Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw

Song of the Newborn

Knowledge and Stories Surrounding Pregnancy, Childbirth, and the Newborn

A Collaborative Language Project

by

Catherine Dworak

B.A., Concordia University, 2009

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Abstract

The *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* (Song of the Newborn) project is situated on *Lax Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory) and embraces a decolonizing and Indigenist (Wilson, 2007) methodology. The project is a collaboration between Catherine Dworak (me), the graduate student, and Dr. M.J. Smith, educator and Gitxsan storyteller. We partnered with three Gitxsan Elders to learn about the language of pregnancy, childbirth, and life with a newborn. In agreeing to work with us, the Elders honoured us by sharing some of their knowledge and life experiences with us.

The thesis begins with three chapters that provide background information regarding the Gitxsan language and territory, how I came to be involved in the project, and the traditional seasonal round and laws related to women in transitional periods. The thesis then details the research process that emerged from the project. The following two chapters include information that has not been previously documented. Chapter 5 presents language related to pregnancy, birth, and life with a newborn and corresponding linguistic analysis with suggestions for how someone without a background in linguistics could use the information presented in the chapter. Chapter 6 presents a local history focused on the confluence between Gitxsan and Eurocanadian health and medical care, with a focus on obstetric care from Gitxsan perspectives.

The thesis concludes with a reflection on what working from within a Gitxsan research methodology means for a project that focuses on the sensitive and personal topic of pregnancy, childbirth, and life with a newborn. Traditionally, Gitxsan are researchers (M. J. Smith, 2004), so it is my hope that the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project has made a contribution to Gitxsan epistemological knowledge.

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"It is customary in the Gitxsan culture to give thanks for all the gifts of life. The Chiefs, in their speeches, give thanks to the Creator, the land, their ancestors, animals, plants, their relatives and everything else. So it is in the same spirit that I give thanks to my Creator and teachers as I begin my story of the past, present, and future. This, according to the Elders will promote the principles of harmony (yahlxw wil yeet'), balance (luu hix hogix) and interconnectedness (naadahahlhakwhlinhl)..."
– M.J. Smith (2004)

As a newcomer to *Lax Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory) it has been been an honour to be welcomed to the Territory and into three Gitxsan families to work on the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project.

To the Elders who opened their homes and shared their stories with me:

I feel that language and birth have power for creation, joy, sadness, loss, and beauty. Both language and birth have potential to be ridden with complex emotions because of the Gitxsan history of colonialism and racism. Pregnancy, childbirth, and life with a newborn are also a vulnerable and transformative part of a person's life which can make it a sensitive topic to share. You gave me your time and energy, and above all you trusted me with some of your personal memories. I am overcome with gratitude for your trust and generosity. You have each touched my life in a profound way.

This project could not have happened without Dr. M.J. Smith. Dr. M.J. Smith made a huge investment in mentoring and teaching me, especially considering my fledgling position as a linguist, researcher, and Gitxsan language learner. I am looking forward to many more collaborative projects to come.

I feel very lucky to be well supported by a history of linguists making positive and longterm commitments to the Gitxsan language and communities. Dr. Bruce Rigsby and Lonnie Hindle produced a thoughtful and straightforward orthography, and I think of you both, as well as any others who contributed to the orthography, every time I use it. The UBC Gitksan Lab has also made significant contributions to getting a grasp on the grammar of the Gitxsan language, and above else they have been simply lovely – welcoming and approachable and supportive of me developing my expertise in the language. I'm especially grateful to A. Pine's work to produce an online dictionary, as well as A. Pine and M.D. Schwan's proofreading and mini lessons.

Over the years, it's been a sincere pleasure discovering many common interests with my supervisor, Dr. Su Urbanczyk, in addition to the important topics of decolonization, Indigenist research methodologies, and language activism. Thank you for your enthusiasm and support of my work.

My family has been my rock throughout my Master's degree work. Thank you for loving and believing in me.

T'ooyax̱si 'Nisim.
(I am grateful to all of you.)

Always leave one mistake on the blanket so future generations will have something to do. The Gitxsan do not expect perfection from anyone.

(M.J. Smith, p.c., 2017)

1 Introduction

Simgigyet,
Sigidim Haana̲k,
G̲anhl Guba Wil X̲sitxw,
Luu amhl g̲oodi'y wil 'wihl wilii spag̲ayt disim,
T'ooyax̲si'y 'nisim ahl ama sa tun.

In the time I have lived on *Lax̲ Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory), I have learned
the importance of greeting the Chiefs of the Territory when beginning a speech.
Above is the greeting that my mentor, teacher, and friend, Dr. M.J. Smith has
taught me. Its translation is, roughly:

Chiefs,
Wives of the Chiefs,
Noble Children of the Chiefs,
My heart is gladdened to be here with you,
Thank you for this day.

By addressing the Chiefs, I acknowledge the First Nations who have lived since
time immemorial on the lands that are now called North America/Canada/British
Columbia. Locally, I acknowledge the ancient civilization that is the Gitxsan, who
have history and land title that dates back to the beginning of time.

The *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project emerged from within a decolonizing methodology. It is a partnership between Dr. M.J. Smith, educator, author, and Gitxsan
storyteller, three Gitxsan Elders,[1] and me, a graduate student, language activist,[2]

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[1] The word "Elder" is capitalized following M. J. Smith (2004).

[2] There are many ways to define activism. To me, language activism means that I am working to understand the deep significance of the connection between language and important elements in the world, including land, all things living on the land, family, community, traditions, history, and the link between the past, present, and future. As an activist I am involved in language revitalization

birth doula, and newcomer.[3]

The *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project seeks to honour the Gitxsan Elders not only experts in *Gitxsanimx*, but as knowledge bearers and women with significant life experiences. Together we worked to document language related to pregnancy, childbirth, and the newborn and the Elders' experiences in this transitional time of their lives.[4] A documentation project focusing on the perinatal period on *Lax Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory) has not been done before. This thesis seeks to contribute to Gitxsan epistemological knowledge and to decolonization by presenting a compilation of language related to the perinatal period, by presenting Gitxsan perspectives on health and medical care in the early and mid-1900s, and by identifying gaps in historical, cultural, and linguistic information where they remain.

The Gitxsan rootedness in who they are and where they come from means that the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project has a place within the Gitxsan research tradition. The project was approved by the Gitxsan Hereditary Chiefs, and Dr. M.J. Smith's involvement means that the project is in line with Gitxsan ethical standards and research methodologies and that it adds to Gitxsan epistemological knowledge (M. J. Smith, 2004). These have been important pieces in ensuring the project is meaningful to the people involved in it.

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and I work towards incorporating the Gitxsan language into my daily life. For example, I learn and use Gitxsan place names and speak openly about the role that returning to original place names has for truth, reconciliation, and decolonization.

[3]The term 'newcomer' is used on *Lax Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory) to indicate someone who is not indigenous to North America. A newcomer may be a recent immigrant or a descendant of original settlers. The concept of "newcomer" is relative to the millenia old presence of Indigenous peoples in North America. See "We Are All Connected" by M. J. Smith (2015) in Section 3.1 of this thesis and also M. J. Smith (2004) for further reading.

[4]The life period that encompasses pregnancy, childbirth, and living with a newborn is also referred to as "the perinatal period" throughout this thesis.

The name of this project is *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* which means 'song of the newborn.' One Elder sang the Gitxsan *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* for us:

Question: Do you have any lullabies that you sang to your babies?

Elder: Just to put them to sleep. They're in the cradle and you push them a little and you sing:

Uu'u uu'u
Aajiwok̲t g̲aas ginees
Uu'u uu'u

Uu'u uu'u
Aajiwok̲t g̲aas dimi'it
Uu'u uu'u

Yukw nisa 'wihl hlgu wo'omhlxw

Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw is sung to a newborn baby girl, *g̲aas ginees*, or to a newborn baby boy, *g̲aas dimi'it*, telling them to sleep, *aajiwok̲*.

The title for this thesis, *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw*, represents a transition. When a mother sings to her baby, there are two people who are both at a transitional point in their lives, the mother and the baby. Transitional periods that are significant to Gitxsan are birth, the walking out ceremony (at approximately two years of age), primary tooth ceremony (when a child around six years of age loses a primary tooth), puberty, and death (p.c. Dr. M.J. Smith, 2016).

Gitxsan Worldview
by Dr. M.J. Smith (2016)

It is customary in the Gitxsan culture to give thanks for all the gifts of life. The Chiefs, in their speeches, give thanks to the Creator, the land, their ancestors, animals, plants, their relatives and everything else.

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The Gitxsan concept of non-linear time emerges from our worldview of the co-existence of the realms of the physical and supernatural worlds and our belief in reincarnation. In addition, Gitxsan stories, laws, songs and language that shape our worldview come from the Breath of the Grandfathers. Since time immemorial the stories have been passed down. When the storyteller speaks, he or she is the vehicle for the voices of the Gitxsan ancestors. The listeners become a part of many storytellers' past, present and future. The Gitxsan had a way of thinking and looking at the world through stories. Gitxsan spirituality was and is intimately connected with all things in nature. Animals, water, rocks, trees and earth all have spirits and are all gifts from the Creator.

To the Gitxsan death was a natural part of life. Death was required so others could live; thus, the bodies of the Gitxsan who have died have fed the soil. Everything growing from the land was a part of the Gitxsan. This was why the Gitxsan respected the land and felt that it was sacred. The land was not a commodity to be sold to the highest bidder. "We all come from the same Creator and the same earth, how can they be different, we are all the same." Everyone and everything that took nourishment from the land, including the newcomers to the land, were connected to the Gitxsan. We are all relatives.

The Gitxsan worldview sees an end of a life as the continuation of life; the birth of a baby means the reincarnation of an ancestor. The histories of the ancestors contribute to the futures of the children.

The title of the project, *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* also means that the project contributes to the cycle of storytelling, research, and education for future generations. M. J. Smith (2004) names the Elders as master storytellers and teachers who believe that an understanding of the past provides a foundation for the future (p. 32). Wilson (2007) explains that Indigenous knowledge is created through a continuous process of refining, shifting, adapting, and interacting with their environment:

Well, how did we [Indigenous Peoples] go about gaining all this Indigenous Knowledge? Of course, it came about through millenia of interac-

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tion and relationships with our environment, as well as through painstak-
ing research. This research was conducted in an Indigenist paradigm. It is
part of what makes us Indigenous peoples, and its philosophy is reflected
in everything that we do, think, and are.

(Wilson, 2007, p. 193; italics in original)

The Elders' knowledge and life experiences have added "layers" (M. J. Smith, 2004,
p. 51) to the history and knowledge of their ancestors before them (*Delgamuuk̲* (K.
Muldoe); in Monet & Skanu'u, 1992, p. 22).

1.1   Setting

La̲x Yipxwhl Gitxsan (Gitxsan Territory) is a riverine and mountainous area of what
is now called northwestern British Columbia, Canada. Gitxsan have been living
on *La̲x Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory) since the beginning of time (at least
10,000 years based on cross-referencing Gitxsan historical records with archaeological
investigations (Johnson, 1997)). Gitxsan trace their origins to the ancient village of
T'amla̲xaamit, located near present-day *Gitanmaaxs* (Gitanmaax), at the confluence
of the *Xsiando'o* (Bulkley River) and the *Xsi yen* (Skeena River, River of Mist).
During the Little Ice Age (between 700 and 200 years ago), people dispersed from
T'amla̲xaamit and either founded new villages or joined other villages (M. J. Smith,
2004, p. 2; Johnson, 1997, p. 39).

When Europeans arrived to North America, Gitxsan, Gitxsen, and Gitanyow had
seasonal villages along the *Xsi Yen* (Skeena River) and its tributaries. These villages,
from downriver to upriver were: *Git-anyaaw* (Gitanyow), *Gitwinga̲x* (Kitwanga), *Gij-
egyukwhla* (Gitsegukla), *Gitanmaaxs* (Gitanmaax), *Gisbayakws* (later known as *Ans-
payaxw* (Kispiox)), *Gisg̲ag̲a'as* (Kitsegas), and *G̲aldoo'o* (Kuldo). Later the village

of *Sigit'ox̲* (Glen Vowel) was formed, which is downstream of *Anspayaxw* (Kispiox). The villages of *Gisg̲aga'as* (Kitsegas) and *G̲aldoo'o* (Kuldo) are no longer inhabited full-time, but people still return there for seasonal activities (M. J. Smith, 2004).[5]

Gitxsanimx̲ is an Interior Tsimshianic language spoken on *Lax̲ Yipxwhl Gitxsan*. Closely related languages spoken on or near the territory are *Gitxsenimx̲*, *Gyaanimx̲*, and *Nisg̲a'a*. More distantly related languages in the same language family are *Sm'algy̲ax* (Coast Tsimshian) and *Skiixs* (Southern Tsimshian) (Brown, Davis, Schwan, & Sennott, 2016; (Morgan) Gwa'amuuk, 2017).[6]

The information presented in this thesis could be useful to a language speaker, learner, or activist with a background in any of these languages because of their relationship to each other.

Gitxsanimx̲ is traditionally spoken in the villages of *Anspayaxw* (Kispiox), *Sigit'ox̲* (Glen Vowell), and *Gitanmaaxs* (Gitanmaax). Two of the Elders from the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project grew up in *Anspayaxw* (Kispiox) (E.M. and E.T.) and our third Elder (E.S.) is from *Gitanmaaxs* (Gitanmaax).

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[5]The definition of 'habitation' is subjective. From a Eurocentric/colonizer's point of view, it has been convenient to define 'habitation' as full time occupancy, thus justifying theft of traditional Indigenous territories that were vacant at some parts of the year. From the perspective of many Indigenous groups, occupancy of a place is related to millenia-old patterns of movement on the land through the annual seasonal round by the people and their ancestors (Raibmon, 2007).

[6]*Gitxsanimx̲*, *Gitxsenimx̲*, and *Gyaanimx̲* are closely related. In this thesis, I have chosen to follow the Gitxsan perspective and to name these languages as they are called locally. The Gitksan Research Lab at the University of British Columbia refers to *Gitxsanimx̲*, *Gitxsenimx̲*, and *Gyaanimx̲* as dialects of the language *Gitksan* (Forbes, Davis, & Schwan, 2017). There is a phonological relationship between these languages/dialects (ie. many of the words sound the same, with some differences in pronounciation). The relationship between the languages/dialects can be referred to as a 'dialect continuum' (Brown et al., 2016; Forbes et al., 2017). From the villages *Gyeets* (downriver) on the *Xsi Yen* (Skeena River) and its tributaries, to the villages *Gigyeenix* (upriver) on the *Xsi Yen* (Skeena River) and its tributaries, there is a shift in vowels ([e] downriver shifts to [a] upriver) and stop lenition (stops that are present downriver become lenited upriver (ie. stops are sounds like [t], [d], [k], and [g]; lenition means the stops become softer)) (Brown et al., 2016).

Gitxsenimx̲ is traditionally spoken in the villages of *Gijigyukwhla* (Kitseguecla) and *Gitwinga̲x* (Kitwanga). *Gyaanimx̲* is traditionally spoken by the Gitanyow Nation, downriver of *Gitwinga̲x* (Kitwanga).

Downriver of the Gitanyow Nation are the Kitselas and Kitsumkalum Nations, who speak *Sm'algy̲ax* (Coast Tsimshian). The Nisg̲a'a Nation, who speak *Nisg̲a'a*, is located on the Nass River, west of *La̲x Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory). Upstream of *La̲x Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory), on the *Xsiando'o* (Bulkley River) is the Wet'suwet'en Nation, who speak Wet'suwet'en-Babine, an Athapaskan language (First Peoples' Cultural Council, n.d.; Brown et al., 2016; Forbes et al., 2017).

Figure 1 shows an "upriver, coastal perspective" (Monet, D. & Skanu'u (Wilson A.), 1992, p. vi) of the villages along the *Xsi Yen* (Skeena River), *Xsiando'o* (Bulkley River), and their tributaries and the location of *La̲x Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory) and Wetsuwet'en Territory in relation to larger geographical scales.[7]

Currently there are approximately 300 fluent speakers of *Gitxsanimx̲*, *Gitxsenimx̲*, and *Gyaanimx̲*, close to 500 semi-speakers, and approximately 600 language learners (Gessner, Herbert, Parker, Thorburn, & Wadsworth, 2014). (Morgan) Gwa'amuuk (2017) assesses the status of the language in her family according to Fishman's "Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS)" (Fishman 1991; as

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[7]*La̲x Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory) is the northern part of the territory illustrated in the map in Figure 1. This map was created during the *Delgamuu̲k* Court Case, in which the Gitxsan/Gitxsen and Wetsuwet'en Nations partnered to challenge the British Columbia and Canada governments for ownership and jurisdiction of their traditional territories. The court case began in 1984 and concluded in 1997. The final decision of the Supreme Court of Canada still did not use language of ownership and jurisdiction, but it did expand the definition of Aboriginal title to a "property right encompassing the right to and exclusive use and occupation of land" and acknowledged that Aboriginal title "must be understood by reference to both common law and Aboriginal perspectives" based on "occupation prior to sovereignty" and "pre-existing systems of Aboriginal law" (Delgamuukw at para. 126-7; as cited by Jackson, n.d; in Daly, 2005, p. xiv).
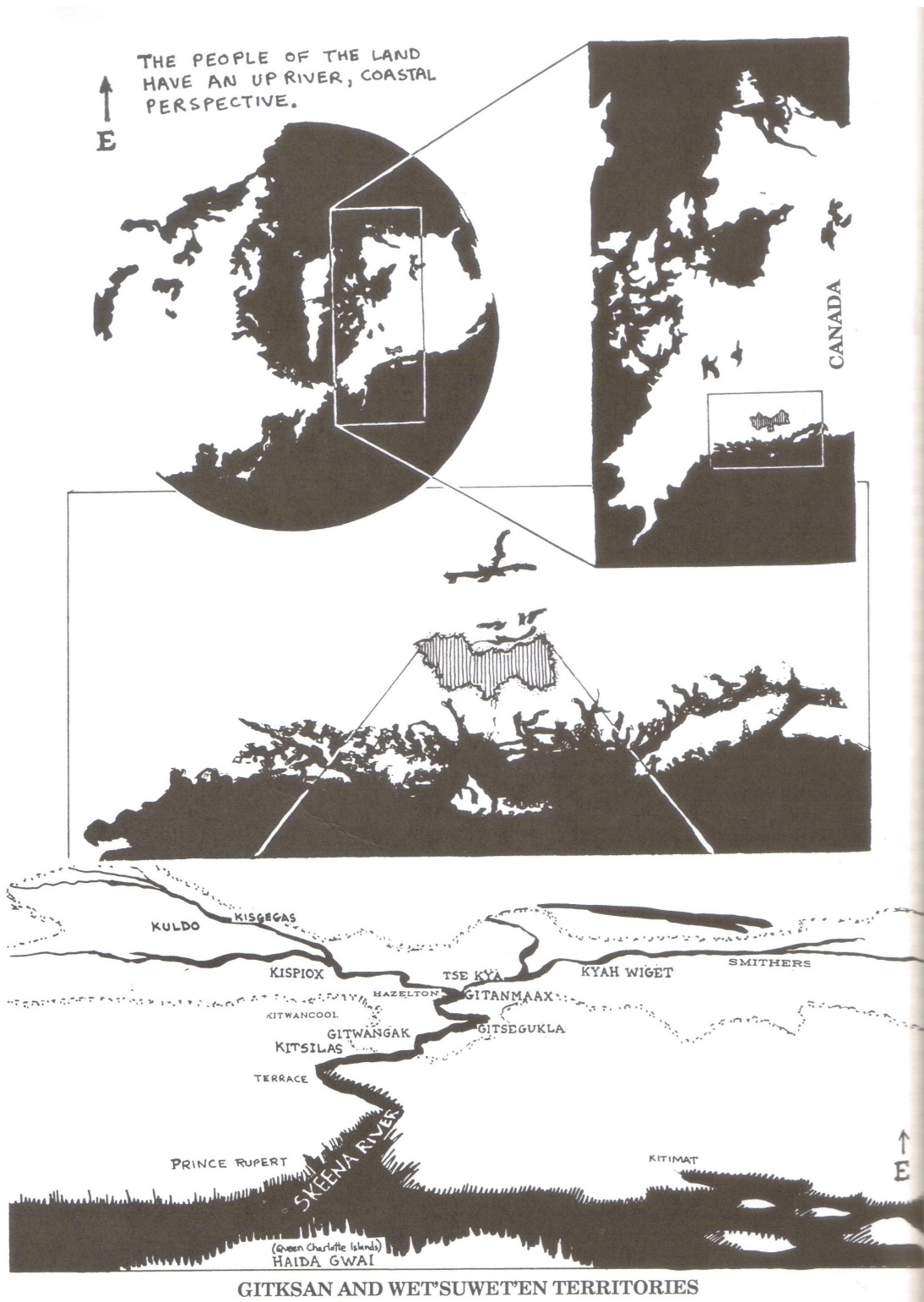
Figure 1: *Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en Territories* by D. Monet, 1992. (*Lax̲ Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory) is the northern part of the territory illustrated.) *Note:* From *Colonialism on Trial* by D. Monet & Skanu'u (A. Wilson), 1992, Gabriola Island, British Columbia: New Society Publishers, p. vi. Copyright 1992 by D. Monet. Reprinted with permission.

cited by (Morgan) Gwa'amuuk, 2017, p. 8) and puts her own family at stage 7 (of 8 stages) which is described as the following:

- All remaining speakers are over childbearing age;
- No new children are being raised in the language;
- Some learners;
- Language is still heard at cultural events;
- There is a culturally active population of speakers, mostly over the age of 60.

(Fishman, 1991; as cited by (Morgan) Gwa'amuuk, 2017, p. 7)

From my time spent on *Lax Yipxwhl Gitxsan*, I feel this assessment is representative of the language community as a whole.

(Morgan) Gwa'amuuk (2017) goes on to explain that the recommendation for language revitalization for a community at stage 7 is to focus efforts on building language skills in adult speakers who can then support other learners in the community (especially children) ((Morgan) Gwa'amuuk, 2017, p. 8). The recommendations for language revitalization in a community at stage 7 are the following:

- Elders are an active resource;
- Strengthening bonds between existing speakers and learners;
- Create opportunities for learners to speak and hear the language;
- Create second-language speakers of child-bearing age;
- Bring the language into the home.

(Fishman, 1991; as cited by (Morgan) Gwa'amuuk, 2017, p. 7)

Most of the decline in *Gitxsanimx, Gitxsenimx,* and *Gyaanimx* speakers occurred as a direct result of government policies that were applied in Indian Residential

Schools. In the Gitxsan *ant'imahlasxw* (story), "Night of the Owl" (M. J. Smith, 2004, p. 103-106) there is an owl who steals a young boy and kills him by feeding him owl food (mice, frogs, and lizards). The action of the owl is marked by the owl's song when she takes the boy, and with the song the tragic event is accorded cultural and historical significance. M. J. Smith (2004) explains that when children were taken away to Indian Residential Schools, there was no song for them:

> "*Di lo di slay, di 'nisim ant masin hlgu tk'iihlxw. Ho heh ho heh*'" sang the owl as she entered the village to take a child into the night. No song was sung for the children who were taken to Residential Schools. (M. J. Smith, 2010, p. 126-127)

The absence of a song for the attack on the most important and vulnerable members of Gitxsan society represents how foreign and culturally incompatible the Indian Residential Schools were for Gitxsan. One of the targets of Indian Residential Schools was Indigenous languages. Language transmission is closely connected to identity and culture, which makes language revitalization and documentation an important focus for language activists.

1.2   Mapping out the Thesis

In this thesis, the Elders' knowledge and stories have been placed in a larger context to allow the reader to situate the information and make connections.

The purpose of *Chapter 2 My Background* is to situate me in the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project and to give the reader an idea of what brought me to become invested in becoming a language activist and language learner on *Lax̱ Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory).

Chapter 3 Gitxsan Moons and the Seasonal Round serves to paint a picture of traditional seasonal activities on the *Lax Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory) and describes some of the system of laws and rituals that exist to mediate women's spiritual power during periods of transition. Practicing the laws and rituals connects Gitxsan to the land and to their ancestors who have practiced the laws and rituals for thousands of years before them (M. J. Smith, 2004).

Chapter 4 Process details the process that emerged from the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project. One of the foundational principles of the project was to decolonize Eurocentric research methodologies and to discover what doing research within a Gitxsan framework could look like. For this reason, the process is said to have emerged from the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project, rather than the project becoming a product of a predescribed process.

