record the voices and experiences of Dene speakers. We returned exhausted from the “field” with more than twelve hours of audio recordings, overwhelmed hearts and minds, and no real plans of what to do next.

This first experience in leading a language documentation project brought to light the ways in which I personally, as a graduate student and outsider linguist, was under-prepared to design and engage in ethical, reciprocal research. I was in my first year of my PhD program, and this invitation felt like the first real opportunity to plan and carry out a language documentation project of my own. I had thought that if I just repeated steps I had taken in past documentation projects and followed what I had learned were best practices in the field, good work would come, and with it, good relationships. I had not fully considered what forms of research would work best in that particular community, or what methods of inquiry would be the most respectful. I gave lots of thought to performing the documentation, but little to what would or should be done with the results. I relied solely on the advice and opinions of one person, my co-researcher,

Because our work has never been shared publicly, I’ve chosen to protect the privacy of the community by not naming them specifically here.
and neglected to consider the well-being of the community as a whole. I left the community that had graciously welcomed me and returned to Honolulu with a hollow feeling of not having done enough; worse, I felt that my actions and lack of planning had contributed to the unfortunate legacy of extractive research among Indigenous communities in Canada.\(^6\)

These challenges inspired me to reflect on my experiences and consider how I could do better in the future. I questioned my own understanding of reciprocity within the context of language work, as there had clearly been a discrepancy between my own expectations and the reality “on the ground” when it came to performing reciprocal linguistic research. This motivated me to consider the topic of reciprocity further and inspired the research supporting this dissertation. It is my intention to use my missteps to help others avoid the same mistakes.

In this dissertation, I have chosen to focus on the outsider linguist because it is a role I myself am very familiar with. I have never done linguistic fieldwork, data collection, or analysis on my own mother tongue, therefore in all language work that I have been a part of so far I have played the role of the outsider linguist. My own motivations for involving myself in language work in Indigenous communities have been varied, overlapping, and context-dependent, and I admit that I have been motivated at one time or another by every single factor that Woods (2017) considers (see Chapter 4). My motivations for language work have always been influenced by temporary factors like my personal research interests, my level of maturity, and the opportunities that happened to be available to me at a given time.

Because of my many positive experiences in language work with Indigenous Peoples and languages in Canada, I feel a personal responsibility and am motivated to help bring about more ethical language work in this place. Unfortunately, I cannot say with confidence that the language work I have participated in has always brought benefit beyond myself, despite having what I considered at the time to be benevolent and altruistic motivations. It is my wish that the work in this dissertation helps guide others

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\(^6\) I have discussed my feelings about this at length with my research co-researcher, and she shares many of my concerns. We continue to brainstorm possible solutions to improve upon our work.
(and myself) into more thoughtful, intentional, and reciprocal research practices. It is my hope that the voices shared in this dissertation inspire other outsider linguists to look beyond their own motivations to consider the needs and of others, and that this awareness leads them to enact reciprocity more thoughtfully in their own work.

Above all, I feel very deeply a personal responsibility to use my skills to put goodness into the world. I am perpetually propelled by the words of Robin Wall Kimmerer in *Braiding Sweetgrass*:

"This is our work, to discover what we can give. Isn't this the purpose of education, to learn the nature of your own gifts and how to use them for good in the world?" (Kimmerer 2013: 239)
Chapter 3: Defining key terms

In this chapter, I define terminology that plays a key role in this research. Because this dissertation relies upon certain terminology to describe complex and multifaceted concepts, I have chosen to designate a full chapter of this dissertation to describe these terms in detail so as to be maximally transparent about each term’s definition and application. I designate individual subsections to discuss each term in detail, including reciprocity (3.1), Linguistics and language work (3.2), Indigenous (3.3), insider/outsider (3.4), and ethical (3.5). For each term, I begin by establishing nomenclature by providing examples of its use in literature, then clarify how it will be applied throughout this dissertation.

3.1 Reciprocity

Reciprocity is the central concept under investigation in this dissertation. There are many interpretations of reciprocity, and I consider several of these definitions in this subsection. It is not the goal of this dissertation to put forth one single definition of reciprocity as true, but rather to expose various perspectives and honor the concept in its multiplicity. First, I consider conceptions of reciprocity as put forth by Indigenous scholars (see 3.3 for further explanation of the term Indigenous). Next, I present Western interpretations of reciprocity for contrast. Finally, I consider why Indigenous and Western concepts of reciprocity may conflict and question the impulse to provide a universal interpretation of the term.

For many Indigenous societies, reciprocity is interpreted as a system of economics. Traditional Indigenous “systems of reciprocity defined economic exchange relationships among people, both individually and in groups” (Cheney 2012: 154). In this way, reciprocity works as a basis to forming and strengthening relationships with others (Kirkness & Barnhardt 2001: 95). Within this system of exchange, the key word is balance; rather than extracting resources to support the privileged few, reciprocity in economic exchange works to ensure that the needs of all relations are met.
Reciprocity is a way of acknowledging and honoring obligations to relations. Carjuzaa & Fenimore-Smith (2010) emphasize the importance of relationality and mark it as a key factor of Indigenous identity, arguing that the creation of “intimate, ongoing relationships is the key to understanding and embracing Indigenous ways of knowing” (2010: 8). This accountability in Indigenous kinship includes ancestors past as well as future generations, but also extends beyond human relationships to include reciprocal relationships with land, sky, and water systems (Napier & Whiskeyjack 2021). Wilson (2008) notes that reciprocal relationality is not merely a responsibility, but a way of living in the world: “relationships do not merely shape reality, they are reality” (2008: 7).

Finally, reciprocity also is a crucial component of Indigenous research and research regarding Indigenous Peoples (Kovach 2021; Wilson 2008). Reciprocity is included in what has come to be known in the literature as “the four Rs”: respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility. These four Rs are considered the baseline standard for research involving Indigenous Peoples, helping to stimulate the relationship-building process and guide researchers in creating and practicing ethical research (Kirkness & Barnhardt 1991; Hermes et al. 2012; Rice 2006). Reciprocity in particular serves as a means of both balancing research benefits and feeding the outcomes research back to its stakeholders (University of Otago 2015: 17). Practicing reciprocity in research with Indigenous communities also means cultivating an atmosphere of sharing: sharing the work, sharing information, sharing expectations, sharing the budget, and sharing the credit (Kulana Noi‘i n.d.).

Reciprocity through Western lenses, in contrast, tends to view reciprocity from more of a contractual perspective, as an obligation with both social and legal ramifications (see section 4.3). Throughout history, there have been a number of philosophers within the Western tradition who have considered the role of reciprocity in ethics. However, since it is the intention of this dissertation to foreground Indigenous voices, I have chosen not to provide a comprehensive treatise on the subject but rather

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7 For further discussion on conceptions of reciprocity within the Western philosophical tradition, see Tullberg 2012; Robinson & Garratt 2013; Neusner & Chilton 2008.
focus on two interpretations that provide a more of a general overview of Western conceptions of reciprocity.

First, I consider reciprocity through the lens of Western logic. Tullberg (2012: 2) uses logic to explain “the general formula of reciprocity” in two steps:

1. “Person A makes a first “move” (Deed 1), with a cost to herself (denoted \( C_{1A} \)) and a utility for Person B (\( U_{1B} \)).

2. Person B performs a second move (Deed 2), which implies a cost for him of \( C_{2B} \) and a benefit for Person A of \( U_{2A} \).”

Here, Tullberg highlights four distinct aspects of reciprocity. First is the person – in this case, there are two people, Person A and Person B, who are engaging in reciprocity. Second is the ‘deed’ or ‘move’ that begins the interaction in step 1, to be mirrored by the second person in step 2. Both actions must be performed by each person in order for reciprocity to be achieved. Third is the ‘cost’, incurred by both persons, one for each action. Fourth and finally is the ‘utility’ or ‘benefit’ that will be provided for both people, each by the other’s action.

Tullberg then continues the analysis by focusing on the evaluation of the action to determine whether it is sufficiently reciprocal:

3. Taken together, the two deeds are not supposed to give a zero sum, but a synergy that produces a net benefit for both.

4. A qualification for a successful cooperation is that \( U_{2A} - C_{1A} > 0 \) and that \( U_{1B} - C_{2B} > 0 \). A successful cooperation can be expected to generate new similar interactions producing net benefits.

5. If Person B fails to perform the reciprocal Deed 2, it is unlikely that Person A will perform another deed with a cost to herself and a benefit for B. However, altruistic ethics will encourage A to continue giving even if receiving nothing in return.”
Tullberg emphasizes here that the goal of reciprocity is not a “zero sum” achieved between the deeds; rather, the aim is that both actions, when considered together, produce “a synergy that produces a net benefit for both” parties. In 4, Tullberg notes that a cooperation producing this kind of synergy will likely beget new interactions between the two people, even if, as shown in 5, a person fails to properly engage in this new act of reciprocity. In this case, it is “altruistic ethics” that motivate a person to reciprocity, even when the other fails to reciprocate.

Next, I consider the definition of reciprocity as recorded within the Merriam Webster dictionary. Lexicography, or the compiling of dictionaries, is an important genre within Linguistics and is an especially valuable activity in language documentation, as the express purpose of a lexicographic record is to document and maintain agreed-upon and socially acceptable definitions of terminology within a language. While dictionaries are a reference tool whose definitions are more commonly quoted in pop culture than in academic treatises, I include the dictionary definition here to acknowledge the socially accepted definitions of reciprocity as well as reinforce the importance of such a reference tool within the Western tradition.

I consider the dictionary entry for reciprocity as recorded by Merriam Webster, which defines reciprocity in two ways. The first definition describes the aspects of reciprocity as a concept – a state of being in which there is “mutual dependence, action or influence.” The second definition focuses on the action of reciprocity – “a mutual exchange of privileges.” This definition also includes the more political aspects of reciprocity, noting that it can also apply to certain privileges or recognition that are exchanged by governing bodies or institutions. However, the key word in both of these definitions is ‘mutual’; according to Merriam Webster, one of reciprocity’s primary attributes is that it cannot exist in isolation.

It is important to note that, whether through Indigenous or Western lenses, the perception, expression, and reception of reciprocity will always be relative and contextual. Hermes et al. (2012) observe that Indigenous communities in particular tend

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8 https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/reciprocity

9 The entry for reciprocity even emphasizes this by including an extra note cautioning users to avoid using the terms mutual and reciprocity together for the sake of redundancy.
to have distinct, community-specific protocols with respect to reciprocity and relationality, and it is within these protocols that acts of reciprocity will be perceived and expressed (2012: 389). Furthermore, Holton (2009) argues that there cannot be a “one size fits all” solution to these kinds of ethical questions, nor should there be: “The pursuit of universal interpretations of ethical guidelines and standards may prove elusive, or in the worst case even harmful” (2009: 173).

In this dissertation, I explore this conflict by focusing singularly on the concept of reciprocity as conceived of and practiced by Indigenous and non-Indigenous language workers in Canada. However, I would also like to emphasize that while it may be useful within the context of a dissertation to isolate reciprocity as a singular concept, this separative practice aligns with the impulse to isolate, name, and categorize characteristic of Western epistemologies (Kovach 2021: 63). For Indigenous peoples, reciprocity can only exist when in concordance with other values such as respect, relevance, reciprocity, responsibility, and relationality (Leonard 2021: 221). In this consideration of reciprocity, author and reader alike must remember to keep this interdependence in mind.

3.2 Linguistic research and Language work

In this dissertation, I make the distinction between linguistic research and language work, two similar concepts with differences in application and practice. I first describe each term in its own right, then compare the two as used in the literature and this dissertation.

In its most basic sense, linguistic research is language-related research that is carried out by linguists. Linguistic research typically contributes to the study of language as conceived within the bounds of the discipline of Linguistics, a field that prioritizes “the study of how language works – how it is used, how it is acquired, how it changes over time, how it is represented in the brain, and so on” (O’Grady & Archibald 2016: 1).11

10 Though there may be no one-size-fits all approach to reciprocity, Kimmerer (2013) notes that there are commonalities between Indigenous cultures in interpreting reciprocity.

11 Here and throughout I call upon Leonard’s (2020) distinction between Linguistics with a capital L and linguistics with a lowercase l. Like Leonard, I use the capital Linguistics when referring to the academic
Linguistic research can be classified as theoretical or practical; while the former focuses on the theory of language as an object of study, the latter prioritizes the value of linguistic knowledge as applied to real-world situations. Because it is often situated within Linguistics as an academic discipline, linguistic research is generally carried out according to the dominant or best practices of the field.

Language work, in contrast, is an overarching term that implies a more inclusive view of language-related activities than as defined within the discipline of Linguistics. Leonard (2017) uses language work as an “umbrella expression” to describe activities typical of linguistic research such as “documentation, description, teaching, advocacy, resource development” (2017:16), while Eira (2008) takes an even more expansive definition of language work, using the term to describe activities like language use, language planning, and product development.\textsuperscript{12} Though the activities of language work and linguistic research tend to overlap, language work is a term that suggests an independence from academic connotations and implies a scope that operates outside of the traditional boundaries of Linguistics.

In this dissertation, I use language work to refer to language-related tasks performed in the service of language-related goals, and I use the term language worker to describe those who undertake these tasks. I limit the use of linguist to refer to those who practice linguistic research as situated within the academic discipline of Linguistics. Linguistic research, then, is limited to describe research or language-related tasks as performed by a linguist, practiced either within or outside of a university setting, in order to satisfy specific, academically-oriented research goals.

3.3 Indigenous

Indigenous is a term used as a descriptor of First Peoples in North America and throughout the world. In her dissertation, Rosborough (2012) employs Indigenous to discipline and lowercase linguistics when discussing the scientific study of language in general (see also Demson 2022).

\textsuperscript{12} Eira (2008) notes that some aspects of language work are typically the domain of linguists than community members, while others are more often performed by community members than linguists; see her Table 5 (2008: 287).
refer to the “descendants of the original inhabitants of a territory… [who] have traditions and social, economic and political structures that are distinct from those of the dominating societies” (2012: 3). Wilson (2008) defines Indigenous as a label that is “inclusive of all first peoples —unique in our own cultures—but common in our experiences of colonialism and our understanding of the world” (2008:16).

In Canada, Indigenous is rapidly replacing other terms used previously, such as Aboriginal, Native, or Indian (Rosborough 2012: 3). At the time of writing, the term Indigenous has almost ubiquitously supplanted Aboriginal; however, Aboriginal remains embedded in Section 35 of Canada’s constitution, as well as Section 25 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Younging 2018: 62). First Nations is another term commonly used politically in Canada to refer to “groups that are recognized by the Canadian government under the Indian Act” (Rosborough 2012: 3). Indigenous Peoples is used to refer to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples in Canada collectively, as well as to other Indigenous Peoples worldwide (Younging 2018: 64).

There are also two important grammatical observations to make about the term Indigenous:

1. Indigenous is always used as an adjective (Younging 2018: 65). For example, an Indigenous person (an individual), Indigenous people (multiple individuals), Indigenous People(s) (distinct societies of First Nation, Métis, or Inuit peoples).

2. Indigenous contrasts with the lower-case indigenous, the latter referring to something that is “home-grown” and native to a specific place (Wilson 2008: 15).

I also use several terms in this dissertation that are meant to be seen in contrast with Indigenous:

- **Non-Indigenous**: Those without Indigenous heritage, lineage, or belonging, who are not considered members of Indigenous Peoples, groups, communities, or

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13 Though still commonly used to refer to Indigenous Peoples in the United States, the terms Native and Indian are problematic and have fallen out of use in Canada. However, when referring to “the status of individual people under the Indian Act” in Canada, the terms Status Indian or Status Indian under the Indian Act are generally considered appropriate (Younging 2018: 69).
families. Common terms associated with non-Indigenous include immigrant and settler (Tuck & Yang 2012).\textsuperscript{14}

- **Western:** Of a European, Euro-Canadian, or Euro-American tradition. I especially employ this contrast when discussing epistemologies, frameworks, or paradigms (Carjuzaa & Fenimore-Smith 2010).

Terminology to describe Indigenous peoples are “multiple, contested, and in a constant state of redefinition” (Rosborough 2012: 3). While I recognize that *Indigenous* can sometimes be seen as a pan-term that subsumes and obscures the distinctiveness and uniqueness of the many Nations and Peoples on this continent, I do use the term *Indigenous* frequently throughout this dissertation. However, I try to identify and use a Nation’s preferred endonyms whenever possible and appropriate.

3.4 Insider/Outsider

This dissertation considers the role of the *outsider linguist* in practicing reciprocity in language work. This term comes together from two distinct parts: *outsider* and *linguist*. As I’ve already defined linguist in 3.2, I consider and define the term *outsider* in this subsection.

Though the insider versus outsider positionality in research is a crucial distinction often made in anthropological, discourse analysis, and ethnographic work (Hammersley & Atkinson 2019; Cruz 2021), scholars have also examined the role that outsiders play in linguistic research with Indigenous Peoples in North America. Parker and John (2010) consider the differences between insider and outsider issues in cross-cultural collaboration with Yup’ik and Alaska Native languages, and Kealy (2014) reviews the roles of outsider, non-Indigenous teachers in teaching Alaska Native languages.

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\textsuperscript{14} Tuck and Yang (2012) further expound these nuances of identity: “The settler positions himself as both superior and normal; the settler is natural, whereas the indigenous inhabitant and the chattel slave are unnatural, even supernatural. Settlers are not immigrants. Immigrants are beholden to the Indigenous laws and epistemologies of the lands they migrate to. Settlers become the law, supplanting Indigenous laws and epistemologies” (Tuck & Yang 2012: 6–7).
To be an outsider, Cruz (2021) notes, is to be considered “external” to the community in which research takes place (2021: 45). Pérez (2021) identifies three categories into which linguists can fall in research: outsider, insider, and insider-outsider.

“Outsider linguists are those who do not belong to the community in which they conduct their studies and who do not speak the language, nor do they belong to any other community that speaks a minority language. An outsider linguist in the majority of cases speaks the language of the dominant group.

Insider linguists are researchers who study the minority language that they speak and who conduct their research in their own communities. In some cases they do not speak the language because it is only spoken by elderly people in the community.

A third group of linguists is what I call here insider-outsiders. This group includes linguists who come from a marginalized group that speaks a language different from the minority language that they study and who are generally citizens of the same country or region so that they identify strongly with the group they study and share many of the same local problems” (Pérez 2021: 133, emphasis and formatting mine).

In this dissertation, I follow Pérez’s definition and use the term outsider or outsider linguist to mean a linguist who engages in language work in a community in which they do not belong, identify with, or are not themselves a member of.

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15 Though commonly used when discussing linguistic research among Indigenous Peoples, the term community can be problematic in its oversimplification of complex social dynamics. For a more in-depth consideration of the term, see Leonard & Haynes 2010, Fitzgerald 2018, and K. Rice 2011.

16 Pérez (2021) also uses outsider linguist as a kind of catch-all category for non-Indigenous linguists: “I include in this concept [of Indigenous linguists] both insider and insider-outsider linguists, that is, linguists who speak a minority language and who work with either their own language or another minority language from some part of the world. I also include those who claim a minority language community by blood that do not speak their ancestors’ language but who work on it or another minority language. Outside of these cases, all other linguists belong to the group that is called “outsider linguists” (2021: 135).
3.5 Ethical

Ethics is certainly one of the most complex and multifaceted terms that I will use in this dissertation. Because of its numerous considerations and interpretations, it can be tricky to center on a single definition. In this subsection, I first consider ethics as interpreted through a Western perspective, then present definitions of ethics as interpreted by Indigenous scholars. I finish by presenting my own definition of ethics as applied within the context of this dissertation.

Ethics as a concept has been considered at length in a variety of contexts throughout numerous disciplines. Generally within the Western academic tradition, the most engaging of these conversations have emerged from philosophy and related fields. Some of the most notable philosophers of modern times, such as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, and Kant (and many, many others), have engaged in interpretations of ethics as situated within competing moral frameworks in modern society, with the central focus of ethics within the Western philosophical tradition contemplating competing conceptions of the good (Robinson & Garratt 2013). While these interpretations have tended to focus on the more abstract ties between ethics and morality, within this dissertation, I consider the practical applications of ethics as applied to linguistic research and language work within Indigenous communities.

Western interpretations of ethics are generally considered within and implemented by means of various guidelines, policies, and requirements established and enforced by institutions and governing bodies (discussed in more detail in Chapter 4). Linguistic researchers in North America must adhere to these mechanisms put in place by Research Ethics Boards (Canada) and Institutional Review Boards (United States) in order to carry out ethical research with human subjects. While these policies are purportedly put in place to ensure ethical research design as well as ethical comportment of researchers associated with these institutions, van Driem (2016) argues that enforcement of ethics protocols in university research “is essentially just about global compliance with Anglo-American legal culture” (2016: 247).

Indigenous interpretations of ethics, in contrast, highlight relationality as a guiding principle that underlies and informs Indigenous ethical frameworks (Wilson 2008;
Woods 2017). Kovach (2021) argues that Indigenous ethics are “more expansive than the liability focus that marks university ethics standards,” noting that “at its crux, an Indigenous ethical framing starts with respecting Indigenous peoples, places, and knowledges” (2021: 98). She also emphasizes that Indigenous ethics extend to include respect for Indigenous knowledge systems as well as Indigenous guardianship over Indigenous knowledges (see Chapter 4 for further discussion on Tribal IRBs and research contracts required by some Indigenous Peoples in Canada and the United States).

Kovach also describes ethics as being synonymous with good relations, evoking the “4 Rs” as discussed by Kirkness & Barnhardt (2001) as being exemplary of this concept. In describing a conversation with fellow Anishinaabe scholar Kathy Absolon, Kovach highlighted the integral role of reciprocity in Indigenous ethical systems, noting that “[Absolon]... nest[ed] her research practice within an Indigenous ethical framework of relationship, purpose, sacred knowledge, and giving back. Reciprocity was evident throughout, as she was steadfast in her assertion that her research must be meaningful to her family, her community, and Anishinaabe people” (Kovach 2021: 106).

Ethical concerns within linguistic research have also been circulating throughout the literature for decades, as scholars continue to debate what these ethical guidelines should look like when put into practice in Linguistics. These discussions have included a variety of topics concerning linguistic research with Indigenous Peoples, including the appropriateness of different research methods (e.g., Cameron et al. 1992; Leonard & Haynes 2010), the ethical ramifications of fieldwork within Indigenous communities (e.g., Bowern & Warner 2015; Dobrin & Schwartz 2016), and how to best go about engaging and honoring Indigenous knowledge systems in research (e.g., Rice 2006; Czaykowska-Higgins 2009, 2018). These ethics-focused conversations have continued to percolate throughout linguistic conferences and training institutions as evidenced by the themes for the 2022 CoLang summer session in Montana (Reciprocity and Accountability in Collaborative Language Work) and the upcoming 2023 International

17 Kovach (2021) also includes reverence as a fifth R, as posited by Pidgeon (2019).
Conference on Language Documentation and Conservation in Hawai‘i (*Centering Justice in Language Work*).\(^{19}\)

In this dissertation, I consider the role of the outsider linguist in language work and explore how outsider linguists can best leverage reciprocity to form *ethical* research practices in working with and within Indigenous communities in Canada. My use of *ethical* in this undertaking can be clarified using elements of both Western and Indigenous conceptions of reciprocity. In this work, I partially consider *ethical* to mean language work that adheres to and abides by the guidelines, policies, and requirements established and enforced by institutions and governing bodies; *ethical language work*, then, would be work that acknowledges and respects the rights of human subjects as defined by these institutions. However, for language work to be fully *ethical*, it must also encompass the interconnectedness and complexity expressed by the Indigenous ethical framework of the “4 Rs” of respect, relevance, responsibility, and reciprocity. The concept of ethical language work as defined within this dissertation takes a holistic approach that incorporates many of the elements as described in this subsection. It is my intention that this exploration of reciprocity will serve to highlight for outsider linguists the absolute necessity of fostering a relationship between *reciprocity* and *ethics* in their language work with Indigenous Peoples and languages in Canada.

\(^{19}\) [http://ling III.hawaii.edu/sites/icldc/](http://ling.ill.hawaii.edu/sites/icldc/)
Chapter 4: Critical literature review: Reciprocity and linguistic research

In order to properly explore how reciprocity can be best modeled in linguistic research, one must first identify the ways in which linguistic research is already being practiced. In 4.1, I review the dominant models of linguistic research (4.1.1) and question how each model might lend itself to reciprocal practices (4.1.2). In 4.2, I question how reciprocity is interpreted within the institution of academia and the discipline of Linguistics and consider how these principles of reciprocity are translated and applied practically in linguistic research (4.2.1). I then consider the position of the individual linguist, including possible motives for undertaking linguistic research among Indigenous communities and how these motives might translate into concrete action (4.2.2).

4.1 Designing linguistic research

In this subsection, I provide a brief overview of some of the more dominant models employed in language research in North America, including linguist-focused, advocacy, empowerment, collaborative, and community-based linguistic research. Because several scholars have already discussed these models at length – Cameron (1992) from the perspective of power balances in language research, Rice (2006) in considering ethics in language research, and Czaykowska-Higgins (2009) in advocating for community-based language research – I refrain from conducting an in-depth analysis of these methods. Instead, I briefly discuss each method in the context of language work and consider why researchers may choose to work in that particular model. Finally, I question how each method might lend itself to reciprocal practices in language work. Because my own training and experiences have focused mostly on language documentation, many of the examples I give throughout this section are from a documentation perspective.
4.1.1 Research models in Linguistics

Linguist-focused research

A linguist-focused model of research is self-explanatory; in this model, the focus of research is determined in large part by the interests and priorities of the linguist. Employing a linguist-focused model in language work means that most or all of the linguistic research will be conceived, designed, and performed according to the priorities of the linguist. This control may also continue throughout the life of the project, with the linguist retaining the right to dictate the form of analyses, dissemination, and storage of research data.

Linguists who practice this type of research are sometimes referred to as ‘lone wolf’ researchers, a term coined by Austin (2007) and supported by Crippen & Robinson (2013). Lone wolf linguists are researchers who set, prioritize, and work to satisfy their own research agenda without explicit efforts to investigate, prioritize, or collaborate to accomplish the needs or wishes of the speaker community in which they do research (Crippen & Robinson 2013). Dwyer (2006) calls this phenomenon “lone ranger linguistics,” summing it up succinctly as “the old go-at-it-alone model of research: go in, get the data, get out, publish” (2006: 54). In their response to Crippen & Robinson (2013), Bowern & Warner (2015) warn against some of the logistical pitfalls of lone wolf research in academia, such as the potential of duplicating existing work and possible refusal of publications in places where collaboration is expected. While they do concede the possibility of practicing linguist-focused research ethically, Bowern & Warner also warn that doing so requires open communication, honest negotiation, and generous understanding between all parties involved.

Linguists may choose linguist-focused language work for a variety of reasons. Some may adopt linguist-focused methods because they complement nicely the Western empirical, scientific frameworks commonly employed in academia. Within these frameworks, scientists (or in this case, linguists) purport to act as neutral

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20 I’ve chosen to follow in the manner of Czaykowska-Higgins (2009) and not name any specific examples of language work in this section. Rather than showcase a couple of language projects at the exclusion of others, I’ve deliberately described each model abstractly in a general North American context.
observers, ostensibly controlling for variables in a way that negates bias and allows them to assume objectivity in their simple act of recording facts (Nevins 2013). Researchers can then prioritize the needs of ‘science’ more generally and select the research topic based on what they believe potential findings could contribute to a particular discipline, the scientific community, or the general body of human knowledge. Other researchers may choose a linguist-focused research method because it permits a certain degree of control over the language work, allowing the linguist to maintain a project’s progress in a way that best adheres to personal or professional schedules. Even others find ‘lone wolf’ work desirable because it may look to be an easier path than collaboration. This may be especially true when the linguist is a novice or new to a particular language community; Crippen and Robinson (2013) suggest that the anxiety that first-time researchers and graduate students often have in building collaborative fieldwork may actually make linguist-focused methods the most appropriate course of action.

Though common practice within the discipline of Linguistics prior to the 2000s, language work that is strictly linguist-focused is not looked on as favorably today (Bowern & Warner 2015). This is especially true in North American contexts, where linguist-focused work on Indigenous languages has resulted in a long legacy of extractive and exploitative research practices (Davis 2017). Designing and carrying out research based solely on one's own wants and needs permits the exclusion of the community of language stakeholders from the entire research process and risks overlooking important factors such as protocols, local politics, and existing community goals for language reclamation (Leonard & Haynes 2010). In the last thirty years or so, many linguists conducting language work among Indigenous languages in North America have shifted to adopt more inclusive, collaborative models that foreground the wants, needs, and expertise of those traditionally considered to be simply research ‘consultants’ or ‘participants’ (Rice 2006; Czaykowska-Higgins 2009).
Advocacy research

Another step towards including Indigenous communities in the research process takes form in advocacy research (Cameron 1992). In an advocacy framework, language work is conducted on and for social subjects and is generally designed and performed with the intention to provide some type of benefit for these subjects. In advocacy research, the linguist may focus on their own goals and schedules but will typically try to plan their work in a way that results in some type of benefit for those who contribute.

Linguist-focused and advocacy methods are similar in that the linguist retains the power over the language work and its process. Though focus is broadened to consider the benefits of the work, research ‘subjects’ in advocacy research are still considered as such and can thereby be excluded from contributing to or maintaining control over a project’s design and execution. Advocacy research only requires that the linguist make some accommodation for its subjects’ benefit, but what form these benefits take can be decided solely by the linguist on the research subjects’ behalf.

Despite these flaws, advocacy research has remained one of the dominant models in linguistic research. The method has been especially popular in language documentation since the 1990s when linguists first began drawing attention to worldwide trends of decreasing linguistic diversity (Krauss 1992; Hale 1992, Dorian 1993; Kinkade 1991). In response, linguists began questioning their roles and responsibilities in combating the decline, eventually advocating for language documentation as a means to collect linguistic data and preserve endangered languages (Himmelman 1998, 2006; Woodbury 2011; Seifart 2012). Since then, documentary linguists have used a variety of methods in their work, though many continue to choose an advocacy framework because they wish for their research to be beneficial beyond themselves – to the wider discipline of Linguistics, to the communities that speak the language, and to the vitality of the language itself. When practiced within an advocacy framework, language documentation is performed on behalf of a language’s speakers with the intention of bringing benefit to both the language itself and/or the communities in which it is spoken.
However, the major flaw of the advocacy framework is its inherent power imbalance between the researcher and those undergoing the research. Regardless of how beneficial the linguist may intend the outcomes of research to be, excluding the undergoers of research – those meant to benefit – from the project’s design and process has the potential to effectively negate any intended benefits of the research. Because the advocacy framework does not require the linguist to take into account the needs of its participants nor what they might consider to be desirable benefits of the research, it is possible for a linguist to conduct language work with the best of intentions but result in having provided no benefits to its subjects whatsoever.

**Empowerment research**

In an empowerment research model, language work is conducted on, for, and with social subjects, with all parties in research working cooperatively to satisfy the goals of research. In this framework, the linguist actively includes research subjects in the research’s design and process and takes into consideration the needs and desires of those who in other models would only be considered ‘undergoers’ of research. Because the empowerment method prioritizes interactive or dialogic strategies, as opposed to distancing or objectifying ones, it permits a more collaborative research environment than linguist-focused or advocacy approaches (Cameron 1992) and works to “bridge[s] the gap between researcher and the researched” (Yamada 2007: 271). Though the empowerment method calls for shared agency between the linguist and community members, there is generally a certain amount of training that takes place in order for community members to be maximally effective in the research process.

Training is a common practice in Linguistics, as linguists frequently reach out in different ways to empower speakers and share their linguistic knowledge and training with others (Genetti & Siemens 2013; S. Rice 2011; Fitzgerald 2018). Special institutes designed to impart linguistic training to speakers of Indigenous and minority languages are found across North America, including the Canadian Indigenous Language &
Literacy Development Institute (CILLDI)\textsuperscript{21} in Canada, and the American Indian Language Development Institute (AILDI),\textsuperscript{22} Northwest Indigenous Language Institute (NILI),\textsuperscript{23} and Institute on Collaborative Language Research (CoLang)\textsuperscript{24} in the United States. Depending on the specialties of instructors and courses being offered, these institutes can cover elements from a variety of aspects of language work, including language documentation, linguistic analysis, designing and building archives, setting up language nests and immersion programs, curriculum development, and much more. Training institutes can be beneficial to language stakeholders in that they impart skills necessary to undertake certain types of language work, provide certificates noting this specialized training to prove expertise to outside entities, and strengthen pathways for Indigenous teachers and students to pursue postsecondary or graduate education (S. Rice 2011).

Some scholars have hailed training as a beneficial exercise that “constitutes empowering social action” (Genetti & Siemens 2013: 59). In sharing skills through training, linguists can help build capacity within communities by empowering speakers of Indigenous and minority languages to improve their own linguistic situations without relying on external support or expertise (Dobrin & Schwartz 2016). Training community members in linguistic analysis can also improve the quality of academic research, serving as a third axis that supports language documentation and revitalization, and an action that supports ethical and collaborative research paradigms (Genetti & Siemens 2013: 61).

However, other scholars have called out the power imbalance inherent in the empowerment model:

“As linguists, we are trained to act as authorities in language work. In addition, our positions in the social schema train us to maintain unequal relationships with language communities. Historically, we have moved through roles of benefactor, advocate, and empowerer. But all of these roles are based on a position of power

\textsuperscript{21} https://www.ualberta.ca/canadian-indigenous-languages-and-literacy-development-institute/
\textsuperscript{22} https://aildi.arizona.edu
\textsuperscript{23} https://nili.uoregon.edu
\textsuperscript{24} https://www.linguisticsociety.org/content/colang-2020
– and ultimately it is power differentials which endanger languages.” (Eira 2007, as quoted in Woods 2017: 18)

Leonard & Haynes (2010) argue that ‘empowerment’ as a concept is problematic. In the context of language work, empowerment frames agency as something that one with more power (the linguist) is to bestow upon one with less power (the community) (Leonard & Haynes 2010: 273). Though the empowerment model is beneficial in that it encourages cooperation between linguists and community members, it still reinforces an unfair power dynamic that elevates the linguist to the role of ‘empowerer’, a position that inevitably influences the social schema surrounding language work and hinders the development of unequal relationships with language communities (Woods 2017: 18). For this reason, Carjuzaa & Fenimore-Smith (2010) argue that recognition of such power differentials – and the linguist’s position in them – is a critical aspect of developing ethical partnerships and ensuring equitable, reciprocal research.

**Collaborative research**

As the research ethics conversation continued to circulate throughout Linguistics well into the 2010s, the discipline began to see a shift as linguists advocated for and adopted more collaborative and community-based research methods. Florey (2008) referred to this type of research as “new linguistics”, a phenomenon in which researchers prioritize relationships and put the interests of the communities they work with at the forefront of research design and implementation. The literature reflected this growing recognition of ethical responsibilities in fieldwork as well as increased considerations of the effects of linguists’ participation in Indigenous language communities in North America (Bowern & Warner 2015; Cox 2011; Dobrin & Schwartz 2016; Glenn 2009; Leonard & Haynes 2010; Rice 2018; Shulist 2013).

In a collaborative research model, linguists strive to maintain an equal power balance between themselves and their community of research. Those who may be

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25 Though some scholars use these terms somewhat interchangeably (see Yamada 2007; K. Rice 2011, 2018), I separate ‘collaboration’ from ‘community-based’ research and note the ways in which I see them as being different.
considered ‘undergoers’ of research in less equitable models are instead co-directors of the research, from its inception and throughout the process as co-collaborators, co-researchers, and often remaining on through the dissemination stage of the research as co-authors (Leonard & Haynes 2010). Whereas traditional models tend to consider the inclusion of community members into already formed research plans, a collaborative model ensures that language work will be designed in a way that benefits all parties involved. Leonard & Haynes (2010) explore ways to make collaborative research truly collaborative, and argue that research goals should not be unbalanced in any one direction, as shown in Figure 4.1 below.

![Figure 4.1. A model of truly collaborative fieldwork (Leonard & Haynes 2010: 288)](image)

The graphic in Figure 4.1 depicts the balance of collaboration visually: the circles representing the researcher needs and community needs are of equal size, as are the circles representing researcher expertise and community expertise. This visual balance represents the equal importance that each aspect has on a project’s design. No circle overshadows nor outweighs another, but contributes equally and collaboratively. The purple arrows connecting these goals serve as the additional “layer [that] is mutual relationship-building, major tenets of which are time and trust” (Leonard & Haynes 2010: 288).
True and balanced collaboration, however, is by no means an easy undertaking. Because collaboration requires an accommodation of multiple viewpoints, needs, desires, and expertise, it can be a complex process that takes time to develop. Research relationships that are formed through collaboration need time and space to build trust, assess needs and desires, and move forward in a cooperative manner. Furthermore, even though the graphic in Figure 4.1 looks nice and harmonious on paper, it can be tough to keep these circles balanced equally in practice. Leonard & Haynes (2010) recognize this difficulty, pointing out that while collaboration is a desirable goal, true and “equal agency” is a “Western cultural ideal” that may not always be feasible (2010: 273).

Community-based language research models

In a community-based language research (CBLR) model, language work is conducted for, with, and by members of the language community – notably, “primarily not for or by linguists” (Czaykowska-Higgins 2009: 15). Language work performed within the CBLR model both recognizes and relies upon the expertise of the language community and promotes those considered in other models to be ‘undergoers’ of research to the primary designers and directors of research. Czaykowska-Higgins first brought CBLR to the forefront of Linguistics in 2009, with many scholars contributing subsequent positive reviews of the method vis-à-vis Indigenous language work in North America (K. Rice 2011; Bischoff & Jany 2018).

The key factor that separates CBLR from collaborative methods is the optional nature of the linguist. In collaborative methods, the needs and expertise of the linguist are considered to be of equal priority to those of the community members (see Figure 4.1); in CBLR, however, the needs and expertise of community members remain at the forefront of the project. The linguist, in contrast, is considered an optional resource or ally to be called upon at the community’s discretion. CBLR even allows for the omission of outsider linguists from the entire research process:
“In its fullest form, Community-Based Language Research involves training members of the language-using community to do the research themselves, and can have as one of its goals the aim of making redundant the presence in the community of academic linguists who are not from the community.” (Czaykowska-Higgins 2009: 25).

The CBLR framework elevates members of the language community to the primary directors of research, giving the language community – not the linguist – total control over any research that takes place as well as the direction those projects may take. Relegating the linguist to an optional position in research affirms both the sovereignty of the community and the agency of its stakeholders, as well as asserts the community’s ownership over its linguistic knowledge. Since the directors of research are members of the language community, CBLR also ensures that the products of language work will stay within the community and that its benefits will be locally relevant.

4.1.2 Research models and reciprocity

In reflecting on the models commonly employed in linguistic research – linguist-focused, advocacy, empowerment, collaborative, and community-based – I propose both collaborative and community-based research to be the most accommodating methods for reciprocity in language work. The collaborative model relies upon equality, seeking to balance the needs of both the linguist and the language community while valuing equally the expertise of all parties involved. Collaboration entails a coming together of minds before moving forward in research, an act that breaks down even further the boundary separating the researcher and the subject. It is this act of openness and willingness to accommodate the other that I feel would best allow reciprocal relationships to form and flourish in language work.

CBLR, on the other hand, wholly prioritizes the needs and expertise of the language community, considering those of the linguist to be secondary or optional. Though this may seem like an unbalanced proposition or seem unfair to the linguist and their needs, I would encourage those who feel this way to first take a closer look at the
history of linguistic research among Indigenous Peoples in North America before objecting. Crippen & Robinson (2013) criticize Linguistics as a disciple as over-correcting focus on community needs at the expense of the linguist:

“The pendulum has swung too far in the shift against inequality between linguist and community; now we are told that the linguist must be subservient in the relationship.” (Crippen & Robinson 2013: 126)

But Bowern & Warner (2015) issue this beautifully worded assertion as part of their response:

“Linguists’ goals have taken priority over communities’ goals in so many communities throughout the history of linguistic fieldwork, we question whether it is so bad if community goals dominate, especially where communities have clear views of what language projects should achieve. Many communities feel that linguists still come in to do the research they want to with little regard for what the community might want to achieve, and without listening well to the community’s goals. It is only very recently that linguists have even considered how communities should benefit from academic research, beyond a warm and fuzzy feeling of having contributed to the documentation of global human scientific knowledge. It is only right that the community’s goals should sometimes dominate by default. [Crippen & Robinson] feel that the ‘pendulum’ has swung too far toward prioritizing the community’s goals, even at the expense of the linguist’s. But the linguist’s goals have been prioritized at the expense of even helping the community decide on language goals for so long, the pendulum has a very long way to swing before parity will be achieved. Furthermore, many community members we know feel that the pendulum really has hardly yet begun to swing in their direction, since their personal experience in their own communities is with outside linguists who have failed to listen well to the community’s goals.” (Bowern & Warner 2015: 66–67)

Leonard (2017) echoes these sentiments, noting that the discipline of Linguistics “developed hand in hand with colonialism” in a way that explicitly served Euro-American
needs (2017:18). Academic linguists have long been used to identifying and prioritizing their own needs in research, but how good are we at holding space in language work for needs and perspectives beyond our own? Subordinating our own needs as linguists while welcoming the input of those with whom we work lays fertile ground for cultivating reciprocity and allows for “a more open-ended set of possibilities” in linguistic research (Nevins 2013: 226).

4.2 Reciprocity and Linguistics

4.2.1 Reciprocity and the Institution

In this subsection, I review some of the institutional requirements for ethical human research in the United States and Canada. I discuss some of the guiding policies and mechanisms that institutions use to enforce ethical research, and explore ways in which Indigenous Nations may choose to enforce ethical research within their own communities. Finally, I share some concerns about how these requirements may not guarantee reciprocity in research.

Before undertaking the research supporting this dissertation, I first needed approval through the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). Requirements for approval through the IRB system included completion of several hours of training modules through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative as well as submitting a research request form with details of my research plans. I also crafted, submitted, and revised several versions of a consent form to be shared with, negotiated, and signed by every one of my research participants (see Appendix A).

In one of the CITI training sessions, I was required to read through and reflect on the *Belmont Report: Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research* (The National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research 1979). Commonly shortened to simply the

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26 The discussion in this section concerning ethics in human research is situated within the context of linguistic research. As such, arguments made within this section may not be entirely applicable to ethical human research in other specialized fields, such as health care, law, etc.

27 [https://about.citiprogram.org](https://about.citiprogram.org).
“Belmont Report,” the document serves as the federal guide for designing and performing ethical human research in the United States (Leonard & Haynes 2010: 268). The Belmont Report promotes three principles of ethical research: respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. *Respect for persons* protects the autonomy of persons involved in research; *beneficence* prohibits harm and requires the researcher to balance benefits and risk for all subjects, and *justice* advocates for equal treatment of research subjects and encourages careful consideration of “fairness in distribution” of benefit and risk (The National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research 1979). From these principles came applications that are now required for all university-affiliated researchers who engage with human subjects in the United States, including mandatory informed consent, prior assessment and sharing of potential risks and benefits, and fair, equitable selection of research subjects and participants.

University research works much the same in Canada, with all university-affiliated human research requiring approval by the Research Ethics Board (REB). The REB works similarly to the IRB in the United States in that researchers must first submit an ethics application and gain approval from the REB before engaging in research involving human subjects. Human-focused research must also abide by guidelines set by Canada’s three research councils: the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), commonly referred to simply as the “Tri-Council” (Riddel et al. 2017). The Tri-Council first drafted their policy statement *Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* in 1998 with three guiding principles at its helm: respect, concern for welfare, and justice (CIHR et al. 1998). Several updated versions of the document have since been released, the most recent being the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* in 2018 (CIHR et al. 2018). The Tri-Council also developed the *Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research* document in order to more clearly articulate the

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28 However, the original document did not reflect any kind of consultation with Indigenous communities nor did it include any provisions that applied specifically to research on or with Indigenous Peoples; for this reason, the Tri-Council released its first update of the document in 2010 (CIHR et al. 2010).
ethical expectations and responsibilities of researchers and institutions in working with human subjects (CIHR et al. 2021). Other frameworks such as The Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession principles (OCAP), the Utility, Self-Voicing, Access, and Inter-Relationality Research framework (USAI), and the Inuit ethical principles also serve to guide those working with Indigenous Peoples in Canada and prevent extending the legacy of exploitative, extractive research.29

However, policies put in place by universities and outsider institutions, which tend to represent only the values of Western/Euro-American educational systems, are not always compatible with Indigenous values systems (Carjuzaa & Fenimore-Smith 2010). Marley (2019) agrees, noting that the “university review processes tend to focus on academic freedom rather than the rights and interests of [American Indian and Alaska Native] communities” (2019: 731). In order to protect their own people and interests, many Indigenous Nations in the United States and Canada have chosen to develop their own contracts independent of the university that all researchers must agree and adhere to when conducting research in their communities. In the United States, these generally take the form of Tribal IRB systems (Shore et al. 2011; Marley 2019; Hull & Wilson 2017; Ketchum & Meyers 2018), while in Canada, Memoranda of Understanding and Canada’s Community-University Research Alliances (CURAs) are more common (Yamada 2007; Czaykowska-Higgins et al. 2018).

Research contracts can be powerful tools for Indigenous communities that can help ensure that any research taking place within their borders will align with local priorities and values (Kuhn et al 2020). Leonard & Haynes (2010) note that these local research contracts serve to not only prevent ethical breaches by outside researchers, but also provide a way for Indigenous communities to “assert sovereignty as a discrete nation and culture” (2010: 277). Communities previously subjected to research without any mechanisms for input can leverage these agreements to ensure that researchers “acknowledge[s] their unique history and address current needs and concerns” and design research that is mutually beneficial (Kuhn et al. 2020: 279). Unfortunately,

29 For more discussion of the Tri-Council Policy Statement and a complementary reflective list of “good practices” for research within Indigenous communities, see Czaykowska-Higgins (2009: 28); for a more in-depth discussion on the OCAP, USAI, and Inuit frameworks, see Riddell et al. (2017).
however, these documents are not foolproof nor do they always guarantee ultimate control; in some instances, outside research contracts may not have the power to supersede university or institutional IRBs/REBs. Marley (2019) note that Tribal IRBs “are often made subservient to outside researchers and universities” and that “university IRBs typically have the last say in the IRB process” (2019: 739).

IRB/REB systems, Memoranda of Understanding, CURAs, and research contracts exist to advocate for human research that is respectful, beneficial, and fair to its subjects.30 However, even though institutional requirements prior to research are supposed to ensure that researchers are aware of these principles when designing their own research, the mere existence of institutional ethical requirements does not guarantee that they will be put into practice by researchers. An institutional insistence toward a particular set of practices does not automatically ensure that the researcher will take heed of them, nor does it guarantee that reciprocal (or even ethical) research will take place.

Ethical obligations can be and are interpreted in many ways in language work, and how these principles are put into practice will likely change with each researcher and project. In his consideration of researcher obligations and ethics in Linguistics, Samarin (1967) puts it most plainly: “How all of this is done is, of course, a matter of personal decision” (1967: 16–17).

4.2.2 Reciprocity by linguists

The title of this dissertation is “Reciprocity and language work: Considering the role of the outsider linguist”. As such, I emphasize this work focuses on the outsider – namely, those linguists in academia who choose to engage in language work in Indigenous communities of which they are not a member (see 3.4 for a more detailed definition of outsider). This study considers how academic linguists considered to be outsiders to their communities of research can and should engage in reciprocity when they choose

30 van Driem (2016) takes a more cynical view of these mechanisms, arguing that these kinds of “legal documents... are not designed to protect ethics, but rather to protect vested interests” of their affiliated institutions (2016: 250).
research paths that involve Indigenous communities and languages in Canada. But why do outsider linguists choose to work in Indigenous communities in the first place? Why might linguists choose to contribute to language work in communities they are not themselves a part of, and how might they incorporate reciprocity in their work?

In her consideration of ethics and motivation in linguistic research, Woods (2017) notes “a widening gap in the goals of Indigenous communities and non-Indigenous linguists.” She argues that this conflict is beginning to permeate the field of Linguistics, leading to “a rejection of linguistic research more broadly” from Indigenous communities (2017: 15). Drawing from Bell (2010) and Musgrave & Thieberger (2007), Woods identifies several factors that may motivate non-Indigenous linguists to undertake language documentation in Indigenous communities:

- An academic interest in the grammatical or typological features of a certain Indigenous language or group of Indigenous languages;
- A desire to investigate and document the linguistic diversity of and within Indigenous languages;
- A desire to contribute knowledge about Indigenous languages to the field of Linguistics and the larger scientific community;
- A desire to improve the Indigenous language’s vitality or the community’s connection to the language.

She also notes that linguists may choose to work in Indigenous communities in response to external pressures such as:

- To fulfill degree requirements from a researcher’s academic institution;
- To honor requests from the Indigenous language community, generally stemming from an existing relationship.

Outsider linguists choose to work in Indigenous communities for a variety of reasons, and it is ultimately the motivations of the researcher that shape both the manner of research and its expected outcomes. Linguists invest a great deal of time,
energy, and effort into crafting and carrying out their research, and it is not unreasonable to expect some sort of return on that investment. What form that return ends up taking, however, will likely be driven by the linguist’s expectations; whether or not the resulting benefits will be satisfactory to the linguist depends on how they align with the linguist’s motivations for the work.

In the previous subsection, I reviewed ways in which various institutions frame ethical research with human subjects and require ethical practices from affiliated researchers. Judging from my own experiences in Linguistics, which have also been corroborated by what I know of my colleagues and fellow linguists in North America, I can say that the application of these principles in linguistic research varies.

When it comes to incorporating reciprocity into practice, common actions that are performed with the intention to contribute back to the community of research can include:

- Paying research subjects a stipend or honorarium;
- Including an explicit acknowledgment of individual contributors in research products such as presentations, book chapters, and journal articles;
- Counting research subjects as collaborators in co-authorship;
- Giving back or returning research products such as dissertations, publications, dictionaries, audio/video recordings etc., generally toward the end of the research process;
- Helping out during one’s time spent in the community, often with day-to-day tasks that may or may not be language-related.

But are these actions considered sufficiently beneficial to Indigenous language communities? Do they constitute reciprocity in language work? Leonard (2017) notes that he regularly encounters a paradox in language work in which well-intentioned linguists often “claim to want to help, [but] are not actually doing so” (2017: 16). Even though linguists may take on tasks that they feel support the language and/or
community, they may still be seen by members of the community as not engaging in effective reciprocity or doing enough to hold up their end of the relationship.

This dissertation looks to address this paradox in order to help outsider linguists practice more ethical, reciprocal language work. In this study, described further in Chapter 5, I explore what sorts of actions could be considered reciprocal in language work and question how outsider linguists can more effectively engage in reciprocity with Indigenous communities in Canada.
Chapter 5: Framing the research

The study presented in this dissertation is a qualitative investigation into reciprocity in language work. In this chapter, I first discuss the framework supporting this study, including the methodology (5.1) and research methods (5.2). Next, I provide details about the study’s participants (5.3), including the criteria for participation (5.3.1), the recruitment process (5.3.2), and the demographics of those who ultimately chose to participate (5.3.3). I then describe the interviewing process in its entirety (5.4), starting with the pre-interview (5.4.1), moving to the interview itself (5.4.2), and closing with the post-interview details (5.4.3). Finally, I review the process of informed consent as pertaining to this work (5.5) and consider the benefits generated by this research (5.6).

5.1 Methodology: Reciprocity and an Indigenist research paradigm

In this subsection, I articulate the conceptual orientations that guided this project by describing an Indigenist methodology. I review the elements of an Indigenist research paradigm and describe how it was implemented in this work. Finally, I discuss the limitations of this study and consider ways it could have better captured the essence of an Indigenist framework.

5.1.1 Implementing an Indigenist paradigm

At its core, an Indigenist research paradigm “respects and honors Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing through using methods that are informed by, resonate with, and are driven and supported by Indigenous peoples” (Rix et al 2019: 254). Research guided by an Indigenist methodology is research that both prioritizes Indigenous epistemologies and is firmly rooted in relationality and accountability to others. Researchers who adopt an Indigenist paradigm must also practice reflexivity throughout the research process, acknowledging that their work will be influenced and framed by

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31 An *Indigenist* methodology is not the same as an *Indigenous* methodology: “Indigenous methodologies are based on Indigenous knowledges and referenced in research vernacular as Indigenous epistemology and theory… Indigenous methodologies require an Indigenous interpretation throughout” (Kovach 2021: 37).
their own positionality as well as the positionalities of all co-creators. Importantly, research conducted in an Indigenist framework must also actively contribute and bring benefit to others (Rix et al. 2019; Wilson 2008).

Reciprocity is also an essential aspect of an Indigenist research paradigm. Rix et al. (2019) advise that Indigenist research “must be approached with ‘respect, responsibility, and reciprocity’,” as these elements serve as “the foundational principles of ethical research performed with Indigenous communities and individuals” (2019: 264). I argue that this affinity to reciprocity makes an Indigenist methodology appropriate for this study. In choosing an Indigenist paradigm, I aspired to model at least some of these forms of reciprocity in order to make this work maximally useful to others and bring benefit beyond myself (see 5.6 for a further discussion on this study’s benefits). As a non-Indigenous person engaged in research concerning Indigenous Peoples and languages, I also felt that applying the principles of an Indigenist paradigm would help guide me to research practices that are respectful, responsible, and reciprocal.32

In considering the tenets laid forth by Wilson (2008) and Rix et al. (2019), I see this study as honoring an Indigenist methodology in the following ways:

1) Honoring Indigenous epistemologies

Before attempting to honor Indigenous epistemologies in my work, I felt it important first and foremost to educate myself about what Indigenous epistemologies are. I needed to know what these theories of knowledge entailed and how they differed from those in which I was raised, especially concerning reciprocity and ethical research. For this education, I depended on the works of Indigenous scholars, including Atleo’s *Tsawalk: A Nuu-chah-nulth Worldview* (2004), Kimmerer’s *Braiding Sweetgrass* (2013), Kovach’s *Indigenous Methodologies* (2021), Wilson’s *Research is Ceremony* (2008), and many

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32 Wilson (2008) assures that one need not be Indigenous to implement an Indigenist paradigm: “working within an Indigenist paradigm is not limited to Indigenous researchers, just as working with a western paradigm is not restricted to researchers of “white” descent, or working with a “feminist” methodological approach is not restricted to being female.” (cited in Rix et al 2019: 262).
more.\textsuperscript{33} I also relied heavily on my dissertation committee, especially Dr. Megan Lukaniec, who suggested the idea of Indigenist research and helped determine its appropriateness for this research project.\textsuperscript{34}

Another way I have strived to foreground Indigenous knowledge is through presenting the words of Indigenous people in their own voices. Wherever possible, I have tried to incorporate the teachings of Indigenous scholars, directly by citation or verbatim by quotation. This was especially the case when recounting interviews with Indigenous language workers, further discussed in Chapter 6.

2) \textit{Grounding the work in relationality}

The most obvious example of relationality in this work can be seen in the process of recruiting participants. As an American conducting research among those living and residing in Canada, networking became especially important in my attempt to broaden the geographical area of the study. I began by identifying those I knew personally, then asked members of my dissertation committee their opinions on who they thought might be appropriate for the study. Based on their recommendations, I reached out, and several of these people responded positively; many even suggested additional names, broadening the network even wider. It was interesting to see how often the web crossed over itself, as people seemed to suggest the same names over and over again. A web of connection became exposed and blossomed, born from the relationality of all involved.

3) \textit{Bringing benefit to Indigenous communities}

This aspect of an Indigenist methodology challenged me to not only identify the benefits this work would produce, but to also consider how these benefits might reach beyond myself and return back to my community of research. I was inspired by my dissertation chair, Dr. Andrea Berez-Kroeker, who suggested that

\textsuperscript{33} Authors are listed alphabetically, not by any other criteria.

\textsuperscript{34} I am deeply grateful for Megan’s input and guidance in this work.
I get creative with the compensation benefits offered to participants. She proposed the idea of adding a charity option alongside the traditional gift card offer, and I was happy to incorporate it into my research. Several participants chose the charity option but declined to choose a particular institution; with this opportunity, I was able to choose a charity that ensured the money went to Indigenous students (see 5.6).

Furthermore, I made sure to ask participants explicitly what benefits they felt should come from this kind of research. The suggestions were creative and feasible, and I discuss them in more detail in Chapter 6.

5.1.2 Limitations in implementing an Indigenist paradigm

Finally, I acknowledge that there were some limitations to implementing an Indigenist methodology for this work. The greatest challenge is the nature of this written document; because I present this work as part of a doctoral dissertation, there are expectations from my academic institution that hinder me in incorporating certain aspects of an Indigenist framework. As is standard for a dissertation, I must be the sole author named on this research, a requirement which prevents me from elevating the contributors to this work to the level of co-author. Though an Indigenist methodology asserts that “the co-creation of new knowledge [i]s a relational exercise that cannot occur in isolation,” officially, I must present myself as an isolated individual in the authoring of this document (Rix et al. 2019: 263). Moreover, the timeframe imposed by the degree path for a doctoral student limits me from taking too much time in conducting and analyzing this work (see Chapter 7). Though within an Indigenist paradigm, “true change is paced to things other than research programs or publishing deadlines,” in this research, my hands are somewhat tied by the requirements of the institution with which I am affiliated (Rix et al. 2019: 263).
5.2 Methods

In this study, I employed semi-structured interviews with a subsequent analysis of themes as a research method. In this subsection, I first review how other researchers have utilized similar methods, then discuss why I have chosen this particular method. I close by considering some drawbacks to using interviewing for this research.

5.2.1 Semi-structured interviewing

This method has been similarly utilized by others in the study of language work, most notably by Leonard (2017) in which he used interviews to elicit expanded definitions of language. In the context of language work in Canada, Taylor-Adams (2019) also made recommendations based on the results of interviews and suggested ways for linguists to better connect language documentation with revitalization in British Columbia. Bergin (2021) also conducted a similar study that used interviews to elicit suggestions on how to improve teaching materials for an Indigenous language program in Ontario. Finally, Demson (2022) employed this method similarly in her consideration of postsecondary education, investigating how Linguistics programs can better prepare graduate and undergraduate students for linguistic fieldwork among Indigenous communities in Canada.

For this study, I chose the method of semi-structured interviewing to allow for one-on-one discussions, deeper conversations, and flexibility in the interviewing process. Much like Wilson (2008) and Leonard (2017), I chose this method in order to give participants a platform in which to share their own personal conceptions of reciprocity and their experiences with it in language work. Furthermore, I wanted to choose a method that would honor each individual’s expertise by letting them drive the conversation based on their own understanding of the questions.

5.2.2 Limitations to semi-structured interviewing

Despite these intentions, and however informal it is contrived to be, the interview is a Western research practice rigid in form that can facilitate a skewed power dynamic. By serving as the interviewer, this automatically makes the participant an interviewee – this
places the asker in an authoritative position and the answerer in the position with less power (Chen 2011). In attempting to mitigate this power imbalance, I sent the interview questions to participants ahead of the interview meeting and encouraged them to read them over and ask questions beforehand. During the interview, I also tried to re-frame these questions as prompts, telling participants explicitly that I was looking to have more of a conversation than the ask-answer format typical of interviews.

I also recognize that the ‘focus group’ method of interviewing may have been an option that better honored Indigenous epistemologies; one of the participants even suggested that I adopt this format for further studies on reciprocity (see Chapter 6). However, the choice to hold one-on-one interviews was due in part to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. To keep myself and others safe, all research that took place past March of 2020 took place online via Zoom and email, and all communication with participants, including the interviews, took place digitally. Based on my personal experience, group discussions over Zoom can sometimes be challenging in that individuals aren’t always sure when they should step in and speak. Since I wanted to foster an environment where participants could speak freely, and I needed to use Zoom in order to have these conversations, I felt most comfortable conducting interviews with one person at a time.

5.3 Participants

To support this study on reciprocity, I first needed to find participants who would share their perspectives about and experiences with reciprocity in language work. In this subsection, I describe the ways in which I selected participants, including the criteria for participation (5.3.1) and the recruitment process (5.3.2). Finally, I share details about the individuals who ultimately chose to participate in this research (5.3.3).

35 https://zoom.us.
36 I use clinical terms such as participants and interviewees throughout this dissertation to describe those who chose to participate in this study. Despite the impersonality these terms might imply, I want to stress the importance of all eight contributors as co-creators of the new knowledge presented in this work.
5.3.1 Criteria for participation

The primary criterion for participation in this study was that the participant have prior experience with language work with or in Indigenous communities in Canada. The land that is now called Canada has always been an incredibly diverse place politically, culturally, and linguistically. It is a large country with many Indigenous Peoples and languages living within its borders, and each territory has its own “story” (McIvor 2013: 41).

Figure 5.1. Map of Canada illustrating the modern distributions of First Nations within its borders

I chose this particular location for this study because of my personal experiences with language work in Canada and my desire to bring benefit to the place that had been so welcoming to me. Moreover, since I intended for this dissertation to accommodate a
number of perspectives on reciprocity from a variety of individuals, I tried to recruit participants from different locations across Canada.\footnote{Because I wished to explore reciprocity in language work in Canada more generally, I chose a broader rather than a more narrow focus for this work. Were I to have conceived of this study in a different way, or if I’d had a closer connection to any one community, I might have chosen to do a more in-depth study on how language work and reciprocity are related in one place specifically. However, in order for the results to be applicable to language work more broadly, this study represents the views from language workers across Canada.}

Furthermore, because a large portion of this research took place during an ongoing pandemic, the available pool of participants was necessarily skewed by limitations imposed by Covid-19-related restrictions. Since I began interviewing during the summer of 2019, prior to the pandemic, two of the interviews were conducted in person. However, post March 2020, participation in the study was limited to those who could be reached through digital channels and would be comfortable being interviewed over Zoom.

5.3.2 Participant recruitment

In this study, I held two rounds of interviews. The first interviews took place in-person in 2019 during the CILLDI summer session, while the second round of interviews took place digitally over Zoom in 2022 between the months of March and August. Though I had not originally intended such a large time lapse between interviewing, the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic disrupted my original plans to continue in-person interviews in the summer of 2020. Forced to pause and rethink the project, I took the larger part of 2020 and 2021 to reimagine and strategize how to best make this study work within a pandemic.

In 2019, I conducted four interviews, all with Indigenous language workers who were students CILLDI. The summer session in 2019 had been my fourth consecutive year volunteering at CILLDI as a program assistant, and my ongoing, annually-renewed relationships with CILLDI students helped me to identify potential candidates to participate in my research. Because of our prior existing relationships, I personally...
identified all four participants and asked them directly if they would be interested in contributing to my research. I include two out of four of these interviews in this study.\textsuperscript{38}

In 2022, I conducted six interviews with language workers, two of whom were Indigenous and four of whom were non-Indigenous. I continued this same method of personally reaching out to recruit participants, and after identifying potential participants (5.3.2), I sent an email to each asking each if they would be willing to meet with me for an interview.\textsuperscript{39} For those who said yes to the first email, we negotiated a meeting time over Zoom. I sent them the details for the interview along with the interview questions (5.4) and the consent form (5.5). These interviews were limited to online discussions over Zoom, and these discussions were automatically transcribed and subsequently shared with participants.

Networking was a crucial component in this second stage of recruitment. The IRB policy of my affiliated institution had prohibited in-person, research-related communication during the pandemic, so I instead relied on email to contact and attempt to recruit participants for the study. I reached out to those I knew personally who practiced language work in Canada, but also sought the help of my dissertation committee to broaden my connections. I even asked participants in the study for potential leads from their own networks, hoping to find similarly aligned people who were known for their reciprocal contributions in language work. I also tried to take heed of recommendations made in the opposite direction; if it was insinuated that a person had a reputation for not being sensitive to reciprocity in language work, I listened and chose not to include them in this study, regardless of their reputation within the greater Linguistics community.\textsuperscript{40}

\textsuperscript{38} Two interviews from the first round were audio recorded, with both transcripts reviewed and verified by their contributors in 2020. Two interviewees, however, had declined to be recorded. Due to the time lapsed between interviewing cycles and an inability to follow up with the two unrecorded interviewees, I have chosen not to consider their contributions in this analysis of reciprocity.

\textsuperscript{39} In total, I sent out twenty-one email invitations to participate in the study. I received nine replies, six positive and three negative.

\textsuperscript{40} Of course, this is not to say that absence from this work implies a poor reputation. There are many individuals involved in language work within the Linguistics community in Canada, and I could in no way contact every one of them for this investigation of reciprocity.
While this type of recruitment might suggest a ‘cherry-picking’ approach that could potentially skew the analyses presented in this dissertation, I argue that this method of recruitment actually honors and aligns with the relationality inherent in an Indigenist methodology. The primary intention of this dissertation is to create recommendations that outsider linguists can use to improve reciprocity between themselves and Indigenous communities in language work; as such, I needed to hear from language workers who have had experiences with reciprocity in language work that could inform these recommendations. Rather than consider reciprocity as formed by a random sample, I chose instead to rely on the experiences of those with whom I am connected, those with good intentions and good reputations who I was confident would provide honest and constructive feedback. I chose to honor relationality by recruiting participants based on their advice.

5.3.3 Participant demographics

For this study, I had the goal of conducting approximately ten to fifteen interviews. In total, ten individuals participated in this study; however, I chose to only include eight interviews for analysis (see 5.3.2). Henceforth, I only provide the demographic information and interview contributions of those eight participants.

The geographic location of participants in the study varied, as demonstrated in Figure 5.2 below. All four of the Indigenous participants in this study resided within the borders of what is now called Canada, though hailed from different parts of the country: two from Ontario, one from Alberta, and one from Yukon Territory. Out of the four non-Indigenous participants, three resided in Canada: one in Ontario, and two from British Columbia. The fourth non-Indigenous participant resided in the United States, though had years of experience with language work within two Canadian provinces (not shown in Figure 5.2).
Of the eight in the study, there was an almost equal distribution of female and male participants: three participants were female, while five participants were male. To ensure that the topic of gender was approached and addressed respectfully within this study, I asked participants during the post-interview follow-up to share their preferred pronouns and gender identity. Several participants responded with this information, while others did not; in these cases, I extrapolated from information shared by the participants themselves, including their own bodies of work, email signature, and/or general presence online.

Additionally, because the conversation concerning ethics in language work has changed over time (see Chapter 4), I also tried to recruit participants from different age groups. While I did not ask for anyone’s age specifically, all participants ranged between...
twenty and eighty years of age. During interviews, some participants remarked that their views on reciprocity had changed and evolved throughout their years in language work; I discuss these observations in more detail in Chapter 6.

Finally, all eight participants had at least some university education in either Canada or the United States. At the time of interviewing, six participants held professional degrees in Linguistics or related fields, five of whom also held teaching positions at universities throughout North America. Two other participants were in the process of working towards Bachelor’s degrees. This clear bias toward university-affiliated participants is partially due to my own networking; as all of my language work experience in Canada took place during my time as a graduate student, most of the language-connected individuals within my network also have academic affiliations.

5.4 Interviews

In this subsection, I describe the application of methods in this work by outlining the interview process. I first provide details about the pre-interview communication (5.4.1), then walk through the process of a typical interview (5.4.2). Finally, I review the post-interview process, including data management, transcription processing, and following up with participants (5.4.3).

5.4.1 Pre-interview

Once an individual had agreed to participate in the study, the two of us set up a time to meet. I advised participants that interviews would take anywhere from an hour to an hour and fifteen minutes, though this time could be lengthened or shortened at their discretion. Once a meeting had successfully been arranged, I provided each participant two documents: the interview questions (with both the ‘short’ and ‘extended’ lists, see 5.4.2) and the consent form (discussed in more detail in 5.5). I encouraged participants to review these documents ahead of time, but assured them that we would review both of them in detail together during the interview session.
5.4.2 During the interview

Each interview was divided into four distinct segments: introduction, consent form review, interview, and wrap-up. After each segment, I gave the participant space for additional questions, concerns or comments. I describe the aspects of each in detail below.

1) Introduction

I began the interview by introducing myself and sharing my positionality in language work (see Chapter 2). Even for those I already knew prior to the interview, I felt it was important for them to know more about me, where I come from, and how I came to study Linguistics at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. I also introduced this study on reciprocity and language work, sharing with participants how the idea came to be and where I hoped the project might go. I finished the introduction by explaining to participants why I had asked them specifically to participate and what it was I was hoping they would share with me.

2) Consent form review

Next, I reviewed the consent form in detail (see 5.5). Upon obtaining consent from each participant, I started recording the discussion on my Tascam recorder. For digital interviews, I also recorded the interview via Zoom’s record function. Captioning was enabled to permit Zoom’s ‘Live Transcription’ function to record our talk into a transcript, a text file that I later edited and sent to participants for verification (see 5.4.3).

3) Interview

The interview itself consisted of nine prompts, as shown in Figure 5.3. Drawing from this list, I asked aloud one question one at a time, giving the interviewee the chance to talk as much or as little as they wanted. To further aid understanding, I also shared questions visually by utilizing Zoom’s screen share feature (Figure...
5.4). Where appropriate, I asked follow-up questions to both clarify the answers given as well as move the conversation forward. Once there was a lull in the conversation, or a participant said explicitly that they had said all that there was to say about that particular prompt, we moved on to ask the next question on the list.

![Figure 5.3. The 'short list' of questions asked during the interview.](image)

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41 For in-person interviews, I asked each question aloud without the benefit of visual aids.
The first three questions on the list invited the participant to share about themselves, to open up about their background, their experience with language work, and their sense of self within their community of practice. The next four questions spoke to the heart of the research question, asking more generally about reciprocity as a concept and how it could and should be applied in language work more specifically. The next question called upon the expertise of the participant to ask for advice about how to best format and distribute the results of this study. Finally, I asked if there was anything further the participant would like to add, prompting one last mental inventory of reciprocity and language work in order to ensure that they had said everything that they had wanted to say on the topic. I also brought up the extended list again and asked if there were any questions on that list that they wanted to address. Upon finishing this question, the interview portion ended, and we moved on to the wrap-up.

Prior to the interview, participants were given access to these questions – dubbed the ‘short list’ – as well as the questions on what I called the ‘extended list’. The ‘short list’ in Figure 5.3 was curated carefully to ensure comprehensiveness and brevity simultaneously, designed to get at the heart of the research question without tiring out the participant with too many questions.
nor confusing them with too many tangentials. The ‘extended list’, in contrast, was a compilation of guiding questions designed to give participants a more detailed picture of the kind of information I was seeking (see Appendix B for the full list). Though I provided both lists to participants in the pre-interview email, I assured them that I would only directly ask questions from the ‘short list’ during the actual interview. However, I encouraged participants to review the extended list beforehand and bring up any questions they thought relevant during the interview.

4) **Wrap-up**

Finally, since many of the interviews lasted for longer than an hour, I kept the wrap-up at the end of the interview brief. I thanked the participants once again for participating in the study, and reminded them that I would be contacting them at a later date with the edited transcripts for review.

5.4.3 **Post-interview**

Immediately following the interview, I collected and cataloged the interview recordings, including the .wav audio file from the Tascam and the .mp4 video file from Zoom. The live captions generated from the Zoom recording were automatically transcribed into a text file that served as the basis of transcripts, which were then edited and revised at length. Each of these files were downloaded onto my personal computer and then backed up on a separate hard drive for safekeeping.