Chapter 5 Perinatal Language presents the language related to the perinatal period that we documented in the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project. The language is presented in two parts: (i) a list of words and phrases and (ii) a list of sentences. This chapter has some technical information that could be challenging to a reader who does not have a background in linguistics; for this reason, the chapter includes an outline of how any language learner can learn to perform basic linguistic analysis as a tool for language learning and a description of how the average reader can use the information presented in this chapter.

As part of the perinatal language documentation, the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project also produced booklets containing transcriptions of the conversations with the Elders, translations upon request, and audio CD's with edited copies of the

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conversations. The information in these resources is private and available only to the Elders and members of their families.

Chapter 6 Historical Context: Health and Medical Care situates the Elders' perinatal experiences within the local climate of obstetrics in the early and mid-1900s, the time when the Elders' mothers gave birth, and then the Elders later had their own children. The Elders' experiences are not representative of Gitxsan culture or people; however, their experiences provide an important perspective that has been missed in the literature regarding the confluence of Gitxsan and Eurocanadian health and medical care and practices. Learning about the truths of history is an important part of all decolonization journeys and this chapter works towards shifting the rhetoric on this time period to one of power and resistance.

In *Chapter 7 Conclusion: A Gitxsan Research Methodology* I reflect on how working in a decolonizing and Indigenist (Wilson, 2007) methodology has shaped the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project.

1.3   Chapter Conclusion

This chapter served to introduce the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project and to situate it in the context of people, territory, and language. The next chapter presents my background so the reader can see what brings me to a language documentation project on *Lax̱ Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory).

2 My Background

"...the discussion and experiences I have had with other Indigenous scholars and traditional knowledge-keepers...have helped me to become a better researcher and ultimately a better person. And yes, the two can coincide." – Wilson (2007, p. 193)

This chapter serves to situate the researcher (me) in the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project, to give the reader an idea of my background and what brought me to do a language documentation project on *Lax̲ Yipxwhl Gitxsan*.

2.1 What brought me here

Language is what brought me to *Lax̲ Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory). I have always been fascinated by language. I love grammar and the diversity of human languages. I am amazed by the human mind and our ability to absorb language as infants and children. I am intrigued by the changes languages experience from generation to generation. And I live, on a deep personal level the complex relationship between language and identity. At times the connection between my childhood languages and my identity has been a source of pride. I have also lived through feelings of shame and confusion related to the languages my family spoke at home. Language has never been a benign or neutral topic in my life.

When I go back to the place where I grew up, I can close my eyes and feel completely oriented. I know the feeling of the sun, the smell of the forest, the types of vegetation, the direction the rivers flow, where the wind comes from. I have the same feeling of orientation when I am around my first language. The patterns of sounds, the order of the words, the intonations across sentences. These feelings of

being grounded in language and place have had an influence on who I am today.

The language shifts in my family have followed the shifts in the places where we have lived. My great-grandmother grew up speaking Rusyn in what was then eastern Poland, and her children grew up speaking Polish with likely some latency in Rusyn.[8] Following the second world war the family was displaced to other parts of Poland. My mother was born and raised in the city of Kraków speaking Polish. My mother still has memories of some of the exotic sounding Rusyn words her grandmother sometimes used. The move to Canada caused another language shift in my generation. My parents spoke to my sister and me in Polish. The switch to English occurred gradually as we were growing up, and my sister and I are now both latent Polish speakers.

Being outside, in the forest and in the mountains has always been an important part of daily life in my family. I go to the forest every day for a walk with my dog. For the past few years my walks have mostly taken place behind my home on *Lax Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory) in the village of Two-Mile. My daily walk takes me up a modest hill through a mixed forest of cedar, spruce, birch, cottonwood, and aspen. In the summer I snack on thimble berries and tiny raspberries and in the late summer and early fall I harvest *prawdziwki* and *kozaki*, two varieties of bolitas mushrooms that my family has harvested for generations. My walk takes me to the top of a south facing rock outcrop. From this viewpoint I have a spectacular view on the villages in the valley below me – New Hazelton, Hawgilget, and Two-Mile – overshadowed by *Sdikyoodenax*. *Sdikyoodenax* is an impressive mountain that

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[8]Most people who are latent speakers of a language say they understand the language but don't speak it. I also like term "silent speaker."

is visible from most villages in the upriver (eastern) part of *Lax̱ Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory).

Sdikyoodenax̱ features in many Gitxsan legends, and they call him the big brother to the Seven Sisters mountains, who are west of *Sdikyoodenax̱* (M.J. Smith, p.c., 2017). At the top of my walk I sit on a boulder and spend some time watching *Sdikyoodenax̱*. *Sdikyoodenax̱* is forever changing. Some days he's obscured completely by clouds that make a ceiling over the valley. Other days he sits, black and grey rock towers against a vivid blue sky backdrop. Some days the wind howls around the mountain and wisps of clouds get caught on the rocky peaks for a few minutes then get blown away.

I like to imagine the generations of my grandmothers finding peace in the mountains like I do. My maternal great grandmother was born in a town in the Karpaty Mountains in what was then eastern Poland. She was part of the Rusyn minority that claim the Karpaty Mountain Region as their homeland. She hiked in the mountains, harvested mushrooms, and kept a cottage in the Karpaty Mountains until the second world war. My maternal grandmother also spent time in the mountains. In addition to hiking and harvesting, she took up skiing and worked as a ski instructor at one point in her life. My mother was also brought up doing these activities, mostly in the Tatra mountains in Poland. My parents met each other after immigrating to Canada, and they were drawn to the stunning Squamish Valley in the Coastal Mountains of British Columbia, which is where I grew up with my sister.

I spent my childhood and early adolescence playing outside, in and around the ancient cedar and spruce trees in our yard. Dog walks took us mostly across the

street to the Squamish River. The changing seasons brought the river levels up and down. The salmon came to spawn and die. The bald eagles came by the hundreds to feast. One year we rescued salmon out of pools where they had become trapped after the water level dropped and left them stranded. The mountains surrounding the valley were a source of awe and inspiration to my active imagination. And my family, like the generations before me, hiked in the mountains, harvested mushrooms, and skied.

I continue to spend time in the mountains. In the summers I hike and mountain bike a little, and in the winters I do alpine ski-touring. Alpine ski-touring is not something I grew up with, and there has been a lot to learn in managing safety and efficiency in winter mountain travel. I do most of my ski-touring with my partner, Chris. It's a great privilege to venture into the mountains during the winter and early spring months. The snow covered mountains take me out of the bubble of my life and remind me how small I really am in the world. It's a good feeling to feel small. The big things in my life become smaller. I value the moment I'm in, the people I'm with, and the life I'm living. On days when the visibility is good and the snow is stable, we hike to a ridge top, or occasionally to a gentle peak. From this vantage point we can see rows and rows of snowy mountains and valleys all the way to the horizon.

One of my favourite parts of being in the mountains in early spring is the smell of *wa'ums* (devil's club). Devil's club is an important medicine for Gitxsan. In the spring, as the snowpack shrinks, the old devil's club stalks from the year before protrude above the snow. As we ski down to the valley bottom we have to ski around

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and over the prickly stiff stalks, and this releases the fresh smell of the devil's club that in my mind is uniquely characteristic of springtime in the north.

The longer I live on *Lax̱ Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory), the more I become invested in the community and committed to learning *Gitxsanimx̱*. I am grateful for the opportunity the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project has given me learn about the Gitxsan language and history, to make friends and a home in the community, and to grow as a researcher and as an individual. I'm looking forward to more collaborative projects to come.

2.2   Chapter Conclusion

This chapter, *Chapter 2 My Background*, provided an introduction to who I am and what drives my passion for working in a decolonizing and Indigenist (Wilson, 2007) project on *Lax̱ Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory). The next chapter, *Chapter 3 Gitxsan Moons and the Seasonal Round* describes some of the activities of the traditional seasonal round and makes connections with some laws and rituals related to women and children in transitional points of their lives.

3 Gitxsan Moons and the Seasonal Round

"The ancestors are continuously present today on the landscapes. They have left us ancient names, hand tools, and trails. We bring them to life in singing their songs and telling their stories. We continue to use their language and we are acquainted with their cherished places. The past and the present merge together into the future."
– L. R. Smith (2008, p. 15)

The traditional seasonal round, which has been practiced on *Lax̱ Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory) since time immemorial represents the Gitxsan cyclical connection with the world. Women in transitional points of their lives, namely in menstruation, during their first year of puberty, and in the perinatal period are believed to be able to influence the world, and thus a system of laws[9] and rituals exists to mediate women's spiritual strength.

This chapter looks at the traditional Gitxsan seasonal round through the lens of the Gitxsan moon cycles. Many of the laws and rituals related to Gitxsan women in these transitional periods are connected with food, the land, and the well-being of the women and their village. Elements that pertain to women in menstruation, in puberty seclusion, and in the perinatal period are an important part of the Gitxsan reciprocal relationship with the land.

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[9]Napoleon (2001) makes a distinction between 'law,' 'legal rule,' 'socio-legal rule,' and 'social convention' (p. 64-65). For example, that a woman shouldn't eat fresh fish or meat while in puberty seclusion is referred to as a socio-legal rule, and the restriction against eating certain berries in this period is referred to as a social convention. For the purpose of this discussion, I follow the terminology used in the original sources, and in general statements I refer to these rules as laws.

3.1   Maintaining Relationships with the Land

We Are All Connected
by Dr. M.J. Smith (2015)

My Grandparents taught me that death was a natural part of life. Death
was required so others could live; thus, the bodies of the Gitxsan who
have died have fed the soil. Everything growing from the land was a part
of the Gitxsan. This was why the Gitxsan respected the land and felt
that it was sacred.... Everyone and everything that took nourishment
from the land, including the newcomers to the land, were connected to
the Gitxsan. We are all relatives.

The Gitxsan reciprocal world view and way of living means that people are in-
tricately interconnected and can become connected to each other in many complex
ways (Daly, 2005). Food from the land connects all people to *Lax̱ Yipxwhl Gitxsan*
(Gitxsan Territory), to each other, to the ancestors, and to generations to come. It
is a complex multi-layered reciprocity that has been going on since the beginning of
time. *Tenimgyet* (Art Mathews) speaks to the cyclical Gitxsan worldview: "We are
our own ancestors. It goes in a big circle" (Gitxsan Hereditary Chiefs, 2010, p. 27).

Ayoo̱k (Gitxsan legal system) are central to the relationship between people and
between people and the land (*Delgamuu̱k* (Ken Muldoe); in Monet & Skanu'u, 1997,
p. 22). *Delgamuu̱k* (Ken Muldoe) explains that following *ayoo̱k* (Gitxsan legal sys-
tem) ensures that the cyclical flow of power of the land and its inhabitants is har-
monious:

For us, the ownership of territory is a marriage of the Chief and the land.
Each Chief has an ancestor who encountered and acknowledged the life
of the land. From such encounters come power. The land, and plants,

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the animals and the people all have spirit; they all must be shown respect. That is the basis of our law.

. . .

By following the law, the power flows from the land to the people through the Chief; by using the wealth of the territory, the House feasts its Chief in order that the law can be properly fulfilled. This cycle has been repeated on [Gitxsan] land for thousands of years.

(*Delgamuuk̲* (Ken Muldoe), 1987; in Monet & Skanu'u, 1997, p. 22)

Many of the laws and rituals described in this chapter, from a Eurocentric point of view, seem to be restrictive for a woman in transitional periods of her life (Dennis, 2014, p. 135-136). From an Indigenous perspective, the traditional practices are a way to honour and respect women (Dennis, 2014). L. R. Smith (2008) writes about *nímính*, a *Tsínlhqút'ín* (Chilcotin) energy that is strongest during life transitions:

. . . the *Tsínlhqút'ín* (Chilcotin) concept of an energy called *nímính*. . . manifests within individuals at the onset of a life transition (namely at birth, puberty, and death) lingering for varying durations from one week to an entire lifetime, and influencing subsistence items, places, and vegetation.

(L. R. Smith, 2008, p. iii)

Rituals and laws associated with transitional periods of life connect women with their ancestors (M. J. Smith, 2004) and with the "cosmic importance of the group and of the place of the individual within that group" (Davis-Floyd, 1992, p. 1).

Dennis (2014) explains that Indigenous societies "believed [a woman's] restorative process is so strong during [menstruation] that it is able to draw power away from the ceremonies, sacred items and foods that are eaten during and after ceremonies" (p. 135). Dennis (2014) explains that "[w]omen in traditional Native societies were

revered for their ability to give life" (p. 135). Dennis (2014) frames this as a "nurturing approach" (p. 136) in which women in transitional periods of their lives were honoured in special ways including being given the opportunity to take time for spiritual reflection during transitional times of their lives during which other members of their family assumed their workloads, cooked for them, and protected them (Dennis, 2014, p.135-136).

3.2   The Cycle of Seasons

We begin with *K'uholxs* (January), a time of story-telling and feasting.

> *K'uholxs* (Stories and Feasting Moon)
>
> January – Rainbow ring around the moon. The ring represents the circle of stories. The stories are told and retold and customs and traditions are perfected during this quiet time of winter.
>
> (M.J. Smith, p.c., 2017)

A crucial part of Smith's (2004) education came from listening to stories told by her *Na'a* (grandmother). M. J. Smith (2004) writes:

> After the lantern was turned off, my Na'a (Grandmother) would tell a story...Na'a had many talents, but telling a story was her greatest talent. Before she would begin she would credit all her sources. Soon the listeners would realize that they were listening to the stories from the beginning of time.
>
> (M. J. Smith, 2004, p. 21)

Gitxsan storytellers recognize their ancestors when they continue the cycle of the storytelling tradition.

In the story of "The Odyssey of Nuhlx, His Three Brothers and Sister" (M.J. Smith, 2004) (henceforth referred to as "The Odyssey") a young woman is forced

by circumstances to break the laws of her puberty seclusion. The laws are in place because a woman in puberty seclusion has a powerful connection with the land. Breaking the laws can influence the land or her health, often with negative consequences.

"The Odyssey" (M. J. Smith, 2004) is an old story that takes place in a village in the northern part of *Lax̲ Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory). In the story, the young woman is staying in a little house designated for girls completing their puberty rites. Women in puberty seclusion were taken care of by other older women and could not leave the house they were staying in for 10 days (Duff, 1959). M.J. Smith writes that "It was a powerful time for the girls" (p.c.). This was the time when a young girl transitioned to being a woman (M.J. Smith, p.c.). To signal for food or water, the young woman could pull on a piece of leather string or cedar bark string that was attached to deer hooves in her parents' house (M. J. Smith, 2004, p. 53-61; Duff, 1959, p. 40-41).

Daly (2005) explains that the woman who mentored a young woman in puberty seclusion was often the young woman's father's sister. It could also be a grandmother, mother, or a female cousin (M.J. Smith, p.c.). Their relationship was an important lifelong relationship in which the mentor guided the young woman to "prepare mentally and materially to organize her first feast...[and to] unlock [her] own gifts and talents" (Daly, 2005, p. 65). In old age the younger woman would care for her mentor. The relationship between a young woman and her mentor is still important today, especially for women taking on a role as a feast organizer. Daly (2005) explains that a close relationship like this one where it is "*xshla'wasxw* – the

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foundation, or 'the one who is as close to us as our underwear''' (p. 66) is called *ge'nax̲*, 'to chew for someone who has no teeth' (Daly, 2005, p. 65-66).

As discussed below, the transitional period of puberty seclusion is associated with a number of laws and restrictions. Napoleon (2001) points out that the most important outcome of completing this life step from the Gitxsan legal point of view is that young women receive a new name and their "legal status changes accordingly" (*Xhliimlaxha* (M. Brown) in Napoleon, 2001, p. 64).

The period of puberty seclusion was traditionally one year and during this year a woman's contact with her community was governed by laws. Some of the laws restricted her participation in community activities (eg. fishing and hunting; see below for further discussion) or restricted her contact with some people (eg. men could not look at or pass near a puberty house) (Duff, 1959, p. 40-41; M. J. Smith, 2004).

The young woman in "The Odyssey" (M. J. Smith, 2004) first pulls a string for water, then for dried fish and meat, and finally for berries. There is no response. Fearfully, she leaves the house. She covers her head with a hood, because if she looks at the mountains during her puberty rites she could go blind, such is the power of the connection between a woman and the land during this period of time (M. J. Smith, 2004, p. 53-61; Napoleon, 2001, p. 65).[10,11]

The young woman discovers that everyone in the village has disappeared, en-

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[10]Looking at the mountains during puberty seclusion has other implications as well. See below for further discussion.

[11]Although not related to food and the seasonal round, it can be added here that women in puberty seclusion are also required to keep their hair covered. Exposing their hair can result in the early onset of grey hair (*Antgulilbix* (Mary Johnson) in Napoleon, 2001, p. 65).

trapped by a magical feather lure sent down from the sky by a *Naxnok* (supernatural spirit) who had become annoyed by the noisy game of *gunnxhl* they had been playing. The devastated young woman walks around the village crying. Without realizing her actions, she wipes *nuits* (mucus) from her nose on a blanket she is wearing like an apron, and she picks up four objects and places them in her blanket, *masxwagwa lo'op* (red rock), *mahumin lo'op* (stone file), *skants'ook'* (chokecherry branch), and *k'olim lo'op* (gutting knife made from stone) (M. J. Smith, 2004, p. 53-61).

Because of her sudden isolation, the young woman has no choice but to break the laws of her puberty seclusion. Soon she becomes pregnant and gives birth to five supernatural children conceived from the *nuits* (mucus) she had wiped on her blanket, and the four items she had placed in her blanket. The children are born with powers related to the items they were conceived from, and they go on in other stories to free *Lax Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory) from monsters on the land.

In addition to story-telling, the winter months are also a time for the arts (music, dance, basket weaving, carving, etc.) and for feasting. Traditionally a feast was held to commemorate a young woman who had completed her period of puberty seclusion (Johnson, 1997, p. 57). The name for this feast is *ginitxw* (*Xhliimlaxha* (Martha Brown) in Napoleon, 2001, p. 64-65).

> *Lasa hu'mal* (The Moon of the Cracking Cottonwood Trees and Opening Water Trails)
>
> February– When the cottonwood trees snap because of the bitter cold. When the false thaw comes and ice melts and canoes can be used on the rivers.
>
> (M.J. Smith, p.c., 2017)

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Lasa hu'mal (February) is the end of winter. Johnson (1997) explains that this is a time when supplies of stored food (dried berries, fish, and meat) are running low. The snowpack begins to melt and the river ice begins to break up, so beaver and wintering steelhead can be caught at this time of year. In the event of a prolonged winter and/or food shortage, Gitxsan could dig for *ax̱* (a spiny woodfern rootstalk) under the snow, but finding it requires expertise. Despite the difficulties of travel presented by the melting snowpack and river ice at this time of year, Gitxsan began the journey on the grease trails to the mouth of the Nass River for the annual oolichan harvest (Johnson, 1997; Cassidy & Ans'pa yaxw School Society, 1984; Harrington, 1967).

> *Wihlaxs* (The Black Bear's Waking Moon)
>
> March– The bears sit in front of their dens in the early spring, trying to wake up and get accustomed to the daylight and fresh air. They are safe from the hunters because they are thin after their long winter sleep.
>
> (M.J. Smith, p.c., 2017)

Wihlaxs (March) is the beginning of springtime. This is the time when black bears are waking up with their new cubs. March is also called "Ha-owalq"[12] in Duff (1959), which represents the downriver dialect for *Hat'ag̱an*, in the upriver dialect. "Ha-owalq" and *Hat'ag̱an* mean 'forbidden' (Duff, 1959, p. 29; M.J. Smith, p.c., 2017). A pregnant mother who looks at a black bear could result in her child being "disfigured" (Duff, 1959, p. 29). If a pregnant mother is hunting and frightened by a black bear it could result in the baby acting like a baby bear (M.J. Smith, p.c., 2017).

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[12]In the current orthography, this might be written *ha'walḵ*.

In *Wihlaxs* (March), Gitxsan families were for the most part en route to the mouth of the Nass River for the oolichan harvest via one of two main grease trails on the territory. Gitxsan from the upriver part of the territory traveled a route that followed the *Xsi Anspayaxw* (Kispiox River) north to the Cranberry River, crossed the Cranberry River, then down the Nass River to its mouth. Gitxsan from the downriver part of the territory followed a route along the *Xsi Yen* (Skeena River), along the Kitwancool Valley, then down the Nass River to its mouth. Oolichan, and a variety of other wildlife including seal, sturgeon, salmon, porpoise, finback whales, sea gulls, other diving birds, eagles arrive at the Nass River around mid-March. Members from other neighbouring Nations also attended the annual harvest so this was also a time for trade (Harrington, 1967, p. 29-31).

Gitxsan have followed the grease trails for thousands of years, and today's highways follow parts of these routes, where contemporary Gitxsan continue to travel to buy or trade for oolichan grease.

> *Lasa ya'a* (The Spring Salmon's Returning Home Moon)
> April – Spring salmon return to the rivers of their birth.
> (M.J. Smith, p.c., 2017)

After the oolichan harvest, Gitxsan families began the journey home, some carrying as much as 200 pounds of processed oolichan (grease, dried oolichan, and smoked oolichan) home to their winter villages (Harrington, 1967, p. 31). Early spring is also a time to harvest some medicinal plants, and bears may also be hunted at this time (Johnson, 1997, p. 45-46).

Traditionally *Lasa ya'a* (April) was also the time to give thanks with the First

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Salmon Ceremony (Johnson, 1997, p. 60). The first salmon to be caught is honoured and praised, then the head chiefs share a meal of salmon prepared in a special way (*Gwis Gyen* (Stanley Williams) in Napoleon, 2001, p. 66).

> *Lasa 'yanja* (The Moon of Budding Trees and Blooming Flowers)
> May – Trees wake up and start to come into bud, flowers are blooming.
> Nature is reborn.
> (M.J. Smith, p.c., 2017)

In *Lasa 'yanja* (May) Gitxsan harvested food plants such as greens and cambium, and barks from willow, maple, and cedar for weaving and ropes (Johnson, 1997, p. 45-46).

> *Lasa maa'y* (Gathering and Preparing Berries Moon)
> June – The season begins for berry picking and preserving for the long
> winter months ahead.
> (M.J. Smith, p.c., 2017)

In *Lasa maa'y* (June) soap berries are the first berries to begin to ripen, and wild strawberries are an added treat a little later in the early summer.

M.J. Smith (p.c., 2016) writes that young women in puberty seclusion were able to participate in berry harvesting and could eat berries; however, it was important that she take care to keep her head bent down and not gaze around. Usually the young woman's mother wove her a hooded cloak from cedar bark that she wore whenever she went outside (M.J. Smith, p.c., 2016).

One restriction in the literature regarding young women in puberty seclusion applies to eating *t'imi'it* (kinnikinnick berries) during the year of puberty seclusion. *Antgulilbix* (Mary Johnson) explains that eating *t'imi'it* (kinnikinnick berries) can

have negative consequences for a woman's health by causing her to lose her teeth (Napoleon, 2001, p. 65).

> *Lasa 'wiihun* (The Fisherman's Moon)
> July – Season of moving to the fish camps to preserve salmon for the winter months.
> (M.J. Smith, p.c., 2017)

In *Lasa 'wiihun* (July) Gitxsan traveled (and continue to go) to the next fishing camp of the season to catch and process spring salmon (chinook) and a little later sockeye (Johnson, 1997, p. 46; Cassidy & Ans'pa yaxw School Society, 1984, p. 11-13). Today, some families still process fish on site at the fish camps, while others process their catch at home in their villages.

Some Gitxsan laws regarding young women in transitional periods (in puberty and menstruation) apply to fish. Women who observe the laws have long lives, good fortune, and are respected as "women of good morals, good character, honour, and pride" (Duff, 1959, p. 40-41). It was important to locate the puberty house far from the fishing site to prevent young women from looking at fish. Looking at fish could "bring misfortune to the village" (Duff, 1959, p. 40-41). The law also prevents women from eating fresh fish in puberty seclusion and in menstruation; they can eat dried or smoked fish (M.J. Smith, p.c., 2016; E.S., 2016; Duff, 1959, p. 40-41).

The laws extend to the water and the mountains. Crossing water has the potential to "offend the fish" and a tube is used to drink water. When traveling on water by canoe young women are required to carry stones their mouth to prevent talking or laughing. Talking or laughing while traveling on water could make "the spirits…fly

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away with them" (Duff, 1959, p. 41).[13] Looking at the mountains may anger the mountains which can have the power to stop the fish run (Duff, 1959, p. 40-41).

Saskatoons ripen near the end of *Lasa 'wiihun* (July) and are harvested before heading into the mountains to the berry-picking camps (Johnson, 1997, p. 46-47).

> *Lasa lik'i'nxsw* (The Grizzly Bear's Moon)
> August – The grizzly bears are fishing and eating spawning salmon, fattening up for the long winter months ahead.
> (M.J. Smith, p.c., 2017)

When the sockeye fish run is over, and the pink salmon run begins, Gitxsan leave the rivers for the mountains to their berry picking camps where they pick huckleberries and blueberries. Berries were traditionally the most important plant food and source of carbohydrates. They were stored in sun dried berry cakes and in oolichan grease (Cassidy & Ans'pa yaxw School Society, 1984; Johnson, 1997; Harrington, 1967).

Today annual berry picking continues to be important and most people can or freeze their harvest.

> *Lasa gangwiikw* (The Groundhog Hunting Moon)
> September – Gitxsan go to the mountains for the groundhogs. The groundhogs are easy to hunt. They are slow moving and fat from eating all summer.
> (M.J. Smith, p.c., 1997)

Blueberries and huckleberries continue to be available in *Lasa gangwiikw* (September) on the mountain slopes. From the berry picking camps, hunters head into the

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[13]It is unclear whether it is the spirits of the fish or of the young women that will fly away.

mountains to hunt groundhogs (marmots), mountain goats, caribou (before their disappearance), and deer. In more recent times moose have replaced caribou and are an important game meat in the fall (Cassidy & Ans'pa yaxw School Society, 1984; Johnson, 1997).

Wild cranberries and rosehips are available in the early fall, and this was also traditionally the time to collect moss. Moss was dried and used for sanitary purposes, including diapers for infants. This was also the time to harvest plants such as *wa'ums* (devil's club) and *ax̱* (spiny woodfern rootstock), and medicinal plants used for hunting and trapping purification rituals and for the maintenance of health throughout the winter (Johnson, 1997, p. 47).

The final salmon run, coho, comes in *Lasa gangwiikw* (September) and *Lasa xsin laaxw* (October). Coho were traditionally eaten fresh or smoked (Johnson, 1997, p. 46-47; Cassidy & Ans'pa yaxw School Society, 1984, p. 11-13).

> *Lasa xsin laaxw* (The Catching Lots of Trout Moon)
>
> October – Gitxsan are finished with all the preparations for winter and take time to go trout fishing. Trout fishing signifies the completion and celebration of the summer work. The trout are plentiful, hungry, and easy to catch.
>
> (M.J. Smith, p.c., 2017)

The fall was traditionally a time to wrap up summer activities and prepare for the winter. Families began to return to winter villages, and took time to ready traps, snowshoes, snares, and to collect firewood (Johnson, 1997).

"The Odyssey" (M. J. Smith, 2004) takes place in this time of year. The young woman has no choice but to break the laws of her puberty seclusion (M. J. Smith,

2004). M. J. Smith (2004) writes:

> Her breaking the law would bring bad luck to the hunters but there were no hunters around.... This was the law, she thought as she ate fresh trout and rabbit meat. She set the taboos aside as she looked at the mountaintops and snared rabbits. What else could she do? It was against the laws; but she was alone.
>
> (M. J. Smith, 2004, p. 56-57)

The young woman knowingly eats fresh fish, hunts for meat, and looks on the mountains. Although surprised by her mysterious pregnancy, she soon understands the spiritual origins of her conception from the mucus and four objects she had placed in her blanket next to her belly they day she first broke the puberty laws. Until the birth she believes she will be having one baby, not five (M. J. Smith, 2004).

The restriction against hunting or eating fresh meat apply to women in menstruation and in puberty seclusion. The consequences for eating fresh meat include bad luck for the (male) hunter who caught the animal and possible consequences for their eyesight (*Antgulilbix* (M. Johnson) in Napoleon, 2001, p. 65).

Lasa xsin laaxw (October) for the young woman in "The Odyssey" (M. J. Smith, 2004) does not follow the Gitxsan tradition. Rather than resting and celebrating the end of the summer's work, the young woman begins preparations for the coming birth and for caring for her baby. She collects and dries moss for diapers. She hunts rabbits and makes blankets from rabbit skins (M. J. Smith, 2004).

> *Lasa gwineekxw* (The Getting Used to Cold Moon)
>
> November – A time of cold, but some warm days too.
>
> (M.J. Smith, p.c., 2017)

Traditionally Gitxsan spent the winter months in their winter village. During the fur trade, some Gitxsan went away in *Lasa gwineekxw* (November) to traplines on their territories to catch and process rabbits, marten, mink, wolverine, lynx, and wolf for their furs (Johnson, 1997).

> *Lasa 'Wiigwineekxw* (or) *Lasa gunkw'ats* (The Moon of Severe Snow Storms and Sharp Cold)
>
> December – A time of extreme cold. Winter has no compassion. Too cold to run all the way to the outhouse.
>
> (M.J. Smith, p.c., 2017)

After the arrival of missionaries, it became important for some Gitxsan who were out on their trapline to return to their winter villages for Christmas in *Lasa 'Wiigwineekxw* (December). People could hunt moose, deer, and rabbit for food in the winter months (Johnson, 1997).

> *Ax wa* (The Shaman's Moon)
>
> The blue moon, or the 13th moon The most powerful moon, not named. *Halayt* (Shaman) use this moon to cleanse and practice good luck. Fasting, praying, sleeping alone in the four directions around the fire, and gathering at the sweat lodge daily. A powerful moon for the dreamtime.
>
> (M.J. Smith, p.c., 2017)

After a long time, the young woman in "The Odyssey" (M. J. Smith, 2004) gives birth to five children. She prepares her birth place in the traditional way. She puts

water and food close to the place where she will give birth, and she heats stones near the fire and puts them in a hole in the ground with boards on top. The warm birthing bed was where a woman would lie after the birth of her baby to "cleanse her womb and warm her back" (M.J. Smith, p.c., 2016). The young woman in "The Odyssey" (M. J. Smith, 2004) lies on the warm birthing bed with her children. She names her children after the mucus and four objects she had placed in her blanket. The four boys are named *Nuhlx̲* (after *nuits*, mucus from her nose), *Masgwa lo'op* (after the red rock), *Mahumin lo'op* (after the stone file), and *S̲k̲ants'ook̲'* (after the chokecherry branch). The last to be born is a girl, who she names *Kolim lo'op* (after the gutting knife) (M. J. Smith, 2004, p. 57).

The birth may have been a lonely time for the woman in "The Odyssey" (M. J. Smith, 2004) because family and clan members play important support and ceremonial roles at the time of birth, and she was alone.

Family members play important roles in a Gitxsan mother's pregnancy, birth, and in the life of the new baby. A grandmother to the baby or to the mother, or another person close to the mother, or the mother herself, dreams before the birth of the baby. In their dream they see the spirit that is coming and who the spirit has chosen to be reincarnated as. Usually the spirit comes back to their own clan (M.J. Smith, p.c., 2017; E.T., p.c., 2017).

Terrace/ Kitimat and area Aboriginal Health Improvement Committee, Aboriginal Health, Northern Health (producers) (2016) describe the important roles of the mother's family members in a birth. A grandmother (the baby's grandmother or the mother's grandmother) is responsible for examining the baby for birth marks that

indicate who they baby has reincarnated as. The umbilical cord is cut by the baby's father's sister to signify the father clan's life long responsibility to the infant. The baby's father buries the umbilical cord "in a significant place on their land . . . [to] signif[y] the baby's connection to the land" (V. Howard in Terrace/Kitimat, 2016). In the event of the baby's death, the father clan also bears the responsibility of burying the baby in a significant place on the land. "The unborn child isn't lost" (V. Howard in Terrace/Kitimat, 2016). Birth is a transitional period where the cycle of life and death meet. "It's a full circle that they're establishing right from birth to death and into the spiritual realm and into the heavenly realm" (V. Howard in Terrace/Kitimat, 2016).

The five supernatural children in "The Odyssey" (M. J. Smith, 2004) are born in a powerful time over the winter. They grow quickly and by spring they are walking. As they grow more independent, they begin to help their mother with the summer fish harvest activities and other parts of the seasonal round. Their mother supervises them closely while they are outside because she fears for their safety. She still did not understand how the people in her village disappeared the year before (M. J. Smith, 2004, p. 58).

M.J. Smith (p.c., 2016) describes two important ceremonies for young children, the "Walking Out Ceremony" and the "Primary Tooth Ceremony." Both ceremonies are oriented to the east, where the sun rises:

Walking Out Ceremony
When a baby is about a year old, a small feast is held. This is when the baby officially meets the Father Clan. The ceremony is held in the morning and the baby walks towards the East, (towards the direction of the rising sun), with the Father Clan lined up on both sides. A member

of the Father Clan smudges the path with *malwasxw* (Gitxsan medicine) to beckon Good Spirits to walk with the baby. Another Father Clan member sings the *Xsinaahlxxw* (Breath Song) to strengthen the breath and spirit of the baby. The mother holds the baby's hand and they walk together. The baby's clan walks behind them. Gifts are given to the Father clan and food is served by the baby's house members. The Father Clan is proud of every accomplishment of the baby.

Primary Tooth Ceremony

In this ceremony, a child who has lost a tooth, makes a fist and alternates hands and feet while dancing and teasing the sun. On the line, back of the finger, they twirl with their pointing finger up in the air. They twirl again for the stomach of the finger with their finger in the air. Then for the marten's tooth they open up their fists and throw the tooth to the sun, while shouting a joyful *'Wii'ii*.

When a primary tooth has fallen out the child throws it to the sun in the east, early in the morning. Each day as the sun comes up the new healthy tooth will start to grow. It will be strong and razor-sharp like a marten's tooth.

(M.J. Smith, p.c., 2016)

In "The Odyssey" (M. J. Smith, 2004), these rites of passage are not celebrated for the five supernatural children. The children's curiosity eventually leads to the return of the people from the village, but the villagers have no memory of their year spent away. The villagers can not accept the children as members of their clan, and they are suspicious about the children's origins: "It was not long before there were whispers in the village about the strange children. All of them were the same age. Who was their father? Was it a monster?" (M. J. Smith, 2004, p. 61). The loving mother is saddened by the villagers' rejection and s to protect her children, but they eventually decide to leave. The children went on to defeat powerful monsters on *Lax Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory) (M. J. Smith, 2004).

Every place the children fought and defeated monsters on *Lax̱ Yipx̱whl Gitxsan* (Gitx- san Territory) became a significant place on the land, a "*x̱sbin nax̱nox̱* (supernatural or power place)" (M. J. Smith, 2004, p. 27). M. J. Smith (2004) writes of the significance of going to a *x̱sbin nax̱nox̱* (supernatural or power place) on *Lax̱ Yipx̱whl Gitxsan* to perform a traditional ceremony:

> The *x̱sbin nax̱nox̱* [supernatural or power place] is a place of immeasurable strength. It can bind an individual to that spot of ground in the face of adversity. Before I leave on a journey I go to the *x̱sbin nax̱nox̱* to wash my face and hands. A true ceremony would be to immerse myself in the icy waters. This was so I would not forget my early teachings and who I was...Here I have often felt the sensation of my ancestors who are doing it once again in my actions as I obey the laws of the land.
>
> (M. J. Smith, 2004, p. 27-28)

The seasonal round, the cycle of retelling stories, and the observance of laws and rituals, are integral to the Gitxsan reciprocal relationship with the world.

3.3   Chapter Conclusion

This chapter, *Chapter 3 Gitxsan Moons and the Seasonal Round*, painted a picture of the Gitxsan traditional relationship with *Lax̱ Yipx̱whl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory) in order to situate the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project in a wider context of ancient cycles of meaning and life on the territory. The next chapter, *Process*, provides a detailed description of the process we arrived at to document the information presented in this thesis.

4 Process

"[A] methodology of the heart (Pelias, 2004), a prophetic, feminist postpragmatism that embraces an ethics of truth grounded in love, care, hope, and forgiveness, is needed. . . . And, as such, [we] must recognize love as an essential principle through which we struggle to create mutually life-enhancing opportunities for all people. It is grounded in the mutuality and interdependence of our human existence that which we share, as much as that which we do not. This is a love nurtured by the act of relationship itself. It cultivates relationships with the freedom to be at one's best without undue fear. Such an emancipatory love allows us to realize our nature in a way that allows others to do so as well." – Darder & Mirón (2006); as paraphrased by Denzin and Lincoln (2008, p. 2)

Process is an important part of learning how to do research within a Gitxsan context. The perspective of working with Gitxsan partners and investigating Gitxsan knowledge makes it a Gitxsan project, because the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project adds to Gitxsan epistemological knowledge (M. J. Smith, 2004).

As part of contributing to Gitxsan knowledge we need to understand the physical steps that were taken to get to this knowledge in the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project. Section 4.1 of this chapter provides a list of the steps that were taken in the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project, and section 4.2 elaborates on these steps. Much of this methodology emerged as the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project unfolded; it was important to me to have an open mind in my approach to the research process.

4.1 Research Steps

The following is a quick-reference list of the steps that were taken in the research process for the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project. Some of the steps, once initiated, were ongoing throughout the process (eg. decolonization, project design), and others

were completed in a sequential process (eg. obtaining permissions, archiving):

1. Learn about colonialism and decolonization;

2. Ethics;

3. Go to *Lax̱ Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory);

4. Find a Gitxsan project partner;

5. Design the project (research questions);

6. Get permission from the Hereditary Chiefs;

7. Apply for funding;

8. Establish the rest of the project team;

9. Acquire the necessary tools;

10. Interviews with Elders;

11. Edit the recordings;

12. Transcribe the recordings;

13. Edit transcriptions;

14. Select key words/sentences;

15. Resources: booklets, CDs, word/sentence lists, MA thesis;

16. Finalize/produce/disseminate/archive resources;

17. Future directions (eg. contributions to online dictionary, decolonization efforts).

4.2 Details of Research Steps

This section elaborates on the research steps that were taken to complete the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project.

4.2.1 Learning about Colonialism and Decolonization

Decolonization is a lifelong journey. The steps towards decolonization that were taken in the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project started with learning about colonialism (Henderson, 2000; Battiste & Youngblood Henderson, 2000; Tuhiwai Smith, 2012; Davis-Floyd, 1992). Next, I explored alternative approaches to traditional research methodologies (M. J. Smith, 2004; Wilson, 2007). Part of exploring alternative approaches includes learning about challenges and insights that other researchers have had before me (Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer, 1998; Dorian, 2010; Czaykowska-Higgins, 2009; Shulist, 2013). Learning about Indian Residential Schools must also be addressed in every decolonization journey (Florence, 2016; Regan, 2010; M. J. Smith, 2010). Learning about the millenia old history of the Gitxsan (up to recent history that includes confluences with the newcomers) helped me situate the stories of the Elders in time and place (M. J. Smith, 2004; Monet, D. & Skanu'u (Wilson A.), 1992; Gitxsan Hereditary Chiefs, 2010; Daly, 2005; Johnson, 1997; Raibmon, 2007).

4.2.2 Ethics: Some Additional Considerations

Ethical oversight on the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project came from several angles. At the institutional level, the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Board (HREB) reviewed and approved the project proposal. On *Lax Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory), Dr. M.J. Smith provided the main ethical oversight throughout the process, and members of the Elders' families were also involved on a peripheral level and could contact any of us if concerns came up.

Ethical supervision was very important for me, because I wanted to avoid making

mistakes that could hurt people. Dr. M.J. Smith's close involvement in all stages of the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* means that throughout the whole process of the project she has provided me with opportunities for learning, decolonizing, and avoiding mistakes that are not available through HREB requirements. Ethical oversight in my mind also equates to the highest level of transparency possible.

Transparency is the foundation of a collaborative relationship. Transparency leads to trust, equality, reciprocity on multiple levels, and clarity about the rights to and ownership of the knowledge gathered or produced through a research project.

Lack of transparency in research relationships, whether intentional or unintentional, can result in feelings of betrayal and distrust. Lack of transparency can happen when project partners misunderstand each other's intentions. Dorian (2010) points out, for example, that the perspectives on documented information can be multifaceted; it can be highly private and personal from the point of view of the speakers, it can be regarded as a valuable resource for community members interested in the language and the culture, and it can be considered an interesting subject of study from a linguistic point of view. Lack of transparency is created when each party approaches the relationship with the assumption that the other parties have the same perspective.

Dorian (2010) explains that researchers can put themselves in a socially unnatural position when they embark on a research relationship. She writes that "the scholar's ability to 'walk away' after prolonged and intense connection is simply unnatural in terms of ordinary social interactions" (Dorian, 2010, p. 182). Misaligned expectations between the researcher and the people they work with can lead to misunderstandings

regarding consent and the role of the researcher. Dorian (2010) writes that people don't always understand what researchers do or what will happen to the information they share with the researcher. This misunderstanding comes in large part from the fact that when people engage with a researcher, they engage in a way that is familiar to them, for example as a potential friend or community member, and they may not understand the public nature of the way the researcher presents her or his findings. If people don't completely understand the researcher's purpose and intentions, then the lack of transparency can present a problem for "truly informed consent" (Dorian, 2010, p. 182).

Since the beginning of the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project, I have been concerned with avoiding mistakes that could damage relationships. Unethical research practices can hurt people and communities, and if ethical considerations are not taken seriously by the researcher, then the researcher may not be available to witness the consequences of their actions, if any arise. Building relationships founded on trust and transparency requires a commitment to care about the people involved in the project. The first formal step in establishing transparency is ethics approval from the university followed by reviewing and agreeing to a consent form with research partners.

I appreciated the Human Rights Ethics approval process because of the ethical oversight it provided in the design of the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project. Receiving ethics approval is a lengthy process in which the researcher submits a detailed description of the research proposal and answers in-depth questions about the possibilities for negatively impacting the people who are in involved in the project.

The concrete result of ethics approval is a consent form, and the researcher is required to "acquire" or "obtain" consent from the people they work with. This standard dialogue for talking about consent, as something handed over to the researcher, has underlying feelings of colonialism. Saunders (2015) feels uncomfortable with a written consent form and explains that "I didn't want the act of signing something [sic] make people feel like they were giving away their knowledge.... I wanted to share, and to learn" (p. 68). 'Giving' consent at the beginning of a research relationship can create an impression that the rest of the relationship may also be based on giving and acquiring.[14] It puts the researcher in a position of power. Alternatives to the written consent may sometimes be available. For example, Saunders (2015) uses a verbal consent process.

My approach to the consent form was to initially ask Dr. M.J. Smith about its implications (see previous footnote). After Dr. M.J. Smith's encouragement to continue with the formal processes of my program, I thought about how the consent form could be used as a starting point to work towards the highest level of transparency. Although many consent forms follow the same format, I took my time to carefully consider each section. I wanted to use language to make it accessible to anyone reading it, and I wanted to ensure I understood and thoroughly thought about the topics it covered so that it could contribute to a dialogue about transparency, preventing misunderstandings, and avoiding hurting people. I was also glad to have a concrete document to leave with the Elders so that their family members could review it

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[14]It would be interesting to see if the Elders I worked with had the same feelings as me about signing the consent form. This was a minor point for Dr. M.J. Smith who counseled me to 'Just ask them to sign it' and not to make a big deal out of it.

and be aware of their Elder's involvement in the work we were doing together. I feel that the ethics approval process gave me good guidance in developing a project methodology that would protect the people I worked with.

An important part of my project methodology has been to minimize (and ideally equalize) power differences between myself and the people I have worked with. Regardless of the format, or the wording, or the thoroughness, or the thoughtfulness of a consent form, there remains the small but significant part at the end where the project partner 'gives' their consent to the researcher. In my experience, I found that having a project partner sign a consent form created a feeling of a power difference. It felt like they were promising something to me, where the real intent of the document is to inform them of their rights and protect them from abuse.

In my consent form I added the following as a partial solution to address this feeling of power inequality:

Signing below means that:

- You understand your rights.

- You have had a chance to ask questions, and you are satisfied with the answers.

- You consent to participate in this project.

The purpose of adding these statements was to give the person signing the consent form a moment to reflect on the process. If their answer to any of the statements was 'No,' then this would be a signal to me that we needed to review a part of the consent form, discuss concerns, or even delay signing the form so that another person could witness and/or participate in the consent process (such as a family member or Dr. M. J. Smith).

In retrospect I offer here some additional feedback to take the balancing of power in the consent process one step further. The consent form, in its traditional purpose is not an agreement; however, post-colonial, collaborative, and community-based relationships are all about developing trust through transparency. The perception of the consent form could be adjusted with a minor change to make it feel more like a promise. The promise could come in the form of adding a line to the end of the consent form that requires the researcher to sign it. The act of both people signing the document is a simple way to even out the power difference that is created when only one person signs the document. Including the signature of the researcher is a symbol that they promise to respect the rights of all the individuals involved in the project (including those of the researcher) as outlined in the consent form document.

Is it possible to decolonize a consent form? Yes, and I would argue that the ethics process in its entirety can be viewed as an important formal step in decolonizing methodologies. The consent form (which is the only part of the ethics approval process that most people see) can be used to start a dialogue about transparency while developing a methodology in a post-colonial framework.

4.2.3   Go to *Lax̱ Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory)

In my mind, *Lax̱ Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory) is like a member of every Gitxsan's family, and if a researcher doesn't 'meet' the land, then they will struggle to situate themself within the Gitxsan language, history, worldview, and research process. Aileen (a pseudonym) in Moayeri and Smith (2010) explains that in order to participate in oral Indigenous traditions of education, a researcher (or any other

learner) must be present on the land and with the people. She says, "In our tradition, things are not supposed to be written down...so if some other person like you [referring to the interviewer], if you need to know about our spirituality you'll have to go there and experience it yourself" (Moayeri & Smith, 2010, p. 411).

4.2.4   Find a Gitxsan Project Partner

Once on *Lax̱ Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory), the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project began with making connections and it ultimately led to forming friendships.[15] In the beginning I met with several people in the Gitxsan communities with the same basic questions: Was there a desire for a language documentation project? What steps did I have to undertake to obtain permission to engage in a language documentation project? Who might be able to work with me? Were there any suggestions for possible topics of research? And finally, would focusing on language surrounding pregnancy, childbirth, and the newborn, be valuable and appropriate as a possible topic? Through these encounters, I was led to Dr. M.J. Smith.

4.2.5   Design the Project: Some Additional Considerations

The *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project explored the following research questions:

(1) What can we learn about the language of pregnancy, childbirth, and the newborn from Gitxsan Elders?

(2) What can we learn about Gitxsan protocols, methods, and methodologies regarding research?

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[15]Not all research relationships have to end in friendships; however, it's important that all members involved in a project are on the same page regarding the nature of the relationships that evolve through a shared project (Dorian, 2010).

Dr. M.J. Smith approved the research topic and the initial idea for its design. The project design, however, was not finalized until it was completed because it emerged from the collaborative process. Part of the reason for holding back on finalizing a vision for the project is that I wanted all project partners to have an opportunity to contribute to the project design so that it would be meaningful for everybody. This ended up being confusing for most project partners, so Dr. M.J. Smith and I made most decisions on project design, and adjusted the design throughout the process as necessary. This means that Dr. M.J. Smith and I held power in the project design and the outcomes of the project, and we did not learn about how the Elders might conceive of a language project on the topic of pregnancy, birth, and the newborn. Aspects of the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project, consequently, are more decolonized than others.

Dr. M.J. Smith's involvement as a project partner and Gitxsan mentor, and the project's position as a collaborative and community based project (Rice, 2011; Czaykowska-Higgins, 2009) means that the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project and this thesis have had opportunities to decolonize in ways that have not typically been addressed in linguistics work (Shulist, 2013). Over the course of the project it became clear that we could not look at perinatal language in isolation from the knowledge and experiences that the Elders shared with us (Macri, 2010); for this reason, this thesis provides cultural and historical context (in Chapter 3 and Chapter 6, respectively) to give the knowledge and experiences of the Elders a place within the project. The *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project also returns the knowledge shared with us to the Elders and their family members in the form of booklets that contain

transcriptions of our conversations with them and CDs that contain audio recordings of their narratives.[16]

On the other hand, there are parts of the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project process that could be further deconstructed in future projects to become more open to learning about Gitxsan ways of thinking. *Chapter 5 Perinatal Language* presents language related to the perinatal period in the form of lists grouped into categories. One list contains words and phrases and the other list contains sentences. The categories were identified by reading the English translation of the Elders' narratives and identifying themes that seemed, from my point of view, important to the Elders.[17] The Elders were not involved in any discussions regarding this way of organizing information, nor were they involved in the process of selecting words, phrases, and sentences that are presented in these categories. Organizing information according to emic themes is a step in a decolonizing direction; however, the concept of creating lists and categories itself stems from Eurocentric forms of conceptualizing ideas. Consulting with the Elders on their views of how to present this information may have resulted with an alternative approach.