Each transcript went through four drafts: rough, clean, revised, and finalized. The raw text files from Zoom were considered the ‘rough’ version. While the Zoom live captions seemed like an easy way to quickly compile the contents of our interviews, I found their accuracy in transcription to be severely lacking. For two of the interviews, I tried to trudge through and un-garble each Zoom transcript manually; however, each file took more than a week of concentrated effort to revise, and I found that I was almost rewriting the whole document. For this reason, I switched to using instead the
transcription service Rev, a resource that produced much more accurate versions of
the transcripts in a fraction of the time.

After initial revision, the transcripts were considered ‘clean’ and were sent to
participants for their review. Once participants returned the transcripts with their editing
suggestions, I incorporated any suggested changes and re-sent the ‘revised’ versions.
Finally, once the participants gave final approval that the transcripts needed no further
revision, the documents were considered ‘finalized’. These ‘finalized’ transcripts were
the only versions consulted for analysis. A single transcript’s journey from ‘rough’ to
‘finalized’ varied in length, but on average took approximately six to eight weeks from
start to finish.

In an Indigenist methodology, it is crucial that one presents the words of
Indigenous people in their own voices. While I felt it was important to honor this tenet in
reviewing the transcripts, I also wanted to be sure I was doing all participants’ words
justice in both meaning and form. When transitioning from the ‘rough’ to the ‘clean’
copy, I read the transcript while listening carefully to the recording, editing where
necessary to ensure that all written verbiage matched the spoken. To ease the flow in
the written form of the interview, I also removed many discourse particles (so, right, you
know, etc.) and hesitation markers (uh, um, etc.), and corrected false starts. I made sure to
inform participants that I made these kinds of edits when returning their transcripts for review.

When following up with participants post-interview, I encouraged them to read
the transcripts carefully to verify both grammar and the spirit of the content. To this end,
I included a line in each of these email correspondences reading:

“Please read carefully to make sure your words match the message you were
trying to convey, and note where you’d like to add, rephrase, or omit words,
sentences, paragraphs, points, etc. Please don’t feel like you have to stick to
what the transcript says – after all, the point is to capture your actual thoughts on
reciprocity, so a written thought after the fact is just as effective as a spoken one
in the moment.”

By following up with participants in this way, I hoped to convey that capturing the true spirit of their words and message was important to both the analysis and to me, as the author of this dissertation. When a non-Indigenous person like myself calls upon Indigenous voices in research such as this, it is of utmost importance that these voices are being represented accurately. However, I confess that returning the transcripts to participants for their review left me feeling rather exposed. I felt very clearly in those moments the vulnerability that comes from allowing others in on the process, from sharing the power over these transcripts with which I had become so intimately acquainted. I articulate this discomfort to acknowledge my positionality in this collaborative endeavor, but also to honor the circular nature of research as part of an Indigenist methodology. Following up with participants in this way helped to ensure that the participants were the ones speaking, and in their own voices.

“Collaboration ensures that works do not speak for Indigenous Peoples. It ensures that works are Indigenous Peoples speaking.”
(Younging 2018: 31, emphasis original)

5.5 Consent

Ensuring the informed consent of a study’s participants is one of the most crucial aspects of ethical research. During the IRB process, I drafted and submitted a consent form for this work, which was revised and resubmitted. This second draft gained IRB approval, and I proceeded with the research. A full version of the IRB-approved consent form can be found in Appendix A.

I shared the consent form with all participants prior to our meeting and reviewed the form in detail during the interview session. Though I had emailed the consent forms to participants prior to the interview, I had also reassured them that we would walk through the consent form together during the actual interview. During the introductory portion of the interview, I talked participants through the entirety of the consent form, displayed on-screen as clipped, more digestible sections (see Figure 5.5 below). I
encouraged dialogue during this section, stopping after each clipping to allow for questions.

After reviewing the consent form in its entirety, all participants consented to participate in the research. To further ensure participants were fully informed before beginning, I also asked for oral consent in three additional aspects of this research:

- To audio-record the interview portion of our meeting (not the introduction, consent form review, or wrap-up);
- To use their name in reporting the research (and not use a pseudonym);
- To be contacted after the interview to confirm consent and verify transcripts.

Figure 5.5. Two portions of the consent form as displayed on-screen during the interview session
At this point, I also asked each participant how they would like to be compensated for the research. I gave two options: a $15 gift card to Tim Horton’s or an equal donation to the charity of their choice. I assured them that they need not answer this question right away, that they could make the decision at any time of their choosing, whether later on in the interview process, during the follow-up, or beyond.

Though consent is an important part of any research endeavor, this research focuses on reciprocity; therefore, I felt greater pressure to extend this gesture of compensation beyond the monetary to include actions that would be meaningful to participants. After explaining the gift card/charity portion, I acknowledged that the participant had chosen to share with me their time, knowledge, and expertise, a gift that certainly measured beyond a $15 honorarium. I asked each participant if there was any way that I could further honor my responsibility upheld by their contribution, whether by participating in their own research, assisting them in their language endeavors, or performing any other task where I could be of service. Though perhaps not the most elegant of solutions, I had hoped to make two things clear to participants: that I appreciated their contribution of immense value to my research, and that I was willing to honor my responsibility to reciprocity in this work.

The IRB process only required that I gain consent at the beginning of the process, before any interviewing took place. However, I personally believe that consent – in all of its applications – is best interpreted as an ongoing process. To this end, I reminded participants at the beginning and end of the interviewing process that they had the freedom to withdraw from this study at any time. Furthermore, I encouraged participants to consider carefully their agreement to participate, and advised them that I would be double-checking this consent in the follow-up email. When following up with participants, I reminded participants again that they were still free to redact whatever they wished from the transcripts and/or withdraw from the study completely.

5.6 Benefits

Like informed consent, compensation is also a standard element of ethical research. During the IRB process, I included in the consent form a stipulation that I would
compensate all who chose to participate in the study with a $15 (CAD) gift card to either Tim Horton’s or Amazon. However, after some consideration and consulting with my supervisor, I decided to withdraw the offer of an Amazon gift card and replace it instead with a $15 donation to any charity of the participant’s choosing. This turned out to be a popular option, as most of the participants chose to forgo the coffee card and donate their $15 to charity.43

The benefits stemming from this study amount to more than simple monetary compensation for its participants. I candidly admit that the most immediate benefit is that, in conducting this study, I collected the necessary primary data to conduct an analysis worth reporting. With this research, I have been able to craft and write a dissertation worthy of defense, completed with the intention of earning my doctorate degree. This study has also allowed me to network with important scholars in the field of Linguistics and beyond, fostering important connections that have the potential to return benefits back to me throughout my academic and professional career.

However, in order to produce the kind of reciprocal work that this dissertation advocates for, the benefits of this study must extend beyond advantages afforded to the author. If this research is to truly adhere to an Indigenist methodology, then it must surpass mere ‘compensation for participation’ and actively contribute and bring benefit to others, especially Indigenous people and communities in Canada. When initially conceiving of this research, I had thought that part of the benefit from this work would come from guiding outsider linguists away from doing harm in Indigenous communities. I have since learned, however, that harm reduction is not the same thing as a benefit, and that ethical, harm-free language work should be considered the standard, not some beneficial exception.

I recognize here that I am still in the process of figuring out how to best bring benefits to others with this work. Part of the research process has been identifying and

43 While most participants chose to donate, only two participants named specific charities: Indspire (https://indspire.ca), an organization that assists First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students with the costs of higher education in Canada, and RAVEN (https://raventrust.com), an organization that “raises legal defence funds to assist Indigenous Peoples who enforce their rights and title to protect their traditional territories.” Following their lead, I chose to also donate all of the other participants’ portions between Indspire and RAVEN.
determining what kinds of benefits this work could bring, and I am still learning from
others what actions would be most appropriate. During the interview process, I asked
how a study on reciprocity could be beneficial for others, and several participants gave
inspiring, creative suggestions (discussed further in Chapter 8). Led by their examples, I
intend to incorporate at least some of these suggestions into a larger body of work that
will extend past the completion of the doctoral dissertation.
Chapter 6: Sharing the findings: Interviews

In this chapter, I recount the interviews that support this study of reciprocity in language work. Following the style of Leonard (2017), I designate for each participant their own subsection in order to describe each interview as its own complete narrative (6.1–6.8). As it is my intention to foreground the contributions of Indigenous language workers, I begin by recounting the interviews with Indigenous language workers (6.1–6.4) then follow with the interviews with non-Indigenous language workers (6.5–6.8). Finally, I provide a brief summary reviewing the contributions of all participants in 6.9.

The intention of this chapter is to recount the interviews and tell the story in the participants’ own voices. Most subsections feature five main parts: 1) background information about the participant; 2) a description of their insider- or outsiderness in language work; 3) their opinions on reciprocity as conceived of and practiced within language work; 4) perceived challenges in implementing reciprocity in language work; and 5) some explicit recommendations for outsider linguists to help them better incorporate reciprocity in their language work with Indigenous communities in Canada.

The two interviews that were held during the first round of interviewing (David and Kay) do not include a description of their insider- or outsiderness in language work nor their perceived challenges in implementing reciprocity in language work (see footnote in 6.3).

6.1 Ryan DeCaire

Ryan DeCaire is a Kanien’kehá:ka scholar born and raised in the community of Wáhta Mohawk Territory. He is a speaker, learner, and instructor of Kanien’kéha dedicated to developing best practices in advanced oral proficiency for adult learners. He is also an Associate Professor in the Department of Linguistics and Centre for Indigenous Studies at the University of Toronto, as well as a PhD Candidate in the Hawaiian and Indigenous Language and Culture Revitalization program at the University of Hawai‘i at

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44 I refrain from providing too much of my own commentary or observations in this chapter, reserving these for the more in-depth analysis of themes presented in Chapter 7.
Hilo. Ryan has also served as a teacher and curriculum developer for Onkwawén:na Kentyóhkwa, a Mohawk adult immersion program.

Ryan’s experiences in language work have focused primarily on Kanien’kéha; to this end, he has been involved in teaching, learning, and documenting the language for revitalization. He has worked with Mohawk in several communities, including Wáhta, Kahnawà:ke, and Ahkwesáhsne, and has shared teaching methods with speakers of other Iroquoian languages in Oneida, Tuscarora, and Seneca communities. Ryan has also participated in consulting work in language revitalization and planning and has done voice coaching and translation. He is also dedicated to other non-language-related community organizations and runs a food initiative/community garden named Tsi Tewaienthò:tha’.

Ryan and I met for the first time over Zoom during our interview session. He had been recommended by a member of my dissertation committee, as well as several other participants, as someone who would be good to talk to about reciprocity in language work, so I reached out to him over email. Our conversation was easygoing and lasted approximately an hour and a half.

6.1.1 Insider or outsider?

When I asked Ryan if he considered himself to be an insider or outsider in language work, he noted that the answer to that question depended on the definition of community. He confidently identified himself as an insider in his local community of Wáhta and in other Mohawk communities.

“It depends on how you define community. Within the micro-community of Wáhta, Mohawk Territory, of course I am. Within Mohawk communities in general – there are eight different communities through Ontario, Quebec, New York state – yep. Because a lot of that work is inclusive of what’s going on in each community, so if you’re involved in any language revitalization effort amongst Mohawks, no matter

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45 As he was recommended for this study by several individuals, Ryan is one of the most salient examples of relational overlap in the recruitment process.
what community, and you know the people who are in it.” (PID forthcoming, 00:10:58–00:12:01; Speaker: Ryan DeCaire)

Next, he pointed out that his sense of being an insider also extended to include Iroquoian languages more generally.

“And then also go up in a level of community, which would be Iroquoian languages, yeah. We're developing a pretty tight relationship amongst other Iroquoian languages, because they're working to develop adult immersion programs like Mohawk have, and we have gone to other communities – specifically Oneidas, and Tuscaroras, and Senecas – to share our methods in teaching adults.” (PID forthcoming, 00:10:58–00:12:01; Speaker: Ryan DeCaire)

But Ryan noted that his insiderness became less clear when considering the larger Indigenous language revitalization community.

“And then there's the Indigenous language revitalization community. So Indigenous communities throughout, let's say Canada, but let's also say the United States, I'd say yes and no. Oftentimes, I'll work as a consultant or I'll do presentations for other communities who are working to do similar work as us, or to share our experiences. So in those, I'm not sure whether I'm an insider or outsider. Insider in the sense that we share similar experiences with revitalization and language decline, but also outsider in the sense that I'm not Lakota or I'm not Navajo at the same time, right? So, yes. And no.” (PID forthcoming, 00:12:01–00:12:51; Speaker: Ryan DeCaire)

Finally, Ryan commented on feeling like both an insider and an outsider in academia.

“And then I guess you could also say I'm also part of the Linguistics faculty. I feel I'm an insider there, but also kind of like an outsider.” (PID forthcoming, 00:13:02–00:13:30; Speaker: Ryan DeCaire)

In considering his insider/outsiderness, Ryan identified five distinct levels of belonging: 1) the community of Wáhta; 2) other Mohawk communities; 3) the greater
Iroquoian language community; 4) the larger Indigenous language revitalization community; and 5) as a faculty member of Linguistics within academia. The first three levels he noted himself as clearly being an insider, but within the latter two, he felt there was some overlap in being both an insider and an outsider.

6.1.2 Reciprocity in language work

After asking Ryan to tell me about himself and the language work he is a part of, we moved on to discuss reciprocity as applied in language work. In response, Ryan likened reciprocity in language work as being similar to reciprocity practiced within any other kind of a relationship, such as a or friendship or marriage:

“I look at it almost like a relationship like with you and your husband. You hope that you're in a relationship that is reciprocal, right? It doesn't necessarily mean you're giving the same things back and forth of equal value, however you define those things to be valuable. But an understanding that, in a way, you're mutually interdependent, and your work, your success in your work relies on each other's commitment to one another...So what does that mean when you get into a good reciprocal relationship? Well, you seem to have similar core values. You seem to have similar goals and what the purpose of your work is, and you both understand each other's vision and goals and intentions out of their work. You agree on that, and you set a course for achieving those goals.” (PID forthcoming, 00:13:52–00:17:30; Speaker: Ryan DeCaire)

Here, Ryan noted three virtues that must be shared by both sides of the relationship in order for it to be reciprocal: interdependence, commitment, and shared core values. The success of reciprocal relationships, he explained, relies on mutual giving and understanding that is upheld by all parties. Ryan also addressed the mutuality inherent in upholding these reciprocal relationships, noting that the bond can suffer when just one side of the relationship fails to uphold their responsibility to these values.
“[Y]ou know what it’s like, if you’ve got friends, right? If your friends never call you, I guess it’s fine for a short period of time, but if they never call you, and you never contribute to that relationship, then that friendship seems to fall apart, seems to end. And these kinds of relationships need that.” (PID forthcoming, 00:36:59–00:38:21; Speaker: Ryan DeCaire)

Ryan also noted that, like friendships, reciprocal relationships in language work require time and effort. Without those aspects, relationships can break down.

“And as soon as somebody drops out of that, the other person kind of falls. So that’s kind of how I see it as happening. And what tends to happen, at least in relationships between linguists and Indigenous people or communities, it often seems to be quite one sided. But not always.” (PID forthcoming, 00:13:52–00:15:06; Speaker: Ryan DeCaire)

Ryan also considered an outsider linguist’s physical presence within the Indigenous community to be an important part of reciprocal relationships within the context of language work. He noted that, in his experience, an outsider linguist’s physical presence within an Indigenous community is paramount in demonstrating their intention to build a reciprocal relationship.

“I've seen people who are in the communities all the time. They're at the schools, they're working with the language revitalization authority of some sort, with the education department of some sort, our elementary schools, all kinds of things to be involved in the community, and in some kind of way, become a member of that community. Now, of course, there's some political and cultural challenges associated with becoming a member of a community, however, you define that. Of course they're never going to become Mohawk, or Lakota, or Native Hawaiian, or whatever. However, you can still become and be recognized as a member of the revitalization community, who sees that language as something important. And their lifestyle, their goals in their life, what they value, is to see these languages flourish once again into the future.” (PID forthcoming, 00:33:41–00:34:48; Speaker: Ryan DeCaire)
However, presence within the community is a value that must be renewed on multiple occasions. In order for presence to count toward building a reciprocal relationship in language work, outsider linguists must demonstrate this intention by returning to the community again and again, even after the targets of language work have already been met. Ryan said repeated presence is something that he’s seen outsider linguists struggle with.

“I know this from firsthand experience, speaking with first language speakers who are interviewed by linguists – for mostly theoretical work, I have to say, it's usually theoretical work. They're told that there's going to be some kind of reciprocal relationship in a very vague way. The linguist comes in, does one or two, maybe three interviews, and they absolutely never see them again. And they were expecting some kind of relationship. And this still happens. This has recently happened in our community… Indigenous people, they already have the historical baggage from anthropology and linguists who have come into the community. They get their data, they peace out, they get their tenure and they get a new faculty position somewhere else, and you never have to see them again. Meanwhile, they've taken what I'd argue in many cases is intellectual property and just given a little thank you at the bottom of it with little consideration for other things. Like maybe to be a coauthor, perhaps. Or to engage people in the community with what they want, as opposed to what researchers want. To talk to language revitalization authorities in communities that are trying to do work in the communities to figure out how can my work as a theoretical linguist fit within that.” (PID forthcoming, 00:24:36–00:25:45; Speaker: Ryan DeCaire)

In these cases, Ryan pointed out, honesty can do wonders to improve relationships between outsider linguists and Indigenous communities in language work. He noted that the kind of long-term, in-depth reciprocal relationships we had been discussing are not necessarily required for work with Indigenous languages to be ethical. As long as all parties involved remain honest and upfront about their intentions
for the language work, he argued, reciprocity can be manifested effectively in short-term contracts or agreements.

“I don’t necessarily think reciprocity is necessary with work in Indigenous communities or with Indigenous languages, as long as the researcher is upfront about that. If they say, “I'm going to come into your community. I'm interested in looking at whatever this syntax problem for Mohawk is. I'm going to do some elicitation sessions with you and some other Elder. I'm going to record you, and I'm going to give you a $10 – or I should say $15 Tim Horton's card, just to joke – and I'm never going to come back. I'm not interested in providing anything back to you. It's for my theoretical work in better understanding the human mind and cognition and further supporting universal grammar.” If they just said that, I don't necessarily see anything wrong with that, because we know that that's the case. Oftentimes, there are linguists who do those kinds of things, yet on their website, they'll say their specialty is in syntax and on, I don't know, pragmatics. And then at the end they put ‘revitalization,’ when there's really very little revitalization work there, except for maybe some kind of obscure, unattainable, highly technical grammar of some sort or something like that. So I find that as an issue.” (PID forthcoming, 00:15:06–00:17:30; Speaker: Ryan DeCaire)

6.1.3 Obstacles that hinder reciprocity in language work

During our discussion of reciprocity, Ryan also commented on obstacles in academia and the discipline of Linguistics that hinder outsiders in developing reciprocal relationships with Indigenous communities in language work. One of the ways that he saw Linguistics departments setting researchers up to fail was by not focusing on Indigenous languages local to where the university sits.

“[U]sually Linguistics programs aren't focused on their local Indigenous communities. For example, I can only think of one of all the Iroquoian – two, actually, most famous Iroquoian linguistic researchers that actually are in the semi-local area to Iroquoian communities. A lot are in California, out east, and all
kinds of places. I could only imagine how much closer they'd be with our communities if they were actually here and participating in the language work that exists in the communities. So with that in mind, that sets the basis for poor reciprocal relationships.” (PID forthcoming, 00:23:10–00:24:36; Speaker: Ryan DeCaire)

He imagined how beneficial it might be for outsider linguists and Indigenous communities if Linguistics departments focused on local communities and supported their students in engaging with them.

“Imagine you were [a student's] supervisor, and you've worked hard throughout your time to work with a local Indigenous community organization. You've worked with them to apply for SSHRC funding. You're going to share that funding, and you're going to share it with that organization, as well as you're going to keep some for some graduate students. Your interests are aligned with the interests of that organization, which are likely going to be motivated by language revitalization in some way, and then that's how you attract students into your lab. Which is to say, you have a clear relationship with this organization and your goal is to help them in language revitalization matters, whether it be documentation of some sort, whether it be developing pedagogical materials, assessments, language planning, et cetera, which are usually more aligned with applied linguistics. So if you have that kind of setup, and then a Linguistics department advocates for those types of setups, it helps you to find money, to develop community partnerships, then hey, maybe we in Linguistics would be in a better situation.” (PID forthcoming, 00:27:50–00:29:01; Speaker: Ryan DeCaire)

Ryan also noted that the limited timetable typical of graduate programs often does not allow sufficient time for graduate student outsider linguists to develop reciprocal relationships with Indigenous communities.

“One of the problems is the way graduate work and research work is set up. For example, let's look at a PhD thesis or dissertation. Generally, you have to do it within four years. You've got two years of classwork, then let's just say you've got
two years to do some research and finish off your dissertation. Is that enough
time to develop strong relationships with community, people, and organizations?
No it’s not. At all. No matter how much money you pay out to an individual to help
you as a consultant or as a person to do elicitation work with, it’s not going to
make up for that. So you say, “Okay,” to the PhD student, “you have to develop a
relationship with these people over five, six, seven years.” And well, they don’t
want to do that. They want to get in, get out, get their dissertation and move on to
things that they want to do beyond that. So sometimes we’re setting linguistic
students up to fail in this regard.” (PID forthcoming, 00:21:04–00:23:10; Speaker:
Ryan DeCaire)

Finally, Ryan pointed out that negative precedents set by previous outsider
linguists can often hinder the formation of new relationships in language work. Outsider
linguists practicing within the Western academic tradition have a well-earned reputation
in Canada of using extractive methods within Indigenous communities. Ryan alluded to
this reputation and noted that these exploitative, non-reciprocal practices persist even
today.

“'I've recently seen linguists coming in to do interviews, and they do the interview,
say they'll give some kind of monetary donation to them, and they just never
come back. Most people don't want that. They really don't, which leads them to
never want to do work with linguists ever. Because most Elders who are giving
up their time want to, because they love their language and they want to see it
flourish into the future. So if these people never come back, and it's of no benefit
to them in any way, meaning the community, then it's going to lead people to
never want to do interviews again with linguists. And I know a few Elders myself
who basically say, “Nope, never going to do that again. What's the point? I've
only got so many days left here on earth. Why would I waste it when these
people don't seem to be doing anything for us?"'” (PID forthcoming, 00:31:53–
00:33:41; Speaker: Ryan DeCaire)
While Ryan recognized that individual outsider linguists generally have good intentions when engaging in language work with Indigenous communities in Canada, he lamented that those linguists likely do not have the guidance or support to make these good intentions come to fruition in their language work.

“Because I think a lot of the time, what a lot of people in the community don't realize is that a lot of, quote, 'outsiders' aren't really just interested in themselves. They want to do good work. They'll often have limited guidance in that regard, that's probably one of the sources of it, but really people just want to do the best they can, and help the community, also get their degree, also get the research done, and do no harm, and contribute the best they can. And while doing the best that they can, as you said, they can commit some, I don't know, questionable things that we maybe think weren't right, or what have you. And then they learn from it in the process. So I think at the end of the day, I recognize that people oftentimes are not trying to do wrong. However, because of the historical wrongdoings that, especially with academia, namely linguistics and anthropology, a lot of people are nervous to work with them. And now the burden's being put on people like you to fix a lot of the problems that people have created in the past.” (PID forthcoming, 00:51:50–00:53:12; Speaker: Ryan DeCaire)

6.1.4 Improving reciprocity in language work

When I asked Ryan about concrete strategies that outsider linguists can use to improve reciprocity in their research relationships, he had some recommendations. First, he recommended that outsider linguists volunteer their time within the community as a way to familiarize themselves with protocols and develop positive relationships.

“[T]ry and take opportunities to learn that language, and use it as much as possible. Two, volunteer, or advocate from your supervisor or department for funding to volunteer at community organizations, such as in summer or on weekends, or whatever, part-time during your school year. From the get go, I find
that the more often people are around, the more respect they develop, and the
more of a sense of place they develop. And people generally tend to be more
inclusive of them and understand their intentions. That's usually it. Most people
are fearful of people if they don't understand their intentions. They come in, they
peace out, right? So if they're around more often, people understand their
intentions and why they're there.” (PID forthcoming, 00:41:06–00:42:34; Speaker:
Ryan DeCaire)

Ryan also advised that outsider linguists should work to align their research
interests with those of the language community in some way. He urged outsider
linguists to look beyond strictly theoretical concerns and consider the practical
applications of their research within Indigenous communities.

“[Outsider linguists should] consider aligning their research focus, not just with
their supervisor’s research focus, but also with the interests of a particular
community organization, whether it be a school, whether it be a band council,
whether it be an education department, whether it be a language revitalization
authority in the community, what have you. So I guess you could go even before
that, select the right supervisor that can aid you in doing so, or select the right
program that will aid you in what you do…[F]ocus more on applied linguistics,
you know? Because people are going to understand that more, and they're going
to see a greater value in it and how it can actually be reciprocal. Rather than
saying, “Oh yeah, I'm going to create a grammar one day, and it'll be published
for linguists to read one day, and maybe one day, somebody will make it
accessible to you.” No, people aren't really going to care too much about that.”
(PID forthcoming, 00:42:34–00:43:43; Speaker: Ryan DeCaire)

Finally, Ryan advised outsider linguists to keep the human element of language
in the forefront of their mind in working with and talking about Indigenous languages.

“[T]he other thing is to remind people that languages come from human beings,
and there's a human element to them. Of course, I can understand the idea that
we should look at it more like mathematics, as data. I guess there’s some benefit
to that at some points. But at the same time, that's one of the roots of the issues that we're having.” (PID forthcoming, 00:46:35–00:47:04; Speaker: Ryan DeCaire)

6.2 Nathan Brinklow

Nathan Thanyehténhas Brinklow is a Kanien’kehá Mohawk scholar from Tyendinaga in Mohawk territory. He is a speaker, learner, and instructor of Kanien’kéha, and has been involved in language work in both university and community settings. Nathan is the Associate Department Head of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures in Indigenous Studies at Queen’s University, where he is a lecturer of Mohawk Language and Culture. He is also a PhD Student in Indigenous Education at the University of Victoria.

Nathan is a heritage speaker and adult learner of Mohawk, having completed a two-year intensive adult language program in his home community of Tyendinaga. Upon completing the program, he served as an instructor at the community’s local language center for three years, then went on to teach at Queen’s University. Nathan also supports additional language work at the community language center in Tyendinaga, including editing, translation, spell-checking, emceeing, and helping out with ceremonies at the community longhouse.

I first knew of Nathan and his work when he served as an organizer for the Stabilizing Indigenous Languages Symposium online, and I was in attendance. Nathan was also suggested by several members of my dissertation committee, and I reached out to him over email and asked him to participate. We met for the first time during our interview over Zoom, and we connected through our mutual positions as PhD students. Our conversation was comfortable and engaging, and lasted approximately an hour and a half.

6.2.1 Insider or outsider?

When I asked Nathan if he considered himself an insider or outsider to the language work he participated in, he simply replied, “both”.

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“I think it’s both. I think being a researcher or being an academic kind of instantly puts up this kind of outsider dynamic with your home community. Even though I’m from Tyendinaga and I’m related to all the people, as much as we’re all related to each other. My dad’s family is non-Indigenous. My mom’s family is from there, and they’ve been there since the 1780s when we all arrived. So we're insiders, have been around for forever and related to important people or people that everybody knows. And if someone doesn't know me, I'd be like, “Oh, well, you know my mother or, you know my uncle,” and they'd be, “Oh yeah, right.” That kind thing. So that's like insider.” (PID forthcoming, 00:13:13–00:13:58; Speaker: Nathan Brinklow)

In this passage, Nathan identified himself as clearly an insider within his home community of Tyendinaga. He pointed to his ancestry and familial relations as proof of his insiderness, but also to his recognizability by other members of the community. Nathan noted that even if others would not immediately recognize him, he could easily locate himself within the community in a way that others would understand.

However, Nathan also described himself as an outsider in Tyendinaga, an identity brought on by his association with academia.

“But then outsider, in a way that being an academic is. Because you're otherwise aligned, right? That you come with baggage, in a way… Even if it's not true, people have expectations sometimes about what you represent or what you're working at.” (PID forthcoming, 00:13:58–00:14:47; Speaker: Nathan Brinklow)

Nathan also alluded to the complexity of the insider/outsider dichotomy, noting that these roles are fluid within the dynamics of different communities and situations.

“And then also the different complicated dynamics, because we don't have any first language speakers left. There's some children who have been brought up by second language [speakers] to be first language [speakers], but we don't have first language speakers who live in my home community. And so working with people who do speak the language are from other communities. So you're an insider insofar as you're Mohawk, but you're an outsider insofar as you're from
somewhere else.” (PID forthcoming, 00:13:58–00:14:47; Speaker: Nathan Brinklow)

Finally, Nathan pointed to relationships as indicators of belonging and suggested that the degree of familiarity can influence a person’s insider- or outsiderness.

“If I need translating things, if I'm doing a project or something and I want something translated, I'll talk to one of my older friends from Ka’nehsatà:ke. And she loves translating, so she does it. But we've built that relationship over like ten, twelve years, and she knows who I am. But going to other Mohawk people, or to first language speakers who have no idea who you are, it's like, you're an insider because you speak the right language, but you're an outsider because you don't know the same people. You're not from the community.” (PID forthcoming, 00:14:47–00:15:22; Speaker: Nathan Brinklow)

6.2.2 Reciprocity and language work

When I asked Nathan about his views on reciprocity in language work, he surprised me by saying that he really does not care for the term *reciprocity*. He argued that the focus should be placed on relationships instead, since without relationships, reciprocity could not exist.

“I know that reciprocity is the word, and all the Rs, we keep adding more Rs to it. And I think the foundation for me is relationship more than reciprocity. Only insofar as, if you have a positive relationship with people, then reciprocity in that sense doesn't even, it just kind of falls away… For me, anyway, this is kind of the ideal of reciprocity. If you have a good relationship with someone, reciprocity becomes irrelevant because it just happens, right? It doesn't become a focus. It's not something that has to be *done*. It's just something that *is*.”(PID forthcoming, 00:15:55–00:16:20; Speaker: Nathan Brinklow)

Nathan explained how this inseparability of reciprocity and relationships can be interpreted through a Mohawk perspective as balance. In order for this balance to be
achieved, he argued, reciprocity must be considered and practiced in conjunction with other values.\textsuperscript{46}

“So thinking from a Mohawk perspective, it would be the idea of balance. That each person to the relationship, each party to the relationship is coming with their own stuff which just kind of builds together into something new.” (PID forthcoming, 00:17:15–00:18:22; Speaker: Nathan Brinklow)

Later in the interview, Nathan circled back to emphasize and more clearly define reciprocity as being a necessary value of any healthy relationship.

“For me, reciprocity starts in a relationship, and if you have that relationship, reciprocity becomes less important. Because it just becomes the relationship. That relationship is reciprocal, that's the defining characteristic of the relationship... If you find a way to center relationship, to make that and figure out how to keep those healthy, then I think other things flow from that which are reciprocal in nature, or could be thought of as reciprocal, but they're just the product of a healthy relationship.” (PID forthcoming, 00:50:50–00:51:46; Speaker: Nathan Brinklow)

Though Nathan admitted that his remarks on reciprocity throughout the interview appeared to be an exercise in circular logic, he pointed out that it actually spoke to the interconnectedness of reciprocity to other important values in relationships with others.

“I can professionalize what I've been doing as an exercise in circular logic, which is why I keep coming back and can't make any sense of what I'm trying to say. But this idea, right, is that you're just going around in circles and circles. You can't stop at reciprocity because you're on the edge, you know what I mean? You can't stop on top of a circle, right? Because you start falling to the next one. You just keep going around and around in circles. There's nowhere to land. To just

\textsuperscript{46} See Chapter 7 for further discussion on interconnectedness of values.
kind of sit with reciprocity for a while, well, you have to think about relationship, all the Rs.\textsuperscript{47} (PID forthcoming, 00:53:28–00:54:17; Speaker: Nathan Brinklow)

However, like Ryan, Nathan did not consider in-depth relationships between outsider linguists and Indigenous communities to be a necessary prerequisite for language work to be reciprocal. As long as all parties are up-front with each other about their motives, Nathan expressed that he felt there would be nothing unethical with language work practiced as a strictly contractual endeavor.

“I'm also perfectly fine with a community that wants to do a specific bit of research. They want to know something specific about their language. Well, find yourself a linguist for hire! Go and hire a pro to come in and do this research, and you pay them, and you get to know them maybe, but you're not building a relationship. You're just buying a service. If that's the model that a community wants, then that's fine too.” (PID forthcoming, 00:19:14–00:20:00; Speaker: Nathan Brinklow)

6.2.3 Obstacles that hinder reciprocity in language work

Next, Nathan and I discussed roadblocks that might keep outsider linguists from incorporating reciprocity in their language work with Indigenous communities. Nathan remarked that outsider linguists can demonstrate reciprocity in language work by honoring and supporting the agency of the Indigenous community partners in language work. By leveraging their connections to universities and other institutions, Nathan argued, outsider linguists can enable the initiatives of Indigenous communities by redistributing funds and supplying infrastructure.

“Bringing communities together and, at every point, pushing the institution to let the communities do what they know they need to do. So good reciprocity in that way being freedom, right? That seeing in that relationship there as an enabler, as

\textsuperscript{47} Nathan is referring here to the Rs of “respect, relevance, reciprocity, and reciprocity” as defined by Kirkness & Barnhardt (1991: 100). These and other Rs elements considered crucial for ethical research with Indigenous Peoples – see Chapter 7 for further discussion.
the institution or the professionals, the academics as enablers. Recognizing that
the system values the credential, and values the institution, and would never give
the money to the community directly. The communities wouldn't have access. So
seeing that role as this kind of enabling, helping along, funneling, that that's the
relationship that will support you with research assistants, will support you with
funds, will support you with infrastructure, will support you with whatever you
need, and doing it that way. So another good example of reciprocity." (PID
forthcoming, 00:31:54–00:33:29; Speaker: Nathan Brinklow)

However, Nathan noted that this kind of reciprocity in language work can be
hindered when outsider linguists fail to respect Indigenous community partners
throughout the research process. Here, Nathan put forth several rhetorical questions
intended to highlight areas of language work where, in his experience, outsider linguists
have tended to demonstrate a lack of respect for Indigenous partners.

“How do you value the relationship?... Where are the community’s side partners
on your publication record? How high up do they rank in the order of people who
are on the list of authors? Do they get invited to come to your presentation? Do
you find money in the budget to pay to fly them to Hawai‘i when you present at
ICLDC? And obviously that may not work if there's like fifteen or twenty of you,
that's always going to be a negotiation. There's twenty of us and we obviously
can't all go, but the group decides who goes, right? Not the person in the
institution that controls the money. So signals like that from the academic side –
how do you talk about the other, the community side of your partnership? How do
you reference those people? Do you call them by name? Are they your partners,
your friends, colleagues?” (PID forthcoming, 00:22:39–00:24:33; Speaker:
Nathan Brinklow)

Finally, Nathan also raised questions about how academic outsider linguists
store data from language work and how that data is made accessible to community
partners.
“[H]oarding data is a big one. Where is it stored? How is it accessible? If you're going and doing a big data collection burst, is the community fully aware? Obviously this is a longer term project, but like, I'm not going to dump twenty-five hours of recordings onto somebody say, “Here you go. This is what I did.” It's like, well, no, we're going to sort this and organize it. And you can have copies now, obviously, if you want, but we're going to actually give you something useful at the end of this, right? Not just that big data dump to say that we did. So to know what's collected, to know where it is, if it's not in your possession, and know where to find it. To have easy access – by which, I mean instant access, not requesting permissions through some university library system like anybody else. Where you just have access as the owner. So yeah, from the linguist side or from the academic side, those would be bad reciprocity for me.” (PID forthcoming, 00:22:39–00:25:37; Speaker: Nathan Brinklow)

6.2.4 Improving reciprocity in language work

I also asked Nathan if he had any recommendations for outsider linguists looking to improve reciprocity in their language work with and within Indigenous communities in Canada. First, he advised that outsider linguists looking to engage Indigenous communities should start close to home and rely on existing connections.