The sentences in Chapter 5 are presented with language analysis that is based on linguistic theories that stem from Eurocentric principles that separate language into structures and categories (Mellow, 2010; Speas, 2009); however, describing Gitxsan linguistics is beyond the scope of this thesis.[18]

To sum up, the project process was decolonized in some ways and remained colo-

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[16]See Section 4.2.15 for further description of the booklets and CDs.
[17]See Section *5.3 An Emic View* for further discussion of how the themes were identified.
[18]See for example Mellow (2010) for an alternative way of approaching linguistic analysis.

nized in other ways. For a first collaborative partnership, this kind of middle ground may be a reasonable approach. It gives project partners a chance to learn how to work together and to be exposed to some of the possibilities of a documentation project. This kind of collaborative work also takes more time than traditional linguistics research that is "linguist-focused" (Rice, 2011; Czaykowska-Higgins, 2009), and it's important to keep this in mind when working with aging project partners. Overall, however, the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project was a learning experience for all project partners; consequently, the project partners involved may feel more able to contribute to project design ideas for future projects now that we have gained some shared experience working together.

4.2.6 Permissions

On Dr. M.J. Smith's recommendation, I wrote to and received approval from the Gitxsan Hereditary Chiefs to proceed with the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* research project. Copies of this correspondence are available in Appendix 1.

4.2.7 Apply for Funding

Funding for honoraria and some project related expenses was provided by Jacob's Research Funds.

4.2.8 Establish the Rest of the Project Team

Dr. M.J. Smith contacted some of her Elders to ask them if they were interested in doing a project with me. Some declined, and Dr. M. J. Smith took me to the

homes of the Elders who were interested to introduce me to them. In those initial meetings we described the project and formally invited them to become partners in the project. After this, Dr. M.J. Smith did not accompany me to visit the Elders until our last set of formal interviews. My second meeting with the Elders was to read through the consent form as required by my ethics protocol. After the consent forms were signed, I had a number of visits where I got to know the Elders. I also met their family members when they were present and/or available. Some of the visits included recorded interviews.

I asked the Elders to invite family members to join the project. When I met family members (usually children or grandchildren), I introduced myself, described the work their parent/grandparent and I were doing together, and explained that there was an opportunity for them or other family members to become involved in the project. The family members were supportive of the project and chose to be involved in peripheral levels of the project that included ethical oversight, contributing pictures to the booklets, dissemination decisions, and archiving decisions.

The *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project partners consisted of:

- Dr. M. J. Smith, educator, Gitxsan storyteller, and scholar;

- Elder E.T., Gitxsan language and culture expert;

- Elder E.M., Gitxsan language and culture expert;

- Elder E.S., Gitxsan language and culture expert;

- Family members of the Elders;

- Myself, Catherine Dworak, graduate student, linguist, and resident on *Lax Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory).

4.2.9   Acquire the Necessary Tools

We used the following tools in the interview stage of the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project:

- Interview questions (see Appendix 5);
- Zoom H1 Handy Recorder;
- .wav digital audio file format;
- Electronic storage devices for digital audio files (computer, hard drive);
- Field notes;
- Journal.

We used the following tools in transcribing and editing transcriptions for the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project:

- Audacity software (Audacity Team, 2015);
- .wav digital audio files;
- "Gitxsanimx̱ Speller (2nd Edition): Text for Adult Gitxsanimx̱ Class" (M. J. Smith, 2016);
- "Ha'niimagooanswhum Algax̱hl Gitksen Gitksan – Gitxsenimx̱ Gitxsanimx̱ to English Dictionary – Learner's Edition, Volume 1" (Sim'algax̱ Working Group, n.d.);
- Gitksan orthography (Forbes et al., 2017; see Appendix 2);
- Mother Tongues Dictionary – Gitksan (Pine, 2017);
- Computer;
- Open Office Writer (The Apache Software Foundation, 2014);
- LaTex software (Kew, Löffler, & Sharpsteen, 2013).

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We used the following tools in editing audio recordings for the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project:

- Audacity software (Audacity Team, 2015);
- .wav digital audio files;
- Computer.

We used the following tools in the linguistic analysis stage of the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project:

- Audacity software (Audacity Team, 2015);
- .wav digital audio files;
- Computer;
- Gitxsan Glossing Guide (UBC Gitksan Research Laboratory, p.c., Oct. 21, 2015; see Appendix 4);
- Gitxsan Pronouns (UBC Gitksan Research Laboratory, p.c., May 3, 2012; see Appendix 3);
- LaTex software (Kew et al., 2013);
- Mother Tongues Dictionary – Gitksan (Pine, 2017);
- "Gitxsanimx̱ Speller (2nd Edition): Text for Adult Gitxsanimx̱ Class" (M. J. Smith, 2016);
- "Ha'niimag̱ooanswhum Algax̱hl Gitksen Gitksan – Gitxsenimx̱ Gitxsanimx̱ to English Dictionary – Learner's Edition, Volume 1" (Sim'algax̱Working Group, n.d.).

4.2.10   Interviews with Elders

All of the meetings with the Elders took place in their homes, except for two which took place at the hospital. The meetings sometimes began with a little bit of visiting. Often the Elders would dive into the subject right away or ask me what we were going to talk about that day. Following this cue, I would ask if I can turn on the recorder. The Elders often knew what they were going to talk about without interview questions. Other times I asked them one or two questions to give them ideas for what to talk about.

The interview questions are available in Appendix 5. They came from a variety of sources, including (i) our own curiosity, (ii) my experiences as a birth doula, and (iii) literature review (Davis-Floyd, 1992; Begay, 2004; Jordan, 1993; M. J. Smith, 2004; Conklin & Morgan, 1996; Gottlieb, 2004; H. Smith, 1997; Johnson Gottesfeld, 1988).

The duration of each meeting was between 30 minutes and two hours. I scheduled each meeting two to seven days in advance, and then I arranged to call the day of the meeting to confirm. Sometimes the Elder confirmed and sometimes they rescheduled. On two occasions when I arrived to see an Elder, I could see immediately that she wasn't well so I offered to reschedule and left shortly after or immediately. I did not take many field notes during the meetings. When I took note of something an Elder had said, the Elder would usually pause and wait for me to finish writing before continuing. The Elders spoke mostly to me in English, and I asked them to say key words/sentences in *Gitxsanimx̱*. The Elders had more ease speaking *Gitxsanimx̱* when a family member who spoke or understood *Gitxsanimx̱* was present or when

Dr. M.J. Smith was present.

Dr. M. J. Smith conducted one interview with each of the Elders. These interviews were conducted in *Gitxsanimx̲*. In these interviews, I listened, managed the recorder, and asked interview questions when prompted by Dr. M. J. Smith or the Elder.

Following each interview that Dr. M. J. Smith attended, Dr. M. J. Smith and I met to debrief. In these debriefing meetings we discussed what we learned, what worked, and what we could do differently. I also documented the process in a journal following the meetings.

We recorded interviews on these dates:

E.M.	November 24, 2014	25min
	December 17, 2014	20min
	March 30, 2016	15min
	July 4, 2016	1hr 50min
	July 26, 2016	1hr
E.T.	February 24, 2014	45min
	March 3, 2014	1hr
	March 31, 2014	2hr 20min
	December 17, 2014	15min
	July 11, 2016	1hr
E.S.	August 6, 2016	1hr

Table 1: Dates and Duration of Interviews

4.2.11 Edit the Recordings

We edited the recordings in a series of meetings because it was a lengthy process. Editing the recordings had two goals, first to remove Dr. M.J. Smith and myself from the audio recording and second to represent the Elders in a positive way. We removed parts where the Elders were searching their memory or made mistakes then corrected themselves. We did not change the order of the events in their stories.

4.2.12 Transcribe the Recordings

Dr. M.J. Smith transcribed the recordings, then I typed out the transcriptions from her hand-written notes. All transcriptions were done using the Gitksan Orthography (Forbes et al., 2017; see Appendix 2).

4.2.13 Edit the Transcriptions

We edited the transcriptions in a series of meetings because it was a lengthy process. We read through the transcriptions to check for spelling, typing mistakes, and to edit the content. To check the spelling, Dr. M.J. Smith read parts of the transcriptions out loud or we listened to parts of the recordings, while reading and editing the transcriptions.

The transcriptions accurately represent the conversations we had with the Elders, but do not exactly match the recordings. This allows the writing to stand alone or as complement to the audio recordings. The transcriptions were edited to follow the chronology of events (instead of in the order the Elders remembered things), to eliminate repetition of information, and to remove or edit parts that could be confusing.

In the interviews, we did not need to formally ask all of our interview questions because the Elders covered many of the topics addressed in the interview questions on their own in their stories. We organized the transcriptions based on the interview questions by inserting the interview questions where the Elder addressed the topic of the question, whether or not the question was formally asked in the interview. The interview questions are available in Appendix 5.

4.2.14 Select Words/Sentences

While we worked through editing the transcriptions, we selected words, phrases, and sentences that related to the perinatal period and compiled them into two lists, a list of words and phrases (Section 5.4) and a list of sentences (Section 5.5).

4.2.15 Resources: Booklets, CDs, & Word/Sentence Lists

The *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* research project produced the following resources:

- MA thesis (available to public);

- Lists of *Gitxsanimx* perinatal terms, phrases, and sentences with English translations and linguistic analysis (available to public);

- Local history of the confluence of Gitxsan and newcomer health and medical care, with a focus on perinatal care (available to public);

- Booklets & CDs (private; available to Elders and members of their families).

The MA thesis documents and explores the research process and contains the information that is available to the public. The Elders asked not to be identified in the thesis. *Chapter 5 Perinatal Language* contains two lists: Section 5.4 is a list of words and phrases related to the perinatal period with English translations, and Section 5.5 is a list of sentences related to the perinatal period. *Chapter 6 Historical Context: Health and Medical Care* presents a history of the confluence of Gitxsan and newcomer health and medical care.

The booklets and CDs contain transcriptions and edited recordings of the interviews with the Elders. This information is private and available to the Elders and members of their families.

We produced three different booklets, one for each of the Elders containing transcriptions of her stories. We made copies of the booklets and CDs for members of the Elders' families.

The booklets are double-sided and contain 23-28 pages each. The first 10 pages of each booklet is the same. Page 1 is a cover page, page 3 is a table of contents, page 5 is an Introduction in which I acknowledge and thank the Elders for working with us, and pages 7 and 9 contain my contact information, information about archiving, acknowledgment of funding sources, and information about permissions and ethical oversight. Text is presented on odd pages, and photos provided by members of the Elders' families are presented on even pages. In the transcriptions, text in *Gitxsanimx̱* is in plain font and text in English is in italicized font. A CD of the digital audio recordings of the interview(s) is appended on the last page. A pdf of the booklet is also included on the CD.

The design of the resources was my own. (See section 4.2.5 for additional considerations regarding project design.) Dr. M.J. Smith approved and provided guidance on important details of the design.[19,20]

Figures 2 – 8 are images of a sample booklet:

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[19]For example, Dr. M. J. Smith advised against including an English translation or list of perinatal terms in the booklet. When I showed the draft to the son of one of the Elders, he agreed and felt that a translation could cause offense because it's a type of interpretation. The daughter of another Elder, upon seeing a draft with no English translation, requested that we include a translation. These conversations would not have happened, had Dr. M. J. Smith not exposed me to the possibility of creating a booklet without a translation.

[20]I reflect here, that prior to this experience I viewed translations as either a neutral aspect of language work, or a positive one. I could not have imagined translation viewed in a negative light. This is a neat example of decolonizing through the process of the project.

Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw

Knowledge and Stories Surrounding Pregnancy,
Childbirth, and the Newborn

[Elder's Name]
Sample Booklet
In collaboration with Catherine Dworak and Dr. M. Jane Smith

[photo]

Figure 2: Sample Booklet: Cover Page

Contents

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Figure 3: Sample Booklet: Contents (Page 3)

Introduction

In 2016 [Elder's Name] gave me the honor of sharing with me some of her personal experiences of pregnancy, childbirth, and life with a newborn. I recorded the stories in Gitxsanimx̱ with Dr. M. Jane Smith, and this booklet contains edited transcriptions of her stories.

[Elder's Name] made it clear that she did not want her experiences to be representative of Gitxsan people. These stories are part of her personal life experience, and life experiences are what make every person unique. [Elder's Name] also expressed that she did not want her stories to be made publicly available. Her stories are for herself and for her family.

I feel that language and birth have power for creation, joy, sadness, loss, and beauty. Both language and birth have potential to be ridden with complex emotions because of our history of colonialism and racism. Pregnancy, childbirth, and life with a newborn are also a vulnerable and transformative part of a person's life which can make it a sensitive topic to share. [Elder's Name] gave me her time and energy, and above all she trusted me with recordings of some of her personal memories. I am overcome with gratitude for her trust and generosity.

[Elder's Name], you have enriched my life. Thank you for sharing your stories.

T'ooyax̱si 'Niin,

Catherine Dworak

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Figure 4: Sample Booklet: Introduction (Page 5)

Contact

Catherine Dworak lives in Two-Mile, on the Gitxsan Territory. She can be contacted by phone at [phone number] or by e-mail at [e-mail address]. Please do not hesitate to contact her with questions, concerns, or even ideas for other projects.

Records

History has shown that the most permanent records survive in physical forms such as carvings, paintings, and printed forms. Technology, unfortunately, is often unreliable, so the best way to preserve digital records is to have them backed up in multiple places. Copies of these transcriptions and recordings exist in the following places: on Catherine Dworak's personal computer, on Catherine Dworak's external hard drive, on Dr. M. J. Smith's personal computer, at the University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, and in the CDs and printed booklets that were provided to [Elder's Name] and her family members.

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Figure 5: Sample Booklet: Contact and Records (ie. Archiving) (Page 7)
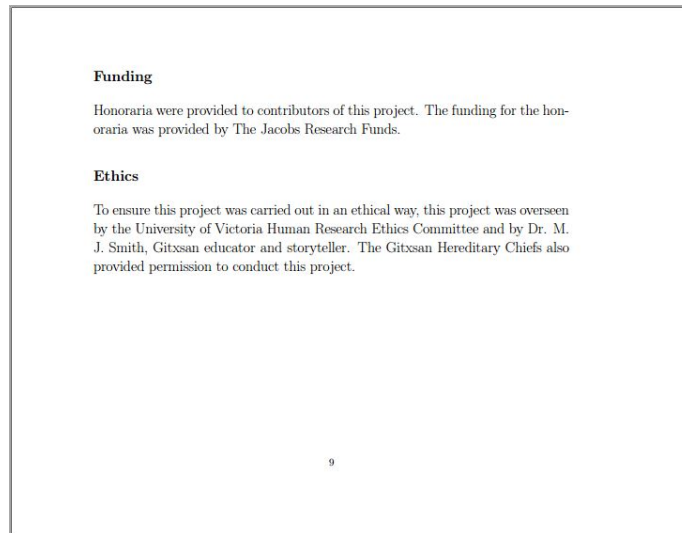
Figure 6: Sample Booklet: Funding and Ethics (includes Permissions) (Page 9)
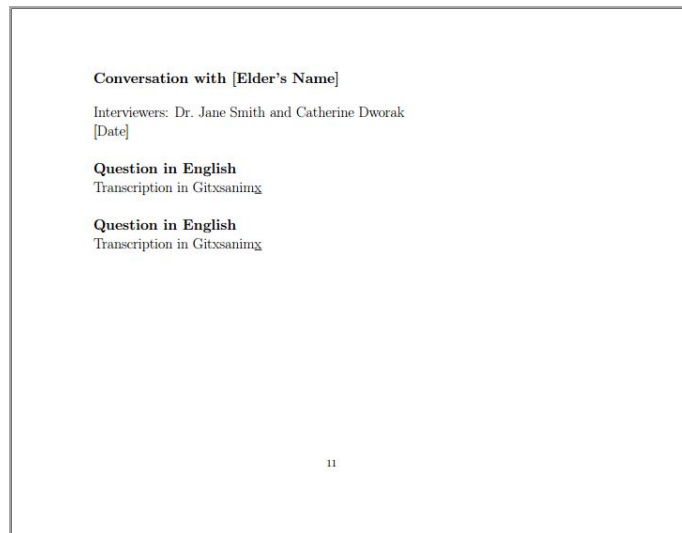
Figure 7: Sample Booklet: First Page of Transcription (Page 11)
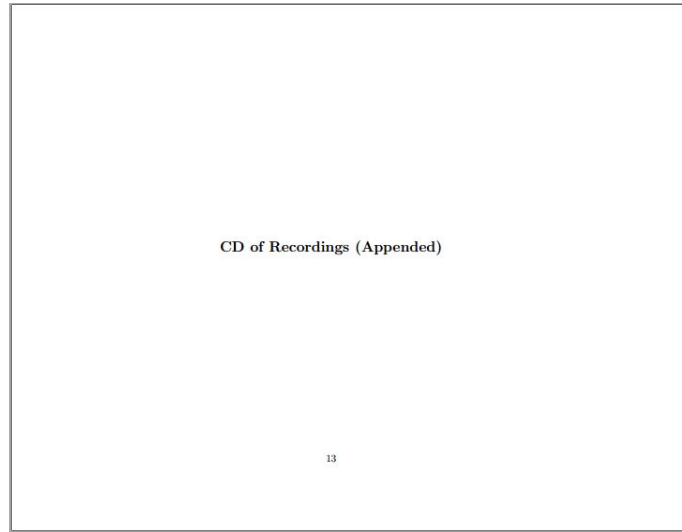
Figure 8: Sample Booklet: CD of Recordings (Appended) (Last Page)

4.2.16 Finalize/Produce/Disseminate/Archive Resources

M.D. Schwan and A. Pine from the University of British Columbia Gitksan Research Lab proofread the lists of words and sentences and provided feedback and corrections on spelling and linguistic analysis. (All mistakes are still my own.)

The Elders and members of their families reviewed and gave final approval on their Elder's booklet, the lists of words and sentences, and sections of the local history chapter that were relevant to the Elder's contributions (ie. Section 6.1 of the thesis).[21]

The booklets and CDs were disseminated to the Elders and members of their families, in accordance with their wishes.

Copies of the booklets and CDs were archived in the following locations in accor-

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[21]The Elders and their family members were also welcome to read the rest of the thesis, but I did not ask this of them when I asked them to review and approve relevant parts of the thesis to avoid placing an unnecessary burden on them.

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dance with the wishes of the Elders and members of their families:

- C. Dworak's personal library;

- M.J. Smith's personal library;

- University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections.

4.2.17 Future Directions

Presently the information documented in the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project has not been applied in any other projects; however, I plan to contribute the words and phrases to the Mother Tongues Dictionary – Gitksan (Pine, 2017), which is an online dictionary developed by A. Pine, who is affiliated with the Gitksan Lab at the University of British Columbia. I also would like to partner with a local expert in Gitxsan health and medical care to do a more thorough historical documentation project of the confluence between Gitxsan and newcomer systems of health and medical care, to address the gaps in perspectives and information that are identified in this thesis.

4.3 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter, *Chapter 4 Process*, described the steps that were undertaken to document the information in the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project. This was a collaborative process that involved contributions from Dr. M.J. Smith, our three Elders, and me. The next chapter, *Chapter 5 Perinatal Language* provides a suggestion for how linguistic analysis can be used for language learning, followed by a compilation of language related to the perinatal period accompanied with linguistic analysis of the word structure.

5 Perinatal Language

"It is recognized that the languages and cultures of Indigenous peoples are living processes and that research and the discovery of knowledge is an ongoing function for the thinkers and scholars of every Indigenous group." – Wilson (2007, p. 195)

This chapter presents *Gitxsanimx̱* related to the perinatal period. Section 5.1 describes the process of looking at the language from a linguistics point of view as a tool for language learning. Section 5.2 provides basic information about *Gitxsanimx̱* and illustrates how linguistic information can be used to gain more detailed information about language. Section 5.3 describes how the words, phrases, and sentences in this chapter have been organized by looking at themes that emerged from the Elders' narratives. Section 5.4 presents a list of words and phrases related to the perinatal period that the Elders used in their narratives. Section 5.5 is a list of sentences related to the perinatal period that the Elders used their narratives. Section 5.6 is a chapter conclusion.

5.1 A Linguistic Perspective

I like to imagine a language learner like a lake with many streams flowing into it. Each stream is one way that can contribute to language learning, and the streams flow into the lake – into the language learner. The most important stream is *language exposure*. Another stream could be *online how-to videos* or another could be *traditional dance* or attending *language classes*. A lake can be fed by a number of streams, as there are many ways to combine tools to contribute to language learning. One of the streams can also be looking at language from a *linguistic perspective*.

One of the goals of this thesis is to make the information in it accessible to any reader; however, some of the linguistic information presented in this chapter is technical and may be challenging for someone without a background in linguistics. Looking at language from a linguistic point of view means that we attempt to understand the structure of language by looking for patterns. The *process* of looking at language from a linguistic point of view can be a helpful way to learn in-depth information about a language. This means that preparing the information for this chapter helped me to learn quite a bit about *Gitxsanimx̱*.

If you are a beginner to looking at language from a linguistic point of view and are interested in attempting it on your own, I would suggest starting with the following basic steps. First, record some language. Second, listen to the recording and write it down using the Gitksan Orthography (See Appendix 2. The process of listening to spoken language and writing it down is called **transcribing**.). Listening to recordings is an excellent way to get language exposure and has helped me start to get a feel for the rhythms of the language. Take time to learn about the Giksan Orthography, because it was developed in a thoughtful way to represent the sounds of the language in a consistent way. Learning the Gitksan Orthography takes a lot of practice, so as you're learning you can check your spelling with other learners/writers and against the various Gitxsan/Gitxsen dictionaries available (see, for example, www.gitxsansimalgyax.com for links to dictionaries). Third, break the words into parts. (Parts of words are called **morphemes** by linguists. For example the English word [chairs] has two parts, [chair] and [s]. Breaking words into parts is also called **morphological breakdown**.) The "Gitxsan Glossing Guide" (UBC

Gitksan Research Laboratory, p.c., Oct. 21, 2015; see Appendix 4) has helped me to identify morphemes, but if you grew up hearing the language you may already have some intuitions about what the morphemes in *Gitxsanimx̱* are.

The process of gaining proficiency with the Gitksan Orthography (Forbes et al., 2017) which, crucially, involves listening to lots of recordings (hence increasing language exposure) and breaking words into parts (which involves recognizing morphemes that come up frequently) is a significant amount of linguistic work that can contribute to language learning.

Following the steps listed above, I labeled the meanings of the morphemes (labeling the meanings of morphemes is also called **glossing**) according to the glossing guide (UBC Gitksan Research Laboratory, p.c., Oct. 21, 2015; see Appendix 4). M.D. Schwan, from the UBC Gitksan Research Laboratory, provided valuable feedback for spelling, morphological breakdown, and glossing. (All mistakes are, however, my own.)

To sum up, the steps to perform linguistic analysis of word structure in *Gitxsanimx̱* can be used as a tool to contribute to language learning. The steps are:

  (i) record;
 (ii) listen to the recording;
(iii) write it down in the orthography (ie. transcribe);
(iv) break the words down into morphemes (this involves understanding the behaviours of sounds);
 (v) identify the meanings of the morphemes (ie. gloss);
(vi) add the free translation in English.

Table 2 presents a short list of the most important technical terms that are

described in this chapter. This list is meant to serve as a quick reference for the reader as you work through this chapter.