“Start close to home. It's obviously tricky with universities – you travel across the country, and you want to get connected with a local Indigenous community, but it's going to be very difficult to maintain that relationship. If they know you're just coming into this to do like a one-term project and they're going to get something useful – again, it's basically the contract linguist, right? If that's what that's supposed to be, and both sides know that, both sides are happy with that, then great. Absolutely, if the community gets something out of it in the immediate term. But if someone's looking at this longer-term relationship, starting close to home, I think, is important.” (PID forthcoming, 00:40:51–00:41:58; Speaker: Nathan Brinklow)
He also recommended that outsider linguists take every opportunity to make their research useful and accessible to communities, even in circumstances where this kind of work might not traditionally be expected.

“Certainly for undergrads, probably hopefully not by the time you get to graduate school, but going to the community, looking for their needs first. I mean, obviously there'll be some container for your work. If you're doing it inside of a course, right, I've got to produce this, this, and this for assessment. But be willing to advocate for the community inside the assessment and say, “Well, I know this is what the project was, but I got there and this is what they really needed.” So finding ways just to make it happen. To be that enabler, like, “Nope, I will use my time in this course to do something that's useful to them.” And as an instructor, I would think this would be great that the student came to me and said, “You know what, you asked me to do this, but I went and this is what they really want, so can we make that work?” As an instructor, I would be so happy if a student ever came and asked me that, because it's like they were actually listening.” (PID forthcoming, 00:41:58–00:43:00; Speaker: Nathan Brinklow)

6.3 David

David (pseudonym) is an Indigenous scholar from the Yukon Territory. He is a heritage speaker and learner of a northern Dene language, and at the time of our interview, he served as a language coordinator and leader in his community. David is constantly looking for new ways to document, innovate, and adapt the existing language documentation to support the needs of his community, and his remarks and recommendations reflect these efforts.

David and I first met in 2016 during my first year volunteering at CILLDI. He had returned to Alberta that summer for his second year of courses, and he was in the process of earning his Community Language Certificate from CILLDI. I was a classroom assistant for a course he was attending, and we also happened to be lodging in the same dormitory during the CILLDI summer session. This combination of circumstances
repeated for the next three years, and our friendship grew. In my third year at CILLDI – his fourth – David was the first participant I asked to participate in this study. We talked together in-person after a class session, and our discussion lasted approximately an hour.  

6.3.1 Reciprocity and language work

When I asked David to tell me about his thoughts on reciprocity as practiced by outsider linguists in language work, he observed that reciprocity can sometimes look like building the capacity of Indigenous communities to carry out their own language work.

“I think it would be better received if our people were trained in doing stuff like this and then mentored by linguists. I think that would be more … that would be well received. Because then the thing about when we have people come and do work for us is when they leave then we don’t have the capacity to keep it going.”

(PID forthcoming, 00:08:20–00:08:45; Speaker: David [pseudonym])

Here, David alluded to the linguistic training that outsider linguists have in documenting, preserving, and maintaining Indigenous language data. Outsider linguists frequently provide linguistic training and mentoring within Indigenous communities in Canada (see Chapter 3 for further discussion), and David notes that this kind of mentoring would be well received within his own community.

David also noted that this kind of collaboration between outsider linguists and Indigenous community members works within the framework of training already established for other kinds of community activities.

“To be honest, in our community, that's kind of the way that our governments are going. Our First Nation governments are going to train our people so that they can continue to do [work] rather than having to continually rely on the outside

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48 David and Kay’s interviews took place during the first round of interviewing, when the main research question was still being developed. As a result, I did not know to ask David nor Kay explicitly about insider-outsiderness in language work, nor did I inquire about obstacles preventing reciprocity from taking place. The absence of these elements in these early interviews reflects both my inexperience as a novice interviewer and the maturation of the study from the first round of interviews to the second.
source. So [outsider linguists] would be way better received if people were to come in, work with our people, and then get them going on some of these things that need to be done, and then mentoring them like an ongoing process. So it'd be kind of a lengthily thing, but in the long run would benefit us more. The mentoring, I think, is important.” (PID forthcoming, 00:08:45–00:09:22; Speaker: David [pseudonym])

Providing mentorship in this way not only empowers Indigenous communities to drive their own revitalization initiatives long-term, but also serves to build and foster ongoing reciprocal relationships between outsider linguists and Indigenous communities.

6.3.2 Improving reciprocity in language work

When I asked how outsider linguists can work to improve reciprocity in the language work that they are a part of, David commented on the complicated state of existing documentation for the language in his own community and urged outsider linguists to provide assistance in working through these kinds of materials.

“There's extensive documentation of [the language] that's been done and lots of it is on paper. The only issue is finding people who can read it, and who can actually, and sticking with the same orthography because it hasn't been really a standardized orthography for [the language], hasn't been established for quite a while. I think it was back in 1978 that it was sort of how they established it. Even then, there were some people who disagreed with the way that things should be spelled. So there are documents that are totally different spellings, and you're trying to figure out how to read them, so that's kind of a struggle.” (PID forthcoming, 00:04:39–00:05:02; Speaker: David [pseudonym])

“We have lots of papers and documents, but the only thing is, I can read it, but am I saying it right? … Sometimes that has happened where [someone] like myself has learned a word and started teaching it, and then been told "That's not how you say it. This is how you say it", and then I was like, “Oh well that's how it
was spelled.” Well, it's because they accidentally missed [something] when they were doing it. So that's one thing that I think is an issue.” (PID forthcoming, 00:20:25–00:21:16; Speaker: David [pseudonym])

In these cases, David advised that outsiders make themselves available to Indigenous communities for assistance in processing these documents. He noted that outsider linguists can call upon their linguistic training to aid in identifying, consolidating, and making language materials accessible for language reclamation and revitalization efforts.

Finally, David also recommended that outsider linguists provide support for Indigenous communities by improving existing linguistic tools for their language or supporting those tools already in development.

“So one thing that I think would be beneficial for our community, like in terms of non-Indigenous people partnering with us is we definitely need help with ... We have an online dictionary right now, but it's just finding like the resource people who can work more with that. Because I see that as being like a huge tool in our learning. And there's so many different speakers that are saying different things and new phrases and stuff that I think are very, very important for everybody to be able to learn and benefit from...a linguist would probably be the best person to actually work on that and have a community person and a speaker working together with a researcher and trying to do that.” (PID forthcoming, 00:00:01–00:00:58; Speaker: David [pseudonym])
6.4 Kay

Kay (pseudonym) is a Métis scholar from Alberta. She is a heritage speaker and active learner of both Michif and Cree. At the time of interviewing, Kay was an undergraduate student; now, at the time of this writing, she is a university graduate and is currently employed as a language research assistant and educator for a Métis institution in central Alberta. In this capacity, Kay designs and creates educational resources for Michif language and culture.

Kay and I met during my first year at CILLDI. She had attended CILLDI the year prior as a student in CILLDI courses, but returned the following year to serve as a summer intern. As someone who was familiar with the area, Kay took me under her wing and introduced me to many local people and places, helping to alleviate my anxiety of being in a new country for the first time. We became good friends over the years I returned to Alberta, so I asked her in-person if she would be willing to be interviewed for this study. Owing to her busy schedule as a university student, we held our interview over the phone in the week following the 2019 CILLDI summer session.

6.4.1 Reciprocity and language work

When I asked Kay to share her views on reciprocity in language work, she noted that reciprocity can best be interpreted through the lens of relationships.

“Some people aren't always great at this, but it's a relationship. You honor each other. If you come, and they know that you're there to serve and to be there to help them to do their work, then people know that you came for a purpose, and you came to connect, and you came because maybe you want to learn something, but that you're not imposing that on them... It's not like a demand, like, "You let me do my thing, and then I can help you." [It's more like] “This is what I'm needing, and I'm here to be a part of this helping.”” (PID forthcoming, 00:48:07–00:48:46; Speaker: Kay [pseudonym])
Here, Kay remarked that outsider linguists can seem demanding and imposing when they attempt to instigate relationships in language work by leading with research plans (“You let me do my thing, and then I can help you.”). She then described how a framework of reciprocity and humility can improve this interaction (“This is what I’m needing, and I’m here to be part of this helping.”) and that these intentions can be better conveyed by first submitting oneself to a community and asking how one can be of service to others in that place.

Kay suggested that another integral part of reciprocal relationship-building for outsider linguists is to be present within the community. She noted that in order to learn how to best engage with the language, outsider linguists must also sit, listen, and learn about what community members may need from you.

“[Y]ou have to go sit with the old ones, and sit with people to learn things. We’re all still learning how to revitalize language in our communities. No one has done it before, and [there’s] no “this is how you do it.” It’s always about being with people and doing things with them. If you're with your kohkom [grandmother], that's how you learn some words about this. Or you cook with them, or something. It's different words, because there's that experience with it.” (PID forthcoming, 00:33:33–00:34:02; Speaker: Kay [pseudonym])

Finally, Kay also observed that reciprocity in language work can include performing tasks that have little to nothing to do with actual language. In considering how outsider linguists may be asked to contribute to reciprocal relationships within the community, Kay pointed out that even after communicating one’s skills and areas of expertise in language work, what the community may need from an outsider linguist may not be language-related. Kay suggested that linguists be ready to take on other vital roles that build reciprocal relationships within the community, such as assisting elders in their daily lives or volunteering to watch children so adults can talk and practice their language.
6.4.2 Improving reciprocity in language work

When asked if she had any recommendations for outsider linguists looking to improve reciprocity in their language work with and within Indigenous communities in Canada, Kay urged outsider linguists to help create an environment in which Indigenous languages can exist and thrive in Canada.

“You speak a few languages, and one of them is academic. That's a role. That's a role I take, because I speak academic, too… There's an element of it, translating “academic speak” to everybody. I think there's two things. One is being able to speak to people who have power, so leaders, politicians, whoever is going to make a decision about if an Indigenous language is important or not. Those people need to understand how and why they're important, and what's needed for revitalization. Then also other people that need to understand are I think the public, on some levels. Even though not everyone is going to be involved with language revitalization, just having a positive narrative about the language makes it a better atmosphere to grow in.” (PID forthcoming, 00:38:51–00:41:13; Speaker: Kay [pseudonym])

As an educator and university graduate, Kay is familiar with the academic system and knows firsthand how technical the jargon used by academics can be. She pointed out that this academic register is likely mystifying to those outside of the discipline, and recommends linguists work to make what she calls “academic speak” understandable. She also acknowledged the power that outsider linguists can have in influencing public policy, and advised that they honor their responsibility to Indigenous communities by using this power to support Indigenous languages

Finally, Kay noted the importance of identifying one’s own positionality and capabilities prior to beginning language work. She recommended that outsider linguists looking to build relationships with Indigenous communities communicate these abilities to the community and ask plainly how they can use these skills to be of service to others. Being aware and honest about one’s own strengths and weaknesses in this way allows for more authentic and reciprocal relationship-building.
“You [as a linguist] have a lot of insight, and wisdom, and experience, and within navigating language, and all the different facets of what that means. Then bringing that, it's almost like submitting yourself to the community like, "Here, I'm here to work with you. What can I do? How can I serve you?"” (PID forthcoming, 00:46:41–00:47:07; Speaker: Kay [pseudonym])

6.5 Ewa Czaykowska-Higgins

Dr. Ewa Czaykowska-Higgins is a non-Indigenous scholar and linguist who began participating in language work in the Pacific Northwest approximately forty years ago. She has worked collaboratively for many years with Indigenous Peoples in Canada, supporting and contributing to community language reclamation projects and digital dictionary construction. Ewa is well-known for her work on research ethics and language work, which advocates for community-based research methodology in language documentation. She is also a tenured Professor in Indigenous Education at the University of Victoria.

Ewa and I were first introduced at a conference in Alberta in 2016, when I was a new Master’s student in Linguistics. I have engaged with Ewa’s work frequently in my research on ethics and language work in Canada, and her name was suggested again and again by others as someone who would be good to talk to about reciprocal language work. Now, six years after our first meeting, Ewa agreed to meet with me over Zoom to discuss her experiences with and insights regarding her extensive language work in Canada, and we talked easily about reciprocity and language work for approximately an hour and fifteen minutes.

6.5.1 Insider or outsider?

When I asked Ewa if she considered herself to be an insider or outsider in the language work she is a part of, she expressed some discomfort in speaking about the topic. While she did identify herself to be an outsider within this dichotomy, she also described her position in language work with Indigenous communities to be just one part of a group
dynamic. Talking about herself as being separate from that context felt, to her, very othering.

“Someone like me, from my kind of background being an outsider to many of the communities that I work in and with, whenever I talk about that experience it feels like a kind of othering… When you wrote to me and asked whether I would be willing to participate in this interview, I really hesitated. Not because I think the work that you're doing isn't valuable, but because talking about the work that I've done, when I also talk about other people, potentially, that is just not very comfortable for me.” (PID forthcoming, 00:07:08–00:09:03; Speaker: Ewa Czaykowska-Higgins)

Ewa argued against describing oneself as an outsider, remarking that such labels allow for a fallacious claim of neutral perspective. Ewa explained that she will always be “deeply implicated” in the work that she does.

“I also think it's important not to continue to be that outsider that's observing and saying, “This is what it was like, and this is how it happened.” So this othering piece that concerns me is that it's still sort of allowing myself to be separated from the work that I do, whereas in fact, I'm really deeply implicated in it. I have relationships that I'm very honored to have and that are also emotional. The people that I work with are people that I care about very deeply, and that have given me friendship, and generosity, and kindness.” (PID forthcoming, 00:24:06–00:26:24; Speaker: Ewa Czaykowska-Higgins)

However, Ewa acknowledged that there were times, especially as a child, that she felt her outsiderness very deeply.

“I think for me, language is just really deeply connected to who I am, because I grew up in a Polish-Canadian family. My first language was Polish, so I remembered not understanding what people were saying around me when I was very, very small because they were speaking English and I didn't understand. So for me, language is just really deeply connected to who I am as a person, and I
have a really emotional response to language as a vital part of who people are.”
(PID forthcoming, 00:00:28–00:03:21; Speaker: Ewa Czaykowska-Higgins)

In reflecting on these memories, Ewa highlighted the intimate connection between language and identity and acknowledged its influence in shaping her work.

“As you get older, you reflect more on how you got where you are. I think that the kind of work that I do and the way that I work is really connected to that deep emotional response to the importance of language, and how it shaped me as a person to being different. Because I was always different, always the weird one in the class, and all of that, and it really affected how I am, and who I am… I think it took me quite a long time to understand the extent to which that early background has really shaped me, but it's something that I acknowledge now in a really deep way… that has also shaped who I am as a person, and I think it affects how I work.” (PID forthcoming, 00:03:21–00:06:23; Speaker: Ewa Czaykowska-Higgins)

6.5.2 Reciprocity and language work

When I asked Ewa about her conceptions of reciprocity as practiced in language work, she emphasized the intimate connections linking reciprocity and relationship. In considering the benefits of a reciprocal relationship, Ewa argued that mutuality, rather than equality, made for good reciprocity.

“I think it starts with a relationship. It starts with an acknowledgment that there are differences, that people are starting from different places, that they have different experience. I think good reciprocity does not mean that there's equality or identity in the way that people are contributing. But that doesn't mean that there can't be a kind of mutuality, and a kind of back and forth. So good reciprocity requires good relations, and it requires a lot of generosity of spirit, I think.” (PID forthcoming, 00:27:09–00:28:29; Speaker: Ewa Czaykowska-Higgins)
However, she also remarked that this view of relationality in reciprocal language work may not always be acknowledged or practiced by outsider linguists working within the Western academic tradition.

“I think the more that I have the privilege of doing work with language, and with my colleagues in the communities I’ve worked in and with, and with my Indigenous academic colleagues, I increasingly realize the way in which the relations that we have affect who we are, and how we do our work, and how we know. So that relationality is just really central to a lot of what we do as researchers, but in the positivist Euro-American tradition, that's often completely ignored. And I don't believe the notion of objectivity that attempts to kind of erase relations and relationality. I don't think that is a good way to understand research roles.” (PID forthcoming, 00:03:21–00:06:23; Speaker: Ewa Czaykowska-Higgins)

Ewa also mentioned that what may be considered appropriate in expressing reciprocity in language work will likely change as the relationship grows.

“If you're starting out in a relationship of language documentation work, then maybe the first type of reciprocity is actually largely, from the point of view of the outsider linguist, compensation that is maybe monetary. But then, as a relationship grows, that is going to change. So then reciprocity becomes something different, and hopefully the relationship will involve not necessarily explicit, but maybe implicit kind of negotiation of reciprocal actions. So reciprocity is different at different stages of a relationship as well.” (PID forthcoming, 00:29:52–00:31:22; Speaker: Ewa Czaykowska-Higgins)

Finally, Ewa argued that practicing reciprocity in language work will require the outsider linguist to assume a sense of humility, an action that often takes the form of listening and learning.

“That's where the consultation comes in. You have to find ways to show whoever you're working with it, it doesn't matter who it is, but find ways to show that you're
actually consulting, and you're doing so in a meaningful way. You're listening, you're absorbing, you're acting on what you're being given and told. And that's true for whatever kind of research context you're in.” (PID forthcoming, 00:54:42–00:56:41; Speaker: Ewa Czaykowska-Higgins)

6.5.3 Obstacles that hinder reciprocity in language work

Next, I asked Ewa why outsider linguists might not be incorporating reciprocity into their work already. She pointed to several issues within academia that prevent reciprocity from happening. First, she admitted that fieldwork settings considered “normal” in Linguistics can, in reality, be uncomfortable and off-putting for outsider linguists as well as for Indigenous communities. She recounted her own experience approaching fieldwork for the first time.

“So one was just the whole way in which that work was initiated. So you know my supervisor gave me the names of a few people that he had contacts with, and then I just went to the community and tried to find out how to meet people. So I started out with one person that my supervisor knew well and had a good relationship with. But then I had to go and sort of knock on people’s doors, and just say, “Hi, I'm a linguist. Do you want to work with me?” That was a really difficult thing to do... Even though they were not comfortable with me doing this, they were really very kind and generous, but also not comfortable. And that really made me think deeply about what it was that somebody like me was doing. What did I think I was doing, just going and knocking on somebody's door and saying, “Hi, do you want to work with me?” So that was just very strange, and it made me really aware of what it meant to be an outsider. And then the other thing, what it was like for the people whose doors I was knocking on. That was really what struck me is the kind of arrogance of it, and the assumption that it was actually fine for me to just do that.” (PID forthcoming, 00:11:20–00:13:28; Speaker: Ewa Czaykowska-Higgins)
Ewa also remarked that sometimes outsider linguists coming from universities aren't prepared to engage in reciprocal relationships because Linguistics doesn't teach about that aspect of the work.

“One of the reasons why I think that this is a difficult thing to talk about is that I think there's really not a lot of acknowledgment in the way that Linguistics teaches language documentation work to students. There's not a lot of acknowledgment yet in the ways in which language work involves relationship, And it's really great that you're talking about it, and about reciprocity, and so hopefully your work will contribute to changing some of the culture of what is taught in Linguistics programs. Because I think there's still a lot of learning that needs to go on, and a lot of decolonizing and rethinking of what it means to do scientific language work.” (PID forthcoming, 00:50:43–00:51:54; Speaker: Ewa Czaykowska-Higgins)

Researchers within the discipline of Linguistics typically offer some form of compensation to consultants in exchange for their participation in linguistic research; in Canada and North America more generally, this compensation is often in the form of monetary payment (Samarin 1967). During our conversation, Ewa commented on this traditional practice of paying linguistic consultants and reflected how the practice has changed somewhat since her earlier days in Linguistics.

“All of the outsider linguists who did work with members of the language communities – I was part of that, you know, linguistic world, so to speak – all of them exchanged money for language work. There was discussion in these groups about what is the appropriate payment, and I remember discussions also of “Well, you shouldn't pay them more than a certain amount because then they'll expect more,” which always really shocked me. And you can hear in the way that I phrased that. I mean, that's reflecting the discussions that people were having, the outsider linguists for having in those days, how othering that is and also the power dynamics that are involved in that kind of discussion.” (PID forthcoming, 00:16:25–00:18:14; Speaker: Ewa Czaykowska-Higgins)
Even today, monetary compensation for participation in linguistic research is still the norm in Canada; the same holds true even for this study on reciprocity in language work (see Chapter 5). However, Ewa remarked that the process of paying consultants has become more cooperative and ethics-focused since her earlier days in the discipline, noting that many researchers must now push for the expertise of consultants to be compensated appropriately.

“I do think that it's very important for people's time and expertise to be acknowledged appropriately… So, one of the projects that I was involved in, we had quite a few Elders working with us, and there was a lot of discussion about pay. But it was more about compensation and salary. There was one Elder who was really pushing the university and us as a project team to think about the expertise that was being brought by people who are knowledge keepers. Why should that be compensated at a rate which is just a pittance when university professors who were working with these knowledge keepers had big salaries? So there was a lot of discussion about compensation there, but it wasn't like, “Do you give them $15 an hour?” and who is it that decides that, or $20. It was more of a discussion in this larger context of who has expertise and how is that appropriately acknowledged.” (PID forthcoming, 00:19:38–00:21:34; Speaker: Ewa Czaykowska-Higgins)

6.5.4 Improving reciprocity in language work

Finally, I asked Ewa if she had any concrete advice for outsider linguists who may be looking to initiate reciprocal relationships with Indigenous communities in Canada. She replied that outsider linguists must first and foremost be honest with themselves and others.

“I think being very transparent and honest about, if one is an outsider linguist, being very open and honest about the fact that that is one's sort of positionality. Making oneself vulnerable by sharing about oneself, but not too much, because it's not about you, you know. But also you don't want to just again think of
yourself as this neutral observer that isn't a person, this scientist. You are a
person, so it's important. To enable reciprocity, you need to acknowledge your
own personhood and also the personhood of the people that you're working with.
That's how relations start, and that enables reciprocity.” (PID forthcoming,
00:40:59–00:42:14; Speaker: Ewa Czaykowska-Higgins)

In order to properly participate in a reciprocal relationship, she argued, outsider
linguists must openly embrace one’s outsiderness and acknowledge the power dynamic
that that position brings with it. listen and learn the proper protocols. Ewa also stressed
the importance of humility; in this endeavor, she noted, it is best to follow the lead of
others.

“I think also being humble and acknowledging that you may not know exactly the
right way to enact reciprocity, and that you would be grateful for guidance. You
need to know about the protocols of communities that you work in. You need to
understand who you are but also where you’re going, and how to conduct
yourself to the extent that it's possible. And when you don't know, then you have
to ask respectfully and acknowledge that you don't know. Humility is hugely
important, in my opinion, in any kind of relationship. And any work where, you
know, if you come from an academic institution, with the power of that institution
holding you up, and you go into somebody else's community, that creates a
certain kind of dynamic. So it's important to know that, and to be humble within
that. And you need to listen. And learn.” (PID forthcoming, 00:42:14–00:43:32;
Speaker: Ewa Czaykowska-Higgins)

For outsider linguists looking to build reciprocal relationships with Indigenous
communities in language work, Ewa noted that they will likely need to resist the
frameworks in which they were trained as academics.

“[I]n the Euro-American tradition, people who are being trained as academics are
trained to take the lead, to start out by explaining, to kind of be in the expert
position, and often it's important not to do that. Often it's important to start out by
asking questions and not being the one to take the lead. You can be sort of led
towards taking the lead if that's appropriate in a collaborative relationship. But I think it's important to start gently and slowly.” (PID forthcoming, 00:54:42–00:56:41; Speaker: Ewa Czaykowska-Higgins)

Generosity is another key characteristic within reciprocal relationships in language work. Ewa encouraged outsider linguists to be generous of themselves, their gifts, their talents, and their time when building and maintaining relationships with Indigenous communities.

“I've used this word generosity a number of times, but I think generosity is really important. And by that, I don't mean necessarily giving, although that's also part of it. But I mean generosity of spirit and generosity of openness to the lessons that you're given. And knowing that language work is not just about recording ablative constructions or something like that, but that it's about how language is used, and who uses it, and what it's for, and how people understand what language is. Because every one of us has a different experience of language and a different understanding of language.” (PID forthcoming, 00:43:32–00:45:07; Speaker: Ewa Czaykowska-Higgins)

Above all, Ewa recommends that outsider linguists stay open and be willing to learn.

“Those are some of the things that come to mind. I don't think that it's possible to lay out, you know, “do step one, step two, step three.” I think you just have to be really open, and really willing to learn, and really humble about your own knowledge that you bring, because you do also bring some. You have quite a lot and it's different, and maybe it's of use to others. You have to be willing to share that when it's appropriate and in ways that are appropriate and that are asked for or called for.” (PID forthcoming, 00:45:07–00:45:41; Speaker: Ewa Czaykowska-Higgins)
6.6 Keren Rice

Dr. Keren Rice is a non-Indigenous scholar and linguist who has been involved in language work with Indigenous Peoples in Canada for several decades. Keren began working with Dene languages as a graduate student and has since been involved in numerous language-focused projects and initiatives with Dene communities throughout the McKenzie River valley. Keren also served as the first director of Indigenous Studies (previously Aboriginal Studies) at the University of Toronto, where she is now a tenured Professor in the Department of Linguistics.

I first met Keren as a Master’s student in 2017 at the International Conference of Language Documentation & Conservation in Honolulu. As an aspiring student of Dene languages, I had followed her work for many years, and was thrilled to have the chance to meet and speak with her. We talked over lunch in between presentation sessions, where she gave me wonderfully sound advice about applying for PhD programs. Keren was recommended for this study by members of my dissertation committee and other participants. I was pleasantly surprised that she remembered me when I reached out to her over email, and we held a stimulating discussion about reciprocity and language work that lasted approximately an hour and a half.

6.6.1 Insider or outsider?

When I asked Keren if she considered herself an insider or an outsider in the work she is a part of, she identified herself as an outsider. Like Nathan, Keren commented on the degrees of familiarity that can influence insider- and outsiderness. However, she also noted that for some Indigenous communities, no level of familiarity would result in an outsider linguist’s transition to insider.

“I don’t think you ever really become an insider. Even people that are married into those communities from outside. So outside Dene people, I think, become part of the community, but I don’t think outside white people become part of the community in the same way. They can live there. I know people who have lived there for forty years, and there are still barriers. They're accepted, but there are
barriers to the acceptance. So I don't think you ever really become an insider. And I guess it probably depends on where you are, but in [Dene] communities, I would say you never really become an insider, even if you’ve lived there for a long time.” (PID forthcoming, 00:13:48–00:14:44; Speaker: Keren Rice)

Here, Keren identified two different types of outsiders to Dene communities: Dene people from other Dene communities and non-Dene white people from non-Dene communities. She observed that the former could likely assume a level of insiderness within Dene communities eventually, while the latter would likely never be able to achieve this level of belonging. While similar to Nathan’s discussion of familiarity and outsiderness (see 6.2.1), Keren’s remarks highlighted the distinction between Indigenous and non-Indigenous outsiders in language work, and noted the differences in their inclusion with and within Indigenous communities.

6.6.2 Reciprocity and language work

Keren has spent decades connecting with Indigenous communities, and she leveraged this experience to comment upon reciprocity as practiced by outsider linguists in language work with and within Indigenous communities in Canada.

“I just have a lot of years that I've been thinking about these questions, and so I can talk about them, in a way, by looking back over my life and see why my academic life and see how I've changed.” (PID forthcoming, 00:55:18–00:56:30; Speaker: Keren Rice)

When I asked Keren about her conceptions of good reciprocity in language work, she highlighted the interdependence between reciprocity and relationships and the importance of honoring these connections as an individual.

“Reciprocity is built in relationships. And I think that if you don't honor those relationships, you’re not going to have reciprocity. So it means trying to spend the time getting to know people, and being a participant. Whether it means going to play bingo or whatever things are, it’s really important to see yourself not just as
a researcher, but as somebody who's striving to understand what the needs of this community are.” (PID forthcoming, 00:07:07–00:08:01; Speaker: Keren Rice)

Even though the topic of our discussion centered around reciprocity as practiced in language work, Keren stressed that one cannot simply focus on reciprocity and language as isolated concepts. Language is intimately entwined with and inseparable from culture, community, and identity; therefore, she argued, reciprocity must be considered in the same way.

“I think that what we're talking about when we're talking about language revitalization is, for many communities, not really about language. It's about culture. And I think that's what the -- and this is another word that I don't like very much -- but I think it's about empowerment. What I don't like about that word is that it's saying that I have the obligation to empower somebody else, but what does that mean for me to be able to do that? I think that that's an important aspect of things to look at. So I think what you've got to do is figure out what it is. First, you've got to figure out what community means, and then you've got to figure out what it means to be responsible to the community.” (PID forthcoming, 00:49:15–00:50:20; Speaker: Keren Rice)

Keren described this connection as demonstrated within the context of a governance project she had once been part of.

“What we did was look at the changes that have gone on in the Dene communities over the past 50 years or so with respect to language, but it was way more than just language. It was with respect to coming to understand what it means to be a Dene person. And I think that in a way, that's really what people are talking about when they're talking about language revitalization. To use the term that Wes Leonard uses, it's more like reclamation that they're interested in. And when you talk with people, they don't really care about 'how you say whatever,' they care about understanding the cultural aspects of what it means to be a Dene person.” (PID forthcoming, 00:10:01–00:11:09; Speaker: Keren Rice)
Keren observed that in order to learn how to be responsible to an Indigenous community, outsider linguists must first spend time getting to know those with whom they intend to build relationships. She remarked that, in her experience, determining what actions of reciprocity might be appropriate within this dynamic takes time.

“I think that there are lots of linguists that are doing really good work with reciprocity, but they’re people that have had a long-time interest in the relationship with the community… I think there are things that you can do, but you need to make sure that you've got the buy-in of the community, and that's the thing that takes the time to develop.” (PID forthcoming, 00:30:50–00:31:46; Speaker: Keren Rice)

Finally, Keren emphasized that reciprocal relationships in language work also entail the outsider linguist’s repeated presence within the community. As a linguist who lived outside of her community of research, Keren remarked upon the difference in welcoming on her return trip back to the community.

“I felt when I went back to the first community that I worked with, when I went back there, that my position had changed. Because I think that a lot of people go once and then they don't go again, and that's a kind of way of using the community for your own goals. I don't think people trust you that much the first time you go, but when you go back, then you've kind of said that this place means something to you. And it might be just in terms of your research, but you've gotten to know some people who welcome you back, so you feel like you're more welcome there. So I think that's another aspect of time, that going back is valuable. And I guess you could say that that's sort of a form of reciprocity, is that you want to go back and you want to learn more and give more.” (PID forthcoming, 00:39:55–00:41:34; Speaker: Keren Rice)

6.6.3 Obstacles that hinder reciprocity in language work

When the conversation shifted to discussing obstacles preventing reciprocal relationships between outsider linguists and Indigenous communities in language work,
Keren identified practices considered standard in Linguistics that can hinder reciprocity. First, she noted that linguistic research as performed by outsiders is not always relevant or interesting to Indigenous communities.

“I really like doing morphology, but people don't really like doing morphology. They like understanding what the words mean. They want to understand why it is that that's that way. If you look at the Master's theses that have been done at the University of Victoria program, you'll get a really good idea of the kinds of things that the speakers and learners are interested in. And it's not morphology. It's not syntax. So ultimately, yes, they're interested in that, but those aren't the starting points. And so you've got to somehow work together to figure out what the right things are and come to an agreement. And that takes building up those relationships. Because people will say yes to lots of things and then not do them, because they don't really want to.” (PID forthcoming, 00:16:13–00:18:04; Speaker: Keren Rice)

Keren also remarked that typical graduate degree programs do not allow for sufficient time for outsider linguists to develop reciprocal relationships with Indigenous partners. She noted that this was likely a result of Linguistics’ move away from its Anthropology roots; as the discipline shifted to prioritize more theoretical concerns, Keren noticed that Linguistics afforded less time for students to form and develop these kinds of relationships.

“If you look at anthropology where they're doing a lot of field work, and they're trying to get kind of inside of a community, they're not going for two weeks at a time, or anything like that. They're going for longer time periods, and they're trying to get at larger questions. So this is an impossible answer to this question, but I think we've got to disabuse ourselves of the idea that you can complete a PhD in five years. You've just got to allow for and say this is really anthropological-type work.” (PID forthcoming, 00:24:24–00:25:48; Speaker: Keren Rice)
In considering these obstacles preventing reciprocity, Keren commented on the importance of creating change in higher education – not just for individual outsider linguists, but for the academic system as a whole.

“I just think that there's something wrong with how higher education works with respect to work in these communities. And the communities are asserting themselves about that. So if we don't change the way things are being done, then we're not going to be able to be successful at doing any of this kind of work. I think we do have a role to play as linguists, but I think we've got to figure out how to balance the different things, and that's going to take work in our departments and our universities to recognize that.” (PID forthcoming, 00:26:53–00:28:05; Speaker: Keren Rice)

6.6.4 Improving reciprocity in language work

When I asked Keren what kinds of concrete steps outsider linguists could take to better incorporate reciprocity in their work, she made some recommendations. She stressed again that, more than anything, it is important that outsiders recognize that the concept of language is more complex and intersectional than simply the spoken form. For many Indigenous Peoples, participating in language work is about reconnecting with one’s culture, traditions, and identity. Keren recommends that in order to properly engage with these elements in language work with Indigenous Peoples, outsider linguists ought to familiarize themselves with the concept of culture and learn how to study it.

“I think [outsider linguists] also have to realize that this is about culture for most people. It's not about language, it's about culture. So I actually think that they should take an ethnography course and figure out how to do that.” (PID forthcoming, 00:32:29–00:33:34; Speaker: Keren Rice)

“It can also be impossible to figure out what [reciprocity] means if you don't understand culture.” (PID forthcoming, 00:51:41–00:52:48; Speaker: Keren Rice)
Keren also suggested that outsider linguists interested in initiating language work with or within an Indigenous community should identify language-focused individuals in the community and build a relationship with them.

"I think they need to figure out who the people are in that community that are interested in language and try to build relationships with those people. They need to find out who those people are. And a lot of times there are programs in the schools, but those aren't necessarily [always] the right places to go." (PID forthcoming, 00:32:29–00:33:34; Speaker: Keren Rice)

In undertaking this endeavor, Keren also warned outsider linguists to be careful not to over-simplify the complex dynamics of Indigenous societies and advised caution in using homogenizing terms like community.

"[W]e use community in this way that is probably not really appropriate, because we are thinking of a whole community, but any community is going to have a lot of variation in it. So we've got to be clear that we don't really mean a whole community, we mean a subset of a community, and we've got to find a subset of people where there's actual interest in what it is that you are going to do, that you want to do. I think that there's a lot of things that you need to be aware of, and you need to find that right part of the community that is keen on these issues and what it is that they want, and then be responsive to them and their needs." (PID forthcoming, 00:50:20–00:51:16; Speaker: Keren Rice)

She also recommended that outsider linguists keep an open mind when it comes to practicing reciprocity in language work. In her experience, Keren found that sometimes reciprocity is doing what is asked of you, even if those actions are not language-related or are related to your own personal research goals.

"I think what you need to do is show yourself from the start as being willing to take on the kinds of things that people in the community are asking you to do, and that'll evolve. You can't just go in and say, “Okay, I know what you need,”
because that just doesn't fit with anything these days.” (PID forthcoming, 00:20:57–00:21:26; Speaker: Keren Rice)

In order to learn what kinds of reciprocity will be most meaningful in a relationship, Keren noted, outsider linguists should also listen and remain observant to the feedback given by Indigenous community partners.

“I think it takes time to understand what the needs [of the community] are, and what the perceived needs are. Because you've got your own perception of what the needs are, but in a lot of places, that perception is actually not what anybody wants. You can see it, because when you suggest something, then it just falls flat. People will be very polite, because that's how they are, and because they don't want anybody to lose face, but they just won't do it. So I think that you kind of know when you've hit on something that's good.” (PID forthcoming, 00:16:13–00:18:04; Speaker: Keren Rice)

Finally, Keren observed that not all who have an interest in Indigenous languages in Canada will necessarily have the right temperament to engage in these kinds of long-term, deep, reciprocal relationships with Indigenous communities.

“I think also that there are personalities that can do it, and so you've got to kind of really look at yourself. A lot of academics are not very good at interacting with people. There's a kind of a romance these days about doing language revitalization, and it's only going to intensify in this Decade of Indigenous Languages… Not only do you have to come to know the community, but you have to come to know yourself as well. You've got to see, do you have the right personality to work in this community? And there are people that go into the communities and they don't. It doesn't work for them. And it has a lot to do with them and what their aims and goals are. So you've got to just make sure that you're the right person to be doing this.” (PID forthcoming, 00:33:34–00:34:30; Speaker: Keren Rice)
Keren emphasized the importance of acknowledging one’s positionality prior to language work. She explained that in honoring the protocols or traditions of an Indigenous community, the outsider linguist may need to temporarily compromise on or put aside their own cultural values.

“For example, a lot of people are vegan these days. That doesn't work very well in a lot of these smaller communities where to have somebody give you dry meat is really important, and it means a lot to them. So you've got to kind of think about your values, and what are your core values, and what are those things that you can't give up on. What are the ones where you've got to recognize that you're the outsider, and if you want to be accepted, there are certain kinds of things that you've got to do. And those might be giving up on dietary habits, or wearing dress that's appropriate to a place. So if you like wearing short dresses and you're working in a community where women wear pants all the time, then maybe you should be wearing pants all the time. That's one that I actually didn't experience myself, but I've seen people say, "Oh, I don't really care that I have to," you know. They're going to Iran, say, and they don't really care that it's protocol to cover your head there. So I think that those kinds of things can really have a negative effect, and they don't show very much respect. That's the other R word that I think is important.” (PID forthcoming, 00:41:47–00:43:27; Speaker: Keren Rice)

As Keren described in this passage, an important part of building reciprocal relationships with others is to first know oneself and one’s boundaries. Throughout the interview, Keren emphasized multiple times the inseparability of language and identity; therefore, engaging in language work must also entail engaging with one’s own identity as applied to that work.

“I think that then you have to realize that if you want to really get to know people in the community and really work with them, then you're not there only as a linguist, you're there as a person. And you've got to do the work that they want
you to do. That helps build up the relationships, and then that's what leads to the reciprocity.” (PID forthcoming, 00:05:53–00:06:29; Speaker: Keren Rice)

6.7 James

James (pseudonym) is a non-Indigenous scholar and linguist whose work focuses on the acquisition and revitalization of Indigenous languages in Canada. Though initially drawn to Linguistics by an interest in language documentation more generally, James leveraged his time as a PhD student to support language revitalization initiatives in multiple Indigenous communities in Canada. He is currently employed as an educator in the United States, though he travels to Canada frequently to continue his research on the acquisition of Indigenous languages.

James and I met early on in my graduate studies, when I was only just learning how to be a graduate student in Linguistics. We bonded over a similar interest in the Indigenous languages of Canada, and he has given me lots of much-needed advice over the years about what it means to build relationships in language work with Indigenous communities in Canada. James and I met over Zoom for a very thorough discussion of reciprocity in language work; our discussion lasted well over three hours.

6.7.1 Insider or outsider?

When I asked James if he considered himself an insider or outsider in the language work that he does, he emphatically conveyed his outsiderness.

“'I've always been very aware of my status as an outsider, and I would never presume to call myself an insider. That's not the point for me. My goal has always been to just use my abilities, my interests, and everything to to be a part of work that I think is important, where people are looking for someone like me to kind of help pitch in, or whatever. I'm not from a language community where I'm doing work and I'm definitely an outsider.” (PID forthcoming, 00:21:17–00:22:00; Speaker: James [pseudonym])
As our conversation continued, James casually referred to himself several times as an “outsidery” outsider.

“Coming into Linguistics, I had zero experience with ever being in [an Indigenous] community, interacting with [Indigenous] people, related to [Indigenous] language issues, or like anything, you know. So I was very much a complete outsider from the very beginning. I sought out conversations with other outsiders who have worked in communities. I went to places like CoLang to try to get some experience learning from outsiders who have worked in language communities, as well as insiders, on language documentation, revitalization, the works. So I very much sought out that kind of information, because I was well aware of my status as a very much “outsidery” outsider.” (PID forthcoming, 00:22:22–00:23:53; Speaker: James [pseudonym])

Intrigued by his use of this term, I asked him why the extra “outsidery” was necessary to convey his outsiderness. Did he feel like more of an outsider in language work in Indigenous communities than others might be?

“I guess what I mean by being an “outsidery” outsider is that I just… I never ever had an illusion that I was anything other than an outsider. I was working in Canada. I was from America. I was non-Indigenous. I was in a kind of context I had never been in over 30 years of life. You know what I mean? Everything was always new. I was always the strange one. And I was fine with that. I mean, that's what it is, you know?” (PID forthcoming, 00:26:02–00:28:01; Speaker: James [pseudonym])

James clarified that there was nothing inherently negative about this assessment of “outsidery” outsiderness. He had simply accepted his own outsiderness in his language work and wanted to emphasize that he had no aspirations to alter this outsider positionality.

“I understand and I’m totally comfortable with my status as an outsider. You know what I mean? I feel like some outsiders will try to blur that line between insider
and outsider, and they try to, like, become an insider, if that makes sense. And I've just never bothered. I think you can't. I think you can't. And that's okay. You can still do good work and be a part of really good and important things without necessarily being an insider, and I'm totally comfortable with that. (PID forthcoming, 00:26:02–00:27:28; Speaker: James [pseudonym])

6.7.2 Reciprocity in language work

When the conversation turned to discussing reciprocity in language work, James first clarified that what he considered to be ideal reciprocity in language work carried out by outsider linguists is likely very different from what actually happens.

“I think there are ideals. Ideal is like you would have a longstanding deep relationship with the community. I'll speak about it from the outsider's point of view. An outsider would have a longstanding, deep relationship with the community. So we're talking years. There would be clear-cut goals that both sides have discussed and agreed upon. There would be some kind of mutual contribution of resources, as well as a, not a taking away, but a gaining of resources for each side, you know what I mean? There would just be kind of a shared vision, a shared implementation, both sides contributing equally to the realization of the project and benefiting from it equally. I think that would probably be like what reciprocity would be.” (PID forthcoming, 00:30:34–00:31:26; Speaker: James [pseudonym])

Here, James described reciprocity between outsider linguists and Indigenous communities as a long-term relationship with clear communication, shared goals, and a mutual contribution of effort and resources. James also noted that within this ideal relationship, reciprocity would be practiced as parity between invested partners.

“I feel like there are these differences between the ideal and then what actually happens. So I would say good reciprocity in the ideal is that you have parity between the – let's just maintain the outsider/insider distinction. So you have this parity between outsiders and insiders where each side is working together on
some kind of project, but they're both benefiting equally. That would be at least an ideal form of reciprocity is they're both contributing and they're both getting something in return that's all kind of of equal value.” (PID forthcoming, 00:28:27–00:29:21; Speaker: James [pseudonym])

James argued that in order to achieve this level of parity, all vested parties in the relationship must identify their needs in language work and communicate them effectively.

“I think that everybody has the same responsibility to communicate their goals and interests, and to seek informed consent, and to make sure that in their interactions with people in research that the people that are working with the insiders are not misleading them. That they're not exploiting them, they're not just taking from them without discussing what they might want in return, or what they might want as part of this relationship.” (PID forthcoming, 01:04:45–01:05:54; Speaker: James [pseudonym])

Part of achieving parity, James pointed out, is recognizing and honoring the expertise of Indigenous partners in regards to language work. James highlighted the responsibility of outsider linguists to compensate Indigenous partners fairly for their expertise.

“So where I work [in Canada], it's mostly been working with people who are experts. They have proficiency. They have invaluable expertise with their language. And so they often expect, their communities often expect, and I agree, that they should get paid like it. Money is one of the things that they really want, and they can use, and I don't see anything necessarily wrong with that. I think in those situations, it is important. And I wish that I could pay people more, quite frankly.” (PID forthcoming, 01:37:02–01:38:47; Speaker: James [pseudonym])

“These [Indigenous community partners] are experts, and they should be paid like experts in the Western framework.” (PID forthcoming, 01:44:51–01:46:30; Speaker: James [pseudonym])
James also considered the importance of presence in building a reciprocal relationship in language work. He discussed his experience as a PhD student in the United States working with Indigenous languages in Canada, and conveyed his regret that he was not able to achieve the kind of longstanding, deep relationship he considered to be ideal in reciprocity.

“That was a massive challenge, too. At most, I could commit to being there [in the Indigenous community] physically once per year, and I can only be there for so long. The longest I was able to hang around was nine weeks, which is a pretty good chunk of time in terms of, you know, quote, “fieldwork”. But yeah, that's definitely not enough. I mean, ideally, you would live in the community or very close to it. And you'd be able to have really frequent, regular interactions with people. And I just could not do that. So yeah, that was definitely a huge barrier.” (PID forthcoming, 00:48:11–00:48:50; Speaker: James [pseudonym])

However, James did note that returning multiple times to the community in which he worked helped to overcome this obstacle of being a long-distance outsider linguist. Like Keren, he emphasized the importance of repeated presence in establishing and fostering reciprocal relationships in language work.

“[O]nce I did that first pass and figured out where everything was and what everything was, then I consulted with people there about what kind of management tool they would like. What kind of software they would like to organize things, and be able to access things, and that kind of thing. So that was another step in this pursuit of a reciprocal relationship or project was okay, I've started on the path that they laid out for me, and then now I'm coming back to check it. They basically said, “Go start on it and let us know, report back when you've got something.” (PID forthcoming, 00:36:25–00:37:37; Speaker: James [pseudonym])

Finally, James remarked that the reason that ideal reciprocity may not always translate to reciprocity in practice could be because reciprocity is so context-dependent.
“There's not a one size fits all approach, right? I don't think that there's just one kind of linguistic work that has to be done and I don't think that necessarily every type of linguistic research has to be reciprocal in the same ways… my experiences are flavored in just a couple of small corners in North America, whereas I know people who have worked in other parts of the world, and things are radically, radically different.” (PID forthcoming, 01:03:57–01:04:45; Speaker: James [pseudonym])

Here, James clarified that his experiences and observations about reciprocity in language work are to be considered within the context of Indigenous language work in Canada. While he conceded that these concepts might be able to be extrapolated to North America more generally, he warned against applying these frameworks to language work in other parts of the world.

“I think that there's really a lot of time and energy being invested right now in North America in order to try to flesh out these kinds of questions. Like, how can we do research the right way, for example. And I think that’s extremely, extremely important. But we also need to recognize that there’s not necessarily a one-size-fits-all model for within North America, let alone across the entire world.” (PID forthcoming, 01:07:17–01:08:12; Speaker: James [pseudonym])

Despite the context-dependent nature of reciprocity, James pointed out that the general framework of reciprocity could likely be applied appropriately in all contexts in language work.

“As we're having these kinds of conversations in the field, we do need to understand there's not that one-size-fits-all. And then I think that the overarching principle of building the relationship, establishing expectations, agreeing upon things – that's the overarching framework that can be brought into every situation. But how it actually plays out might be very different.” (PID forthcoming, 01:44:51–01:46:30; Speaker: James [pseudonym])
6.7.3 Obstacles that hinder reciprocity in language work

Next, the conversation turned to consider obstacles that might prevent reciprocal relationships from forming between outsider linguists and Indigenous communities in Canada. One clear factor that can negatively influence these connections is the ongoing colonialism and legacy of oppression imposed on the many Indigenous Peoples in what is now called Canada. Non-Indigenous researchers practicing within the Western academic tradition have a well-earned reputation of exploitation and extractive research practices among Indigenous communities in Canada; as a result, many Indigenous people today are wary of outsider researchers entering into their community and may be reluctant to partner with these outsiders in research (Wilson 2008).

James recounted his own experience in approaching an Indigenous community in Canada with the intent of engaging in language work. From the very beginning, it was clear that the community’s perception of outsider linguists like him had been influenced by previous outsider linguists who had behaved poorly.

“[The community] had a history of working with outside researchers, and from their point of view, it did not go very well. They felt exploited. They didn't use that term but that was the sense I got was that they kind of looked at outsiders coming in and taking stuff away from them, not engaging in reciprocal work. They felt like people had come and extracted and exploited. And it wasn't just linguists. It was anthropologists too, you know, they had an ongoing sort of process with a museum to get things repatriated from the museum. So there was a lot of history there with people – with outsiders – coming in and taking things. And so that was also part of this process of trying to build a reciprocal relationship was understanding what had happened in the past and trying to figure out a way to not reproduce those problems. That was huge, you know? And that created issues as well. You're not operating in a neutral place. The tone has been set, in some ways. And you're trying to exemplify things in a different way, that takes time.” (PID forthcoming, 00:44:38–00:45:27; Speaker: James [pseudonym])
“From my experience, when I was working with this community, it was very clear that they thought that reciprocity hadn’t been enacted [in the past]. So they were very open and very upfront about that fact. So all you would have to do is just kind of say, “Hey, I’m a linguist,” or “Hey, I’m interested in doing work with you related to – I’ll just use these terms – documentation/revitalization.” And they would tell you right away like, “Oh, okay, we’ve had problems with people like you.” So that was a very clear indicator that reciprocity had not been enacted in the past. They felt that outsiders had, quite frankly, done them wrong. Not all outsiders, which was really interesting. But yeah, they generally felt like linguists had come under one set of auspices, and that they had actually operated under another, and taking things out and not done what they said they were going to do. And there was a very sort of bad taste left in their mouth from that.” (PID forthcoming, 00:50:29–00:52:05; Speaker: James [pseudonym])

However, James recalled that there had been an outsider linguist that the community spoke highly of, and that she had demonstrated many characteristics of ideal reciprocity in her work.

“But there was an outside researcher that people did speak really highly of, and that people seemed to like quite a bit. And I think that she had some of those ingredients that I think were necessary to overcome some of those barriers. She had spent a lot of time there. She lived nearby and was able to spend regular amounts of time building relationships and really engaging with people. She had done the kind of work that people wanted outsiders to do. So she had done things, I think, very much the right way. And people are still speaking very fondly of her, like fifteen years later. But that was the exception, right? So she was kind of the exception that had done things the way that I was trying to do them. But they provided plenty of indications, overtly, that reciprocity had not been enacted in the past.” (PID forthcoming, 00:52:05–00:53:05; Speaker: James [pseudonym])
In exploring the proposed ideal reciprocal relationship in language work, James and I also discussed other reasons why this kind of reciprocity might not be happening already in relationships between outsider linguists and Indigenous communities. More often than not, he argued, this disparity stems not from the moral failings of individuals, but rather from systemic pressures that set these kinds of relationships up to fail.

“In my experience, I've met almost only people that espouse good intentions, and they seem to want to be a part of work to document/preserve/revitalize Indigenous languages. And I think that the failures in reciprocity come primarily from – again this is just my experience – but it seems to me like a lot of the failures related to reciprocity come from outside pressures rather than internal failings and bad motivations and a lack of caring. I feel like that's just what I keep coming back to again and again... I just feel like very often the parties involved, everyone has good intentions, and people want to do the right thing. And then outside forces derail that. That's just what I see again and again. And you do see people that, you know, the stuff they do as an individual is a problem. You get those kinds of problems, but I think, like the bigger things that stand in the way of enacting reciprocity are systemic institutional pressures.” (PID forthcoming, 00:58:02–01:00:08; Speaker: James [pseudonym])

James identified several systemic pressures imposed by academia and noted that graduate students are the outsider linguists most likely to be disadvantaged by these pressures. First, he called out the requirements of degree programs as being a hindrance in the development of reciprocity in language work. He noted that students are required to produce certain types of work (e.g. thesis, dissertation) in order to satisfy these requirements, but argued that these kinds of products may not always align with the needs of Indigenous communities nor with their timelines for language work initiatives. James recounted his own experience with this kind of conflict in his work with an Indigenous community in Canada.

“But at the same time, during the course of this work – and this is kind of where I keep coming back to and thinking about reciprocity – at the same time doing that...
work, though, I realized that I would not be able to do a dissertation with [the
Indigenous community], because of all the external pressures that are placed
upon me as a graduate student. And that's what I think is the biggest problem for
achieving good reciprocity is the set of outside pressures that are on outsiders as
well as insiders. So during the course of my work with this community, I just
realized that the relationship-building we were doing and the pathways we would
need for me to do a dissertation, it was not going to be possible for that to
happen in two or three years. And so I explained to them that, you know, while
we were building our relationship, and we've been doing this kind of work
together, I just know that I'm not going to be able to do my dissertation with them.
But I still want to stay connected and I still want to stay involved.” (PID
forthcoming, 00:39:37–00:41:00; Speaker: James [pseudonym])

James remarked that this path may have been more feasible had he had more
time to develop his relationship with the community.

“And I think that kind of thing would have worked if I had more time. I would have
been able to develop this relationship more. And so to be a little more succinct
about it, it's pressures from the institution in terms of time, the kinds of products
they expect from you, the kinds of support they offer you in terms of financial
support to get things done.” (PID forthcoming, 00:43:48–00:44:38; Speaker: James [pseudonym])

James pointed to the limited amount of time allotted for the completion of degree
programs as a major hindrance in the development of complex, long-term relationships
between graduate students and Indigenous communities in language work.

“Graduate students are only in school for a few years, right? Like five [or] six, and
most of that time, at least the first chunk of that time, you spend taking classes.
You just don't have a lot of time to build the relationships you need to do
reciprocal work, at least from scratch.” (PID forthcoming, 00:41:55–00:42:42;
Speaker: James [pseudonym])
Like Ryan, James also remarked that oftentimes outsider linguists who are trained in the more theoretical aspects of Linguistics are not prepared or supported to address the more practical needs of Indigenous communities.

"I think that's another one of these institutional pressures and consequences is that Linguistics traditionally trains people to do a certain kind of work, and that work isn't necessarily what people from language communities want, what they express that they want and need from outsiders. So you have a bunch of linguists with very good intentions that are very interested in the revitalization or reclamation of language and culture, but they're not trained. They don't have the kind of training that they need for that." (PID forthcoming, 00:56:14–00:57:00; Speaker: James [pseudonym])

In considering the systemic pressures preventing outsider linguists in engaging effectively in reciprocity with Indigenous communities, James opened up about the associated emotional load that he and other graduate student outsider linguists tend to carry.

"I feel terrible about it. I know a lot of people like that, though. I'm not special in that regard. I mean, there's a million graduate students and faculty that feel tremendous guilt, and they feel tremendous desire to do something more, or to do things in a better way. But yeah, I just think the pressures, the externally imposed pressures are a real, real problem." (PID forthcoming, 01:17:52–01:18:35; Speaker: James [pseudonym])

“This is such interesting stuff, but it's so tricky. And yeah, it does, it stirs up emotions, you know? I never feel like I'm doing enough. And I don't know anybody – I don't know any outsiders that talk about this kind of stuff that feels like they're doing enough. Like none. Not a single person.” (PID forthcoming, 01:26:56–01:27:40; Speaker: James [pseudonym])
In the end, James concluded, the daily pressures inherent to the life of a professional academic are what distract him, and likely others, from being able to develop this kind of idealized reciprocity in language work.

“When people come to me and they want some kind of information that might help them… that to me is some of the most important stuff I could be doing, and that’s a way that I really could make a difference. And I’m just like, yeah, I have to teach this course. I have to go do this workshop. I have to present at this conference. I have to publish. I have to be on this committee. I have to go do field work on something else. Those are all the things that just keep jumping one notch up on that to-do list. Because I have to do that to keep my job, or I had to do that to graduate. And so to me, that's the biggest – as I've said, I mean, I just keep hitting you over the head with this – to me, that's the biggest problem for enacting reciprocity. It’s a slow, steady, constant trickle of things that distract you, that pull you in different directions.” (PID forthcoming, 01:15:46–01:16:55; Speaker: James [pseudonym])

6.7.4 Improving reciprocity in language work

Finally, I asked James if there were any concrete steps he felt that outsider linguists could take to enact reciprocity in their language work with Indigenous communities in Canada. First, James urged outsider linguists to remain as open as possible when looking to engage in language work with Indigenous communities. In his experience, the best way to approach these relationships was to be honest about his intentions and remain flexible in his research plans.

“So even from the beginning, I was clear about who I was and what I was interested in. I would introduce myself as a PhD student. I'm in Linguistics. I'm interested in language documentation/revitalization. I would like to be a part of the work around here. But I left it very open. I tried not to impose any of my own goals, or – I don't know if that's the right word. I tried to leave it really open, you know, what our work could look like. Just letting them know, “Listen, I know that
you're engaged in this kind of work that I would love to be a part of, and I'm in school to develop skills that can contribute to that kind of work. So I'm interested in building a relationship with you and seeing if there's a way that I can put those skills to work to contribute to what you're working on.” (PID forthcoming, 00:31:53–00:33:05; Speaker: James [pseudonym])

Finally, James recommended that those who are looking to initiate reciprocal language work must first identify possible connections that already exist within their network.

“I think that if you can have conversations with undergraduates who are interested in language and interested in doing language work in places like documentation and revitalization, that that's a prime opportunity to start shaping expectations, getting people thinking along the right kinds of avenues, and making the right kinds of plans, and building relationships. If you're an outsider as an undergraduate, and you get connected with a faculty member, or a grad student, or anybody working with insiders on a project – that's fertile ground to be able to do reciprocal work.” (PID forthcoming, 01:24:28–01:26:17; Speaker: James [pseudonym])

“If you're an undergraduate student or graduate student, there need to be people that are able to facilitate you in building the relationships that are needed to do reciprocal work. Like connecting people to language communities, helping them foster relationships, and stuff like that. That's the ground floor.” (PID forthcoming, 01:27:40–01:28:24; Speaker: James [pseudonym])

6.8 Aidan Pine

Aidan Pine is a non-Indigenous scholar and linguist, though his most recent language work has focused on the intersection between Indigenous languages and technology. Aidan classifies his language work as natural language processing, with emphasis on how technology can aid revitalization and reclamation initiatives put forth by Indigenous communities in Canada. He is the founder and lead developer of Mother Tongues...
Dictionary and is a part-time technology consultant for the First Peoples’ Cultural Council and the University of British Columbia. He first earned a Bachelor’s degree in Linguistics from the University of British Columbia, then went on to complete a Master’s degree in Speech and Language Processing. Aidan is also a full-time researcher on the Indigenous Language Technology project at the Canadian National Research Council.

I had heard of Aidan’s work with the Mother Tongues Dictionary project prior to undertaking this study, though I had never met him personally. His name was recommended to me through another participant in this study, and I reached out to him over email. Aidan and I first met over Zoom during our interview session, which lasted just over an hour and a half.

6.8.1 Insider or outsider?

Aidan self-identifies as a settler in Canada and raised in the territory of the ləkwəŋən and SENĆOŦEN-speaking peoples in what is now called British Columbia. Though he had lived in this linguistically-rich location for much of his life, he had not been made aware of this diversity until later in life.

“I found myself really enjoying this Linguistics class. I thought that was kind of interesting. I remember talking to the professor, Charles, after the class, and he said something to the effect of, “You've come to Montréal, but you're from British Columbia where it's the most linguistically diverse place in the country. Why did you come all the way out here?” And I kind of thought, what the heck? What are you talking about? And that's because I had grown up with this deeply colonial narrative of English being the “language of the land”. Maybe there was one Indigenous language, but “it was probably all the same”. That's the message from the education that I'd had growing up.” (PID forthcoming, 00:03:00–00:04:15; Speaker: Aidan Pine)

Aidan remarked that it was this comment that spurred him to think more deeply about the colonial narratives in which he had been raised as a settler in Canada.
“The miseducation I had growing up, that colonial narrative was kind of like a sweater that had been knit over my eyes, if you want to be metaphorical with it. And [the professor] making that comment was kind of the first tug at unravelling that, where I was kind of like, oh maybe the story I’ve been told isn't the right one. Maybe my understanding of it is being filtered through something that I maybe didn't sign up for.” (PID forthcoming, 00:04:30–00:05:00; Speaker: Aidan Pine)

This awakening inspired Aidan to learn more about the linguistic diversity of his homelands, which eventually led to him becoming involved in language work with Indigenous Peoples.

“So when I started looking at degree programs back home on Vancouver Island, and as I mentioned, ləkwəŋən and SENĆOŦEN-speaking territory, I started seeing these courses for like, Introduction to a Salish language, Introduction to a Wakashan language, a Tsimshianic language, and I was just like, what?! It was this very interesting thing where I was intellectually interested in the languages that were there and the linguistic properties of them, but I also had this kind of moral indignation. Like, this is the place I grew up for twenty years, and nobody mentioned any of this? How could that possibly be? And so I think coming back, and then getting involved in the First Nations languages and the Linguistics program at UBC, it was at that intersection or meeting of my newfound intellectual curiosity with language and my political beliefs. That both the story I had been told about what happened and what had happened historically in the place that I grew up and contemporarily was wrong, and the idea that I could kind of combine those things to learn more about the place that I grew up in and learn more about language was this really interesting idea.” (PID forthcoming, 00:06:00–00:07:40; Speaker: Aidan Pine)

When I asked Aidan whether he considered himself to be an insider or an outsider in the language work he does, he recounted an uncomfortable situation he encountered during his undergraduate studies at the University of British Columbia. As
he advanced in the program and became more familiar with the Indigenous languages he had been studying, he was asked to lead and teach language courses.

“And as I was getting more involved in the kind of, I would say, purely linguistic study, like just doing Linguistics, I became increasingly uncomfortable with how that was positioning me. I started being asked to teach classes for a particular language, or teach portions of classes, or teach an entire course for a particular language. Because I was learning these languages as part of my studies, and after a while, you know, you start to become somewhat proficient in some of them. And I just remember having this experience of being on a particular territory and teaching to a bunch of people that were from that territory. I did it because I was asked to do it, but I felt very uncomfortable about the dynamic. And I had a hard time putting my finger on why at the time, but I think for most people working in language revitalization, we would probably all agree that there's more to it than understanding how pronoun paradigms work in a language, or how some particular part of the verbal inflectional paradigm works. There's more to it than that, right?” (PID forthcoming, 00:11:00–00:12:40; Speaker: Aidan Pine)

Aidan then described the inner conflict between his linguistic interests and his responsibilities as an outsider linguist in the revitalization of Indigenous languages.

“The whole reason why language revitalization is necessary, as I've written in some of the papers, is the fact that languages were de-vitalized and intergenerational relationships were severed. So part of language revitalization is mending those intergenerational relationships between people and community. And that's just something that I don't have… that's not my story. It's just not what I have to share with people… On the one hand, this is such interesting work, and I feel so drawn to it in a lot of ways. It feels very fascinating, but also motivating. I really want to be doing this, but at the same time, what are the roles that I can see myself in? And I didn't really feel comfortable with a lot of the roles I saw.” (PID forthcoming, 00:13:00–00:14:20; Speaker: Aidan Pine)
Dissatisfied with how this new role had placed him in a position of authority, Aidan decided to take a step back to focus instead on technology and how it could support Indigenous language revitalization.

“It's been a circuitous route, but it feels like the technology part is comfortable for me now, to work in that space.” (PID forthcoming, 00:17:00–00:17:15; Speaker: Aidan Pine)

Finally, Aidan clarified that even though he clearly considered himself to be an outsider in language work, he was not fond of the exclusionary aspect of the insider/outsider dichotomy as applied to language work. He argued that even though outsider might apply to his positionality, the term failed to capture the welcoming way in which he had been included into the Indigenous community in which he worked.

“I mean, I think the obvious answer is that I'm an outsider, but I don't know if I love that dichotomy. I'm definitely not a member of any of the Indigenous communities that I work for, and I've never tried to do that or tried to make some claim to that… I have no lived experience working inside, like considering myself a member of a community of any of the language communities that I work with. But I guess to me, when I hear “outsider,” it almost feels like you're being excluded or something, or like people are enforcing that boundary. And I guess it's just my experience that a lot of the communities I work with people have been very welcoming and very inclusive. While there's a pretty clear understanding that like I'm an Amsiwaa, a white guy in Gitksan territory, it doesn't feel like I've been made to feel like an outsider. So that's my only maybe qualm with that term. I don't want it to make it seem like I haven't been welcomed.” (PID forthcoming, 00:22:30–00:24:00; Speaker: Aidan Pine)

6.8.2 Reciprocity in language work

Next, Aidan and I explored what good reciprocity might look like when enacted by outsider linguists in language work with Indigenous communities. First, he answered that reciprocity looks like conversation.
“[W]hen I think of that word without bringing it to a specific context, I think about people sitting down and talking to each other about what their goals are, and figuring out kind of overlap and where those two things can meet. It's conversation, for me. I used to be a chef back in the day, owned a food truck and things like that, so for me, it's always like having those conversations while you're sharing food and things. That seems to be where a lot of that happens.” (PID forthcoming, 00:30:00–00:30:50; Speaker: Aidan Pine)

Here, Aidan highlighted the importance of building relationships in language work, and that reciprocity must be present in these relationships from the very beginning. He also pointed out that, unfortunately, this kind of reciprocity is not always practiced by outsider linguists in academia, who tend to come to Indigenous communities with already-formed research plans. The skewed dynamics in these kinds of relationships, Aidan noted, can prevent reciprocity.

“I think that what I see a lot of the time is that reciprocity is not considered from step one. It starts to be this thing that's conditional on this thing that's already been decided unilaterally by the academic. Then you're just working within this project that hasn't been decided reciprocally, like let's try and figure out a way to make it more reciprocal. It's hard to do, and it's hard to go against that when even the systems are set up to do that.” (PID forthcoming, 00:35:00–00:35:30; Speaker: Aidan Pine)

Aidan admitted that it was this kind of linguist-focused language work that discouraged him from pursuing a graduate degree in Linguistics immediately following his undergraduate experience.

“[T]his maybe ties to my decision not to go into grad school, actually, after my undergrad. I feel like a lot of people were like, “Oh, you should go into grad school or something,” and I felt like it was really strange. It was strange to think about how, at that point, I'd only gone up to Gitksan territory a couple times over my undergrad, maybe a week or two at a time, three or four times. And I thought it would be strange to apply to grad school and put in some cover letter some
idea of what I wanted to do when I hadn't had those conversations that I just talked about. I hadn't sat down with people and talked at length and in depth about what our shared goals might be.” (PID forthcoming, 00:32:30–00:34:00; Speaker: Aidan Pine)

Aidan also argued that in order for reciprocity to flourish in relationships between outsider linguists and Indigenous communities in Canada, all invested parties must communicate, work to understand one another, and identify shared goals within the work. However, he also pointed out that not everything ought to be shared in these kinds of relationships.

“So to make that more abstract, like a mutual communication and mutual understanding of shared goals, but also maybe obligations that you have that aren't shared. Understanding where you're both coming from, and not trying to subsume somebody else's challenges or struggles as your own. Not taking over what other people are doing, and not distracting.” (PID forthcoming, 00:31:00–00:31:30; Speaker: Aidan Pine)

In this passage, Aidan cautioned outsider linguists to be sure to mind their own struggles in language work with and within Indigenous communities. In noting the importance of mutuality in language work, Aidan also drew attention to the emotional and intellectual boundaries that are present in these kinds of relationships. Part of an outsider linguist’s responsibility to reciprocity, he argued, is identifying and respecting these boundaries within the relationship.

6.8.3 Obstacles that hinder reciprocity in language work

During our discussion of reciprocity in language work, Aidan also identified obstacles that outsider linguists may encounter when trying to incorporate reciprocity into their work with Indigenous communities in Canada. First, he noted that the priorities and perspectives of language that are common in Linguistics are not likely to match the perspectives assumed by Indigenous communities. This discrepancy can breed discord in relationships between outsider linguists and Indigenous communities.
“I think when you’re doing linguistic description, or when you’re coming at it from the perspective of Linguistics, you have a particular way of viewing the language, and sometimes that’s at odds with how the community might be teaching it or something. So it kind of sets you up for these… disagreements, perhaps?... It's the responsibility, I feel, to explain what the options are, but fundamentally, that decision is with the community.” (PID forthcoming, 00:25:20–00:26:10; Speaker: Aidan Pine)

Aidan noted that these kinds of conflicts can also be exacerbated by the way that Linguistics (and academia more generally) tends to support work that is designed and led by the linguist or researcher. He also discussed the awkwardness that can come from trying to impose timelines typical of academic degree programs onto relationships with community partners.

“[T]he way that the systems within academia are set up, seemingly, is this kind of extractive model where like, step one, researcher concocts an idea in an office by themselves, step two, researcher goes out to community and like tells community, “This is what's going to happen.” Right? That's kind of the model. And of course people are breaking that model, or rejecting it, or changing it in certain ways. But I still didn't want… when I sat down with people and talked about what shared goals we possibly had, or maybe didn't have, or just had that conversation, I didn't want to say, “Oh, but also I've got like six months to hand in this thing. So can you think about this kind of quickly?” I didn't want to take some timeline that only I cared about for my personal, professional, and academic development and just impose that at step one.” (PID forthcoming, 00:33:30–00:34:45; Speaker: Aidan Pine)

Aidan stressed that in these initial conversations between outsider linguists and Indigenous communities, honesty is paramount to maintain reciprocity in the drafting of research or language work plans. Dishonesty on the part of the outsider linguist, whether intentional or inadvertent, can derail the development of reciprocal relationships with Indigenous communities.
“And I think academics are partly to blame when they inflate or exaggerate how much a particular thing will be able to be helpful or support a community. If you don't have people that are supporting the tool, then the tool's probably not going to support people. But I also think it's a failing of the structure of academia, where it's constantly putting emphasis on publishing, and publishing new things, and not maintaining published ideas. That leads to a lot of failed reciprocity or situations where people don't feel like they've gotten what they thought they would get out of it.” (PID forthcoming, 00:41:20–00:42:15; Speaker: Aidan Pine)

Here, Aidan pointed to the pressures of academic life as the catalyst that often leads outsider linguists to overestimate the potential of their tools and their assistance in improving the vitality of Indigenous languages. However, he also described the short-term nature of academic projects as being a barrier to practicing reciprocity long-term in language work.

“I feel like at most universities, a lot of the “how does this actually get built?” questions – and I'm speaking directly about technology here – get offloaded to students. Who are necessarily transient, right? You're not going to have a student be a student for twenty years… And so even if people have good intentions, and even if people do sit down and discuss these things, sometimes I see a situation where people from the language community side expect a certain level of maintenance or support that just doesn't exist.” (PID forthcoming, 00:40:30–00:41:15; Speaker: Aidan Pine)

The reality is that many outsider linguists supported by academia are students working toward the completion of a degree program. For most students, this situation will be temporary, and the language work they engage in as a student may only remain active as long as they are within their academic program. Aidan discussed the effect that this has on the technology developed by outsider linguists as students. Even if tools are developed and implemented in a way that successfully supports community language goals, the short-lived nature of student life will often entail a lack of continued
support and maintenance to ensure the tool’s longevity. Aidan raised this point within the context of his own experiences as a student.