Term	Meaning
morpheme	The parts of a word. eg. English [chairs] has two morphemes, [chair] and [-s].
morphological breakdown	To separate a word into morphemes.
gloss	To label the meaning of a morpheme. Meaning can be either grammatical or lexical (see below).

grammatical meaning	A morpheme that has an abstract meaning that is more difficult to translate into another language.
	   eg. In English [chair-s], the grammatical
	     meaning of [-s] is 'plural.'
	 Morphemes with grammatical meaning are glossed in [SMALL CAPS].

lexical meaning	A morpheme that has a non-grammatical, more concrete meaning and is easier to translate into English.
	   eg. For *Gitxsanimx̱* [hahlo'o] the lexical meaning
	     is 'cloth'.
	 Lexical items are glossed using [lower case letters].

orthography	A writing system or alphabet.
transcribe	To listen to spoken language and write it down.

Table 2: Important Technical Terms for Chapter 5

The next section provides more detail about step (iv) Morphological Breakdown and step (v) Glossing, in addition to some basic information about the Gitxsan language.

5.2 Overview of *Gitxsanimx̱*: Working Through an Example

In this section,[22] I work through an example to provide an overview of *Gitxsanimx̱* and how to analyze word structure. Linguistic analysis of word structure provides

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[22]Thank you to A. Pine and M.D. Schwan for answering questions and providing guidance in this section. All mistakes are, however, my own.

more accurate information about the structure of the language than a translation.

Example (1) shows the final result of the linguistic analysis of the word structure that we will work towards in this section. The top line is presented in bold face to make it easier for the reader to distinguish the Gitxsan text from the other lines:

(1) **Hahlo'o hooxi'y   ahl   gildipgu'usxw.**
     hahlo'o   hoox-i-'y   a=hl   gildipgu'usxw
     cloth   use-TR-1SG.II PREP=CN diaper

     'I used cloth diapers for my babies.'

Each line in (1) has its own purpose. Line 1 (the sentence in *Gitxsanimx̱*) and Line 4 (the sentence translated into English) are the most accessible to a learner. The middle lines, Line 2 (the words of the sentence broken into their parts) and Line 3 (the meanings of the parts of the words), show an analysis of the structure of the words in the sentence. Looking at the middle lines can help a language learner understand the meaning and structure of a sentence more accurately than if the learner only has the Gitxsan and English sentences.

Line 1: the transcription of the sentence using the community orthography (see Appendix 2);

Line 2: orthographic representation that separates morphemes and undoes boundary-sensitive phonological rules;

Line 3: morpheme-by-morpheme gloss (see Appendices 3 & 4);

Line 4: free translation.

(Forbes et al., 2017)

The information presented in these four lines follows the glossing conventions established by the UBC Gitksan Research Laboratory (Forbes et al., 2017); however, the

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UBC Gitksan Research Laboratory also includes a line of full phonemic representation that uses the Americanist Phonetic Alphabet below the line of orthographic representation.[23] The sentences in this thesis do not include a line of phonemic representation in order to keep the information more accessible to the reader. The UBC Gitksan Research Laboratory glossing conventions respect the "Leipzig Glossing Rules" (Department of Linguistics of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology (Comrie, B. & Haspelmath, M.) & the Department of Linguistics of the University of Leipzig (Bickel, B), 2015), which are a standardized set of conventions that linguists use to present information about a language when doing linguistic analysis.

5.2.1 Line 1: Transcription with the Community Orthography

This section provides an overview of the sound system of *Gitxsanimx̱* and how it is written in the community orthography (Forbes et al., 2017; see Appendix 2).

Line 1 of example (1) presents a transcription of the sentence using the community orthography (Forbes et al., 2017). The community orthography was originally presented in Hindle & Rigsby (1973; as cited by Forbes et al., 2017) and has since been modified for the version included in Appendix 2 (Forbes et al., 2017). The community orthography is elegant and effective for two reasons. First, it avoids using non-English symbols in order to make it easy to type on a computer (originally a typewriter). Two symbols that are used differently in *Gitxsanimx̱* are the underline

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[23]A line of full phonemic representation is written with special symbols to represent the sounds of the words before they are pronounced. For example the Gitxsan [hl] sound as in *hlgu* 'small' is written with the symbol [ɬ] in the Americanist Phonetic Alphabet (and also in the International Phonetic Alphabet, another similar convention for writing the sounds of languages).

for sounds that occur at the back of your throat ([x̲], [k̲], and [g̲]) and the apostrophe ['] for glottal sounds (eg. [a'a], ['m], [t'], etc.).[24] Second, the orthography aims to be consistent when representing the language sounds. For example, English has three ways of writing the [f] sound (eg. 'fish', 'phone', 'tough'); whereas the community orthography always uses one letter, (or a pair of letters in some cases) for each sound of the language (A.Pine, p.c., 2017).[25]

There are 36 consonants in *Gitxsanimx̲* (which are presented in Appendix 2). Consonant clusters with more than two consonants occur in *Gitxsanimx̲*. It's important to note that some symbols that are represented in the community orthography (Forbes et al., 2017) with two letters (for example [hl], [xw], and [ii]) are in fact one sound, and not a consonant cluster formed by the independent letters (like English [sh] as in 'ship' is its own sound, and not pronounced [s] plus [h]). The pre-velar consonants [k] and [g] are represented in the most current version of the community orthography with a palatal [y] because most learners coming from a background in English hear these sounds in their velar forms followed by a palatal [y] ([ky] and [gy], respectively), but these are also in reality one sound.[26] (Brown et al., 2016).

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[24]The underlined sounds are uvular sounds and also referred to as 'back' sounds in the community. The glottis is an opening in your vocal folds that closes, for example when you make the English sound 'uh-oh.' If you put your hand on the dip at the bottom of your neck, at the front, you can feel your vocal chords go through a vibrate-still-vibrate pattern when you say 'uh-oh.' The glottal sound is when the vocal chords stop vibrating and are still.

[25]As will be discussed below, the orthography doesn't represent all of the vowels that are pronounced. Vowels in many languages are challenging because they can be easily influenced by factors such as the pronunciation of sounds surrounding the vowels or the speed at which a speaker is speaking.

[26]In plain language, the words 'pre-velar,' 'velar,' and 'palatal' refer to the places in your mouth that your tongue touches when you say these sounds. In English [y] the body of the tongue comes close to the palate. This is where the Gitxsan [g] and [k] occur; whereas English [g] and [k] occur a bit farther back than the [y] sound. English speakers 'hear' a [y] sound when they hear a Gitxsan [g] and [k] because Gitxsan [g] and [k] are articulated close to the same place as [y]

Some consonants in *Gitxsanimx̱* are the same or very close to English, so they are written with the same symbol in the community orthography (eg. [d], [h], [m], etc.). *Gitxsanimx̱* also has some consonants which do not exist in English. In addition to the glottal, uvular, and pre-velar sounds that have already been discussed, there are also fricative sounds that do not exist in English (eg. [x], [xw], and [hl]).[27]

There are 13 vowels that can be heard in *Gitxsanimx̱*, which are presented in Table 3 below. The columns labeled "IPA" represent the sounds and example words in the "International Phonetic Alphabet" (International Phonetic Association, 2015) and the columns labeled "Orthography" represent the sounds and example words in the community orthography (Forbes et al., 2017).

Vowel length is contrastive (ie. vowel length changes the meaning of a word). For example *dus* means "bounce" and *duus* means "cat" (Brown et al., 2016, p. 371). The short lax mid-high near-front vowel [ɪ] (eg. English "fish"; Gitxsan *gildip* "underneath") is not represented in the orthography, but it would be useful to consider adding it in a future modification of the writing system because it is used in *Gitxsanimx̱* (M.D. Schwan, p.c., 2017). Long vowels are generally consistently tense; short vowels can be tense or lax (Brown et al., 2016).

This section has provided an overview of the sounds in *Gitxsanimx̱* and how they relate to the community orthography (Forbes et al., 2017). The community

is articulated (A. Pine, p.c., 2017). To learn more about places of articulation, you can refer to https://www.mimicmethod.com/ft101/place-of-articulation/ (The Mimic Method, n.d.).

[27]Fricatives are consonant sounds that can be held for a long time, like [s]. [x] is a pre-velar fricative, and sounds like a cat hissing, or the 'x' sound in the Spanish pronunciation of 'Mexico.' [xw] is a labialized velar, and is made by making the [x] sound with rounded lips. [hl] is an alveolar lateral fricative and involves floppy cheeks with some spit in them, a wide relaxed tongue that touches the bump behind your teeth, and air going between the sides of your tongue and the insides of your wet cheeks (Brown et al., 2016). Have fun practicing!

IPA	Orthography	IPA	Orthography	Translation
i:	ii	di:kʷ	diikw	'woman's sister'
i	i	asˈgʲi	asgi	'to be ugly'
ɪ	i	gɪldɪp	gildip	'underneath'
e:	ee	je:	yee	'go (VI SG)'
e	e	t'ɪm ɢes	t'im g̲es	'head'
ɛ	e	hɛtxʷ	hetxw	'to stand'
a:	aa	a:q	aak̲	'mouth (outer opening), lips'
a	a	aks	aks	'water, to drink, be wet'
o:	oo	gʲo:	gyoo	'to move in water, to swim (of fish)'
o	o	ɬoχs	hlox̲s	'sun'
u:	uu	gʲu:	gyuu	'beads'
u	u	gʲuks	gyuks	'to jump (of fish)'
ʊ	u	hʊn	hun	'fish'

Table 3: Gitxsan Vowels *Note*: Adapted from Brown et al. (2016, p. 370-371)

orthography represents the sounds of *Gitxsanimx̲* that you hear and say and is used

to transcribe the sentence in Line 1 of example (1).[28]

(Line 1) Hahlo'o hooxi'y ahl gildipgu'usxw.

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[28]In linguistic terms we call the sounds that are pronounced by a speaker the "surface representation." This is contrasted with the "underlying representation" which is a theory about how the sounds of words are stored in a speaker's mind. For example the Gitxsan word for "heart" is sometimes pronounced with a [t] and sometimes pronounced with a [d], [goot] and [good], respectively. Without going into too much detail, most linguists and speakers will say that the underlying representation of the word is /goot/ (forward slashes (/ /) represent underlying representations) and the surface representations are sometimes [goot] and sometimes [good] (square brackets ([ ]) represent surface represenations) depending on the environment that the /t/ surfaces in. In this case /t/ turns into [d] when it's followed by a vowel (eg. [goodi'y] "my heart"; the vowel is the "environment" that triggers the change); and /t/ surfaces as [t] in all other environments (Brown et al., 2016). Part of learning *Gitxsanimx̲* means learners need to learn rules for how sounds change in specific environments. Choosing to design the community orthography to represent the surface representation of words means that it's easier for learners to learn words based on what they hear and/or read. (p.c., H. Davis, 2017).

5.2.2 Line 2: Morphological Breakdown

This section provides an overview of how morphemes are separated.

Line 2 of example (1) shows the boundaries between meaningful parts (ie. morpheme boundaries). Line 2 also shows the sounds at the morpheme boundaries before they are spoken (Forbes et al., 2017).[29] For example, in Line 2 the word *hooxi'y* is broken down into three parts, a verb [hoox] "use", a suffix [-i-] transitive marker, and a suffix [-'y] "I" (Brown et al., 2016).

Three symbols are used to separate morphemes: affixes are marked by a dash (–), clitics are marked by an equals sign (=), and reduplicants are marked by a tilde (∼) (Leipzig, 2015; (Forbes et al., 2017)). The difference between affixes, clitics, and reduplicants is discussed below in the following section.

This section has shown how morphemes are separated and represented to illustrate the sounds at the edges of the morphemes before they are are spoken. The community orthography is used to write the word structure in Line 2 of example (1).

(Line 1) Hahlo'o hooxi'y   ahl   gildipgu'usxw.

(Line 2) hahlo'o hoox-i-'y a=hl gildipgu'usxw

5.2.3 Line 3: Glossing

This section provides an overview of how to gloss the meanings of morphemes.

Line 3 of example (1) provides the meaning of each morpheme in the analysis of the word structure. The words in Lines 1 and 2 are left-aligned vertically to the their corresponding interlinear glosses in Line 3 (Leipzig, 2015). When there is a

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[29]For more information on how and when sounds change, see Brown et al. (2016).

one-to-many correspondence between a morpheme and its gloss, then a period is used to separate the parts of the gloss (Leipzig, 2015). For example, the Gitxsan word *nuutxw* 'to dress up' is glossed as [dress.up].

The glosses represent the meaning of the morphemes that make up the words. There are two types of meaning: grammatical meaning and lexical meaning.

When a morpheme has **grammatical meaning** it means the morpheme has an abstract meaning that is more difficult to translate into another language. A morpheme with grammatical meaning can be attached to different words to convey the same grammatical meaning (Embick, 2015). For example, the English grammatical morpheme [-s] means 'plural' and is glossed with the abbreviation [PL]. The English plural morpheme can be attached to different nouns to convey the same abstract meaning of plurality (eg. 'chairs', 'mountains', 'dogs', etc.). Abbreviations for morphemes with grammatical meaning are glossed in SMALL CAPS (Leipzig, 2015).

The "Gitxsan Glossing Guide" (UBC Gitksan Research Library, p.c., Oct. 21, 2015) in Appendix 4 is useful when glossing morphemes with grammatical meaning, and the "Gixsan Pronouns" (UBC Gitksan Research Laboratory, p.c., May 3, 2012) charts in Appendix 3 are useful when glossing pronouns specifically. When glossing pronouns, no symbol is used between person and number, and a period is used between the notation for person and number and the notation for which series the pronoun belongs to. For example, the pronoun *-y* "I" is glossed as [-1SG.II].

When a morpheme has **lexical meaning** it means the morpheme has a non-grammatical meaning that is more concrete and easier to translate into English. For example the lexical meaning of the Gitxsan word *hahlo'o* can be glossed as 'cloth'.

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Morphemes with lexical meaning are glossed using lower case letters (Leipzig, 2015). A dictionary is a useful tool when glossing lexical morphemes.

Affixes, clitics, and reduplicants are morphemes with grammatical meaning. Affixes are marked by a dash (–). Clitics are marked by an equals sign (=), and reduplicants are marked by a tilde (∼).

A reduplicant is a copy of a part of a word and it changes the meaning of the word. An example in *Gitxsanimx̲* is the word *g̲ang̲an* 'trees'. When the single word *g̲an* 'tree' is reduplicated, *g̲ang̲an*, the meaning becomes plural 'trees'. The word *g̲ang̲an* 'trees' is separated into two morphemes [g̲an∼g̲an], and a tilde (∼) is used to illustrate that the first [g̲an∼] is a reduplicant of the second [g̲an]. *G̲ang̲an* is glossed as [PL∼tree].

Affixes and clitics are morphemes with grammatical meaning that attach to a host. Affixes and clitics are differentiated by how loosely they are bound to their host. An affix has no freedom in choosing its host. For example, the English plural affix [-s] can only attach to nouns (eg. 'chairs' [chair-s]). Clitics, on the other hand, have more freedom to move around to different hosts. An example in English can be the English possessive [=s], as in 'the dog's bone' [the dog=s bone]. In this example, the clitic [=s] has attached to the noun [dog]. It is also grammatical to say, 'the dog who is sleeping's ball' [the dog who is sleeping=s ball]. In this example, the clitic [=s] has attached to the verb phrase [is sleeping] (Haspelmath & Sims, 2010).[30]

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[30]This kind of information is learned through grammaticality judgments. A grammaticality judgment is when a native speaker uses their intuition to decide if a sentence is acceptable (ie. grammatical) or not acceptable (ie. ungrammatical). For example the statement that English plural affixes must attach to a noun is supported by testing it with a native English speaker. So, for example, I know that you can't have multiple [*slowly-s] but you can have lot's of [apple-s]. A star (*) is used to indicate an ungrammatical statement.

This section has provided an overview of how the meanings of morphemes are glossed. Abbreviations for grammatical meanings are glossed in SMALL CAPS and lexical meanings are glossed with lower case letters. Glosses for morphemes are represented in Line 3 of example (1).

(Line 1) Hahlo'o hooxi'y   ahl   gildipgu'usxw.

(Line 2) hahlo'o hoox-i-'y   a-hl   gildipgu'usxw

(Line 3) cloth   use-TR-1SG.II   PREP=CN diaper

The next section provides an overview of word order in *Gitxsanimx̱*, which can be a useful starting point for analyzing word structure. This is followed by a discussion of the free translation in Line 4.

5.2.4   Word Order

This section provides an overview of the way words are ordered in *Gitxsanimx̱*.

The basic word order in *Gitxsanimx̱* is verb, subject, object (VSO) (Rigsby, 1986). We can see this order in the example in (2).

(2) **Gya'a'yhl   gan**.
     gya'a-y=hl   gan
     see-1SG.II=CN tree

     'I saw a tree.'

The verb [gya'a] 'see' precedes the subject [-'y] "I" (which is glossed as [-1SG.II] because it is an affix with grammatical meaning) which precedes the object [g̱an] 'tree'.

gya'a	-'y	=hl	**gan**
see	-1SG.II	PREP=CN	tree
Verb	Subject ("I")		Object

The example in (2) is a simple sentence, but more complicated sentences use words from special categories that go before main verbs, either as part of the verb-phrase or in a position above the main verb, depending on the theoretical interpretation. *Gitxsanimx̱* also allows fronting of some words (ie. moving words to a position before the verb) to change the meaning of a sentence (eg. for emphasis) (Rigsby, 1986).

Gitxsanimx̱ frequently uses three types of connecting morphemes between certain words. The connectives are [hl], [s], and [t]. The example in (2) has one connective, [=hl], which is glossed with the abbreviation [=CN]. The equals sign = is used instead of a dash because connectives are a type of clitic (Davis & Forbes, 2015).

Some words in *Gitxsanimx̱* can be complex, with affixes added to a base. An example of a complex word is provided in (3) below:

(3) **anksuulaagaltxw**
an-ksu-wil-laax̱-al-txw
place-out-of-CMP-look-SFX-PASS
'[mirror]'
(Rigsby, 1986, p. 85; This example has been simplified for the purpose of the discussion.)

This section has provided basic information about word order in *Gitxsanimx̱* which can be helpful when performing a linguistic analysis of word structure.

5.2.5 Line 4: Free Translation

This section considers the layer of information that is added by a line of free translation.

Line 4 of example (1) provides a free translation for the sentence in Line 1. It's important to note that translations often lack in the ability to convey an accurate meaning. The information provided by linguistic analysis of word structure can serve to add depth to words, sentences, and ideas to try to convey more meaning. For example, the verb or maybe even the concept *hahlo'o hoox* "cloth use" does not exist in English. In looking at this verb more deeply we see that it has more information in it than just the free translation of 'use cloth diapers.' This deeper understanding can then lead to more curiosity. Can the verb be used in other applications? What would a speaker say to talk about disposable diapers or traditional moss diapers?

The free translation is represented in Line 4 of example (1).

(Line 1) Hahlo'o hooxi'y   ahl   gildipgu'usxw.
(Line 2) hahlo'o hoox-i-'y   a=hl   gildipgu'usxw
(Line 3) cloth   use-TR-1SG.II PREP=CN diaper
(Line 4) 'I used cloth diapers for my babies.'

This section provided basic information about the Gitxsan language and illustrated how an analysis of word structure can be used to gain more accurate information about language. The next section describes how the perinatal language in this chapter is organized.

5.3   An Emic View

The following two sections (Section 5.4 and Section 5.5) contain *Gitxsanimx̱* related to the perinatal period that was documented in the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project. The language in these sections is organized into the categories of *Nox̱o'y* (My Mother), *Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* (Infant), *'Nu'w* (death), Place, Personal Conduct, Physical Experiences, Spirituality, and Family. These themes were addressed by the three Elders we worked with. By organizing the language in this chapter based on the themes that emerged from our conversations with the Elders, I hope to reflect their perspectives on the perinatal period.[31]

Presenting the documented language based on themes that were important for the Elders legitimizes the Elders' presentation of the knowledge they shared with us (L. Butt, p.c., 2017), and works towards decolonizing the work of this thesis. This way of presenting information is called "emic," which is a word used to decribe the position of a person who provides information – their view of the world: "...emic perspectives strive to recognize and understand the meaning of a concept from within the cultural framework in which it is being observed" (Ninnemann, 2012, p. 597).

Here follows a brief description of each theme and how it emerged as an important theme in organizing the language for this chapter. These themes have been included in the diagram *Worldview of the Hlgu Wo'omhlxw (Infant) – Gitxsan Values Specific to Hlgu Wo'omhlxw (Infant)* in Appendix 6 (adapted from "The Philosophy Wheel of the *Gitxsan*" (by *Wii Muugwikusxw* (A. Wilson) in M. J. Smith (2004, p. 35)). The Elders framed their knowledge within the themes; some of the themes emerged

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[31]As opposed to a biomedical perspective, which, for example, may organize the perinatal period based on stages of the perinatal period – pregnancy, labour and birth, life with a newborn.

because the Elders spoke about or referred to them multiple times throughout their narratives. Other themes were identified because the Elders placed them in a position of importance in the narrative (at the beginning). Other themes emerged because they are featured as an important Gitxsan value in M. J. Smith (2004), and at least one of the Elders spoke about the value. How a theme emerged (ie. by multiple instances of reference in the narratives, or by its place at the beginning of the narrative, or by association with Gitxsan values in M. J. Smith (2004)) is identified in the description of each theme.

Noxo'y (My Mother): The presence (or absence) of each Elder's mother, and the details of her involvement in various stages of the perinatal period was very important in many of the stories the Elders shared with us. This theme emerged because each Elder spoke about her mother many times throughout their narratives.

Hlgu Wo'omhlxw (Infant): In our conversations with the Elders, two of the Elders started off with naming their children, and the third Elder introduced her children early on in the conversation. This puts the *hlgu wo'omhlxw* (infant) in a position of importance in the Elders' perinatal experiences as well as in their lives.

'Nu'w (death): The first birth experience shared by two of the Elders described the death of an infant, and the first birth experience shared by the third Elder described a perilous situation that she felt could have resulted in her own death as well as her child's. By choosing to begin with their experiences of loss or near loss, the Elders give these experiences a position of significance in their perinatal experiences as well as in their lives. From a Eurocentric point of view, the topic of death, especially related to the perinatal period could feel uncomfortable for readers;

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however, (Daly, 2005) explains that the focus on a specific phase of life (eg. marriage, birth, or death) varies from culture to culture:

> Some societies invest most of their gifting in birth or marriage, while in the Northwest Coast culture area it is customary to focus on bereavement (Kan 1989). People say the most meaningful, valuable, and beautiful things in life come into being through sadness and melancholy, associated with longing for those who "have gone before."

(Daly, 2005, p. 57-58)

'Nu'w (death) is also included as an important Gitxsan value in the illustration of Gitxsan values in the "Philosophy Wheel" diagram in M. J. Smith (2004, p. 35).

Place: The location of events in the Elders' experiences emerged as an important theme, especially regarding where they laboured and birthed. Sometimes the location of a birth was uncertain (eg. in one case an Elder's preferred choice of location was denied to her, and in another case an Elder was not able to access her preferred choice of location due to adverse road conditions), and sometimes it was pre-arranged (eg. one Elder's mother encouraged the Elder to stay with her when her due date was approaching). Travel to and from places also emerged as a more minor theme (taxi, train) as well as timing of when to travel. The theme of place emerged because it was referenced multiple times by the Elders. This theme is also relevant to Gitxsan relationships with the Land and with the community and comes up throughout the thesis.

Personal Conduct: Personal conduct is featured as an important Gitxsan value in the "Philosophy Wheel" in M. J. Smith (2004, p. 35), and some of the information the Elders provided focused on appropriate personal conduct, their own as well as that of others around them.

Physical Experiences: The Elders all took time to describe the physical experiences of labour and birth in our conversations with them. This theme emerged because the Elders referred to it in their narratives.

Spirituality: Spirituality, especially *guuxs 'wiitxw* (reincarnation), is important to many Gitxsan (M.J. Smith, p.c., 2017). Two of the Elders spoke in detail about spiritual influences in their perinatal experiences. Spirituality is illustrated as a surrounding value in the Smith's (2004) "Philosophy Wheel" (p. 35).

Family: Many important Gitxsan terms for specific members of the family, especially children, emerged in the documentation of the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project. Dr. M.J. Smith explains the importance of family relationships in the life and upbringing of a Gitxsan child:

> When Gitxsan babies are born, to build their spirits, the teachings begin with kindness, compassion, and gentleness. These traits are modeled in the relationships around them.
>
> (M.J. Smith, p.c., 2017).