“It’s an unfair burden to put on students, you know? I still answer questions from communities whose languages I built keyboards for in my undergrad twelve years ago. And it seems bizarre that a keyboard for an entire language could be maintained by a former undergraduate student, and contacting them and updating the keyboard depends on that undergraduate student not having changed their email in twelve years, or still being willing to do that kind of stuff on a volunteer basis. That's a strange oversight that’s typical for many university-funded projects.” (PID forthcoming, 00:43:45–00:44:40; Speaker: Aidan Pine)

Finally, Aidan warned that if not used properly, technology can undermine the goals of reclamation and revitalization in language work. When developed and introduced to Indigenous language work by outsider linguists, Aidan admitted that technology intended to support Indigenous languages could actually distract from community goals.

“I think there's a danger to it sometimes, though. And this is something that's inherent to technology – not just technology in the language revitalization space – but because it's new, and it's flashy, and it's shiny, it can distract. And I have no interest in making technology that is distracting from people’s goals. I think thinking about technology as a force multiplier – as a thing that can allow people to do a goal that they already want to do with fewer resources or more quickly – is what it's all about, but it's very easy to get into a kind of “space race” mentality. You know, “we have to get an app because other people have an app” or get into a mentality where you're disproportionately funding the flashy thing to the detriment of the day-to-day, on-the-ground work that is actually doing the language revitalization work that this thing is only meant to support… technology is only going to be successful if it braids into what existing community language revitalization efforts are, and if it clearly addresses goals that are defined in those efforts, too.” (PID forthcoming, 00:27:00–00:28:20; Speaker: Aidan Pine)
6.8.4 Improving reciprocity in language work

When I asked Aidan how outsider linguists can better practice reciprocity in language work with Indigenous communities in Canada, he had some recommendations. First, he urged outsider linguists to acknowledge and engage with their own positionality before initiating relationships with Indigenous communities or beginning language work.

“[I]n a lot of academia, we kind of pretend like we're these perfectly objective observers of some natural phenomenon, or something like that. We're taught to write objectively and things like that. But in all my Indigenous Studies courses, we were usually taught to acknowledge our subjectivities, and acknowledge our positionality in talking about something, and where we come from, and all of those types of things. So I think that's helpful. Thinking about who you are, and what your intentions are, and working in a particular space are, and what you can bring to the table, and what you're comfortable with doing and not doing, and things like that.” (PID forthcoming, 00:46:30–00:47:10; Speaker: Aidan Pine)

Once grounded in your positionality, Aidan suggested being candid and upfront about your intentions and capabilities in language work with Indigenous community partners.

“I think a lot of this work, like anything that depends on trust and honesty, which as I mentioned, reciprocity and having those conversations about building that trust and that communication between people, you can't really be perfectly honest with other people if you aren't being honest with yourself.” (PID forthcoming, 00:45:40–00:46:10; Speaker: Aidan Pine)

The honesty required of this kind of conversation, he argued, helps to build trust and open communication between partners in the relationship.

“I think then there's also ensuring that you're making reasonable comments about what your capabilities are. If you are saying that you're going to build some
tool, like explaining that maybe the maintenance is dependent on two people that happen to be students at the time, and you have no contingency plan after that. Just being upfront about saying, “This is what I want to bring, but also these are the resources I have through my institution,” and just being upfront about what you're able to do and not able to.” (PID forthcoming, 00:47:15–00:48:00; Speaker: Aidan Pine)

Above all, Aidan recommended that outsider linguists take the time to really listen to what Indigenous community partners need from outsider linguists to support the revitalization and reclamation of their language. Then, outsider linguists should either adapt their plans for language work accordingly or convey honestly their limitations in supporting these initiatives.

“I also think a lot of it is listening, and being willing to either adapt what you're doing, or say, “You know what, this has been really great, but I don't think what I am able to do, or the skills that I have, are able to address what you're doing.” I think that doesn't really happen. Either people do adapt what they do to meet community goals, or they don't, and they don't really say anything. They kind of just co-opt a project so it's nominally about the thing that you discussed, but substantively it's not. It's about just continuing what you were doing anyways… I don't think there's a problem with just being like, “Oh actually, these things don't align up, but maybe we can line things up in the future somehow.” That's all part of building that trust.” (PID forthcoming, 00:48:00–00:48:30; Speaker: Aidan Pine)

6.9 Summary

In this chapter, I have recounted the qualitative interviews supporting this study of reciprocity in language work. Treating each interview as its own separate body of knowledge enabled a more in-depth description of the interviews themselves, allowing me to explore each participant’s contributions and perspectives in detail. Additionally,
the presenting the data in this format aligned with the tenets of an Indigenist methodology in three key ways:

1) *Grounding the work in relationality.*

One of the main elements of an Indigenist methodology is its focus on relational responsibilities (Wilson 2008; Rix et al. 2019; also discussed in more detail in Chapter 7). In this chapter, I honor that responsibility to relationality by acknowledging explicitly that I am just one of the nine people involved in this co-creation of knowledge. Though my own views on reciprocity in language work are considered at length throughout this dissertation, this chapter demonstrates that the new knowledge emerging from this dissertation should not be considered a product of my mind alone; rather, the eight participants who sat down to discuss and explored reciprocity in language work with me are just as much the creators of this work, as it is their observations and recommendations that satisfy the questions explored in this research.

2) *Recounting interviews using the participants’ own voices.*

While the primary intention of this chapter is to report the contents of the qualitative interviews, I also intended for this chapter to honor the participants and their contributions as accurately and respectfully as possible. To this end, I quoted the participants’ words directly and and frequently, using my own commentary only to set the stage and guide the reader from one topic to the next. Each participant was asked prior to, during, and after the interview session what kind of identifying information they would feel comfortable sharing in this dissertation, including names (their own, of others, of communities, of languages), locations (hometowns, research sites, partner communities, universities), and circumstances (identifiable combinations of research interests, job titles, specific language work), and I have respected these requests in reporting this work. I honored participants’ wishes by using their preferred names
and pronouns, adopting pseudonyms\textsuperscript{49} where preference was indicated and withholding or redacting identifiable information that participants wished to remain hidden.\textsuperscript{50}

3) \textit{Accountability to others in data analysis.}

I have strived to remain accountable to participants throughout the research process. As described in Chapter 5, I followed up with all participants post-interview to re-confirm their consent to participate in the study and request their review and approval of interview transcripts. I continue this process of accountability by also inviting participants to review and comment upon my analysis of their words as described in Chapters 6 and 7 prior to the dissemination of this work.\textsuperscript{51} In this way, I remain accountable to the co-creators of this project by ensuring that I have represented their words and insights honestly and respectfully.

Finally, as demonstrated from the structure of subsections, I note that emergent themes throughout these interviews tended to fall into three categories: 1) reciprocity as an abstract concept; 2) challenges in practicing reciprocity, and 3) recommendations for outsider linguists to help better incorporate reciprocity into their language work.\textsuperscript{52} Based on these observations, I put forth here three assertions about reciprocity in language work as practiced by outsider linguists with and within Indigenous communities in Canada:

\textsuperscript{49} I indicate where pseudonyms have been adopted in the subsections by placing (pseudonym) directly after the first use of the person’s assumed name.

\textsuperscript{50} I was inspired by Leonard (2017) to ask participants to identify their own preferred names in reporting this research: “In the spirit of reclamation, which includes the idea that people should be able to name themselves however they deem appropriate, I invited participants to specify how they wanted to be acknowledged” (2017: 23).

\textsuperscript{51} This process is ongoing and will likely extend past the dissertation defense. I reserve the right to modify analyses presented in this early draft of this work to reflect the insights of participants as they are clarified.

\textsuperscript{52} I reserve the discussion of the \textit{Insider or outsider?} subsection for Chapter 7.
1. Reciprocity is an important aspect of relationships between outsider linguists and Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

2. Obstacles stemming from the structure of academia prevent outsider linguists from forming reciprocal relationships with Indigenous communities in language work and maintaining these relationships long-term.

3. There are many ways that outsider linguists can do better to form and maintain reciprocal relationships in language work with Indigenous Peoples in Canada. I discuss each of these assertions in detail in the following subsections.

6.9.1 Reciprocity is important in language work

All participants indicated that reciprocity is best considered within the context of relationships, and identified reciprocity to be an important element within these relationships. While some noted that these kinds of deep relationships are not necessarily required to perform ethical language work – such as the linguist-for-hire scenario presented by Nathan – they indicated that when these kinds of relationships are present, or it is suggested that they are desired by the researcher or the community, reciprocity is an important component within these dynamics.

Reciprocity in language work is contingent upon relationships; as Nathan and Keren pointed out, reciprocity can only be considered and practiced within a relational dynamic. Ryan, Kay, and James highlighted the importance of mutuality as applied to reciprocity, while Nathan and Ewa described this dynamic to look more like balance and parity between parties within the relationship. Ryan, Nathan, Kay, Ewa, James, and Aidan all highlighted the importance of honesty and communication in building reciprocal relationships in language work.

Participants also supported the idea that reciprocity as considered in language work is interwoven with other values. Nathan and Ewa noted respect to be supremely important within these kinds of reciprocal relationships, especially in how the outsider linguist demonstrates respect for Indigenous community research partners and the Indigenous language data generated through the work. Keren, James, and Aidan also
identified flexibility and adaptability as salient attributes of reciprocal relationships, while Ewa and Kay added humility and generosity as additional values tied to reciprocity.

Finally, participants noted that long-term, in-depth reciprocal relationships are not necessarily required for ethical language work with Indigenous communities in Canada. Ryan and Nathan both indicated that there would be nothing inherently unethical about an outsider linguist approaching an Indigenous community and asking to perform a specific bit of research or limiting the relationship between them to a one-time, transactional interaction. It would be unethical, they argued, if an outsider linguist were to feign interest in a reciprocal relationship only to disappear once they got what was needed from Indigenous communities. Ryan and Nathan agreed that in these situations, honesty and open communication is the best way to avoid conflict and prevent exploitation in language work.

6.9.2 Obstacles preventing reciprocity in language work

Next, participants commented on obstacles that they felt hindered reciprocity in relationships between outsider linguists and Indigenous communities in language work. Many of these challenges alluded to the way that academic programs like Linguistics are structured, and participants identified several ways that this structure works against the formation of reciprocal relationships between outsider linguists and Indigenous communities in language work.

One issue in academia raised by several participants was the lack of time outsider linguists have in initiating, developing, and maintaining reciprocal relationships with Indigenous communities. Ryan, Nathan, Keren, James, and Aidan all agreed that reciprocal relationships in language work are best practiced in the long-term, but pointed out that the limited time-frame characteristic of academic programs prevented the outsider linguist from taking the necessary time to develop these relationships with Indigenous communities. Ryan and Nathan also noted that neither the short-term requirements of academic coursework nor the pressures imposed by recurring publication cycles fostered the kind of depth required for long-term, reciprocal relationships in language work.
Another obstacle to reciprocal language work within academia is the lack of time outsider linguists have to be present within Indigenous communities. Kay, Ewa, Keren, James, and Aidan all observed that part of building reciprocity in research relationships is learning about, spending time in, and engaging with the Indigenous community, though admitted that outsider linguists generally do not spend sufficient time attending to this aspect of reciprocity. Keren and James specifically mention the insufficient time spent within Indigenous communities during language work within the context of Linguistics, noting that the limitations of academic schedules combined with the standards set by traditional fieldwork practices in Linguistics do not generally afford sufficient time for outsider linguists to develop reciprocal relationships. Ryan, Nathan, and James also remarked upon the lack of depth in connection commonly seen between Linguistics departments and local Indigenous communities in Canada, noting that outsider linguists within these institutions often engage in language work in communities located far from their universities.

However, while many commented on the systemic issues preventing reciprocity in language work, some participants also raised concerns about the responsibilities of individual outsider linguists and considered how they fail to incorporate reciprocity in their language work. For example, Nathan observed that outsider linguists can sometimes fail to show respect to Indigenous community partners in language work, also noting that this disrespect can extend to how outsider linguists tend to hoard and appropriate Indigenous knowledge and languages in the form of audio and video recordings. Aidan raised the issue of outsider linguists exaggerating the effectiveness of their technology or skills in improving the linguistic situation of a community. Finally, Ryan, Ewa, Keren, and James noted that outsider linguists can also fail to take the needs of others into account in crafting their research, resulting in language work that is not relevant or applicable to community initiatives nor benefits the communities participating in the work.
In defiance of these ubiquitous hindrances to reciprocity, all participants contributed suggestions as to how individual outsider linguists can better practice reciprocity in language work with and within Indigenous communities in Canada. Here, I revisit these recommendations to present them as a cohesive unit in Table 7.1, noting where contributions overlap between participants. To impose further structure, I separate these recommendations into two categories: personal (engaging introspectively with oneself and in relation to others) and practical (engaging outwardly with others).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal</th>
<th>Practical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Know yourself and your capabilities</td>
<td>Focus on local languages and communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Kay, Keren, James, Aidan</em></td>
<td><em>Ryan, Nathan</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledge your positionality</td>
<td>Spend time with and within the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Kay, Ewa, Keren, Aidan</em></td>
<td><em>Ryan, Nathan, David, Kay, Ewa, Keren, James</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remain honest with yourself and others</td>
<td>Build and rely upon connections with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Nathan, Ewa, James, Aidan</em></td>
<td><em>Ryan, Nathan, Ewa, Keren, James</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be willing to learn</td>
<td>Align research with priorities of community initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Nathan, Kay, Ewa, Keren, James, Aidan</em></td>
<td><em>Ryan, Nathan, David, Aidan</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be willing to listen and adapt to feedback</td>
<td>Volunteer your skills to assist community language initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Keren, James, Aidan</em></td>
<td><em>Ryan, Nathan, David, James</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adopt and maintain a people-focused and intersectional perspective of language</td>
<td>Do what is asked of you, even if it is not language-related</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ryan, Keren</em></td>
<td><em>Kay, Keren</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6.1. Recommendations for outsider linguists to incorporate reciprocity in language work with and within Indigenous communities in Canada. Participant contributors are italicized.

As demonstrated by these recommendations, there are indeed many ways that outsider linguists can do better to form and maintain reciprocal relationships in language work with Indigenous Peoples in Canada. However, I caution readers of this work against considering these recommendations to be a simple “reciprocity checklist” that one can easily adopt in their work and consider the ethical requirements of their job to be satisfied. The intention of this dissertation is to encourage outsider linguists to embark on a similar exploration of reciprocity in their own work, and I urge outsider linguists to use the recommendations made within this chapter as a starting point to help stimulate that introspection within the context of their own work.

As an outsider linguist who engages in language work with and within Indigenous communities in Canada, I argue that the observations made in these interviews effectively negate any supposition that systemic roadblocks might excuse us from our obligations to reciprocity. Rather, the arguments made in the interviews presented in this chapter serve to highlight the responsibilities that we as outsider linguists have to challenge existing power systems, engage more authentically with ourselves and others, and model reciprocity in our own relationships, in language work and beyond.
Chapter 7: Discussion

In chapter 6, I presented the interviews supporting this study by recounting each participant’s interview one by one as a complete entity. Here in Chapter 7, I revisit these interviews to reconsider them as a whole in order to identify common perspectives about reciprocity in language work that emerged across multiple interviews. I also provide additional commentary that consider these perspectives within the context of Linguistics and language work more broadly.

In this chapter, I provide an analysis of reciprocity in language work by examining more closely two aspects of this study that stood out as being uncomfortable for some participants: the proposed dichotomy of insider/outsider language workers (7.1) and the isolation of reciprocity as a concept (7.2). In 7.2, I employ relationality as a framework in which to consider reciprocity. I call upon the knowledge shared by participants in order to demonstrate how reciprocity is connected to the other important “R” words – relationality, respect, responsibility, and relevance – in language work with and within Indigenous communities. I explore ways that each term is related to reciprocity in language work and provide some critique as to how these connections can be better leveraged to improve language work done by outsider linguists.

I highlight these discomforts both as a critique of this study and as an opportunity to explore the connection linking salient perspectives of reciprocity in language work as provided by participants. I end the chapter with a summary of the points presented throughout (7.3).

7.1 Insider/outsider as a false dichotomy in language work

During the interviews supporting this study, participants were invited to share their insights, perspectives, and experiences regarding reciprocity in language work with Indigenous communities in Canada. I also invited participants to share with me their opinions about this study and encouraged them to provide as much feedback and critique as they felt comfortable sharing. In response, participants identified two distinct criticisms of this study: the proposed dichotomy of insider/outsider language workers,
and the isolation of reciprocity as a concept. I address the former issue in this subsection, while the latter is considered in depth in 7.2

I began each interview by asking participants to tell me about themselves. What did they want me to know about them, and what would they like me to share in the dissertation? I then asked specifically about the types of language work they had been involved in. How had they come to be part of that work? For both of these questions, participants answered easily their names, their backgrounds, where they had gone to school, and what subjects they had studied. They shared details about the language projects they had been a part of, the communities they had worked with, and the outcomes that they were proud to have taken part in. This strategy was a nice way to get to know the participants better and learn what kinds of things inspired passion in their language work. It was also a comfortable way to open the interview, stimulate discussion, and keep things moving forward.

However, for many of the interviews, the tone of the conversation seemed to change when I moved on to the next question:

*Are you a member of the community in which you do language work?*

*Would you call yourself an insider or outsider in that community?*

In my mind, I felt I had a good idea of which participants would identify themselves as outsider linguists. I thought that clearly the non-Indigenous linguists like myself would consider themselves outsiders in language work, while the Indigenous linguists would be clearly considered insiders. I had included this question in the interview primarily because I was interested to see how comfortable outsider linguists would be in identifying themselves as such. I had hoped that the question would stimulate outsider linguist participants to delve deeper into the nature of their outsiderness and reveal how it affected their work with and within Indigenous communities.

As expected, all of the non-Indigenous participants identified themselves without question as outsiders to the Indigenous communities in which they do language work. I

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53 While I do provide working definitions for *insider* and *outsider* in Chapter 3, the analyses of the terms in this chapter reflect a more nuanced and updated view of *insider* and *outsider* as influenced by participants’ observations. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to explore this issue in more depth.
was surprised to find, though, that all of the Indigenous participants also identified themselves as outsiders in their work.

In planning this research, I took great care to emphasize the distinction between insider linguists and outsider linguists. As someone who only has experience as an outsider linguist in language work, I never want to pretend to be able to speak to the experience of being an insider linguist within an Indigenous community, nor would I deign to make recommendations as to how insiders could or should incorporate reciprocity into their work. In order to markedly highlight this boundary, I chose to use the qualifier outsider over and over again when discussing linguists not from Indigenous communities in order to make perfectly clear about whom I was speaking when asking participants to make recommendations about reciprocity.

However, all of the Indigenous participants of this study revealed they also felt that they had been outsiders at one time or another in language work. When I asked Nathan if he considered himself to be an insider or an outsider in the language work that he does, he simply replied, “both”:

“I think it's both. I think being a researcher or being an academic kind of instantly puts up this kind of outsider dynamic with your home community. Even though I'm from Tyendinaga, and I'm related to all the people, as much as we're all related to each other. My dad's family is non-Indigenous. My mom's family is from there, and they've been there since the 1780s when we all arrived. So we're insiders, have been around for forever and related to important people or people that everybody knows. And if someone doesn't know me, I'd be like, “Oh, well, you know my mother or you know my uncle,” and they'd be, “Oh yeah, right.” So that's like insider.

But then outsider, in a way that being an academic is. Because you're otherwise aligned, right? That you come with baggage, in a way. Even if it's not true, people have expectations sometimes about what you represent or what you're working at…
And then also the different complicated dynamics, because we don't have any first language speakers left. There's some children who have been brought up by second language [speakers] to be first language, but we don't have first language speakers who live in my home community, so working people who do speak the language but are from other communities. So you're an insider insofar as you're Mohawk, but you're an outsider insofar as you're from somewhere else.” (PID forthcoming, 00:13:13–00:14:47; Speaker: Nathan Brinklow)⁵⁴

Contrary to what I had assumed at the outset of this study, the categories of insider linguist and outsider linguist are not a strict dichotomy in language work. In discussing his positionality in the language work that he is part of, Nathan revealed that the categories of insider and outsider are problematic when presented as a mutually exclusive binary. Nathan described himself as being clearly both an insider and an outsider in the language work he is part of and observed that this positionality shifted depending on the situation at hand. Other participants noted the same fluidity in their work, revealing that the insider/outsider designation can shift depending on many factors, including location, languages, and the people and communities involved in the work. In my zeal to clearly delineate the boundary separating Indigenous and non-Indigenous linguists, I had oversimplified the nature of insider- and outsidersness in language work and had failed to realize the degree to which these categories can and do overlap.

Some participants, though, expressed discomfort at using the term outsider to describe themselves. During our interview, Aidan identified himself as an outsider but also stressed that he had always been made to feel welcome in the Gitksan community:

“I think the obvious answer is that I'm an outsider, but I don't know if I love that dichotomy. I'm definitely not a member of any of the Indigenous communities that I work for, and I've never tried to claim that. I have never considered myself a

⁵⁴ Upon completion of the dissertation, the entire document, as well as the finalized interview transcripts, will be deposited into the Kaipuleohone Archive (https://hdl.handle.net/10125/4250). In accordance with the Tromsø recommendations for citation of research data in linguistics (Andreassen et al. 2019) the final dissertation will reflect the individual PIDs for all interview transcripts.
member of any of the language communities that I work with. But I guess to me, when I hear “outsider,” it almost feels like you're being excluded or something, or like people are enforcing that boundary. And I guess it's just my experience that a lot of the communities I work with people have been very welcoming and very inclusive. While there's a pretty clear understanding that like I'm an Amsiwaa, a white guy in Gitksan territory, it doesn't feel like I've been made to feel like an outsider. So that's my only maybe qualm with that term. I don't want it to make it seem like I haven't been welcomed.” (PID forthcoming, 00:22:30 – 00:24:00; Speaker: Aidan Pine)

Aidan's observation uncovered another dimension of insider- and outsidersness, revealing that the labels can fluctuate depending on how a person may or may not be welcomed into or accepted by members of the community. Aidan's remarks clearly demonstrate that insider and outsider can also indicate degrees of belonging, an assessment that has the potential to change based on a person’s actions, contributions, manners, and reputation within the community. In designing this study, I had intended for the terms insider and outsider to be fixed labels that could be applied to the identity of the individual in question, as almost synonymous to Indigenous and non-Indigenous; observations made by participants in their discomfort uncovered the flaws of using this kind of logic in this study.

7.2 Reciprocity as inseparable from other values in language work

After asking participants to tell me about themselves, the interview moved on to inquire directly about the concept of reciprocity. The question itself was phrased in the abstract:

*What does good reciprocity in language work look like?*

Most participants responded to this question with a moment of silence and a thoughtful look. Some participants commented on the complexity of the question. Another participant asked me for my own definition of reciprocity before giving his own. Still others indicated they had been thinking about reciprocity several days in advance to
make sure they had a coherent answer for that specific question. This question of reciprocity and its application in language work was the one that participants seemed to balk at most, and I was intrigued by the apparent discomfort that answering it seemed to cause participants.

Interestingly, one of the Indigenous participants, Nathan, expressed outright discomfort in talking about reciprocity as an isolated concept:

“I know that reciprocity is the word, and all the Rs, we keep adding more Rs to it. And I think the foundation for me is relationship more than reciprocity. Only insofar as, if you have a positive relationship with people, then reciprocity in that sense… just kind of falls away.” (PID forthcoming, 00:15:55–00:16:20; Speaker: Nathan Brinklow)

Nathan’s resistance to reciprocity as a concept continued throughout the interview. When I asked about the difference between reciprocity and giving back in language work, he responded by saying:

“I would think they’re similar, but taking into account that I don’t like the word reciprocity either...” (PID forthcoming, 00:45:00–00:45:17; Speaker: Nathan Brinklow)

In designing the study presented in this dissertation, I tried to focus specifically on reciprocity in order to uncover ways it could better be practiced by outsider linguists working with Indigenous communities in Canada. However, this impulse to isolate, name, and categorize reciprocity as an isolated concept is actually a separative practice characteristic of Western epistemologies (Kovach 2021). An Indigenist framework, in contrast, prioritizes connection and relationality; therefore concepts such as reciprocity should only be considered in concordance with other related values like respect, relevance, and responsibility (Leonard 2021). The participants’ discomfort at considering reciprocity as a separate concept revealed this underlying conflict of

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55 The list of interview questions were sent to participants several days prior to the interview session. See Chapter 5 for a further discussion on the methods used in this study.
bringing a question crafted by a Western perspective into a study guided by an Indigenist methodology.

In order to try and counteract this conflict, I pivot to present in the following sub-subsections an analysis of reciprocity in language work not as an isolated concept, but as considered through the lens of relationality. Leonard (2021) notes that the “convention of thinking about knowledge production in terms of guiding concepts captured by words that start with R” is consistent with Indigenous epistemologies (2021: 221); here, I apply relationality as a framework in which to consider reciprocity as it relates to relationality (7.2.1), respect (7.2.2), responsibility (7.2.3), and relevance (7.2.4) in language work. By recounting perspectives shared by participants during interviews, I consider how each term influences reciprocity in language work and provide some critique as to how these connections can be better leveraged to improve language work done by outsider linguists. Finally, I provide a summary of these observations (7.3).

7.2.1 Reciprocity and relationality

7.2.1.1 Reciprocity requires relationships

Throughout the course of this study, relationality emerged as a paramount value in considering reciprocity in language work with Indigenous communities in Canada. During the interviews, all eight participants identified relationships as a prerequisite to reciprocity, noting that reciprocity cannot exist outside of a relational structure. Nathan even suggested shifting the focus of this entire study, pointing out that in order to even consider the outsider linguist’s role in reciprocity in language work, like the title of this dissertation suggests, the focus needs to be placed on relationships – not reciprocity. Relationships, as Nathan and other participants argued, serve as the foundational structures upon which reciprocity is then able to be built. Placing focus on relationships in this way also recognizes and respects the relational nature of Indigenous knowledge systems, which are firmly rooted in relationality and accountability to others (Wilson 2008; Carjuzaa & Fenimore-Smith; Leonard 2021).
Within Indigenous epistemologies, reciprocity is a foundational attribute of healthy relationships, in language work and beyond. Ryan described reciprocity in a research relationship as being very similar to reciprocity as practiced within personal relationships such as friendships or marriage:

“I look at it almost like a relationship like with you and your husband. You hope that you're in a relationship that is reciprocal, right? It doesn't necessarily mean you're giving the same things back and forth of equal value, however you define those things to be valuable. But an understanding that, in a way, you're mutually interdependent, and your work, your success in your work relies on each other's commitment to one another. And as soon as somebody drops out of that, the other person kind of falls. So that's kind of how I see it as happening. And what tends to happen, at least in relationships between linguists and Indigenous people or communities, it often seems to be quite one sided. But not always.” (PID forthcoming, 00:13:52–00:15:06; Speaker: Ryan DeCaire)

Here, Ryan points out that healthy reciprocal relationships in language work between outsider linguists and Indigenous community partners can be viewed similarly to other more personal bonds. Reciprocal relationships, in language work and beyond, require open communication, mutual understanding, and explicitly shared expectations from both sides of the relationship.

In considering responsibilities and relationships, Kay took a wider view of reciprocity, identifying additional stakeholders in reciprocal relationships beyond the outsider linguist and the Indigenous community. She argued that the relationality of reciprocity in language work is not limited to a relationship between two entities – the linguist and the community – but is instead situated within a web of interconnected relationships that extends out to include other Indigenous communities, the non-Indigenous wider public, and those in positions of power: “leaders, politicians, whoever is going to make a decision about if an Indigenous language is important or not” (12). This extended relational responsibility has also been espoused by other Indigenous language workers. Gardner (2012) encourages language workers to think “outside the
box” and “inside the circle” when identifying stakeholders in reciprocal relationships in language work, arguing that language work must respect traditions left by ancestors, must be relevant to the community, and must acknowledge connections to land. Leonard and Haynes (2010) and Jacob (2012) also call on institutions like universities and government bodies to honor their responsibilities in fostering and upholding reciprocal relationships in language work. In order to gain a comprehensive view of relationality in language work, outsider linguists must look beyond the traditional community-linguist relationship to acknowledge and address all players who have a vested interest in Indigenous languages.

Reciprocal language work cannot occur unless a reciprocal relationship between minimally the Indigenous community and the outsider linguist invested in the work is acknowledged, nurtured, and maintained. Nathan and Aidan both noted that good reciprocity begins at the very outset of the relationship, and that expectations for the work must be discussed by all parties at the very beginning. Like most relationships, this process often begins with conversation, mutual disclosure, and getting to know one another through the sharing of desires, goals, and ideals. Cultivating reciprocity in language work entails learning about others while making oneself vulnerable, sharing one’s strengths while admitting limitations to one’s capabilities. In this way, honest conversation becomes a form of reciprocity:

“Talk, like the feast, is rendered an object of reflection, a prepared offering extended from his person on behalf of his camp and offered for reception by the other assembled family camp. Alongside gifts of food, gifts of words are offered in reciprocal exchanges between families who otherwise stand to one another as different, or other. Could language expert and community participation be modeled on reciprocal “gifts of words”? (Nevins 2013: 225)

Developing a reciprocal relationship in language work is something that happens over time, and determining which forms of reciprocity are appropriate in a relationship requires time for stakeholders to get to know one another. Most participants discussed in their interviews the importance of both time and presence in developing reciprocal
relationships in language work, observing that these relationships require sustained effort and attention on both sides. Several participants noted that reciprocal relationships between outsider linguists and Indigenous communities in Canada often entails a long-term commitment, arguing that what is considered appropriate reciprocity in research relationships will likely change over time and as the relationship grows.

Participants also identified presence as a significant aspect of reciprocal relationships in language work. Nathan highlighted the importance of outsider linguists being present in the Indigenous communities in which they work, in the context of research and beyond:

“I'm thinking about that long time relationship where you become friends with these people, right? You become part of the community – as much as you can in that situation – but you go to these people’s events, you go to their funerals, you celebrate with them, but in a way that you become kind of part of them… (PID forthcoming, 00:20:14–00:21:17; Speaker: Nathan Brinklow)

“The idea of just even being there when there’s no benefit to being there. You just show up… because this is what community does. It’s not a research trip, you’re not going to be doing data collection, but the community is showing up for this, and friends of the community are showing up for this. And some communities, that might be a powwow, it might be a big community event. You just go! And you can say hi to the people that you know, and visit with the people you know, and eat with them, and sit with them.” (PID forthcoming, 00:21:22–00:22:15; Speaker: Nathan Brinklow)

As Nathan pointed out, showing up to community events, visiting with people in the community, and spending time within the territory all demonstrate the intention to develop a relationship that is not strictly focused on the language. In his interview, Ryan also emphasized the importance of repeated presence in sustaining reciprocal relationships in language work and argued that returning back to the community demonstrates an outsider linguist’s positive intentions. being necessary. Even if it is not possible to be physically present in the community, checking back in regularly with
research partners to assess the state of the relationship is also important in becoming part of the community fabric.

7.2.1.2 Obstacles that hinder reciprocal relationships in language work

Participants also identified obstacles impeding the development of reciprocal relationships between outsider linguists and Indigenous communities in Canada. Ryan pointed out that a major obstacle hindering the development of these relationships is the poor reputation of outsider researchers who have wronged Indigenous communities:

“I recognize that people oftentimes are not trying to do wrong. However, because of the historical wrongdoings that, especially with academia, namely linguistics and anthropology, a lot of people are nervous to work with them. And now the burden's being put on people like you to fix a lot of the problems that people have created in the past.” (PID forthcoming, 00:51:50–00:53:12; Speaker: Ryan DeCaire)

As discussed in Chapter 4, linguist-focused research methods have traditionally been a popular form of language work as practiced by outsider linguists within Indigenous communities in Canada. While these methods may have served to further the discipline of Linguistics, they often resulted in extractive research practices and mistreatment of Indigenous people, earning outsider linguists a bad reputation within Indigenous communities. Wilson (2008) notes the unfortunate frequency with which this exploitative dynamic occurs and describes how it has predisposed many Indigenous people to resent research performed by outsiders:

“Indigenous people are accustomed to research being conducted in their communities. This research has neither been asked for, nor has it had any relevance for the communities being studied. People are accustomed to seeing researchers come into their communities, do whatever it is they do and leave, never to be heard from again. Because community members are for the most part excluded from the research process, they have become resentful of research in general” (Wilson 2008: 15).
In recent years, the focuses of Linguistics have recently begun to shift away from linguist-focused research to prioritize more collaborative and community-focused practices (see Chapter 4). However, for many Indigenous people, the damage has already been done. This mistrust, well-earned from badly behaved outsider linguists of the past, can stymie or prevent altogether the initiation of reciprocal relationships by outsider linguists with Indigenous communities today, as “[t]here is a common recognition among many Indigenous peoples that western research paradigms contributed to their ongoing oppression” (Rix et al. 2019: 258).

Participants also described how a lack of depth in relationships in academia and Linguistics departments can undermine reciprocity between outsider linguists and Indigenous communities in language work. Nathan highlighted that there is sometimes a lack of depth of connection between individual outsider linguists and Indigenous communities within academia:

“[F]or a non-Indigenous linguist working on Indigenous languages, how many languages are [you] expected [to] have in your pocket? But to have a really good relationship with a community or two, as opposed to having written papers about fifteen different languages... Like, “Oh, I've documented these fifteen languages.” It's like, okay, well, what's your relationship with language number one? Do they still know who you are, or all those people who know you, are they dead now? And then what's your relationship with language number two? If it's just cyclical from book to book or from publication to publication, then I don't see the value in that as much.” (PID forthcoming, 00:27:47–00:29:03)

Ryan also points out a lack of depth in relationships at the institutional level, noting that many Linguistics departments in Canada generally do not focus on languages local to the area nor do they foster long-term relationships with local Indigenous communities:

“We should put more pressure on [students’] supervisors and the departments in which they exist to ensure that those Linguistics departments have meaningful relationships with local Indigenous communities. So that they don't rely on their
students to jump through all these hoops to try and do meaningful work and make up for the poor work that their supervisors and institutions have done historically…

And how does that work when you're a researcher at the University [in Canada] doing research [in South America]? Or doing research with Navajos, or the Lakotas in South Dakota? It's a little bit odd. Awkward, in that way. And it also speaks to the fact that usually Linguistics programs aren't focused on their local Indigenous communities.” ((PID forthcoming, 00:22:10–00:24:36; Speaker: Ryan DeCaire)

Finally, the requirements of Linguistics degree programs and the timetables in which academic linguists need to complete them do not provide sufficient time nor support for students to instigate, develop, and maintain reciprocal relationships with Indigenous communities. Time is an important component in cultivating reciprocal relationships in language work, and as Ryan points out, the typical four to seven years allotted by graduate programs in Linguistics do not afford students sufficient time to appropriately develop reciprocal relationships with Indigenous communities. However, Keren suggests that this limitation could be remedied should the requirements of Linguistics programs change to more closely resemble its Anthropology roots (see relevance in 7.2.4). Allowing students to take more time to complete degree requirements, such as a dissertation or thesis, could afford outsider linguists the opportunity to develop and maintain reciprocal relationships with Indigenous communities.

7.2.1.3. Improving reciprocal relationships in language work

One of the primary aims of this dissertation is to gather and disseminate recommendations to help outsider linguists incorporate and improve upon reciprocal relationships with Indigenous communities in Canada. To this end, each participant shared their own personal experiences, perspectives, and advice as to how they felt
that outsider linguists ought to initiate and develop reciprocal relationships with Indigenous communities in Canada.

Prior to beginning research, outsider linguists should get to know themselves, identify the skills they bring to the table, and understand how they fit within a relational dynamic.