This is a fundamental value in the worldview of the *hlgu wo'omhlxw* (infant) (M.J. Smith, p.c., 2017) and has been placed in the centre of the *Worldview of the Hlgu Wo'omhlxw (Infant) – Gitxsan Values Specific to Hlgu Wo'omhlxw (Infant)* diagram in Appendix 6.

Colonialism: The Elders each had negative perinatal experiences due to colonialist practices and policies. Their leadership in sharing these stories with us means that experiences of racism and prejudice were a significant theme in their perinatal journeys.

5.4   Perinatal Language: Words and Phrases

The words and phrases in this section are a compilation of vocabulary relevant to pregnancy, labour and birth, and life with a newborn that the Elders used in their narratives. If a word or phrase came from an outside source, then the source is indicated in the column labeled "Source."

The words and phrases are grouped according to the emic themes that emerged from the Elders' narratives. The categories are: *Noxo'y* (My Mother), *Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* (Infant), *'Nu'w* (death), Place, Personal Conduct, Physical Experiences, Spirituality, and Family. Within each category, the words and phrases are ordered alphabetically according to their English translation, to make it an easily accessible reference for a language learner.

Theme	English	Gitxsanimx	Source
Noxo'y **My Mother**	grandmother (see also "mother")	na'a	
	look after	didi'y	
	mother (see also "grandmother")	na'a	
	mother	nox	
	pacing	laax sii yee	
Hlgu Wo'omhlxw **Infant**	baby blanket	odimxw	
	baby bottle	gan 'moot'ixs	
	baby; child	tk'ihlxw	
	belly button (also "umbilical cord")	t'ikw	
	birth	sgyat	
	(a) live birth	didils	
	blessing	k'amgwitxw	
	breast	'moot'ixs	
	breastmilk	'moot'ixs	H. Davis, p.c., 2017

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Theme	English	Gitxsanimx̱	Source
Hlgu	I breastfed	hooxi'yhl 'moot'ixs	
Wo'omhlxw	cloth	hahlo'o	
Infant	cradle	(see "Gitxsan cradle")	
(continued)	diaper	gildipgu'usxw	
	Gitxsan cradle	wo'omhlxw	
	infant (see also	hlgu wo'omhlxw	
	information passed	gwalx̱yee'nst	
	on from generation		
	to generation		
	kicking	hlo'ox̱s	
	lullaby	limx anaahlxw	M. J. Smith (2016)
	newborn	sgyadit	
	nipple	sim 'moot'ixs	
	placenta	(see "afterbirth")	
	pregnant	ubin	
	rock baby; rock cradle	t'is	
	(also 'push' & 'big')		
	soft spot on	'naahanix	Simalgyax̱ Working
	a baby's head		Group (n.d.)
	swaddle	wo'om	
	twins	luubag̱adil	M. J. Smith (2016)
	uterus	(see "womb")	
	umbilical cord	t'ikw	
	(also "belly button")		
	womb	ansgimhlxw	
_'Nu'w_	death; (to) die	'nu'w	
Death	miscarry (died inside)	luu 'nu'whl hlguuhlxw	M. J. Smith (2016)
	miscarry (died inside)	sg̱eksxw	M. J. Smith (2016)
	reincarnation	guuxs 'witxw	
Place	hospital	wilp siipxw	
	house of menstruation	wilp yasxw	
	Gitxsan Territory	Lax̱ Yipxwhl Gitxsan	
	trapline	ansilinas	

Theme	English	Gitxsanimx̱	Source
Personal Conduct	cry out	ayawaatxw	
	moan	gilsxw	
	push down on your breathing; take deep breaths; hold your breath	dim dip t'isin hlinaahlx̱an	
	taboo	ha'wahlxw	
Physical Experiences	afterbirth	an*g*alan	
	birth	sg*y*at	
	I breastfed	hooxi'yhl 'moot'ixs	
	cramping	x̱bo'luxw	
	cut the umbilical cord	k̲'ots t'ikw	
	discomfort	g̲etxw	
	feel	aatx	
	(give) injection (poke)	gyahlxw	
	labour pains (beginning to feel)	hlaat aatxt	
	massage, feel labour pains, starting to feel labour pain	hliba'la	
	menstruation; monthlies	siipxwum hlox̱s	
	menstruation; monthlies	yasxw	
	period	(see "menstruation")	
	(last) period before pregnancy; periods stopped	kw'oodin	
	phlegm	yahlx̱	
	push (during labour)	damsxw	
	quickly	t'ee'lt	
	rock (cradle, baby)	t'is	
	My insides are rocking	huu'wihl ts'ee'wi'y	
	tired	hlabixsxw	
	water breaking	aat'iks aks	
	water breaking	aat'iks ahl aks	

Theme	English	Gitxsanimx̱	Source
Spirituality	dream	xsi woḵ	
	living soul	oots'in	M. J. Smith (2016)
	reincarnation	guuxs 'witxw	M. J. Smith (2016)
	shamanm, healer	halaydim swanasxw	M.J. Smith, p.c., 2017
	soul of the dead	hayxw	M. J. Smith (2016)
	somebody coming back from the dream, will be reincarnated as	dim 'witxw	
Family	adopt	sihlguuhlxw	
	adopt	sihlgitxw	M. J. Smith (2016)
	baby; child	tk'ihlxw	
	child (singular of *hlgi*)	hlguuhlxw	
	(new) child, kid	siitk'ihlxw	M. J. Smith (2016)
	children (plural of *hlguuhlxw*)	hlgit	M. J. Smith (2016)
	cute litte one	amg̱oogit 'nus	
	dear one (for a girl)	diikw	
	dear one (for a boy)	doots	
	father	nigwoot	
	grandfather	ye'e	
	grandmother	na'a	
	illegitimate child	amts'in hlguuhlxw	M. J. Smith (2016)
	mother	nox̱	
	my little one	mii'y	
	pretty little baby girl	amg̱oogit hlgu 'nusit	
	sibling – opposite sex	gimxdi	
	sibling – man's brother	wak	M. J. Smith (2016)
	sibling – woman's sister	xiikw	
	sibling – woman's sister	xhlgiikw	M. J. Smith (2016)
Colonialism	doctor	dokta	
	dog	us	
	dogs	has'us	
	unbearable pain	t'is siipxw	

5.5   Perinatal Language: Sentences & Linguistic Analysis

The sentences in this section are a compilation of sentences relevant to the perinatal period that the Elders used in their narratives.

The sentences are organized into emic categories that emerged in the Elders' narratives: *Noxo'y* (My Mother), *Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* (Infant), *'Nu'w* (Death), Place, Personal Conduct, Physical Experiences, Spirituality, and Family).

The English translation for each sentence is followed by pseudonym initials that refer to each Elder and the dates we spoke with them. Some of the sentence were provided by Dr. M.J. Smith to provide sample sentences for some of the terms. Sentences provided by Dr. M.J. Smith are labeled with the initials M.J.S.

Table 5 presents the dates we met with the Elders, the length of our conversations with them, the village that they grew up in, the year they were born, and gender:

Elder's Pseudonym, Village, Birth Year, & Gender	Date of Interview	Duration
E.M. *Anspayaxw* (Kispiox) 1928 Female	November 24, 2014 December 17, 2014 March 30, 2016 July 4, 2016 July 26, 2016	25min 20min 15min 1hr 50min 1hr
E.T. *Anspayaxw* (Kispiox) 1928 Female	February 24, 2014 March 3, 2014 March 31, 2014 December 17, 2014 July 11, 2016	45min 1hr 2hr 20min 15min 1hr
E.S. *Gitanmaaxs* (Gitanmaax) 1934 Female	August 6, 2016	1hr

Table 5: Information about Elders' Backgrounds and Interviews

Noxo'y (My Mother)

This section contains 3 sentences in which the Elders spoke about their mothers.

(4) **Gya'a'y wil   laax sii yees noxo'y**.
    gya'a-'y   wil   laax sii yee=s nox-'y
    see-1SG.II COMP pace=PN   mother-1SG.II

    'I saw my mother pacing.' (E.S., August 6, 2016)

(5) **Huguxum didi'ys   noxo'y   'nii'y**.
    huguxum   didi'y=s   nox-'y   'nii'y
    correctly   look.after=PN mother-1SG.II 1SG.III

    'My mother taught me correctly and looked after me.' (E.M., July 4, 2016)

(6) **Ii   ap sim wantxwhl goots   noxo'y**.
    ii   ap sim wantxw=hl goot=s   nox-'y
    CCNJ VER true worry=PN   heart=CN mother-1SG.II

    'My mother was very worried.' (E.S., August 6, 2016)

Hlgu Wo'omhlxw (Infant)

This section contains 9 sentences in which the Elders spoke about their experiences with their infants, including elements of labour and birth that are not directly related to the other categories in this section. (For example, sentences related to the physical experience of labour and birth are included in the section "Physical Experiences.")

(7) **Ansgimhlxw wahl   wil   luu t'aahl tk'ihlxw**.
    ansgimhlxw   wa=hl   wil   luu t'aa=hl tk'ihlxw
    womb   name=CN COMP in   sit=CN baby

    'Womb is the name where the baby is (baby is in there).' (E.S., August 6, 2016)

(8) **Ii he'y loot ha'niigoodi'y ji hlaa luu gwantxw**
ii he-'y loo-t ha'niig̲oot-'y ji hlaa luu gwantxw
CCNJ tell-1SG.II OBL-3SG.II thought-1SG.II IRR INCEP it.is.time

dim sgyathl tk'ihlxw.
dim sgyat=hl tk'ihlxw
PROSP birth=CN child

'I said to him, I think it is time for the birth of the child.' (E.M., July 4,

2016)

(9) **K'i'y hlox̲s nahooxhl 'moot'ixsi'y**.
k'i'y hlox̲s na=hoox=hl 'moot'ixs-'y
one month 1SG.I=use=CN breast-1SG.II

'I used my own breast for one month.' (E.T., July 11, 2016)

(10) **Sax̲ g̲an 'moot'ixs hooxi'y**.
sax̲ g̲an 'moot'ixs hoox-i-'y
only INSTR breastmilk use-TR-1SG.II

'All I used was a baby bottle.' (E.M., July 4, 2016)

(11) **Hahlo'ohl hooxi'y ahl gildipgu'usxw**.
hahlo'o=hl hoox-i-'y a=hl gildipgu'usxw
cloth=CN use-TR-1SG.II PREP=CN diaper

'I used cloth diapers for my babies.' (E.M., July 4, 2016)

(12) **Neediin hooxhl wo'omhlxw**.
nee=dii=n hoox=hl wo'omhlxw
NEG=FOC=1SG.I use=CN cradle

'I didn't use a cradle.' (E.M., July 4, 2016)

(13) **Yukw t'isdiithl wo'omhlxw**.
yukw t'is-diit=hl wo'omhlxw
IPFV rock-3PL.II=CN cradle

'While they rock the cradle.' (E.T., July 11, 2016)

(14) **Lip t'isi'yhl wo'omhlxw.**
lip t'is-i-'y=hl wo'omhlxw
SELF rock-TR-1SG.II=CN cradle

'I rock the cradle myself.' (E.T., Nov. 23, 2017)

(15) **Wo'otsdiit gwalg̱a 'nit tk'ihlkw.**
wo'o-ts-diit gwalg̱a 'nit tk'ihlkw
swaddle-?-3PL.II all 3SG.III baby

'They swaddled all of the little kids.' (M.J.S., p.c., 2017)

'Nu'w (Death)

This section contains 2 sentences in which the Elders spoke about an experience with death. Sentence (17) is included because by specifying "live births," the Elder implicitly refers to her miscarriages, including one at full term.

(16) **Mahldit wil luu 'nu'whl tk'ihlxw ts'im ts'ee'wit.**
mahld-i-t wil luu 'nu'w=hl tk'ihlxw ts'im ts'ee'w-t
tell-T-TR-3SG.II LVB in die=CN baby inside insides-3SG.II

'She said the baby died inside her stomach.' (M.J.S., p.c., 2017)

(17) ***Six* g̱abihl hlgi'mhl didilsit.**
six g̱abi=hl hlgi-'m=hl didils-it
six CNT.AMT=CN children-1PL.II=CN live.birth-SX

'I had six live births (our children).' (E.S., August 6, 2016)

Place

This section contains 2 sentences in which an Elder spoke about place.

(18) **Lip sgyadinhl ky'ulithl x̲hlguuhlxwt, Emma, go'ohl**
lip sgyad-in=hl kyul-t=hl x̲-hlguuxw-t, Emma, go'o=hl
SELF birth-CAUS2=CN one.HUM-SX=CN ?-child-3SG.II, Emma, LOC=CN

lax̲ mo'on iit wilaax dimt wilagwit.
lax̲ mo'on ii=t wilaax dim=t wilaakw-t
ocean CCNJ=3SG.I understand PROSP=3SG.I handle-SPASS

'She birthed one of her own, Emma, at the coast, and she knew what to do.'

(E.S., p.c., August 6, 2016)

(19) **Lip wilaa'yit dim wilt iit lip sgyadinhl**
lip wilaax-i-t dim wil-t iit lip sgyat-n=hl
SELF know-TR-3SG.II PROSP LVB-3SG CCNJ=3SG.I SELF birth-CAUS2=CN

hlguuhlxwt.
hlguuhlxw-t
child-3SG.II

'She knew what to do and she gave birth.' (E.S., p.c., December 19, 2017)

Personal Conduct

This section contains 6 sentences in which the Elders spoke about the personal conduct of themselves or others.

(20) **Ii he'y loot dim dip t'isinhl hlinaahlx̲an**
ii he-'y loo-t dim dip t'is-in=hl hlinaahlx̲-an
CCNJ tell-1SG.II OBL-3SG.II PROSP 1PL.I push-CAUS2=CN breathe-2SG.II

'I told her to push down on her breathing (take deep breaths/hold her breath).' (E.T., July 11, 2016)

(21) **Needii 'wihl ayawaatxws mom.**
nee=dii 'wihl ayawaatxw=s mom
NEG=FOC around cry.out=PN mom

'My mother didn't cry out.' (E.M., July 4, 2016)

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(22) **Needii ‘wihl ayawaatxwi’y wil   yukw hlguuhlxwi’y.**
nee=dii   ‘wihl   ayawaatxw-’y   wil   yukw   hlguuhlxw-’y
NEG=FOC around cry.out-1SG.II   COMP IPFV   child-1SG.II

‘I didn’t cry out while I was birthing my child.’ (E.M., July 4, 2016)

(23) **Needii ‘wihl ayawaatxws Mom am ts’uusx wil   ‘wihl**
nee=dii   ‘wihl   ayawaatxw=s Mom am   ts’uusx wil   ‘wihl
NEG=FOC around cry.out=PN   Mom   good small   COMP around
gilsxwt.
gilsxw-t
moan-3SG.II

‘She didn’t cry out, but there were small moans.’ (E.T., July 11, 2016)

(24) **‘Nit   gan hehl   ha’wahlxw dim   dii ‘wihl la̲x hedix**
‘nit   g̲an   he=hl   ha’wahlxw dim   dii ‘wihl   la̲x he-dix
3SG.III REAS tell=CN taboo   PROSP FOC around on   tell-IMPRS
ahl   ligi na.
a=hl   ligi   naa
PREP=CN DWID who

‘It is taboo to say anything negative to someone.’ (E.S., August 6, 2016)

(25) **Needii ‘wihl wihl   nigwoothl yukwhl dim   gyathl**
nee-dii   ‘wihl   wil=hl   nigwoot=hl yukw=hl dim   gyat=hl
NEG=FOC around LVB=CN father=CN   IPFV=CN PROSP birth=CN
hlguuhlxwt
hlguuhlxwt
child-3SG.II

‘The father wasn’t present at the birth.’ (E.S., August, 6, 2016)

Physical Experiences

This section contains 8 sentences in which the Elders spoke about physical experiences in the perinatal period.

(26) **X̱bo'luxw x̱st'aa se'e'y.**
x̱bo'lu-xw   x̱st'aa   se'e-'y
cramping-? ?   leg-1SG.II

'One leg was cramping.' (E.S., August 6, 2016)

(27) **Iin   aatx wil   hlaa getxw   he'y.**
ii=n   aatx wil   hlaa g̱etxw   he-'y
CCNJ=1SG.I feel   COMP INCEP discomfort tell-1SG.II

'I felt discomfort.' (E.T., July 11, 2016)

(28) **Mooja huu'wihl   ts'ee'wi'y.**
mooja huu'wi=hl   ts'ee'w-'y
almost upheaval=CN insides-1SG.II

'I almost threw up.' (E.T., July 11, 2016)

(29) **Aatxi'y 'wihl aat'iks aks loo'y   ii   gwildim goodi'y.**
aatx-'y   'wihl   aat'iks aks loo-'y   ii   gwildim g̱oot-'y
feel-1SG.II around arrive.water OBL-1SG.II CCNJ get.ready heart-1SG.II

'I felt my water break and I got ready.' (E.T., July 11, 2016)

Note regarding (29):

- *Gwildim* could be *gwilt-m* [get.ready-ATTR] or *gwil-dim* [ready-PROSP] (M.D. Schwan, p.c., 2017).

- The verb for 'water breaking' can be either a compound verb *aat'iks aks* [arrive.water] or a verb with a predicate *aat'iks ahl aks* [arrive PREP=CN water] (M.J. Smith & M.D. Schwan, p.c., 2017).

(30) **Ii ha'wendii xsiaat'iks ansgimhlxw**.
  ii ha'wendii xsi-aatiks ansgimhlxw
  CCNJ not.yet out.of-come womb

  'The afterbirth hadn't come out yet.' (E.S., August 6, 2016)

(31) **Ii haldim t'aat iit ḵ'ots t'ikw**.
  ii haldim t'aa-t ii=t ḵ'ots t'ikw
  CCNJ up sit-3SG.I CCNJ=3SG.II cut umbilical.cord

  'She sat up and cut the cord.' (E.M., July 4, 2016)

Note regarding (31):

- *T'ikw* also means 'belly button' (M.J. Smith, p.c., 2017).

(32) **T'ee'ltdii wilii ahl gwalg̲a 'nit tk'ihlxw**.
  t'ee'lt=dii wil-ii a=hl gwalg̲a 'nit tk'ihlxw
  quickly=FOC LVB-LIKE PREP=CN all 3SG.III child

  'The births happened quickly for all the children.' (E.M., July 4, 2016)

(33) **Ii neediin 'wahl siipxwum hlox̲si'y**.
  ii nee=dii=n 'wa=hl siipxw-m hlox̲s-'y
  CCNJ NEG=FOC-1SG.I find=CN sick-ATTR month-1SG.II

  'I didn't get my period.' (E.S., August 6, 2016)

Spirituality

This section contains 2 sentences in which an Elder spoke about a spiritual experience.

(34) **Ii xsi wog̲os na'a mahldiit naahl witxwit**.
  ii xsi wok̲i=s na'a mahl=dii-t naa=hl witxw-t
  CCNJ dream-T=PN granny tell=CN=FOC-3SG.II who=CN reincarnate-SX

  'I dreamt of granny telling me who was being reincarnated.' (E.T., July 11, 2016)

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(35) **Emma dim   witxwit**.
Emma dim   witxw-i-t
Emma PROSP reincarnate-?-SX

'Emma will be reincarnated (said by the dreamer) (Emma will be back.).'

(E.T., Nov. 24, 2017; M.J.S., p.c., 2017)

Family

This section contains 13 sentences in which the Elders spoke about members of their family.

The reader may note that some of the family terms are specific to gender. There are three words for 'sibling' in *Gitxsanimx̱*. Sentences (37) and (38) show that *gimxdi* 'woman's brother/man's sister' is used to refer to the relationship between siblings of the opposite sex. Sentence (39) shows that *wak* 'brother' refers to the relationship between two male siblings. Sentence (40) shows that *xiikw* 'sister' refers to the relationship between two female siblings.

In addition, three of the terms of endearment for small children are gender specific. Sentence (41) shows that *diikw* 'dear one' is for girl children. Sentence (44) shows that *hlgu 'nusit* 'little baby girl' is also for girl children. Sentence (42) shows that *doots* 'dear one' is for boy children.

(36) **Emmahl   xsg̱oog̱um hlguuhlxwi'y**.
Emma=hl xsg̱ook̲-m   hlguuhlxw-'y.
Emma=CN first-ATTR   child-1SG.II

'Emma was my first child.' (M.J.S., p.c., 2017)

(37) **Xwsdimoosul gabihl   hlgi'y**.
xwsdimoosul   gabi=hl   hlgi-'y.
nine.HUM   CNT.AMT=CN children-1SG.II

'I had nine children.' (E.M., July 4, 2016)

(38) **Emma wahl   gimxdit**.
      Emma wa=hl   gimxdi-t
      Emma name=CN sibling-3SG.II

      'Emma was the name of his sister.' (E.S., August 6, 2016)

Note regarding (38):

- *Gimxdi* is used for a sibling of the opposite sex. In (38) *gimxdi* refers to a woman's brother. (M.J. Smith, p.c., 2017).

(39) **Jonnehl   wahl   gimxdit**.
      Jonne=hl   wa=hl   gimxdi-t
      Johnny=CN name=CN sibling-3SG.II

      'Johnny was the name of her brother.' (E.S., August 6, 2016)

Note regarding (39):

- *Gimxdi* is used for a sibling of the opposite sex. In (39) *gimxdi* refers to a man's sister. (M.J. Smith, p.c., 2017).

(40) **Jonnehl   wahl   wakt**.
      Jonne=hl   wa=hl   wak-t
      Johnny=CN name=CN brother-3SG.II

      'Johnny was the name of his brother.' (E.S., August 6, 2016)

Note regarding (40):

- *Wak* is used for a man's brother (M.J. Smith, p.c., 2017).

(41) **Emma wahl   xiikwt**.
      Emma wa=hl   xiikw-t
      Emma name=CN sister-3SG.II

      'Emma was the name of her sister.' (E.S.)

Note regarding (41):

- *Xiikw* is used for a woman's sister (M.J. Smith, p.c., 2017).

(42) **G̱ala diikw**.

g̱ala   diikw
come dear.one.FEM

'Come here dear one.' (M.J.S, p.c., 2017)

Note regarding (42):

- *Diikw* is used for girls (M.J. Smith, p.c., 2017).

(43) **G̱ala doots**.

g̱ala   doots
come dear.one.MASC

'Come here dear one.' (M.J.S, p.c., 2017)

Note regarding (43):

- *Doots* is used for boys (M.J. Smith, p.c., 2017).

(44) **G̱ala mii'y**.

g̱ala   mii-'y
come dear.one-1SG.II

'Come here little one.' (M.J.S, p.c., 2017)

(45) **Amg̱oogit hlgu 'nusit**.

amg̱oogit   hlgu 'nusit
pretty   little baby.girl.FEM

'Cute little baby girl.' (M.J.S, p.c., 2017)

(46) **Amg̱oogit 'nus**.

amg̱oogit   'nus
pretty   little.one

'Cute little one.' (M.J.S, p.c., 2017)

(47) **Sihlguuhlxws sip   Emma 'nit**.

sihlguuhlxw=s dip   Emma 'nit
adopt=PN   ASSOC Emma 3SG.III

'Emma and them adopted her.' (E.S., August 6, 2016)

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(48)   **Naahl   aat'iksit? Aat'iks an̲galan**.
       naa=hl aat'iks-it   aat'iks   an̲galan
       who=HL come-SX   come   afterbirth

       'Who is coming? *An̲galan* is coming.' (E.S., August 6, 2016)

Note regarding (48):

- The context for (48) is important. A toddler bends over and looks between their legs. The Elders tease the toddler's mother and ask *Naahl aat'iksit?* (Who is coming?) and reply with *Aat'iks an̲galan* (*An̲galan* is coming.). In this context *an̲galan* cannot be translated with its literal translation (afterbirth). (M.J. Smith, p.c., 2017).

Colonialism

This section contains 5 sentences in which an Elder spoke about colonialism.

(49)   **Diyee'm   *baby* go'ohl   Dokta go'ohl   wilp siipxw ii**
       di-yee-'m   *baby* go'o=hl Dokta go'o=hl wilp siipxw ii
       COM-go-1PL.II baby LOC=CN doctor LOC=CN house sick   CCNJ
       'nu'wt.
       'nu'w-t.
       die-3SG.II

       'The doctor didn't take the baby in at the hospital and she died.' (E.M.,

       July 11, 2016)

(50)   **Wil   hii xsg̲oog̲om   'witxwi'y   wilp siipxw ii   he'y**
       wil   hii xsg̲ook-m   'witxw-'y   wilp siipxw ii   he-'y
       COMP first to.be.first-ATTR arrive-1SG.II house sick   CCNJ tell-1SG.II
       dax̲gyathl hasak̲a'y   dim   damsxwi'y
       dax̲gyat=hl hasak̲-'y   dim   damsxw-'y
       strong=CN   want-1SG.II PROSP push-1SG.II.