- Consider the obligations associated with building a reciprocal relationship with Indigenous communities in language work. Do you have the right personality to participate in this kind of work? (Keren)

- Acknowledge your positionality within a potential relationship. What skills do you bring to the table? What do you have to offer? (Aidan)

- Keep in mind that you will always participate in language work as a whole person, not just as a linguist. (Keren)

- If you are an outsider linguist, acknowledge and honor your outsiderness in your work. (James)

- Learn about the Indigenous communities you are looking to enter into and their relationship with language work. Understand the community’s history, their relationship with language work, and how you fit into it (James)

Outsider linguists looking to begin language work with Indigenous communities can call upon relationality to identify already existing potential connections for guidance and opportunities.

- Avoid long-distance relationships by starting close to home. Identify the Indigenous languages spoken near where you live/study/work, and reach out to those communities. (Nathan)

- Identify and connect with individuals within the community that are already working with the language (Keren)
• Rely on other outsider linguists (such as faculty, graduate students, or non-academic language workers) who are already building reciprocal relationships with an Indigenous community. (James)

Finally, outsider linguists should spend time in and contribute to the community prior to beginning research.

• Volunteer in the community before beginning research as a way to demonstrate your intentions and form positive relationships (Ryan).

• Assist in identifying, consolidating, and making accessible already existing language materials (James).

### 7.2.2 Reciprocity and respect

#### 7.2.2.1. Reciprocity requires respect

The connection linking respect and reciprocity in language work emerges from the relationship of the work’s stakeholders. Participants noted that respect in reciprocal relationships is demonstrated by the level of mutuality inherent in the work, including mutual authority over the project’s design and execution, sharing the workload as well as the credits, and ensuring sufficient benefits for all involved in the work. Respectful relationships in language work should reflect a back-and-forth dynamic rather than a simple one-way street that funnels all benefits of the research toward one side (Czaykowska-Higgins 2009). Mutuality does not necessarily mean equal or net zero sum of “profit” between partners, but honors and addresses the wants, needs, and capabilities of both sides of the relationship (see 4.1).

Respect in reciprocal relationships in language work can be seen through the power dynamic between partners in the research process. Shaw (2001) describes how research that is designed, carried out, and controlled by the linguist creates a power imbalance in relationships:
“The traditional model of Linguist as Expert and Native Speaker as Consultant entails a significant power imbalance. This imbalance characteristically serves the academic’s research and professional advancement goals very well, but significantly disadvantages the community in many ways. Frequently a community has come to be dependent on the Linguist for the vital documentation of their vanishing heritage. Such dependency can have quite negative pragmatic implications, like being dependent on the Linguist’s time, availability, funding sources, etc.…. This manifest lack of control can easily engender anger, resentment, volatile feelings of being ripped off because the researcher, like the Colonialists, has taken what they wanted but not lived up to the community’s expectations of continuity and reciprocity” (Shaw 2001:7).

Part of showing respect in reciprocal relationships is rejecting and moving beyond the simple and outdated binary of “expert linguist” and “consulting speaker” in language work. Power imbalances in language work can breed negativity and resentment, and can prevent reciprocal relationships from forming. Nathan addresses the disparity common in language work, emphasizing balance:

“Thinking from a Mohawk perspective, [reciprocity] would be the idea of balance. That each party to the relationship is coming with their own stuff which just kind of builds together into something new. Where one person isn't the lead… One person on the lead, one person on the subject – you get away from that. No, they’re actually just friends or colleagues who are working on this, whatever needs to be done – together. They're all putting into it, they're all getting out of it. It's mutually beneficial, satisfying, and a relationship that everybody wants to preserve.” (PID forthcoming, 00:17:15–00:18:22; Speaker: Nathan Brinklow)

In order to balance this power imbalance and practice respectful reciprocity, outsider linguists must recognize and honor the agency of Indigenous partners in language work. David suggests that this balancing can take place through co-research and collaboration, where all parties are similarly invested in and are active contributors to the language work. Another way to practice respectful reciprocity is to evaluate the
benefits coming from the relationship. In Chapter 6, Nathan asks some questions that outsider linguists can consider when evaluating their relationships in language work:

- Where are the community side’s partners on your publication record? How high up do community partners rank in the order of people who are on the list of authors?

- Do community partners get invited to come to conference presentations? Did you find money in the budget to fly them to conferences when you present? Did the group decide who goes to the conference, or did the person in the institution who controls the money decide?

- How do you talk about the community side of your partnership? How do you reference those people? Do you call them by name? Are they your partners, your friends, your colleagues?

- Are you hoarding the language data collected from Indigenous communities? Where is it stored? How is it accessible? If you’re going to do fieldwork, is the community fully aware?

Respect should also transcend the interpersonal dynamic and be demonstrated through institutional relationships and to the Indigenous communities as a whole. Jacob (2012) frames reciprocity between the university and the community as being similar to the relationship of government-to-government, arguing that university leadership should be held to the same standards that are commonly expected from members of Native leadership: to be “community-based, dedicated to honouring our cultures, and working towards decolonization” (2012:180). Framing the partnership in this way “demands respect” for Indigenous communities in language work and puts both parties in a better place to appropriately form and support reciprocal relationships (2012: 189).

Honesty is also a key component in cultivating respectful relationships in language work. Ryan and Nathan both suggested that outsider linguists can show respect in language work by being upfront with Indigenous communities about their intentions for their language work. They point out that reciprocity is not necessarily
required for all research relationships; should a community hire an outsider linguist to help with language work, or if a linguist simply needs a speaker’s input on a single linguistic issue, there is nothing unethical about this kind of short-term, contracted work. In these cases, Ryan and Nathan do not deem it necessary for outsider linguists and the community to embark on a long-term, reciprocal relationship together.

However, should an outsider linguist indicate that they do indeed desire to enter into a reciprocal relationship with an Indigenous community, the linguist then has the responsibility to respect the other party by following through with their intentions. Ryan points out that problems arise when one party purports to desire a relationship in order to obtain what they need, only to abandon their side of the bargain once they have what they came for:

“I know this from firsthand experience speaking with first language speakers who are interviewed by linguists… They’re told that there's going to be some kind of reciprocal relationship in a very vague way. The linguist comes in, does one or two, maybe three interviews, and they absolutely never see them again. And they were expecting some kind of relationship. This still happens. This has recently happened in our community to the point where Indigenous people – they already have the historical baggage from anthropology and linguists who have come into the community. They get their data, they peace out, they get their tenure and they get a new faculty position somewhere else, and you never have to see them again. Meanwhile, they’ve taken what I’d argue in many cases is intellectual property and just given a little thank you at the bottom of it with little consideration for other things.” (PID forthcoming, 00:24:36–00:25:45; Speaker: Ryan DeCaire)

Ryan’s observation about honesty in language work was echoed in different ways in interviews by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants alike. To foster positive reciprocity, outsider linguists must be forthcoming about their needs and capabilities in language work and be willing to follow through in good faith with assertions made on their part during the initial stages of the language work.
7.2.2.2 Obstacles that hinder respect in reciprocal language work

Outsider linguists can hinder the development of respectful reciprocity in language work by adhering to outdated traditions or practices entrenched within academic disciplines. As discussed in Chapter 4, linguist-focused is a traditional research method that is still commonly practiced in Linguistics, and linguist-led work continues to be encouraged and supported by academic institutions in various ways. Ryan and James both note that the requirements set by graduate degree programs in Linguistics also tend to favor linguist-led work; though it may be changing in some institutions, for many students, dissertations and theses must be written and defended as a solo project. This precedent also extends into the world of academic publishing, as the perceived prestige of single-authorship and the importance placed upon the ordering of authors on publications still persists. These kinds of requirements prevent respectful reciprocity in language work by preventing balance between research partners and reinforcing the skewed power dynamic inherent in linguist-focused, linguist-led work.

Another way that outsider linguists can hinder respectful reciprocity in language work is by not considering carefully the way in which the languages spoken by Indigenous Peoples are framed and discussed in academic discourse. In responding to the growing awareness of the worldwide decline of linguistic diversity, linguists designed classification systems to measure linguistic vitality, assigning labels such as *endangered*, *threatened*, *moribund*, and others to languages with few speakers or declining speaker rates (Lee & Van Way 2016; Eberhardt et al 2022; Roche 2017). Owing to the disruption of intergenerational transmission caused by ongoing colonialism and oppression of Indigenous Peoples around the world, many of these labels were inevitably assigned to languages spoken by Indigenous Peoples (Campbell & Rehg 2018). Though these expressions are still commonly used in Linguistics, many Indigenous scholars have expressed a dispreference for these terms to describe Indigenous languages, preferring to adopt instead a framework of revitalization and reclamation to describe what is, in many cases, renewed and growing linguistic vitality (Davis 2017; Leonard 2019).
Outsider linguists who work with Indigenous Peoples and languages must be intentional about framing discourse around Indigenous languages in a way that does not perpetuate pervasive and harmful rhetorics frequently called upon in language work. Ewa discusses her way of thinking about Indigenous languages as a gift shared among respected parties rather than data collected by a linguist:

“[W]hen I'm working with people who are language knowledge keepers and cultural knowledge keepers – that act of working collaboratively is a gift, and the knowledge that is being shared is a gift. So we often talk about, in the Euro-American tradition, about the data that we gather, the data that we record. I'm finding it increasingly difficult to talk about language work, as producing data. I think of it more as language work as a recording of knowledge. It's a gift, to somebody who's not from the community. It’s a gift that is being shared. That's something that’s being given to someone like me as an outsider linguist who is working with the community. So that's the first part of reciprocity, is that being given something through that work.” (PID forthcoming, 00:35:50–00:39:38; Speaker: Ewa Czaykowska-Higgins)

Finally, respect in reciprocal relationships in language work can be hindered by a lack of honesty with oneself and others. Whether intentionally or accidentally, Aidan continues, outsider linguists can at times exaggerate or over-inflate their abilities or potential to be effective. Aidan reflects on the importance of being upfront about one’s interests, capabilities, and limitations at the outset of language work and remaining honest throughout the relationship:

“I also think a lot of it is listening, and being willing to either adapt what you're doing, or say, “You know what, this has been really great, but I don't think what I am able to do, or the skills that I have, are able to address what you're doing.” I think that doesn't really happen very often. Either people do adapt what they do to meet community goals, or they don't, and they don't really say anything. They kind of just co-opt a project so it's nominally about the thing that you discussed, but substantively it's not. It's about just continuing what you were doing
anyways… I don't think there's a problem with just being like, “Oh actually, these things don't align up, but maybe we can line things up in the future somehow.” That's all part of building that trust.” (PID forthcoming, 00:48:30–00:49:30; Speaker: Aidan Pine)

7.2.2.3. Improving respect in reciprocal language work

Outsider linguists have a responsibility to act respectfully in the Indigenous communities in which they work. They must design and carry out language work in a way that shows respect to Indigenous languages, persons, and communities.

- Be honest and upfront about your intentions and capabilities. (Ryan, Nathan)
- Be generous of your time, your spirit, and your openness to learn. (Ewa)
- Listen, be humble, and take direction and correction from others. (Ewa, James)
- Learn the terms and phraseology preferred by Indigenous Peoples when discussing Indigenous languages. Foster positive discourse about Indigenous languages in the public sphere. (Kay)

For outsider linguists to ensure respect in reciprocal relationships, mutuality must be established and ongoing between all parties. Balancing power dynamics in language work by upholding the agency of Indigenous partners in language work is paramount.

- Generate conversation between all parties invested in the language work before the beginning (Aidan).
- Consult with community stakeholders to confirm that the language work will align with and address the needs, desires, and interests of the community (Ryan, Nathan, Keren, Aidan). Listen and follow the lead of others (James).
- Enlist Indigenous partners in language work as co-researchers and collaborators and refer to them as such in presentations and publications. (Nathan)
• Ensure that Indigenous co-researchers and collaborators are also co-presenters at conferences, workshops, and other dissemination platforms. (Nathan)

• Check in regularly with research partners and community stakeholders to ensure accuracy of the work, re-confirm permissions, and solicit advice and direction (Nathan, Aidan).

7.2.3 Reciprocity and responsibility

7.2.3.1. Reciprocity requires honoring responsibility

Reciprocal relationships in language work require that each side of the relationship recognizes and honors their responsibilities to one another. As several participants noted in their interviews, reciprocity is both situationally relative and context-dependent. Responsibilities to reciprocity, by extension, will also be context-dependent. Napier & Whiskeyjack (2021) note that for many Indigenous Peoples in Canada, protocols and laws are community-specific and dictate and regulate how one ought to engage in reciprocity within that space. For outsider linguists new to an Indigenous community, it may take some time to identify what these requirements are; however, it is still the responsibility of the outsider linguist to identify and learn the protocols of their community partners in language work and to honor those responsibilities accordingly.

However, there are responsibilities that apply to most contexts of language work with Indigenous communities in Canada. Minimally, outsider linguists have a responsibility to compensate Indigenous research partners appropriately and fairly for their expertise. In reflecting on her many years of experience within Linguistics, Ewa remarked that the conversations about monetary compensation in language work seem to be changing. The decision of how much to pay participants in research, at one time made unilaterally by the outsider linguist, has shifted to become more of a collaborative endeavor:

“I do think that it's very important for people's time and expertise to be acknowledged appropriately… One of the projects that I was involved in, we had quite a few Elders working with us, and there was a lot of discussion about pay,
but it was more about compensation and salary. There was one Elder who was really pushing the university and us as a project team to think about the expertise that was being brought by people who are knowledge keepers. Why should that be compensated at a rate which is just a pittance when university professors who were working with these knowledge keepers had big salaries? So there was a lot of discussion about compensation there, but it wasn't like, “Do you give them $15 an hour?” and who is it that decides that, or $20. It was more of a discussion in this larger context of who has expertise and how is that appropriately acknowledged.” (PID forthcoming, 00:19:38–00:21:34; Speaker: Ewa Czaykowska-Higgins)

But, as Keren pointed out, the responsibility of the outsider linguist does not end with payment. When I asked her if she saw financial compensation as being a part of reciprocity, Keren insisted that it entails much more than that. However, she also noted that her opinion was context-specific and reflective of her own experiences working with Indigenous communities in Canada:

“[Monetary compensation]’s an obligation that you have when you’re asking somebody to work for you, so I don’t think that’s reciprocity. I would be kind of disturbed if I felt like all I had to do was pay somebody. It’s going to depend on the culture, though. I think all of these things that I’m saying are kind of relative to the places that I’ve worked. There can be other cultures where things are different, so I think you’ve got to be really careful about how you talk about these things.” (PID forthcoming, 00:38:25–00:39:20; Speaker: Keren Rice)

Participants also opined that outsider linguists also have the responsibility to share their linguistic skills to aid and provide support for Indigenous communities. Nathan noted that outsider linguists can leverage their linguistic training in service to community goals towards language reclamation or revitalization. David suggested that linguists engage in capacity-building in Indigenous communities by training and mentoring local language workers:
“I think it would be better received if our people were trained in doing stuff like this and then mentored by linguists. I think that would be well received. Because then the thing about when we have people come and do work for us is when they leave then we don't have the capacity to keep it going.” (PID forthcoming, 00:08:20–00:09:22; Speaker: David [pseudonym])

By sharing linguistic expertise or making oneself available for consultation or assistance, outsider linguists can provide support for local language workers in a way that ensures that they remain the authorities over language work in their own community. This kind of support fosters capacity-building within the community and ensures that the community will not have to continually rely on outsiders to keep projects going.

Finally, outsider linguists also have a responsibility to familiarize themselves with and honor not only the protocols set forth by Indigenous communities, but also the laws, policies, and regulations of official proclamations designed to protect Indigenous communities. All persons conducting human research in Canada should be acquainted with and abide by the guidelines set forth by the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS), The Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession principles (OCAP), the Utility, Self-Voicing, Access, and Inter-Relationality Research framework (USAI), and the Inuit ethical principles (see Chapter 4 for further discussion of these principles).

During our discussion, Kay specifically mentions the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC, also commonly shortened as simply \textit{reconciliation}) and encourages outsider linguists in Canada to think about their responsibilities toward reconciliation in their work:

“This is something I've thought about with reconciliation. There's lots to talk about in that, but for me, on this, everybody's involved in reconciliation. How do we prepare people to be in reconciliation? I honestly think about that…

[M]y job is to help teachers talk about and learn about Métis people and Métis life, because they're responsible to be part of reconciliation. They're responsible to Métis students and Métis community now. How do we make them ready? In
general, especially in language revitalization, how do we make our nation ready, and America ready for revitalization? How do we foster that?” (PID forthcoming, 00:42:41–00:43:41; Speaker: Kay [pseudonym])

The TRC is a committee dedicated to reporting the history of Canada’s residential school system and uncovering the legacy of atrocities committed against Indigenous children in its care. Upon releasing its official report in 2015, the TRC also “published 94 ‘calls to action’ urging all levels of government — federal, provincial, territorial and aboriginal — to work together to change policies and programs in a concerted effort to repair the harm caused by residential schools and move forward with reconciliation” (Mas 2015). Of the 94 calls to action, eight of them include provisions concerning Indigenous languages: five under the Language and Culture subheading, two under Media and Reconciliation, and one under Education (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015). Outsider linguists working with and within Indigenous communities in Canada have the responsibility to be aware of these and other calls to action, and should consider how they can support Truth and Reconciliation in Canada by incorporating them into their language work.

7.2.3.2 Obstacles that hinder honoring responsibilities in reciprocal language work

As discussed in 7.2.2, Linguistics departments and academia as a whole is structured in a way that prioritizes and supports the academic researcher – in this case, the outsider linguist – to complete the degree milestones for their academic work. Additional responsibilities posed by reciprocal relationships formed with Indigenous community partners may be deemed peripheral to program requirements and thus fall outside of the spheres of support provided by these institutions. Furthermore, the unending daily pressures of academic life such as teaching, attending meetings, and responding to

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56 To maintain consistency in terminology throughout the dissertation, I choose to use Indigenous in this description, even though the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: 94 Calls to Action document uses Aboriginal throughout. See Chapter 3 for further discussion of these terms.
emails can take up an extraordinary amount of the outsider linguists’ time and distract from the kinds of activities needed to nurture and maintain a reciprocal relationship.

During our discussion, James assessed the lack of honoring responsibilities in language work as being due to systemic pressures imposed by the academic structure rather than an unwillingness or moral failing on the part of the individual:

“[I]n my experience, I’ve met almost only people that evince good intentions, and they seem to want to be a part of work to document/preserve/revitalize Indigenous languages. And I think that the failures in reciprocity come primarily from – again this is just my experience – but it seems to me like a lot of the failures related to reciprocity come from outside pressures rather than internal failings and bad motivations and a lack of caring…

[T]hat’s just what I keep coming back to again and again... very often the parties involved, everyone has good intentions, and people want to do the right thing. And then outside forces derail that… I think the bigger things that stand in the way of enacting reciprocity are systemic institutional pressures.” (PID forthcoming, 00:58:02–01:00:08; Speaker: James [pseudonym])

Aidan agreed, noting that in his experience, the honoring responsibilities considered peripheral to academic work was a result of individuals subverting the academic systems rather than systems themselves changing to provide support:

“I also think it's a failing of the structure of academia, where it's constantly putting emphasis on publishing, and publishing new things, and not maintaining published ideas. That leads to a lot of failed reciprocity or situations where people don't feel like they've gotten what they thought they would get out of it.

By contrast, I have seen people kind of circumvent these things, and go above and beyond, and find money to fund researchers, or find money to hire engineers… people have done all types of things, too. But it's usually the individual researcher that is subverting the system, as opposed to a university-wide directive to say, “We recognize that reciprocity is important in our research
projects, and here is an engineering team to help maintain that valuable project.” I don’t think that exists anywhere in Canada, actually.” (PID forthcoming, 00:41:30–00:43:00; Speaker: Aidan Pine)

Another hindrance to honoring responsibilities in reciprocal language work is that outsider linguists may think they are already doing enough to address reciprocity in their work. Traditionally within Linguistics, reciprocity in language work has been expressed as returning the products of research to the language community at or towards the completion of research objectives. Though these products have generally reflected the framework of linguist-driven research, including linguistic grammars, recordings, and transcriptions, in recent years, have shifted to reflect the perceived needs of Indigenous communities, including dictionaries, pedagogical grammars, and phrasebooks. This framework of “giving back” to Indigenous communities in this way has emerged as a common byproduct of the conversation surrounding research ethics in Linguistics, with the idea of giving back becoming almost synonymous with reciprocity in research produced by outsider linguists (K. Rice 2011; Woods 2017).

Curious about what participants thought of this supposed synonymy, I asked directly about the relationship between giving back and reciprocity:

*What is the difference between reciprocity and giving back?*

*How are they similar/different?*

Participants disagreed that the concepts were synonymous and identified two distinct semantic connotations to the idea of giving back. The primary connotation of giving back – the way that it is currently being practiced in Linguistics – is giving back as a form of resource return. In this framework, outsider linguists will partner or consult with Indigenous communities in order to do linguistic research or language work, then will give back the products of research to that community at or towards the completion of research objectives. Participants had problems with this sense of giving back, arguing that it was a very different notion than reciprocity:

“The goal oftentimes of that researcher is not to help with the language. It's to get their dissertation done or to get tenure by publishing as fast as possible. And
usually giving back by providing a copy of the research or in whatever format comes in is just a way out from actually doing meaningful work with the community, in my opinion, most of the time. And then often those things are intellectually inaccessible to the community. I always think it’s so technical that nobody's ever going to use it. They haven't been trained how to use it, or read it, or how it actually fits with what is important to the community. So it's nice that they give back and show what they did. Is it reciprocal? No, because likely in that case, the community didn't want that research to be done in the first place or had no interest in it being done and doesn't understand how it's any important to their goals, to the community, or the community organization.” (PID forthcoming, 00:18:29–19:47; Speaker: Ryan DeCaire)

Considering giving back the products of language work to an Indigenous community as an act of reciprocity can also imply a sense of taking or stealing on the part of the outsider linguist. This calls into question the ownership of that which was supposedly being given:

“I think [reciprocity and giving back] are very similar, but giving back assumes that you took, right? Something had to be removed in order to be given back. So in that ideal relationship, nothing is ever removed. Everything is always together, and each side just pulls out of the pool whatever is needed…

[I]t depends on how you understand that ‘giving back.’ Like in the context of land – “Oh, let's give back the land” – okay, yeah, we're giving back the land because it was stolen. In terms of resources at museums, our intangible cultural heritage or intangible cultural property – “Oh we're going to give it back, because we shouldn't have taken it.” The language can get tied up there, especially with the idea of land back. So in the altruistic understanding of ‘give back,’ I think it's fine. It makes sense that we're giving back. But in the other, more immediate sense of stolen land, and stolen children, and stolen languages, and stolen resources, then it can be kind of tricky.” (PID forthcoming, 00:45:18–00:47:03; Speaker: Nathan Brinklow)
Finally, giving back as resource return is also problematic in that it frames language work as a one-sided endeavor and insinuates that the work is owned and controlled by the outsider linguist:

“It should never have gone anywhere. It was always available, this thing that you did. And [giving back] implies singular action or singular ownership. That “I am the one who's doing this” as opposed to, “we are the ones who are doing this.”... You can't give a resource back to the community for ownership, because, well, my name is on this, too. It's something that we did together. This is the result of our labor, our time together. This is what happened. This is what became of it. And so just being careful around that language, because it implies that one person did something, or one institution owns something.” (PID forthcoming, 00:48:55–00:49:52; Speaker: Nathan Brinklow)

“I see 'giving back' as determined by the researcher and reciprocity is determined jointly. So for me, they're different. I think that they could be similar, but I think that I read too many of those NSF proposals where it was, “What am I going to do for the community? I'm going to give them my thesis.” And that's not the right thing... I think it can't be just controlled by the researcher.” (PID forthcoming, 00:36:28–00:37:23; Speaker: Keren Rice)

As evinced by the arguments made by Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants alike, the connotation of giving back as gifting the products of research to the Indigenous community from which the primary data came is an idea distinctly separate from reciprocity. Giving back practiced as simple resource return not only neglects the spirit of reciprocity but also reflects the colonial logic of possession (or publication) as ownership in academia:

“The scholarly practice that says that the first to publish certain facts or information about a culture has "ownership" over that material ensures that knowledge that belonged to indigenous people, like their land in many cases, is slowly appropriated by the colonizers. It does not matter that indigenous people have owned certain secrets or principles about their cultures since time
immemorial. If a native reveals certain knowledge to a researcher, who publishes it in a book or journal, the researcher is the one cited in the works of other academics” (Hereniko 2000:88).

Indigenous Peoples undoubtedly retain ownership over their intellectual property, including their languages, before, during, and after language work, regardless of whether or not outsider linguists happen to be in possession of language data during that time (see Palosaari 2016; Kukutai & Taylor 2016 for further discussion on Indigenous intellectual property rights). For outsider linguists to pretend otherwise is extractive and exploitative, and perpetuates violence against Indigenous Peoples and languages. Participants concluded that outsider linguists have the responsibility to ensure that the language and language work remains under the care of its rightful owners, but noted that this action alone does not constitute reciprocity in language work with Indigenous communities. In order to honor Indigenous data sovereignty and show respect for Indigenous ownership over intellectual property, outsider linguists must reject this connotation of giving back as being an example of reciprocity in their work.

However, participants also noted a second, more benevolent connotation of giving back that speaks to more altruistic motives of the outsider linguist:

“I think in that way of understanding – if you're like, “Oh, I'm giving back to the community, the community's given me so much and I'm giving back to them” – that's great! Give back of your labor, give back of your thinking… The stuff you've done, the stuff you've created… [the mindset of] “I have benefited so much, and this is something I can do. I'm going to pass this over to the community for them to have, for them to take care of.”” (PID forthcoming, 00:47:13–00:48:09; Speaker: Nathan Brinklow)

Giving back your time, labor, and thinking to a relationship which has given to you reflects the exchange of benefits characteristic of reciprocity in language work. This sentiment of altruism and wanting to give back to the community that has given much is a connotation of giving back that aligns more closely with the spirit of reciprocity as
described by participants. For Keren, the desire to give back in this way can even instigate reciprocal relationships in language work:\footnote{Keren Rice – a participant of this study – wrote the following in an article published back in 2011: ”It is not surprising... that linguists would want to give back. At the same time, given the close working relationships that linguists often develop with the speakers they work with, field linguists might feel that they are already involved in collaborative relationships, and that giving notes and products of research, or developing a reader, is an appropriate form of giving back. It is thus worthwhile to look at the notion of collaboration a little more deeply” (2011: 199–200). For me, this passage uncovered the two conflicting connotations of giving back discussed here. Inspired by her words, I chose to follow her advice and look more deeply into reciprocity in language work as a dissertation topic.}

“I don’t think that you’re going to be able to be reciprocal without wanting to give back in some way.” (PID forthcoming, 00:37:57–38:06; Speaker: Keren Rice)

7.2.3.3. Improving the honoring of responsibilities in reciprocal language work

Outsider linguists working with and within Indigenous communities in language work can work to better honor their responsibilities toward reciprocity. Because reciprocity is a concept that is context-dependent, outsider linguists have the responsibility to educate themselves about the language, the people, the history, and the protocols of the communities in which they do language work.

- Learn more about culture and protocols as sociological concepts and learn how to study it. Familiarize yourself with how language factors into and influences Indigenous cultures. (Keren).

- Educate yourself early about the many aspects of Indigenous community you work in, including its history, protocols, and current/aspiring language reclamation efforts. Evaluate how you as an outsider linguist will fit into this dynamic. (James)

- Learn to speak the Indigenous language you work with and use it whenever possible. (Ryan)
• Familiarize yourself with the existing guidelines, policies, regulations, and legislation concerning Indigenous Peoples and languages at all levels of governance. Align your work to reflect these ethical mandates.

• Learn enough to be helpful to the Indigenous communities in which you work. Identify the community's goals for the language, then identify the skills you have or work to acquire the skills necessary to address this need. (Nathan, Aidan)

Outsider linguists have the responsibility to share their resources, knowledge, skills, training, and expertise to enable local language workers in Indigenous communities.

• Pay research partners fairly as commensurate with their expertise. Ensure that the discussion concerning appropriate compensation is cooperative and includes all parties involved in the work (James, Keren)

• Provide linguistic training when requested and foster the capacity-building of language workers within the community. (David)

• Offer advice or assistance in developing, improving, or maintaining data management systems, strategies for language revitalization, tools for linguistic analysis, etc. (David, James)

• Volunteer your time, labor, and resources as a way of giving back to the community. Encourage outsider colleagues to do similarly. (Nathan)

Outsider linguists have the responsibility to acknowledge and honor the sovereignty of Indigenous Peoples over their languages and associated language work.

• Ask community partners directly how you can be of service to already existing language reclamation initiatives rather than approaching communities with an already-formed research plan. (Kay)

• Keep the language work and the money local to the community. Where possible, house language projects and Indigenous intellectual property in the community. (Ryan)
● Engage in collaborative and community-based language work, and acknowledge the creation of knowledge as an exercise in co-production. Publicly recognize and defer to the expertise of Indigenous persons in regards to the language. (David, Nathan)

● Recognize and respect Indigenous ownership of intellectual property at all stages of research. Avoid hoarding language materials or storing them in a way that makes them inaccessible to the community (Ryan, Nathan).

7.2.4 Reciprocity and relevance

7.2.4.1. Reciprocity requires prioritizing relevance

Reciprocal language work is work that is relevant to both the outsider linguist and the Indigenous community and takes into account and addresses the needs, desires, and interests of all parties involved. However, Ryan and Nathan note that this kind of reciprocity in relevance is often lacking in language work done by outsider linguists, who often arrive in Indigenous communities with research plans already drafted and in-hand. In these cases, it is not always obvious how the technical linguistic research posited and carried out by outsider linguists could be relevant, useful, or even interesting to Indigenous communities, whose goals generally tend to focus on language reclamation and improving speaker numbers:

“I find that when it comes to Indigenous communities, usually what Indigenous communities want are, like I said earlier, applied linguists. People who really want to understand how their work has an impact on language revitalization today and tomorrow. People just want simple questions answered, like, how is this going to increase speakers tomorrow? And if it's not that clear, then they're probably not going to be that interested.” (PID forthcoming, 00:29:01–00:29:45; Speaker: Ryan DeCaire)

[T]hat doesn't mean that an Indigenous community wouldn't be interested in theoretical linguistic work, but I'm going to say 95, maybe 99.9% of the time,
they're not going to be. Most of them are interested in the practical means to help revitalize their language through applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, those kinds of things.” (PID forthcoming, 00:19:47–00:20:26; Speaker: Ryan DeCaire)

However, the opposite can also be the case; language work that aligns with and contributes to the reclamation goals of the community may not always be relevant to the goals or research of the outsider linguist. The priorities dictated by Linguistics, along with the associated expectations placed upon outsider linguists, can be unrelated to or in conflict with the desires of the Indigenous communities. During our discussion, James pointed out that, from the academic side of things, prioritizing relevance can put outsider linguists in precarious situations within their degree programs or professional careers:

“There’s also the pressures from institutions that make you produce certain kinds of products. So me in my relationship-building, saying, like, “Hey, I'm here to kind of do whatever you need.” That was me, quite honestly, taking a big risk from my side of things. Because as a student, I have to produce things that fall into certain categories. Dissertations can only be about a certain subset of things out in the world, right? And you have to produce things like articles that are publishable, and those have to be certain kinds of articles. They can’t be other kinds.” (PID forthcoming, 00:42:45–00:43:48; Speaker: James [pseudonym])

In carrying out language work with and within Indigenous communities, the outsider linguist may also be asked or expected to contribute to language work that brings benefit to the community but has little or no bearing on their own personal or professional interests. Expectations that come with reciprocal relationships in language work may even entail the outsider linguist performing tasks that are not language-related, such as participating in community events, helping someone with errands, or babysitting children. In discussing her experiences with language in Indigenous communities, Keren pointed out that sometimes building reciprocal relationships in language work is simply doing what is asked of you:

“I did all kinds of things that I would say are reciprocal, but I don't know that other people would define them in that way. I did lots of babysitting, I did a lot of
cooking for people… I did people’s income tax for them, so things like that. Things that weren't really involved with language at all, but they were the things I could do…

I was often asked to take on those kinds of things. And so I think that then you have to realize that if you want to really get to know people in the community and really work with them, then you're not there only as a linguist, you're there as a person. And you've got to do the work that they want you to do. That helps build up the relationships, and then that's what leads to the reciprocity.” (PID forthcoming, 00:03:52–00:05:53; Speaker: Keren Rice)

7.2.4.2. Obstacles that hinder reciprocal relevance in language work

The mismatch in priorities between outsider linguists and Indigenous communities can generate conflict within relationships unless actively prevented against. In order to “traverse these competing priorities” in language work, Hermes et al. (2012) recommend that all invested parties come together to find areas of overlap in interests and priorities (2012: 390). This may entail branching out of traditional pathways in language work, such as providing training in applied linguistics for community members and/or outsider linguists collaborating with communities to ensure relevance in the project. Shifting the priority of the discipline of Linguistics “away from content- and object-centered analysis” to a framework that prioritizes “relationality and reciprocity” instead can make for more relevant language work for all parties (Hermes et al. 2012: 396).

Another factor preventing the development of reciprocal relationships in language work is that Linguistic programs generally do not explicitly train students to instigate, develop, and maintain reciprocal relationships with Indigenous communities. James pointed out that even if outsider linguists do choose to take on a project that is relevant to community needs, they may lack the training and support to appropriately engage with and address these needs:
"Linguistics traditionally trains people to do a certain kind of work, and that work isn't necessarily what people from language communities want, what they express that they want and need from outsiders. So you have a bunch of linguists with very good intentions that are very interested in the revitalization or reclamation of language and culture, but they're not trained. They don't have the kind of training that they need for that. So that's definitely a big indicator of a problem related to reciprocity. Like, I can write a grammar for you, and that's valuable, and that is useful. You can use that for something like language teaching. But I don't know anything about — I'm speaking as this person — I don't know anything about designing curriculum, or language lessons, or doing evaluations of students to figure out if they're learning language the way that the community wants to be learning it, that kind of thing. Like, developing the proficiencies that they want, and all that kind of stuff. Linguists just aren't trained for that, I think, generally. At least the kind of linguists that tend to operate in this neck of the woods." (PID forthcoming, 00:56:14–00:57:33; Speaker: James [pseudonym])

Keren muses that this lack of training may be due in part to Linguistics' move away from its Anthropology roots:

"[I]f you look at Anthropology where they're doing a lot of field work, and they're trying to get kind of inside of a community, they're not going for two weeks at a time, or anything like that. They're going for longer time periods, and they're trying to get at larger questions...[W]e've got to disabuse ourselves of the idea that you can complete a PhD in five years. You've just got to allow for and say this is really anthropological-type work" (PID forthcoming, 00:24:24–00:25:48; Speaker: Keren Rice)

"It's kind of a return to some of the anthropological traditions, but in a different way. I think that's an important part of it." (PID forthcoming, 00:57:32–00:57:46; Speaker: Keren Rice)
Earlier linguists like Boas and Sapir studied and documented Indigenous languages in North America when linguistics was simply one of four components that comprised the discipline of Anthropology. During the second half of the twentieth century, however, Linguistics began to separate from Anthropology and form as a discrete discipline. Floyd (2018) notes that the development of formal Linguistics, which focuses on competence, not performance, stands as a benchmark for the field’s move away from more anthropological practices:

“One side effect of this approach [in Linguistics] was that the diverse languages studied in more anthropological-oriented approaches became irrelevant for many linguists, who believed that they could get sufficient results from English and other familiar languages. This left work on indigenous languages and their cultural contexts in the hands of a mixture of field linguists, who continued to describe indigenous languages despite the prevailing climate, and linguistic anthropologists.” (Floyd 2018: 373)

As a result of the discipline’s shifted focus, students within Linguistics programs are often not explicitly taught how to engage with the human aspects of language, including developing relationships with Indigenous research partners. Ewa notes that this lack of preparation for students means that they are often expected to figure their way through these situations on their own:

“I think there's really not a lot of acknowledgment in the way that Linguistics teaches language documentation work to students. There's not a lot of acknowledgment yet in the ways in which language work involves relationship… I think there's still a lot of learning that needs to go on, and a lot of decolonizing and rethinking of what it means to do scientific language work.” (PID forthcoming, 00:50:43–00:51:54; Speaker: Ewa Czaykowska-Higgins)

7.2.4.3. Improving relevance in reciprocal language work

Based on the observations made by participants in this study, outsider linguists can take intentional steps to improve reciprocal relationships in language work by making sure
their work is relevant to Indigenous communities. First, they can leverage degree requirements strategically.

- Leverage the homework assigned in academic courses to design language work that responds to the needs of Indigenous communities. (Nathan)
- Be creative when drafting your dissertation or thesis. Designate part of your document to be written in a way that contributes to the language community (Keren).
- Re-frame writing to make it easily accessible and understandable by non-academic audiences (Nathan).

Finally, outsider linguists should be willing to accommodate and address the needs and interests of others. By keeping research plans open and flexible, outsider linguists adapt language work to be maximally relevant to Indigenous communities.

- Keep your mindset and your research plans open to change. (James)
- Listen to community partners and be willing to adapt yourself accordingly. (Aidan)
- Make your language work as easily accessible to communities as possible. Avoid heavy jargon, and think beyond specialized reference materials typical of Linguistics. (Ryan).

7.3 Summary

In this chapter, I provided an analysis of reciprocity in language work by examining more closely two aspects of this study that provoked discomfort for participants during the interviews: the proposed dichotomy of insider- and outsidersness in language work and the isolation of reciprocity as a concept as an object of study. I revisited these issues raised by participants in order to identify and more deeply explore the sources of their unease. This exercise proved useful in providing valuable feedback about the study’s design as well as uncovered insights about reciprocity in language work that
informed and supported the recommendations made by participants.

First, I explored the discomfort generated by asking participants to identify themselves as insiders or outsiders in language work. While non-Indigenous contributors identified themselves clearly and emphatically as outsiders in the language work that they are a part of, Indigenous contributors commented on the fluidity of the categories, identifying themselves as both insiders and outsiders in language work, depending on the context. These observations made by participants highlighted the ambiguity inherent in insider- and outsiderness in language work and effectively refuted the dichotomy I had constructed in order to more thoroughly explore how outsiderness influences reciprocity in language work.

Next, I considered the discomfort expressed by participants in discussing reciprocity as an isolated, abstract concept. Though I had intended for this study to focus specifically on reciprocity in order to uncover ways it could better be practiced by outsider linguists working with Indigenous communities in Canada, participants expressed implicitly and explicitly that this was likely not the best framework through which to explore reciprocity. Taking into account the participants’ concerns and the Indigenist methodology guiding this study, I pivoted the analysis provided in this chapter to reflect instead the relationality connecting reciprocity with other important values in language work such as relationships, respect, responsibility, and relevance. Through this lens, I revisited the interviews to discuss in more depth participants’ conceptions of reciprocity in language work, the obstacles they identified as preventing reciprocity from taking place, and recommendations made to inform and guide outsider linguists toward improving reciprocal relationships in language work with Indigenous communities in Canada.

In this chapter, I have considered the concept of reciprocity through a relational framework in two distinct ways. First, I identified and explained how reciprocity as a concept in language work could be considered in conjunction with other similar concepts such as relationality, respect, responsibility, and relevance. This form of analysis demonstrates the interconnectedness and relational nature of knowledge
(Leonard 2021) and is also consistent with an Indigenist methodology as well as Indigenous epistemologies and interpretations of reciprocity as described in Chapter 3.

Second, I have emphasized that reciprocity is a value that can only be expressed through relationships with others. All participants in the study identified relationships as being a necessary prerequisite to reciprocity, noting that any expressions of reciprocity would needfully be expressed within a relational context. Interestingly, this interpretation of reciprocity is consistent with both Indigenous and Western definitions of the term – reciprocity is mutual, and as such cannot occur in isolation. This entails that reciprocal research must also be as such – mutually carried out, not in isolation, but with and within the confines of community.

Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991) originally introduced the four Rs of ethical research with Indigenous persons as “respect, relevance, reciprocity, and reciprocity” (1991: 100). Other scholars have since added and emphasized relationality as another important R (Wilson 2008; Carjuzaa & Fenimore-Smith 2010). During our discussion, Nathan jokingly remarked upon the popularity that “the Rs” have since gained in research:

“To just kind of sit with reciprocity for a while, well, you have to think about relationship – all the Rs. I'm pretty sure that someone's writing papers out there, just looking at a dictionary, going through the R section like, “What word could we use? What are we missing? I know there's another R here” just because someone wants to have the latest one.” (PID forthcoming, 00:53:28–00:54:17; Speaker: Nathan Brinklow)

While said in jest, Nathan’s comment also alludes to the important notion of keeping an open mind in regard to interconnectedness. Although the analysis provided in this dissertation focuses on reciprocity as related to “the four Rs” of relationality, respect, responsibility, and relevance, it is important to note that these terms are not the only ones that matter when it comes to considering reciprocal relationships in language work. Verbiage such as this can be significant in guiding all linguists toward ethical research, but a framework of reciprocal relationality positions us to also remain vigilant
in observing additional interconnectedness and reminds us to honor the responsibilities that are inherent within that relationality.
Chapter 8: Future directions

In this chapter, I take a step back to consider the progression of this study and explore possible next steps for this work. First, I consider how this study could be improved upon (8.1), then I describe my intentions for disseminating the results of this study (8.2). Finally, I revisit the benefits of this study as described in Chapter 5 in order to consider how these benefits could be expanded and extended to include Indigenous communities in Canada (8.3).

8.1 Avenues for improving or building upon this study

In Chapter 7, I highlighted discomforts expressed by participants during the interview process, including the insider/outsider dichotomy and the isolation of reciprocity from other important values, as critiques of this study. In addition to these points, I identify within this subsection possible alternatives to the methods and scope of this study that could alter or improve this analysis of reciprocity in language work.

One of the most valuable outcomes of this project has been to witness the progression of this work and its developing interpretations of reciprocity. As described in Chapter 7, this study began with a Western-centered approach of isolating reciprocity as a discrete concept; in analyzing emergent themes from the interview data, I pivoted to instead prioritize a relationality-centered analysis, a lens that more accurately reflected the spirit of reciprocity and my intentions for this study. Were I to begin anew up at the top of the circle of this research cycle once more, I would likely alter my approach to incorporate this relational lens at the very beginning of the research.

Taylor-Adams (2022) is a great example of this principle in practice; she demonstrates and advocates for the Relational Applied Research model, an approach that “uses principles of respect, relationality, and reciprocity to inform research questions, research design, and research dissemination” (2022: 407). I believe the Relational Applied Research model as described by Taylor-Adams is very much aligned with the spirit of this work, and I believe it would be an incredibly appropriate model in which to conduct a renewed examination of reciprocity.
Additionally, as discussed in Chapter 5, most of the interviewing for this study took place during the Covid-19 pandemic; as a result, most of the interviews were limited to online Zoom discussions between myself and one other participant at a time. As the world continues to settle into post-pandemic normalcy here in 2022, I am intrigued to consider how this study could benefit from utilizing different, possibly in-person research methods. During his interview, Ryan suggested that methods like focus groups or talking circles could be a better way to go about studying a concept like reciprocity. He raised the interesting point that group conversations can often stimulate ideas not thought of in a one-on-one dynamic.

“I feel like this one way that you're trying to [explore reciprocity in language work] is by interviewing people like me and others, and you're going to pull from that. Yeah, that's a great way of doing it. I think a better way is having those people come together in some kind of focus group to hash it out, especially key stakeholders. Because sometimes having that just one-on-one conversation, you and me, isn't going to pull out what would if you could have other people from local Indigenous communities, like myself – or maybe not like myself, people who aren't working at the university – coming together to have these discussions. It might pull some critical ideas from that that we all individually couldn't think of.” (PID forthcoming, 00:47:47–00:48:56; Speaker: Ryan DeCaire).

Finally, changing or narrowing the scope of this research could also benefit this investigation of reciprocity. In the study discussed within this dissertation, I interviewed Indigenous linguists and language workers representing multiple First Nations from three different Canadian provinces and territories; I also interviewed non-Indigenous linguists and language workers with a wide variety of experiences from across Canada (see Figure 5.2). I expect that different aspects of reciprocity in language work could emerge from alternative criteria for participation. Rather than take a more general approach to reciprocity as practiced in language work by linguists and language workers from across Canada, as I have done in this study, a different approach could be to
consider what reciprocity in language work might look like specifically within a single context, such as within one project, community, institution, or province/territory.

8.2 Dissemination of findings

Next, I look back over the progression of this study to consider how best to disseminate the results of this work. As discussed in Chapter 1, I had four primary goals in undertaking this study on reciprocity in language work:

1) To develop guidelines/recommendations that will aid outsider linguists in practicing appropriate, ethical, reciprocal language work with and within Indigenous communities in Canada.

2) To improve the conduct of outsider linguists who work with and with Indigenous communities in Canada.

3) To advocate for relational reciprocity as an approach to language work with and within Indigenous communities in Canada.

4) To stimulate ethical discussion and improvement to the discipline of Linguistics.

Within this dissertation, I have been able to clearly satisfy two of these goals: the first, developing recommendations, and the third, to advocate for relational reciprocity. The other two – improving the conduct of outsider linguists and stimulating a discussion within Linguistics – will require careful consideration of how, where, and to whom the results of this study will be disseminated.

During the early stages of developing this research, I was questioned by members of my dissertation committee as to how I would share the results that would come from this work. I had proposed to develop recommendations to aid outsider linguists in reciprocal language work, but how could I ensure that outsider linguists would hear about them? While I was clearly expecting to share the results through the writing of this dissertation, I also knew that this act alone would not be sufficient to distribute the recommendations in a way that would benefit others. Upon asking my committee for guidance in this matter, they recommended that I put the question to
participants of the study to find out how they felt the recommendations should be shared.

To this end, I included this question as the penultimate prompt of the interview:

\textit{One of the goals of this research is to develop guidelines or recommendations to aid outsider linguists engaged in language work. What should be done with these guidelines or recommendations? How could these be best used to encourage language workers to practice reciprocity?}

Participants responded with creative and helpful advice. Ryan remarked that Linguistics departments could benefit from these types of recommendations.

“I think that it would be great to have those be used to inform the underlying curriculum of Linguistics departments in Canada and the United States. Especially with many departments trying to restructure on the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action that a lot of universities are trying to play a role in activating. So I think that, yeah, these should be sent to Linguistics programs, to departments, because a lot of programs are kind of tackling some of these questions that you're asking. I've seen a couple of other similar, not quite the same as yours, but similar, Master's theses here and there. So there's people asking these questions, and people trying to do better, and everybody's, I think, trying to reinvent the wheel sometimes. So, yeah, I think sending this to Linguistics degree departments throughout Canada would be super helpful.” (PID forthcoming, 00:48:56–00:50:00; Speaker: Ryan DeCaire)

Nathan and James agreed with Ryan, highlighting the impact that this kind of guidance could have on students in Linguistics who are interested in working with Indigenous populations. They conveyed the urgency of fostering ethical frameworks in language work early on in students’ careers, ideally before they have had a chance to develop bad habits.

“I think it's very important educating linguists, educating professional up-and-coming linguists. This kind of thing should be core reading in LING 100 classes.
Maybe not LING 100, but like Intro to Fieldwork. It's like, if you want to do something in Linguistics with people, this is what you need to know before you even start. You need to challenge your assumptions and challenge yourself – is this what I really want? You'll need to have access to resources like this. So making things accessible to students before they get into bad habits, before they set those poor expectations in their own career trajectories.” (PID forthcoming, 00:58:22–00:59:15; Speaker: Nathan Brinklow)

“I think that recommendations and guidelines would be really good for students. These would be the kind of things that graduate students need to engage with, very early, probably ideally before they even go to graduate school. Faculty need to be aware of these guidelines and recommendations, and need to be able to help implement them in practice.” (PID forthcoming, 01:21:42–01:22:41; Speaker: James [pseudonym])

James emphasized the importance of presenting undergraduate students with a realistic view of what reciprocal relationships look like in language work with Indigenous communities. He argued that neglecting to prepare students in this way can set them up for difficulty or disillusionment later on.

“I definitely think that undergraduates are a prime population that is – I don't want to say neglected, but they're overlooked, right? Because you end up getting graduate students that have unrealistic pictures of what's possible, and then they hit the wall of reality.” (PID forthcoming, 01:24:28–01:26:17; Speaker: James [pseudonym])

Keren, James, and Ryan also opined that these recommendations, as well as open discussions of reciprocity in language work, would be beneficial for Linguistics-focused publications, conferences, and language institutes across North America.58

58 See page iii for a full list of abbreviations listed in this section.
“I think they could go through the organizations like SSILA and the LSA.” (PID forthcoming, 00:44:16–00:45:34; Speaker: Keren Rice)

“[W]here I've learned the most are outlets like LD&C, or conferences like ICLDC, or places like CoLang or CILLDI, or probably AILDI... Those are all really good places to reach people with particular guidelines and recommendations. (PID forthcoming, 01:24:28–01:26:17; Speaker: James [pseudonym])

“Having discussions of this at major linguistic conferences, aside from things like revitalization, and syntax, phonology, et cetera. Why isn't there a research stream on linguistics ethics, research ethics? That often gets just folded into field methods, but as a topic Itself.” (PID forthcoming, 00:50:00–00:50:48; Speaker: Ryan DeCaire)

Finally, Aidan and James brainstormed other places that these kinds of recommendations could reach, suggesting that they be included in open access journals, personal and professional websites, and blogs. They stressed the importance of these recommendations being easily digestible and openly accessible by a wide variety of audiences outside of academia.

“I think that's really nice, when you can somehow synthesize all of this complicated stuff that you're going to get from all of these people into probably a handful of takeaways, and then have those handful of takeaways, if you can condense them into lines, then expand those out somewhere into really more fleshed out bits. You want the thirty-second pitch, and you want the thirty-minute pitch, and everything in between. And publishing probably on like a blog or multiple blogs.” (PID forthcoming, 00:52:30–00:53:00; Speaker: Aidan Pine)

“Places that are public, and free, and widely available...in the short term, it'd be...something that would at least reach the kind of outsider audiences that would be interested in this kind of stuff. A website, probably. Something people can share easily.” (PID forthcoming, 01:21:42–01:23:37; Speaker: James [pseudonym])
With all of this good advice in mind, I take this first step of disseminating these recommendations by articulating them plainly within this dissertation. I will share this dissertation with the participants of this study, as discussed in Chapter 6, as well as with the committee tasked with evaluating this dissertation. As outlined in Chapter 5, I also intend to deposit the dissertation alongside participant transcripts into Kaipuleohone, the digital language archive of the University of Hawai`i. Finally, I have submitted abstracts to share these recommendations at the upcoming ICLDC and SSILA annual meetings in 2023. What will come beyond these steps is still uncertain; however, I do intend to draw upon the advice provided by participants to adapt this dissertation in a way that will make these recommendations easily accessible and implementable by other outsider linguists in language work.

8.3 Expanding the benefits of the study

In Chapter 5, I discussed the benefits that I observed and expected to come from this research. First, I offered all who chose to participate in the study either a $15 (CAD) gift card to either Tim Horton’s or a $15 donation to any charity of the participant’s choosing. This turned out to be a popular option, as most of the participants chose to forgo the coffee card and donate their $15 to charity, which went to two different charities, Indspire and RAVEN (see Chapter 5). Next, I considered my own benefits of this dissertation, including the completion of my doctorate degree and the expansion of my academic network to include well-known professional scholars within Linguistics and related fields.

However, in order to produce the kind of reciprocal work that this dissertation advocates for, the benefits of this study must extend beyond advantages afforded to the author. If this research is to truly adhere to an Indigenist methodology, then it must surpass mere ‘compensation for participation’ to actively contribute and bring benefit to others, especially for Indigenous people and communities in Canada.

59 https://hdl.handle.net/10125/4250.
As described in the previous subsection, I asked participants during the interviews how they felt these recommendations could be shared with others in order to encourage outsider linguists to practice reciprocity in their work. In sharing these opinions, two participants also gave suggestions as to how this study could bring additional benefit to others.

Similar to Kay’s recommendation of translating “academic speak” (see 6.4), Nathan recommended repackaging the content of this dissertation to be explained in a way that could be helpful for Indigenous communities.

“So by giving community language to help them… It's not the community's responsibility to speak the language of linguists, of professional linguists, but it helps if there are resources. If a community needs to do that, then they have the ability, then they can… So, I don’t know, maybe that's a component, right? That this is how different things can be understood. That this is a language we’re using, this is the language we linguists will use, and this is a translation into kind of the way real people speak, if you're not in the university. So that kind of thing. Finding ways to bridge the gap and make it useful for everybody.” (PID forthcoming, 01:01:33–01:02:45; Speaker: Nathan Brinklow)

Finally, Nathan and Aidan both suggested crafting an alternative list of warnings to assist Indigenous communities in partnering with outsider linguists. Identifying the characteristics and behaviors of outsider linguists with non- or less-than-reciprocal intentions, they argued, could help to protect these communities when engaging in language work with outsiders.

“So I would find a way to make it also useful to [Indigenous] community[ies]. Which is tricky, because as an outsider, as a non-Indigenous person, you don’t want to be preachy. It's like, “Oh, this is what you should know.” But I mean, there is a place for like – I don't know how to say this really nicely – “so some of us are [jerks] and this is what you should know.”… Like a warning to communities…like you obviously know bad things have happened in the past,
and some bad things are still happening.” (PID forthcoming, 01:00:25–01:01:31; Speaker: Nathan Brinklow)

“I think as important as this kind of stuff is to be published in an academic forum, it's also important to be published outside of an academic forum, both for outsider linguists to see, but also for communities to see, and see what kinds of behavior they should expect and be wary of.” (PID forthcoming, 00:51:10–00:51:45; Speaker: Aidan Pine)

Part of the research process has been identifying and determining what kinds of benefits this work could bring, and I am still learning from others what actions would be most appropriate. I admit candidly that, at the time of writing this dissertation, I am still in the process of discovering how to best bring benefits to others with this work. Inspired by the insights of participants in this study, I intend to incorporate at least some of these suggestions into a larger body of work that will certainly extend past the completion of the doctoral dissertation.

8.4 Summary

In this chapter, I have considered the outcomes of this study and outlined possible avenues for future research on reciprocity and language work. While I am still uncertain as to what steps will come next for this exploration of reciprocity in language work, the suggestions contained within this chapter demonstrate that there are plenty of possibilities for moving forward. Whether it is changing the research methods, widening the reach of the recommendations, or expanding benefits, it is important to me that this study continues to develop in a way that improves the conduct of outsider linguists and brings benefit to Indigenous communities in Canada.
Chapter 9: Conclusion

Reciprocity is a crucial component of ethical research involving Indigenous Peoples and languages, and Indigenous scholars have urged that linguists rely upon the “four Rs” of relevance, responsibility, respect, and reciprocity to guide them in their work (Kirkness & Barnhardt 2001; Hermes et al. 2012). Despite the field’s growing recognition of ethical responsibilities in research, explicit discussions of reciprocity, especially details about forming and maintaining reciprocal relationships with Indigenous research partners, are often minimal in or absent from the products of linguistic research done by outsiders. Furthermore, negative precedent set by years of previous practice in the field can mislead outsider linguists who may be struggling to discern how to best apply emerging ethical standards to their work.

In this dissertation, I have considered the role of the outsider linguist in language work and questioned how outsider linguists could best leverage reciprocity to form more ethical practices in linguistic research with Indigenous Peoples in Canada. Through engaging in qualitative, semi-structured interviews (detailed in Chapter 5), I explored and shared the perspectives, experiences, and insights of Indigenous and non-Indigenous language workers who engage in language work with and within Indigenous languages and communities. I asked each participant about their personal experiences in language work, inquiring how reciprocity (or lack thereof) factored into the connection, development, and maintenance of research relationships between outsider linguists and Indigenous communities. I also asked explicitly what sorts of actions participants feel outsider linguists should be doing to ensure that their language work with Indigenous communities was ethical and reciprocal.

In Chapter 6, I identified and discussed three major themes that emerged from the insights shared in participant interviews:

1) Participants viewed relationality as paramount in considering reciprocity in language work with Indigenous communities in Canada, noting that reciprocity cannot exist outside of a relational structure.
2) Participants identified several hindrances within the structure of academia that prevent outsider linguists from forming reciprocal relationships with Indigenous communities in language work and maintaining these relationships long-term.

3) All participants contributed suggestions to how individual outsider linguists can better practice reciprocity in language work. The responses ranged in topic, but all were concrete steps that outsider linguists can take to practice language work more ethically and effectively with and within Indigenous communities in Canada.

Relationality emerged as a paramount value in considering reciprocity in language work between outsider linguists and Indigenous communities in Canada, and participants noted that reciprocity cannot exist outside of a relational structure. Relying upon the knowledge and perspectives shared by participants, I demonstrated in Chapter 7 how relational reciprocity in language work can be best understood in connection to other important “R” words such as respect, responsibility, and relevance. I considered how each term related to reciprocity as applied in language work and provided critique as to how these connections can be better leveraged to improve language work done by outsider linguists. Finally, I proposed that outsider linguists should adopt a framework of relational reciprocity when engaging in research relationships with Indigenous communities in Canada.

This research was framed within and guided by an Indigenist methodology throughout (Wilson 2008; Rix et al. 2019). In Chapter 5, I highlighted the role of relationality in the recruitment of participants and described the process of accountability in processing and analyzing interview transcripts. In Chapter 6, I presented the findings using the voices of the participants, and remained accountable to these co-creators of knowledge throughout the study. In Chapter 7, I considered the interview data through the lens of relationality, highlighting the interconnectedness of reciprocity to other values such as relationships, respect, responsibility, and relevance. Finally, in Chapter 8, I considered how this study on reciprocity in language work could extend and expand benefits to Indigenous communities in Canada (though admittedly, this part is still a work in progress).
Perspectives shared by participants in this study emphasized that at the heart of the reciprocal relationship remains the willingness to listen and respond to the needs of others, even if these needs fall outside of the traditional roles set for outsider linguists. Like Kimmerer (2013), I consider the responsibilities to reciprocity in language work as articulated in this research not as obligations, but as expressions of connections, love, and gratitude shared between human beings:

“Cultures of gratitude must also be cultures of reciprocity. Each person, human or no, is bound to every other in a reciprocal relationship. Just as all beings have a duty to me, I have a duty to them. If an animal gives its life to feed me, I am in turn bound to support its life. If I receive a stream's gift of pure water, then I am responsible for returning a gift in kind. An integral part of a human’s education is to know those duties and how to perform them.” (Kimmerer 2013: 115)

It has been my intention, in undertaking this work, to influence other outsider linguists to leverage their skills and research in a way that visibly supports and actively brings benefit to Indigenous Peoples in Canada. In writing this dissertation, I have aspired to motivate outsider linguists to address these needs and guide others to participate in reciprocity with Indigenous Peoples in Canada more consciously, generously, effectively, and joyfully in language work.
Appendix A: Consent Form

University of Hawai‘i
Consent to Participate in a Research Project
Andrea Berez-Kroeker, Principal Investigator
Ashleigh Surma, Student Investigator

Project title: Reciprocity and language work: Considering the role of the outsider linguist

My name is Ashleigh Surma and I'm a student at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa in the Department of Linguistics. I am asking you to take part in research I'm conducting as part of the requirements for earning my graduate degree. In this research, I am investigating how the idea of reciprocity is approached, established, and realized in language work, and I'm hoping you'll contribute your experience and perspective to this project.

What am I being asked to do?

If you choose to participate in this project, I will meet with you for an interview at a time that is convenient for you. All meetings will take place online over Zoom. We will sit together and talk, and I will ask you questions about your experiences with reciprocity in language work, and how you view its impacts in your life, work, and community.

Taking part in this study is your choice.

Your participation in this project is completely voluntary. You may stop participating at any time. If you stop being in the study, there will be no penalty or loss to you. Even once the interview session is over, you can contact me at any time and I will edit or withdraw your contribution from the study.

Why is this study being done?

In this research, I hope to learn the ways in which reciprocity is planned for, carried out, and evaluated by those who engage in language work. It is my hope that the outcomes of this research will 1) aid in the development of guidelines or recommendations to aid outsider linguists in practicing appropriate, ethical, reciprocal language work with Indigenous communities in Canada, and 2) foreground the experiences, insights, and expectations of Indigenous language workers regarding reciprocity in language work in Canada. I am asking you to participate in this study because of your background with language work. I'm hoping that you'll share your own personal experiences with language work and what building reciprocal relationships means to you and your community.

What will happen if I decide to take part in this study?

I will ask you a series of approximately 10 open-ended questions about your experiences with and opinions about language work. The interview will take about 1 hour to 1 hour 15 minutes.

The interview will include personal questions, such as:

- What does reciprocity in language work look like to you?
- How have you seen reciprocity being (or not being) enacted in language work?
- What are some steps outsider linguists can/should take to enact reciprocity in the language work they do?
- What is the difference between reciprocity and giving back? How are they similar/different?
University of Hawai‘i  
Consent to Participate in a Research Project 
Andrea Berez-Kroeker, Principal Investigator 
Ashleigh Surma, Student Investigator 

Project title: Reciprocity and language work: Considering the role of the outsider linguist

Only you and I will be present during the interview. With your permission, I will use Zoom to record the interview so that I can later transcribe the interview and analyze the responses. You will be one of about 10 people I will interview for this study.

It is my hope that you will consent to allowing me to record our interview session. Recording the interview will allow me to revisit our session in my research and will better ensure that I am more accurately analyzing the language you choose to use in context. If you choose not to be recorded, I will take notes in a designated notebook set aside for this study.

**What are the risks and benefits of taking part in this study?**

As these questions are inherently personal, there are potential risks to you for taking part in this study. The possibility of loss of anonymity, potential personal embarrassment, or social stigma on a wider level are possible, and I’d encourage you not to share any information which could incur the negative effects of these risks. Should you happen to share information with me that you’d later like redacted or deleted, I’d be happy to do so at your discretion.

You may become stressed or uncomfortable answering any of the interview questions or discussing topics with me during the interview. If this happens, you can skip the question or take a break. You can also stop the interview or you can withdraw from the project altogether at any time throughout this process.

There will be no direct benefit to you for participating in this interview. However, the results of these interviews will be used to stimulate an ongoing discussion on reciprocity in language work and promote responsible, ethical practices in linguistic research as a whole.

**Privacy and Confidentiality:**

I will be asking rather personal questions in these interviews and your answers may include identifiable information about yourself, your community, or others. While I am investigating individual perceptions and opinions, you have the option to choose how we manage privacy and confidentiality concerns:

- All identifiable information (personal names, hometown, community, etc.) can be anonymized. Should you choose anonymity, I will use a pseudonym (fake name) when reporting the results of our interview. The connections between the real information and the pseudonym will be maintained in a separate document, safeguarded in a password-protected external hard drive.

- All data relevant to our interview (recordings, handwritten notes, etc.) will be stored on a password-protected computer and a designated password-protected external hard drive.

- Once the recording session is finished, Zoom will transcribe our interview into text format. If you consent to being contacted after the interview, I will provide a copy of this transcript for your review. At this time, you will have the option to add, revise, or redact portions of the text or choose to remove the complete transcript from this study.

Consent Form – version 3
University of Hawai‘i
Consent to Participate in a Research Project
Andrea Berez-Kroeker, Principal Investigator
Ashleigh Surma, Student Investigator

Project title: Reciprocity and language work: Considering the role of the outsider linguist

- After a written transcript of the interviews have been made, reviewed, and verified by you, I will erase the recording of our interview. The interview transcripts will be deposited alongside my dissertation in the Kaipuleohone Archive.

Other agencies that have legal permission have the right to review research records. The University of Hawai‘i Human Studies Program has the right to review research records for this study.

Compensation:
As a token of gratitude for your contribution to my research, after our interview, you'll either receive a $15 (CAD) gift card to Tim Hortons (digital or physical, your choice) or a $15 (CAD) donation to the charity of your choice.

Future Research Studies:
Identifiers will be removed from your identifiable private information and after removal of identifiers, the data may be used for future research studies or distributed to another investigator for future research studies and we will not seek further approval from you for these future studies.

Questions:
If you have any questions about this study, please call or email me at 1+(808) 956-8602 & asmith28@hawaii.edu.

You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Andrea Berez-Kroeker, at 1+(808) 956-8602 & andrea.berez@hawaii.edu.

You may contact the UH Human Studies Program at 808.956.5007 or uhirb@hawaii.edu, to discuss problems, concerns and questions; obtain information; or offer input with an informed individual who is unaffiliated with the specific research protocol. Please visit http://go.hawaii.edu/IRD for more information on your rights as a research participant.

If you agree to participate in this project, please sign and date this signature page and return it to Ashleigh Surma by email (asmith28@hawaii.edu) or mail:

Department of Linguistics,
University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa,
1890 East-West Road,
Moore Hall 569,
Honolulu, HI 96822 USA

Keep a copy of the informed consent for your records and reference.
University of Hawai‘i
Consent to Participate in a Research Project
Andrea Berez-Kroeker, Principal Investigator
Ashleigh Surma, Student Investigator

Project title: Reciprocity and language work: Considering the role of the outsider linguist

Signature(s) for Consent:
I give permission to join the research project entitled,
“Reciprocity and language work: Considering the role of the outsider linguist”

Please initial next to either “Yes” or “No” to the following:

____ Yes ______ No  I consent to being recorded during the interview portion of this research.

____ Yes ______ No  I consent to having my name used in reporting this research.

____ Yes ______ No  I consent to being contacted further by the researcher following the interview session.
Preferred method of contact: _______________________

Please choose one of the following compensation options:

____ $15 digital gift card to Tim Horton’s
____ $15 physical gift card to Tim Horton’s
   Mailing address: ________________________________
   ________________________________

____ Donate $15 to the charity of my choice
   Charity information: ________________________________
   ________________________________

Name of Participant (Print): ________________________________
Participant’s Signature: ________________________________
Signature of the Person Obtaining Consent: ________________________________
Date: ________________________________

Consent Form – version 3

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Appendix B: Interview Questions, short and extended lists

The Short List

1. What would you like me to know about you?

2. What sort of language work have you been involved in? How did you come to be a part of that work?

3. Are you a member of the community in which you do language work? Would you call yourself an insider or outsider in that community?

4. What does good reciprocity in language work look like?

5. How have you seen reciprocity being (or not being) enacted in language work?

6. What are some steps outsider linguists can/should take to enact reciprocity in the language work they do?

7. What is the difference between reciprocity and giving back? How are they similar/different?

8. One of the goals of this research is to develop guidelines/recommendations to aid outsider linguists engaged in language work. What should be done with these guidelines/recommendations? How could these be best used to encourage language workers to practice reciprocity?

9. Is there anything else you’d like to add to this discussion? Have I overlooked any aspects of reciprocity and/or language work that you think are important?

The Extended List

Tell me about yourself.

• What would you like me to know about you?

• I asked to interview you because you’re involved in language work. Can you tell me more about the work you do?

• What roles do you play / have you played in language work? If I asked you to describe yourself as a language worker, what labels might you use? [e.g. teacher, (ILR) practitioner, speaker/signer, learner, linguist, researcher,
community member, insider/outside, activist, a combination/overlap, something else, none of these...]

• What motivates / motivated you to do language work?

Tell me more about your work.

• What kinds of language work have you been involved in? How did you come to be a part of that work?

• Are you a member of the community in which you do language work? Do you identify as an insider / outsider to that community?

• How have you seen reciprocity being enacted (or not) in your language work?

For insiders to the language community

• How were the goals of the language work determined? Who was involved in the planning and decision making process?

• What kinds of compensation or benefits were expected to come out of the language work? How were these terms negotiated?

• What kinds of things were expected of you as a language worker working in your own community?

• What kinds of protocols were expected / honored in undertaking language work? How were you, as an insider researcher, expected to honor / abide by these protocols?

• How did you feel about working with your language and your own community?

• Were you ever asked / expected to do things for your community that you felt would have not been asked / expected of outsider language workers? [in language work]

• Were you ever asked to do things for your community that you felt were tangential to / not in direct service of your personal goals for language work?

• Are you still working with / in connection with your community of research? If not, why?

• Have you ever been involved in language work where you were an outsider to the language community? How did that experience differ from being an insider?
• Have you ever witnessed outsiders doing language work in your own community, (maybe on a project that you were not a part of)? Do you feel those language workers behaved as they should have?

• How do you feel about outsider researchers working with your/your community’s language?

• What should outsider researchers know prior to beginning language work in your community?

• Have you ever come across people who are against language work, or are hesitant about collaborating with outsiders? Why do you think they feel that way?

• Have you ever felt like you were taken advantage of in language work? What happened?

• Was your language work associated with or supported by a university? If so, do you feel that your institution encouraged or supported reciprocal relationships in your language work? In what ways?

For outsiders to the language community

• How were the goals of the language work determined? Who was involved in the planning and decision making process?

• What kinds of compensation or benefits were expected to come out of the language work? How were these terms negotiated?

• What kinds of things were expected of you as an outsider to the community?

• What kinds of protocols were expected / honored in undertaking language work? How were you, as an outsider researcher, expected to honor / abide by these protocols?

• How did you feel about working with a language that is spoken by a community of which you were an outsider to?

• Were you ever asked to do things for your community that you felt were tangential to / not in direct service of your personal goals for language work?

• Are you still working with / in connection with your community of research? If not, why?

• Have you ever been involved in language work where you were an insider to the language community? How did that experience differ from being an outsider?
• Have you ever come across people who are against language work, or are hesitant about collaborating with outsiders? Why do you think they feel that way?

• Have you ever felt like you were taken advantage of in language work? What happened?

• Was your language work associated with or supported by a university? If so, do you feel that your institution encouraged or supported reciprocal relationships in your language work? In what ways?

Tell me about reciprocity.

As an abstract concept

• What does reciprocity in language work look like to you?

• If something is reciprocal, what does that mean?

• What would be an example of a reciprocal relationship?

• What would be an example of an action that is not reciprocal?

• What does reciprocity look like in your own culture?

In language work

• Who is responsible for creating and maintaining reciprocal relationships in language work? Who might be exempt from this responsibility?

• What are some positive actions that would support reciprocity in language work?

• What are some negative actions that would hinder reciprocity in language work?

• How might one know that they have overstepped the bounds of or caused damage to a reciprocal relationship in language work?

• If the relationship were to sustain damage, what might be some avenues of repair?

• How do you feel about financial compensation for those who participate in language work? What other modes of compensation might be appropriate?
• Do responsibilities to reciprocity change when one or more of the partners in language work is from a university? If yes, how so?

• Have you ever been discouraged from doing what you believed to be reciprocal actions in language work (directly or indirectly)? What happened? How did that make you feel?

• How long ought the reciprocal relationship last in language work? How far does the responsibility to reciprocity extend? (until the end of the project? until the research is published? open-ended?)

Tell me about “giving back”.

• Is reciprocity and giving back the same thing? Do you think there is a difference between reciprocity and giving back? How are they similar? How are they different?

• How did you give back in your language work? Did the community ask for that?

• Have you ever felt like you weren’t sure how to “give back” in your work? What happened?

• Have you ever felt like you didn’t give back as much as you wanted to or could’ve? Or that the way you manifested reciprocity wasn’t enough? What happened?
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