       'When I first arrived at the hospital, I said I wanted to push hard.' (E.T.,

       July 11, 2016)

(51) **Ii hes Ms. Nurse hlabixsxwi'y iit   gyahlxwi'y.**
ii   he=s Ms. Nurse hlabixsxw-y   ii=t   gyahl-xw-'y
CCNJ tell=PN Ms. Nurse tired-1SG.II CCNJ=3SG.I poke-PASS-1SG.II

'Ms Nurse said I was tired and gave me an injection.' (E.T., July 11, 2016)

(52) **Lixs gyathl wil   hlaa gya'atdiit 'nuu'm.**
lixs gyat=hl wil   hlaa gya'a-t-diit 'nuu'm
different=CN COMP INCEP see-T-3PL.II 1PL.III

'We were treated differently.' (E.M., July 4, 2016)

(53) **Ha'niigootdiit ji ap has'usi'm.**
ha'niigoot-diit ji   ap   has~'os-'m
think-3PL.II   IRR VER pl~dog-1PL.II

'They thought we were dogs.' (E.M., July 4, 2016)

5.6   Chapter Conclusion

This chapter, *Chapter 5 Perinatal Language*, presented language related to the perinatal period and provided suggestions for how linguistic analysis can be used as a tool for language learning.

The sentences provide a context from which to learn about how language of the perinatal period is used; however, the sentences are out of context from the Elders' knowledge and life experiences that they shared with us. The rest of this thesis strives to provide greater context to their stories and knowledge. The next chapter, *Chapter 6 Historical Context: Health and Medical Care*, situates the Elders' knowledge and experiences in the historical context of obstetric care in the early and mid-1900s.

6 Historical Context: Health and Medical Care

"When we talk about truth, we sometimes don't know what it is exactly we're talking about. We have accepted versions that exist in history books and curricula. We have accepted versions that are passed down orally from generation to generation, all accepted as the truth of the story of a people or the story of a nation. But the truth exists at a whole different level than all of that. The truth exists in the way that makes you feel. If. . . you can walk across that same territory that we did and feel that silence and feel that wind and see the way that the sun shines upon the land and have your emotions kindled by experience then you're able to discern the truth. You're able to shed a tear for the evolution of that story that's carved and painted on those rocks. You're able to bring yourself into an emotional context, and that's where we need to go. . . in order to start talking about the truth." – Wagamese (2014)

Learning about the truths of history is part of all decolonization journeys. In my research into the history of health and medical care on *Lax̱ Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory) I found gaps in documentation regarding Gitxsan perspectives on the confluence of Gitxsan and European health and medical knowledge and care, especially pertaining to the perinatal period.

Regan (2010) emphasizes that "with newfound knowledge, comes an obligation to act" (p. 55), so this chapter addresses the gap in documentation by presenting information from the literature and from the Elders involved in the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project regarding health and medical care on *Lax̱ Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory), with a special focus on obstetric care and practices. First this chapter presents Gitxsan perspectives on perinatal health and obstetric care as learned from the Elders during the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project. Next this chapter describes shifts in obstetric care that occurred in the early and mid-1900's

(Kelm, 1998) – the period when the Elders were born and later had their own children. The chapter then discusses the implications that various waves of illnesses brought by Europeans had for Indigenous communities. The chapter follows by presenting the ways that Gitxsan medicine and newcomer medicine interacted. Finally, the chapter presents a history of the introduction of the newcomers' medical knowledge and systems of care on *Lax̲ Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory).

This chapter identifies gaps in the literature that could lead to a future documentation project on *Lax̲ Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory) regarding the history of medical care in Gitxsan communities.

Gitxsan and other Indigenous perspectives on health and medical care give context to the knowledge and stories the Elders shared with us. An understanding of Indigenous perspectives also contributes to the process of decolonization by shifting the focus from "reinforc[ing] negative stereotypes of victimhood" (Regan, 2010, p. 46) to positions of power and resistance.

6.1 Gitxsan Perspectives on Perinatal Care

The perspective of Gitxsan in the perinatal period is missing from the literature. The Elders we worked with were very clear that they did not want their experiences to be representative of Gitxsan culture or people; however, there are elements of the obstetric climate in the early and mid-1900's as described by Kelm (1998) that are present in the Elders' experiences.

The time period that the Elders of the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project gave birth to their babies was 1945 to 1971. The Elders themselves were born in 1928

(E.M. and E.T.) and 1934 (E.S.). The early to mid-1900s was a period of shift in perinatal care, as the Elders' mothers' perinatal care was predominantly managed by Gitxsan perinatal experts; whereas, the Elders accessed both Gitxsan and Eurocanadian expertise and birthed most of their babies at the hospital.[32]

Indigenous communities have been demanding access to Eurocanadian health care since the late 1800s, not to replace their own health care systems, but to assert their position as equal members of society and to increase the options available to them, in particular to have Eurocanadian solutions to diseases brought by the newcomers (Kelm, 1998). Especially in the early to mid-1900s, Indigenous communities had to actively advocate to have a Eurocanadian medical practitioner practice in their community (Kelm, 1998). Kelm (1998) writes, "Accepting, and even pursuing, non-Native medicine was sometimes a strategic move on the part of First Nations, asserting their status and worth in an emerging settler society" (Kelm, 1998, p. 157).

Gitxsan involvement was significant in bringing Eurocanadian health care to the Territory. The land that the hospital is built on was donated by the Gitxsan (M.J. Smith, p.c., 2017). It was a generous donation, as the hospital is located on a beautiful piece of land adjacent to the *Xsi Ando'o* (Bulkley River) canyon with views of *Sdikyoodenax* and other surrounding mountains. The location of the hospital is central on *Lax Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory) and provides rich soil for growing produce. The hospital gardens were an important source of food in the early history of the hospital (Lee, 1996) and currently they continue to be available as a community garden. Kelm (1998) explains that across the province, Indigenous

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[32]See Begay (2004) for a discussion of the shift in birthing culture in her home Navajo community between 1940 and 1970.

people invested financially to support Eurocanadian medical facilities and practitioners in their communities. The question of Gitxsan and Wet'suwet'en financial contributions to the Hazelton hospital has yet to be documented.

The Elders spoke to me about segregation in the hospital, in the facility itself as well as in the medical care providers. There were separate entrances for Indigenous people and for Eurocanadian people, as well as separate "case rooms." It's unclear to me whether the segregation was organized by status or by skin colour. When one Elder, as a young woman, arrived at the hospital to birth her baby, the doctor who served Indigenous people was unavailable, and her birth was managed by the head nurse. The Elder, as a young woman, incurred injury from the birth and feels that it was not adequately managed and would have been better managed by a doctor. An additional injustice lies in the fact that a doctor was available at the hospital, however he was not assigned to serve Indigenous people, so the head nurse did not call him in to attend the birth.

Kelm (1998) explains that many medical facilities in British Columbia were segregated in the first half of the 1900's. In hospitals and clinics financed by the government, non-Indigenous patients were expected to pay for their care and the Department of Indian Affairs paid for the medical fees of Indigenous people (Kelm, 1998, p. 136). Kelm (1998) goes on to say that for this reason some Eurocanadians (who didn't always pay their medical fees anyway) wanted private and semi-private accommodations to be designated for themselves in hospitals (p. 136 & p. 139). There was also pressure from some Eurocanadians to be separated from Indigenous people in the hospital because from their perspective, Indigenous people were a source of

disease and illness, so some hospitals and medical practices were segregated for the comfort of the Eurocanadians (Kelm, 1998). The original source of diseases such as small pox and measles in North America was of course the Eurocanadians, but in the day to day lives of people in British Columbia, the sources of illnesses were not always clear (Kelm, 1998). Many children got sick in residential schools because of poor living conditions and unwillingness of the government to recognize their complicity in the poor health of the students (Kelm, 1998). The children who did not die at school brought illnesses back to the communities (Kelm, 1998). New immigrants also arrived sick to the continent (Kelm, 1998). Some settler communities had higher incidence of illness than neighbouring Indigenous communities (Kelm, 1998).

Missionary hospitals received little government funding, and strove to provide services at little or no fee (Kelm, 1998). One Elder described paying a fee to deliver her baby at Wrinch Memorial Hospital even though a doctor didn't attend the long and difficult labour and birth. The fee may have been $75, but she wasn't certain of her recollection of the exact amount, and I am unaware whether this was standard practice at the time or not.

The Elders, as young women, birthed all of their babies in the hospital, except two babies for one young woman who was prevented by circumstances out of her control from birthing in the hospital as she had planned. Kelm (1998) writes of "Aboriginal medical self-determination" (p. 155), which means that Indigenous people were in charge of their choices in their health and medical care. The Elders expressed clearly that birthing in the hospital was their preferred choice.

I'm not aware of the overall climate of Gitxsan women choosing to birth at home

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or the hospital during this time period, and this is a question that could be explored in a future project. Kelm (1998) has documented that Indigenous midwifery was still practiced in communities in British Columbia until at least the 1950's. One Elder's mother had a midwifery role in the community, and another Elder also spoke of her as an expert in perinatal care.

Kelm (1998) writes about "Aboriginal conceptions of the body" as being disruptive and resistant forces against the "intended medical monologue of non-Native doctors and missionaries" (p.83). The Elders did not express a belief that birth for them was inherently a life-threatening or medical event, as was the shifting trend in the Eurocanadian thinking at the time (Kelm, 1998; see also Davis-Floyd, 1992). Certainly, they had experiences related to their pregnancies and births that had negative consequences, but in their stories this was due to circumstances and not the nature of birth itself. Although for the Elders, as young women, each birth was different from the next, they expressed confidence in their ability to birth. Difficult or life-threatening circumstances were attributed to factors like sickness in pregnancy, size of the baby, and mismanagement by medical care providers. For example, one Elder makes a clear distinction between the unbearable pain that was caused by her legs being tied down while birthing which made her cry out and lose consciousness, compared with the pain of birth which *"needii siipxw"* ('wasn't painful') (E.S., Aug. 6, 2016). The Elders talked about births that weren't negatively affected by these kinds of factors as proceeding quickly and without pain. By not incorporating the Eurocanadian perception of birth as a life-threatening or medical event, the Elders, as young women, resisted the emerging Eurocanadian discourse and maintained

their Gitxsan identity.

Helin (2006), who is from the neighbouring Tsimshian Nation, describes an Indigenous "holistic worldview" where spiritual life is part of all of life's activities, and contrasts it with a predominant Eurocanadian worldview that separates church from the state (p. 74). Kelm (1998) explains, "while Western medicine had gradually become more and more intent on classification and delimination, Aboriginal medicine was adept at blurring boundaries and refused the non-Native dichotomy of 'natural' and 'spiritual'" (p. 84). One Elder talked about how her spiritual beliefs influenced her perinatal experiences. The Elder, as a young woman, had spiritual dreams in her pregnancies in which she saw the relative that was to be reincarnated as the child she was carrying. She also saw Jesus in one of her reincarnation dreams, and this was spiritually very meaningful to her. Another Elder, as a young woman, was told by her grandmother in a dream who her child was to be reincarnated as. None of the Eurocanadian perspectives (religious, health, political, etc.) have been successful in replacing or dominating Indigenous worldviews (Kelm, 1998); changes have been incorporated into beliefs that are grounded in thousands of years of existence (Davis, 2009).[33] This is, itself, testament to the strength and resistance of Gitxsan worldview and culture.

Kelm (1998) writes about a society of "medical plurality" (p. 129) in which Indigenous people viewed Eurocanadian medical care with skepticism and therefore

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[33]See for example, Davis (2009) in which he describes the merger of belief systems in Peru after the arrival of the Spanish (p. 127-130). "The conquistadors did everything in their power to crush the spirit of the Andes, destroying all religious temples and icons. But every time the Spaniards planted a cross or built a church on top of a demolished shrine they simply affirmed in the eyes of the people the inherent sacredness of the place" (Davis, 2009, p. 127).

added Eurocanadian medical care to the variety of healing strategies that were already available to them, such as their own doctors, shamans, midwives, and herbal specialists. Kelm (1998) writes that "indigenous conceptions of the body shared space with biomedical notions in First Nations medical knowledge" (p. 153).

There were a number of examples of this type of medical self-determination in the Elders' experiences. The Elders, as young women, accessed services from both Eurocanadian and Gitxsan perinatal experts for care in their pregnancies. The Elders viewed their mothers as having expertise. Many of the Elders' birth stories included the presence of their own mother during labour. One of the Elders, as a young woman, birthed most of her babies at the hospital and two of her babies at home, one with her mother-in-law and another with her mother. She referred to her mother as "*Dokta Na'a*" ('Doctor Mom') (E.M., July 4, 2016). Another Elder, described when she was a child she was present for the birth of a younger sibling. She referred to her mother's birth attendant as "*Dokta*" ('the Doctor') (E.T., July 11, 2016). Another Elder explained "*Noxo'y ant hlimoo'y wil hlaa luu gwantxw dim sgyat tk'ihlkw*" ('My mother told me what to do when I had labor') (E.T., July 11, 2016) and encouraged the Elder, as a young woman, to "*Dim luu yugwin heehl dokta diyatt noxo'y*" ('My mother told me to listen to the [Eurocanadian] doctor') (E.T., July 11, 2016) when it came time to birth her baby.

The Elders, as young women, accessed knowledge related to their perinatal experiences from multiple perspectives, including Gitxsan medical knowledge, Eurocanadian medical knowledge, Gitxsan spiritual knowledge, Christian spiritual knowledge, and their personal knowledge about their bodies. In most of their pregnancies, the

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Elders knew that they were pregnant by their missed periods. One Elder told us *"Wilaaxhl hana<u>k</u>' wil hlaa yukw dim hlguuhlxwt"* ('A woman knows when she is going to have a baby.') (E.S., Aug. 6, 2016). The Elders, as young women, usually went to see a Eurocanadian doctor for confirmation of their pregnancies. Two of the Elders explained that a big baby could cause problems with pregnancy or birth. One of the Elders explained that a "woman helper, like a shaman" could be consulted to know the position of a large baby. During a difficult pregnancy, as a young woman, another Elder's mother, bound her stomach to prevent the baby from growing too big. The young woman accessed the medical services of her mother who was a perinatal expert as well as Eurocanadian services at the hospital. In a difficult pregnancy she followed a special diet recommended by her doctor and followed Gitxsan protocols (told to her by her mother) and rules given to her from her Eurocanadian doctor. Advice featured prominently for her in her difficult pregnancies. She says, *"Wil hlaa ubini'y iin wilaaxhl wil sit'aa'mahl yuuhlimxw loo'y"* ('When I was pregnant I knew the beginning of advice to me') (E.S., Aug. 6, 2016). For example, she was not supposed to look at anything ugly or the baby might take on the characteristics of the ugly thing (example given was a monkey on television). She was also told to rest (example given, not even allowed to wash dishes). She expressed skepticism about advice from both sources, but as she explains, *"Needii nim na<u>x</u> 'nisxw ii ap wilt'insxwi'y"* ('I didn't want to listen, but I obeyed whatever advice I got.') (E.S., Aug. 6, 2016) In these examples, the Elders, as young women, accessed a variety of health and medical care strategies available to them to optimize their perinatal care.

Participating in the decision making process and having choices in perinatal care

continues to be important for many Indigenous women. Members of neighbouring Haida, 'Namgis, and Nuxalk Nations participated in a project about their maternity experiences. One of the findings of the researchers was that:

> . . . the level of power, choice, and control available within the community affected how women viewed their birthing experiences. If women felt that there was no choice involved in where they had their babies, or how their labour and birth were managed, they often had negative feelings towards the birth experience.
>
> (B. Calam & C. Varcoe, 2008; as cited by British Columbia Provincial Health Officer, 2009, p. 84).

The Elders talked about their own mothers, who birthed most of their babies at home with minimal support. The Elders, as children and adolescents, were present or close by for the births of some of their siblings. The descriptions were not detailed, so this kind of documentation could be done in another project; however, in their descriptions the Elders focused on how their mothers were familiar with the processes of birth. One Elder described how her mother prepared the room for birth by spreading her mattress and disposable sheets on the floor. Another Elder describes how her mother cut her own umbilical cord and burned the placenta. Another Elder explained, *"Lip wilaaxit dim wilt, hejit 'nuu'm dim dip uu'whl ligi naa, ii goli'm. Needii 'wihl sadilgetxws"* "She knew what to do, and she asked us to call someone, and we ran. She didn't make a big deal out of anything" (E.S., Aug. 6, 2016).

The Elders described their mothers as having minimal support at their own births. One Elder connected her mother's experiences of having minimal support with her own desire for minimal number of people at her own births. She explained, *"Needii 'wihl hasaga'y dim helt dim 'wihl wilit"* ('I don't want too many people there') (E.M.,

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July 4, 2016). We did not ask the Elders for their view on who is necessary to have at a birth and what their roles are and this would be an interesting topic to explore in a future project. As young women, the Elders' mothers were involved in most of their pregnancies and labours. The young womens' husbands were most often away at the time of the birth, for work or for subsistence activities, such as hunting or fishing. For one husband's family it was culturally forbidden for him to be present at the time of birth.

The experiences of the Elders, when they were young women, and their mothers having little support in their births contrasts with the description of Gitxsan birth practices provided in Terrace/ Kitimat and area Aboriginal Health Improvement Committee, Aboriginal Health, Northern Health (producers) (2016). Terrace/Kitimat (2016) describe the important roles of the maternal grandmother,[34] the father of the baby, and the auntie of the baby during the birth of the baby, in addition to people from both sides of the family who "come in great numbers when the baby is born" (V. Howard; in Terrace/Kitimat, 2016). The difference in the experiences of the Elders and their mothers could be attributed to insufficient documentation, differences in cultural/family practices within the Gitxsan communities, or to the impacts of colonialism, notably residential schools (V. Howard in Terrace/Kitimat, 2016).[35]

The political climate, racial attitudes, and obstetric practices of the time period

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[34]It's unclear to me whether grandmother here refers to the infant's grandmother, or the birthing mother's grandmother.

[35]See Begay (2004) for a discussion about the impacts of colonialist practices on the transmission of birthing expertise and knowledge, notably the disconnect caused by sending children from her Navajo community to boarding schools.

in which the Elders, as young women, gave birth impacted some of their perinatal experiences. Each of the Elders told us about experiences of unjust treatment or prejudice from Eurocanadian medical practitioners during labour and/or birth which had harmful consequences.[36]

I have already written about one Elder, when she was a young woman, whose legs were restrained during one of her births. The practice caused her great pain and caused her to lose consciousness. This procedure of restraining women's limbs in birth was a routine obstetric practice for a period of time in North America, and it traumatized many women (Gaskin, 2003; Davis-Floyd, 1992). When the young woman expressed her discomfort, the doctor swore at her. This birth occurred at Wrinch Memorial Hospital.

Another Elder, as I have previously written, as a young woman incurred injury from the mismanagement of one of her births. When the young woman arrived at the hospital, she was ready to push her baby out, but the doctor assigned to Indigenous patients wasn't available so the birth was managed by the head nurse. The young woman had felt disempowered in her pregnancy by the nurse's comment "you are

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[36]In reading about the following experiences of prejudice or unjust treatment that the Elders experienced as young women, the reader may be tempted to compare how a traditional Gitxsan birth may have provided an alternative experience for the young women; however, the goal of this chapter is to listen and learn from the Elders' narratives. The Elders did not compare their perinatal experiences to the possibility of birthing in a Gitxsan environment. In fact, their preferred location for birth, as young women, was the hospital where they could have access to Eurocanadian medical expertise. The Elders expressed in their narratives that, as young women, they entered the hospital and their relationships with Eurocanadian medical caregivers with a high level of self respect and expectation for the personal conduct of all the people who interacted with them there. The Elders described the impact of how the mismatch between the Eurocanadian medical caregivers' behaviour and/or medical practices and their own expectations affected them during and after their labour and/or birth. For further reading, see also Chapter 5 of Davis-Floyd (1992) for discussion regarding people's responses to the rituals of birth and Chapter 4 in Jordan (1993) for discussion of how birthing systems change.

too small, and the baby is too big." This information stayed with the young woman in her labour and birth, especially in light of the fact that the nurse did not call a doctor when the young woman arrived in labour at the hospital. The nurse gave the young woman a pill which made her sleep for most of the day. In the end the young woman pushed for many hours and had to stay for a month at the hospital to recover. The Elder explained that she was scared, and she feels "lucky" that her and her daughter survived the experience. The Elder, as a young woman, was charged for the delivery and to have her baby checked by the doctor, perhaps $75, but she wasn't certain if the amount she remembered was correct. This birth occurred at Wrinch Memorial Hospital.

Another Elder, who, as a young woman, was away working on the coast in the mid-late 1940's, was sent home from the hospital in Prince Rupert, when she and her husband arrived in labour. The Elder explained to us that they were told to return later in her labour, but it's possible she may have been refused care due to the ban on hospital-based Indigenous births in the mid-1930's (Kelm, 1998). The baby was born in her mother-in-law's home and contracted whooping cough at the time of the birth. The local doctor refused to see the newborn, and the heartbroken parents rushed home to *Lax Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory). The infant passed away during the journey home. To add further injustice to the tragic situation, police met the parents on their arrival and arrested them. The young woman's husband had to argue with the police, justifying that had the doctor on the coast treated the infant, the baby may not have died. The injustice angers the Elder who told us, *"Lixs gyathl wil hlaa gya'atdiit 'nuu'm. Ha'niigootdiit ji ap has'usi'm"* ('We were

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treated differently. They thought we were dogs') (E.M., July 4, 2016). The Elder's son explained that had his mother been on *Lax̱ Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory) the outcome of this birth story may have been different. The importance of place, as he explained it, lies in the fact that "people know who she is here" and there is "more unison between people." She would have had more people to advocate for her, especially her own mother, for access to the expertise she needed.

The Elders also described positive experiences with their Eurocanadian care-givers. One Elder told us about a Eurocanadian doctor who shared in the joke and joy when a strange and unexpected illness turned out to be a pregnancy. Another Elder, when asked if she felt the hospital is a safe place, expressed that it is and that she would have felt unsafe birthing at home. Another Elder, with a history of miscarriages and one stillborn birth, explained that the Eurocanadian doctor who attended an easy and painless birth was *"Luu amhl g̱oothl dokta"* ('The doctor was happy') (E.S., Aug. 6, 2016) with the outcome.

Although the Elders do not want their experiences to be used to make generaliza-tions about Gitxsan culture, I feel I can generalize about one part of Gitxsan culture that I have observed time and again while living on the Territory, including in the Elder's stories. Gitxsan deeply love and cherish their children. In Terrace/Kitimat (2016), Gitxsan Elder Frances Sampson explains, "We believe that all our children, every human life has a gift to deliver." One Elder in the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project talked about the beautiful joy she felt when she held her babies, especially the first time after they were born. Another Elder described that she was devastated when she was prevented from holding her baby for some time, while the baby was

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being treated at the hospital. She told us, *"Hasaga'y dimin gya'at wii'o'y'hl tk'ihlxw. Hasaga'y dimin bajit, ii wo waa'atxwi'y"* ('I wanted to see her. I love children. I wanted to always hold her, and I would cry') (E.S., Aug. 6, 2016). Another Elder talked about an unexpected pregnancy as a *"k̲'amgwitxw"* ('blessing') (E.M., July 4, 2016) especially in light of having recently lost some of her children. Gitxsan have many terms of endearment for children, some of which are documented in Section 5.4 and Section 5.5, under the subheading 'Family.' Much of the affection that the Elders have for their children is undoubtedly lost here in translation, but I will always remember the warmth and wonder on the Elders' faces when they spoke about their profound love for their children.

6.2 Indigenous Birth in British Columbia in the Early and Mid-1900's

Kelm (1998) describes the climate of birth in the first half of the 1900's. She writes that Indigenous birth rates began to rise in the early 1900's, due in part to a "strongly pro-natalist subculture that developed in Aboriginal communities" (p. 5). One Elder told Kelm (1998) that she was encouraged "to have children, as many as you can" (M. Gagnon; p. 5). Kelm (1998) explains that the motivating factors for the push to have many children came from several different sources. "Childbearing was. . . highly esteemed. . . emphasizing the importance of childbearing to lineage claims to wealth, power, and resources" (Kelm, 1998, p. 5-6). The pro-natalist culture may have also been "a response to population losses in generations before – a way of reestablishing clans and additional strength in the face of increasing Euro-Canadian incursions"

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(Kelm, 1998, [p. 6). And finally, "higher birth rates were also the result of these incursions, in that missionary teachings lauded childbearing and denounced interventive birth control and abortion" (Kelm, 1998, p. 6).

In this period of time (1900-1950), maternal, infant, and childhood mortality rates were also high (Kelm, 1998, p. 6). The high maternal and newborn infant mortality rates are "suggestive of the state of medical intervention in birthing" in addition to "limited access to medical care in the event of complications" (Kelm, 1998, p. 7). The high infant and childhood mortality rates are "indicative of general health conditions associated with environment and nutrition" due to "the erosion of the Aboriginal land and resources bases" (Kelm, 1998, p. 7). Kelm (1998) reminds us that "Aboriginal ill-health was created not just by faceless pathogens but by the colonial policies and practices of the Canadian government" (p. xix).

Kelm (1998) explains that in the first half of the 1900's "Obstetrical care was one area where Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal medicine and custom clearly co-existed. Well into the first half of the twentieth century, childbirth and neonatal care were shaped by Aboriginal custom modified by missionary influence" (p. 166). During this period of time, a number of contradictions existed regarding the care of Indigenous women in the perinatal period. Women in some places were encouraged to use Eurocanadian health and medical services for their births as the perception of birth in Eurocanadian culture was shifting away from birth seen as a natural life event towards birth viewed as a dangerous medical event (Kelm, 1998). Despite this view, government officials racialized Indigenous women's bodies with the idea that "they were closer to nature, had easier deliveries, and therefore did not require medical

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intervention" (Kelm, 1998, p. 168). For this reason, government funded medical practitioners were discouraged from supporting Indigenous women in the perinatal period, and as a cost-cutting measure, prohibited hospital delivery of Indigenous babies in 1935 (Kelm, 1998, p. 114 & p. 168).[37] Kelm (1998) goes on to explain that Indigenous women themselves "were taught from an early age not to fear childbirth and to rely on their own abilities and those of community midwives when in labour" (p. 167); however, Indigenous communities also advocated for the same access to obstetric care as Eurocanadian women (Kelm, 1998, p. 166-171).

6.3 The Arrival of Newcomer Diseases and Medicine: Contrasting Perspectives

Gitxsan's first contact with European newcomers started about 150 years ago with the arrival of European trade goods and European illnesses (Daly, n.d.; as cited by Johnson, 1997, p. 39; Duff, 1964).

Thousands of Gitxsan died from diseases introduced by the European newcomers. Epidemics hit apocalyptic proportions, with some survival rates as low as one in 200 in neighbouring Nuxalk communities (D. McCreery, p.c., 2017). Throughout British Columbia the Indigenous population declined from 250,000 in the mid-1700's

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[37]Although, it seems the practice at the Hazelton hospital may not have been affected by this prohibition. Lee (1996) has documented that when the Wrinch Memorial Hospital was rebuilt in 1930 an entire floor was devoted to maternity and children (p. 71) and the ward was well-equipped with "a variety of obstetrical forceps equal to the inventory at Vancouver General Hospital" (Lee, 1996, p. 75). In the two years Lee practiced as a medical doctor in Hazelton (1957–1959), there were 100 births at the hospital, two of which required Cesarean sections, one of which was referred to Vancouver, and the other of which was an emergency surgery completed in Hazelton. Lee (1996) writes, "Even complicated deliveries were handled in Hazelton rather than being shipped to Edmonton or Vancouver" (p. 72).

to its nadir of 23,000 in 1929 (Muckle, 2007; as cited by British Columbia Provincial Health Officer, 2009, p. 4). Small pox epidemics first hit the northern coast of British Columbia in the 1780's and 1790's (Duff, 1964, p. 41-43), and other epidemics followed. Two more small pox epidemics occurred in British Columbia in 1836 and 1862, in addition to measles, influenza, tuberculosis, whooping cough, bubonic plague, and yellow fever that significantly affected populations in the 1700's through to the 1900's (Duff, 1964, p. 41-43; Helin, 2006, p. 97; Kelm, 1998, p. 3-18).

In Gitxsan communities, the European illnesses preceded the arrival of the Europeans (Daly, n.d.; as cited by Johnson, 1997, p. 39) and waves of illnesses took big tolls on families and communities. For example, estimates are that between one third to half of the people (or more) lost their lives in the 1862 small pox epidemic (Cassidy & Ans'pa yaxw School Society, 1984, p. 18-19; Monet & Skanu'u, 1997, p. 8). Cassidy and Ans'pa yaxw School Society (1984) documents that in *Anspayaxw* (Kispiox) in the period between 1860 and 1890 the population declined by half or more due to small pox and measles (p. 18-19). Cassidy and Ans'pa yaxw School Society (1984) writes "[Many] people died from measles, a disease which appeared not to affect the white people coming among them. Some felt they were being poisoned" (p. 18-19).[38] The Gitxsan and Wet'suwet'en population in the late 1800's is estimated to have been reduced to one tenth of the pre-contact population (Galois, n.d.; as cited by Johnson, 1997, p. 41).

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[38]The measles vaccine was developed in 1963 (Measles Vaccine [web page], n.d.), so the Europeans' immunity was possibly due to previous exposure to the virus. Immunity for infants can come from the mother to the baby through the placenta in pregnancy and from breastfeeding after birth (Zhang et al., 2012) but the mother has to have the antibodies to be able to pass the immunity to her infant.

Kelm (1998) points out that one of the ways that colonizing North America was justified was to believe that Indigenous people were by their nature, suffering, sick, and dying out (p. xv - xvi). The ways that the "'problem' of Aboriginal health" (Kelm, 1998, p. xv) have been addressed by the colonizer over history have varied, but as Kelm (1998) explains, the condition of Indigenous health has been (and continues to be) perceived by the colonizer as part of the natural relationship between colonizer and colonized (p. xvi).[39]

On the other hand, Indigenous perspectives did not subsume this stereotype of victimhood (Kelm, 1998). Kelm (1998) explains that through contact with the newcomers, Indigenous people have never given up their power; rather than "power over," Indigenous peoples have maintained a "power to... [a] power to resist, to create, to control, to survive" (p. xix). Many Indigenous people saw that the newcomers were responsible for the deaths and impacts on communities of the foreign diseases (Kelm, 1998). Kelm (1998) explains the perception that, by offering to care for the sick (with medicines, Eurocanadian medical practitioners, and Eurocanadian medical facilities) the newcomers admitted to their responsibility for the diseases. "By offering therapy for the new ailments, Euro-Canadians seemed to be recognizing their culpability for

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[39]The perception of the power-over dynamic as natural to the relationship between the newcomers and Indigenous people is seen in the harmful actions and inactions of the newcomers during the smallpox epidemics. The smallpox vaccine was developed in 1796 (Smallpox Vaccine [web page], n.d.) prior to the smallpox epidemics of the 1800s, but the vaccine was not made available to most Indigenous people in British Columbia (Geddes, 2017). The mechanisms of disease transmission were understood in this time period (for example, settlers wanted segregation in hospitals) so people understood the potential for devastating consequences related to the inactions (eg. not making vaccines available to all people in British Columbia) and actions (eg. breaking up a workcamp in Victoria which led to the spread of smallpox across British Columbia as people dispersed) of the newcomers. See Geddes (2017, p. 69-74) for a discussion of the use of the smallpox virus as a weapon of biological warfare in British Columbia (Duff, 1964, p. 41-43; Monet & Skanu'u, 1992, p. 8; British Columbia Provincial Health Officer, 2009, p. 4; Geddes, 2017, p. 69-74).

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the diseases, and this fit nicely into Aboriginal notions of causality" (Kelm, 1998, p. 108; see also Kelm, 1998, p. 143).

Indigenous people have however been perceptive of the limitations of Eurocanadian medicine, and thus Eurocanadian therapies have been incorporated into the millenia-old pre-existing health and medical systems; "...rather than bringing about assimilation, non-Native medicine was itself assimilated" (Kelm, 1998, p. 172). Indigenous medicine is effective. British Columbia Provincial Health Officer (2009) points out that "[m]ore than 500 drugs used in medical pharmacopoeia today were originally used by First Nations peoples" (Dickason, 1992; as cited by British Columbia Provincial Health Officer, 2009, p. 3) and settlers who were treated by Indigenous doctors "were the most likely to recover" (INAC, 1996; as cited by British Columbia Provincial Health Officer, 2009, p. 3).

Kelm (1998) sheds light on the Indigenous way of making meaning from the waves of illnesses that hit populations. She writes that "Many elders remember this period as one when the people were strong" (p. 3). The epidemics have been viewed in a prophetic sense as "harbingers of the devastation that was to come" (Kelm, 1998, p. xv). Indigenous people interpreted illness through the lens of their worldview: "Aboriginal patients tended to look into their own lives for moments of injury, conflict, or disorder and attributed their illness to such events" (Stephen, 1984; as cited by Kelm, 1998, p. 172).

Gitxsan communities and families had the resources to recover from the devastating epidemics of the 1700's to the 1900's. Kelm (1998) writes that "with the exception of the dreadful toll taken by infectious diseases, Aboriginal bodies were

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still strong. The population was recovering [beginning in the 1920's], and the laughter of young children was heard more and more on reserves" (p. 17). Gitxsan had a worldview, spiritual beliefs, a diet that promoted health and well-being, *ayook* (legal system), an education system, a system of economy, scientific knowledge of the land and its plants and animals, a relationship and familiarity with their land and environment – all of which founded a strong base from which to ground themselves, recover, and thrive again[40]; however, government and missionary policies for, "In the buzz-word of the day, *assimilation*; in the language of the 21st century, *cultural genocide*" (McLachlin, 2015, p. 7; italics in original) proceeded to undermine their recovery.

During this period of recovery, government and missionaries began to impose their own policies on Indigenous communities and peoples. Helin (2006) writes "Aboriginal cultures and languages were targeted at a time when indigenous societies were completely decimated by disease. . . The tools of the colonial interests were law and policy. . . with the single-minded purpose of dismantling and assimilating the once-vigorous and ancient societies and cultures" (p. 87). Missionaries manipulated the tragedies of the epidemics. Monet & Skanu'u (1997) explain that the Protestant and Roman Catholic missionaries on the Gitxsan Territory claimed that the Europeans' "immunity [was] 'proof' of the superiority of Christ's magic" (p. 8). Children, the heart of Gitxsan communities and families, were taken away to Indian Residential

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[40]For example, Daly (2005) explains that complex kinship relations, histories, House names, and statuses are never forgotten, even when low population leads a House group to be subsumed for a few generations into another House group, for example when population numbers of a House group decrease due to a dearth of daughters or the epidemics of recent history, until the House has enough members again to re-establish themselves and "enliven the original House names and statuses" (p. 61-62).

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Schools, with attendance becoming compulsory in 1920 (Florence, 2016, p. 48 &
p. 82-85). The government and churches were complicit in the creation and admin-
istration of the Indian Residential Schools, where survival rates were as low as 50%
at some schools (King, 2013, p. 120; Kelm, 1998, p. 64).

Kelm (1998) points out that the colonizer's perception was that suffering, sickness,
and death were part of the natural order of the relationship between colonizer and
colonized, an attitude which contributed to Eurocanadians' inaction and feelings of
hopelessness regarding the "'problem' of Aboriginal health" (p. xvi).

Indigenous people have not been passive victims of the health issues that have
affected them nor the politics surrounding them; they understand the power dynam-
ics that have shaped the situations and have always resisted and fought to "[force]
non-Native medicine into dialogue with Aboriginal conceptions of the body, disease
causation, and therapeutics" (Kelm, 1998, p. xvi). The Indigenous worldview has
wrapped itself around the historical and current context of health:

> First Nations did not see disease as separate from the larger context of
> Aboriginal interactions with the non-human and the non-Native world.
> European medicine, which generally saw disease in impersonal terms,
> was not equipped to displace indigenous world-views. Instead, where
> indigenous and imported medicine diverged, a contest ensued; where they
> intersected, hybrid forms developed.
>
> Kelm (1998, p. xvi)

Since Europeans and their policies have been responsible for the "health crisis," In-
digenous people have "based their demands for non-Native medicine on that percep-
tion of culpability" and have thus "situated social and physical pathologies *outside*
themselves" (Kelm, 1998, p. xvii; italics in original).

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6.4 Confluence of Gitxsan and Newcomers' Medicine

The first Eurocanadian medical practitioners to come to Gitxsan Territory were medical missionaries (Large, 1957; Lee, 1996; Lee, 1997. Kelm (1998) explains that their affiliation with a church had both beneficial and negative impacts. Unlike government sponsored doctors and nurses, medical missionaries came to the isolated northwest of British Columbia willingly and voluntarily (Kelm, 1998). Their practices were more egalitarian, as part of their mission was to influence and care for Indigenous people; they did not avoid treating Indigenous people or focus their practice more on the Eurocanadian settlers in the area, as some other doctors and nurses did who worked for the government (Kelm, 1998). Medical missionaries were, in general, committed to providing good quality care, took their training and job seriously, and in some instances even advocated for better facilities or supplies (Kelm, 1998).[41] The oversight of the church also ensured a standard of care that the Ministry of Indian Affairs did not maintain (Kelm, 1998). Churches also compensated medical missionaries better than their government sponsored counterparts, and the financial support from a larger institution meant that better care could be provided (Kelm, 1998, p. 143-146).

On the other side, medical missionaries were closely in line with the colonizing agenda of the government, as their mission was also to convert people to Christianity (Kelm, 1998). Some medical missionaries came in conflict with their patients when

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[41]Kelm (1998) mentions one of the earlier examples of advocacy in which Dr. Tomlinson, a doctor who worked in various places in northwest British Columbia, including a four year stay near *Anspayaxw* (Kispiox), refused medicines from the Department of Indian Affairs sometime in the 1870's. Kelm (1998) writes that the Tomlinsons' son, "remembered his father reporting in disgust that the department sent inferior medicines because it believed that these were 'plenty good for Indians'' (p. 145).

their orders to abandon Indigenous health and spiritual practices were not followed (Kelm, 1998, p. 146). Some missionaries used the incidence of illness or death to manipulate or convert people (Kelm, 1998). When the Carrier experienced a number of deaths in their community at Stoney Creek, they perceived that the deaths had happened because they had resisted the missionary's order to send their children to residential school (Kelm, 1998). The missionary exploited their fear to increase enrollment at Lejac Indian Residential School the next year (Kelm, 1998, p. 146).

In some ways the missionaries' worldview was in line with Indigenous points of view. For example, (Kelm, 1998) explains that Indigenous people "recognized missionary conflation of spiritual and corporeal elements of disease" (p. 143), but when missionaries' actions did not fit Indigenous people's worldview people have resisted the vision of the missionaries. When Lee (1996) traveled from Wrinch Memorial Hospital in Hazelton to Babine Lake for a medical visit, a man from Babine Nation committed suicide. Despite the community's wish, and Lee's (1996) advocacy, for the man to be buried in the cemetery, the visiting priest refused, citing "Suicide [is] becoming a ritual here...and every big community event [presents] the danger of being marred by the suicide of someone seeking notoriety" (p. 108). The following year, members of the village arranged with a visiting bishop to have the cemetery enlarged, thus including the grave in the cemetery (Lee, 1996, p. 105-109).

Missionaries first started to visit Gitxsan villages in the 1870's (Cassidy & Ans'pa yaxw School Society, 1984). The first missionaries to come to Gitxsan Territory were not trained in medicine, but incorporated "tending to the sick" into their religious activities (Large, 1957). Segregation was incorporated by the missionaries into some

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community activities. Large (1957) describes a weekly social evening for white people held by one of the missionaries in 1880. John Field, a catholic priest, segregated the congregation with a rope down the middle of the church, where Gitxsan were required to sit on one side and newcomers sat on the other side (Pohle, 1974). None of the early missionaries stayed long in the Hazelton area.

Kelm (1998) explains that the early interaction between settlers and Indigenous people in this early period could have been the precursor to a healthy hybrid of medical systems. Plant-based medicines and spiritual beliefs and rituals around healing were used in both European based medical treatments and Indigenous medicine.[42] During this early period settlers turned to Indigenous medicine and treatments when needed. "They used devil's club to treat tuberculosis, visited healers in Aboriginal communities, and relied on midwives to help them bear their children" (Kelm, 1998, p. 153). Both Eurocanadian and Gitxsan medicine relied on a belief system and plant-based medicines.[43] Lee (1996) describes the significant role of belief in the practices of Eurocanadian trained doctors in Hazelton, Lee (1996) explains that:

> The patients regarded the medical practitioners with respect. This confidence had a decided therapeutical benefit. Indeed, in the days before the era of modern medicines, therapy was largely accomplished by the personality of the doctor and the confidence and respect in which he was held by the patients. There were few effective medicines before 1940.
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> (Lee, 1996, p. 73)

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[42]Eurocanadian and Gitxsan health care systems were not the only ones being practiced at the time. Lee (1997) points out that in 1921 only one Chinese person was treated at the Hazelton Hospital. Lee (1997) writes, "Mr. Don Yip, a member of a pioneer family, told me that the Chinese preferred their own herbal remedies and treatments to anything that might be found in hospitals" (p. 43).

[43]Many medical knowledge systems are belief-based. See, for example, Davis-Floyd (1992) for an analysis of the rituals and belief system of the high-technology American obstetrical system.

Lee (1996) describes the range of plant-based medicines at the Hazelton Hospital pharmacy in 1957: "Shelf after shelf held gallon jugs containing elixirs, medications, herbal remedies, and almost anything one could imagine as a medication or mixture from a pre-modern, pharmaceutical age" (p. 76).

There was potential for mutual learning between the Gitxsan and Eurocanadian health care systems, "[b]ut the processes of colonization, complete with systems of thought that excluded Aboriginal forms of medicine as quackery or superstition, stifled cross-cultural medical dialogue" (Kelm, 1998, p. 153). So, instead, as Kelm (1998) explains, an environment of "medical pluralism" developed, where Indigenous peoples "[built] for themselves a medical system that incorporated the new forms while maintaining an indigenous base of medical thought" (p. 153) and the Eurocanadian medical system developed independently because it resisted "other" knowledge systems.

6.5   Local History

The first medical missionary on Gitxsan Territory was Rev. J.C. Spencer who left his mission in the Hazelton area to attend medical school (Large, 1957). At this time, the churches did not financially support medical missionary work, so Spencer attended only one year of medical school due to a limited budget, before returning for a short time to *Anspayaxw* (Kispiox) (Large, 1957, p. 97-99).

A hospital was built in Port Simpson in 1891, so some Gitxsan likely had exposure to European medicine there, when they went to the Nass River for the annual oolichan harvest and trading or to work in the canneries on the coast (Large, 1957, p. 100-

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101).[44]

Alice Tomlinson, a trained nurse, and her husband, a medical doctor, Robert Tomlinson, were the first trained medical missionaries to come to the Gitxsan Territory. They came in 1879 and stayed for four years. Their dream was to set up a Christian community, "free from the temptations of Hazelton and Kispiox" (Lee, 1997, p. 33),[45] so they made their base at Ankitlas, four miles upstream of *Anspayaxw* (Kispiox) on *Xsi Anspayaxw* (Kispiox River). The Tomlinsons made house-calls and saw patients in Ankitlas, but they couldn't establish a practice in *Anspayaxw* (Kispiox) because "the local shamans were opposed to the Tomlinsons' presence" (Lee, 1997, p. 25). Lee (1997) describes an account written in a letter by the Tomlinsons' son:

> Dr. Tomlinson's medical work[46] seemed to be more surgical than otherwise. He was in constant conflict with shamans, who, for the most part, tried to undermine his work. His son, writing later, tells of a Native who was severely mauled by a grizzly bear. Dr. Tomlinson was called to visit the injured man, who had been brought down the mountain straddled on the neck of a carrier. He found the injuries to be severe – lacerations of the scalp, a hand-sized bite taken from the thigh muscle, the ends of the right lower ribs bitten through and severed, and numerous other lacerations together with shock and blood loss.
>
> The father of the unfortunate young man suspected witchcraft and was decked out in war paint, ready to do the evil shaman in, when Tomlinson halted him and made him promise to refrain from taking any such actions. He also made him promise not to call in any shamans. For five hours,

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[44]Port Simpson is approximately 300km southwest of *Lax Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory), on the coast at the mouth of Portland Inlet which leads to the Nass River (Fisheries and Oceans Canada, n.d.).

[45]It is unclear what were exactly "the temptations of Hazelton and Kispiox" (Lee, 1997, p. 33); however, I posit that the missionaries may have felt threatened by Gitxsan spiritual beliefs and practices.

[46]Although Lee (1997) does make an acknowledgment of the contributions of Alice Tomlinson (a trained nurse), his description of events generally does not include her.

in a salmon smokehouse, Dr. Tomlinson worked on the young man. The patient recovered, and this was a great boon to Tomlinson's work.

(Lee, 1997, p. 26)

The perspective of the colonizer in this story is that the *halaydim swanasxw* (shamans) were undermining Tomlinsons' work, but what is missed is that the Tomlinsons were in fact undermining the work of the *halaydim swanasxw* (shamans). As Kelm (1998) explains, part of the colonialist agenda was to usurp traditional Indigenous power structures, so "[f]or the missionaries, indigenous doctors, who were also important spiritual guides, were obviously the enemy" (p. 104-105). In this case of the grizzly bear attack, the Tomlinsons' medical skills were successfully used to convince Gitxsan that the medical practices of the newcomers could have a place in their lives. Kelm (1998) writes that the Tomlinsons' medical skills were also used to "encourage conversion" (p. 104).

In the story of the grizzly bear attack, Dr. Tomlinson convinced the young man's father not to call a *halaydim swanasxw* (shaman). This was short sighted, as the Tomlinsons only stayed four years in the *Anspiyaxw* (Kispiox) area, and an opportunity to share knowledge was missed. Kelm (1998) describes the contradiction surrounding the medical missionaries' intolerance to Indigenous health care. When the Tomlinsons worked in Nisg̱a'a Territory, Dr. Tomlinson "resented the intrusion of Aboriginal healers into what he saw as *his* therapeutic space, but Nisga'a people took their bodily complaints to their own doctors when he was away from their communities" Kelm, 1998, p. 153-154; italics in original).

The Tomlinsons left in 1883 and the next medical missionaries to come to Gitxsan Territory were Alice Wrinch, a trained nurse, and her husband Horace Wrinch, a

medical doctor (Large, 1957; Lee, 1996; Lee, 1997). The Wrinches ran a clinic out of a log house in *Anspayaxw* (Kispiox) from 1900 to 1904. They made house calls and saw patients at their home based clinic where they also dispensed medicine (Lee, 1997). From their base in *Anspayaxw* (Kispiox) they served all the villages and settlements on *Lax Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory) (Lee, 1997).[47]

The Wrinches organized the building of the Hazelton Hospital in *Gitanmaaxs* (Gitanmaax) and moved their practice there when it was completed in 1904 (Lee, 1997). The new hospital had 20 beds, running water, plumbing, electricity, and kept up to date with technology (for example their first x-ray machine was purchased in 1914). In 1904 a school for training nurses was started, which only accepted white women who had some education and were from "good" families (Lee, 1996, p. 75). Mrs. Wrinch passed away in 1923 and Dr. Wrinch retired in 1936.

The addition of the Hazelton Hospital to the Gitxsan community created a juxtaposition in which people sometimes had to choose one healing system over the other; sometimes the choice was made for them. Kelm (1998) writes, "In Hazelton, a Gitksan chief pronounced an end to 'drumming, rattling and dancing over sick people' once the hospital opened" (p. 157). Since one of the purposes of the hospital was to convert people to Christianity and to degrade local Gitxsan and Wet'suwet'en traditional power structures, failure to heal people worked against these goals (Kelm, 1998). Dr. Wrinch refused patients who could not be saved because of a fear that

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[47]Lee (1997) has documented that during the time the Wrinches lived and practiced in *Anspayaxw* (Kispiox), "[w]hen Dr. Wrinch was away on house calls, sometimes necessitating two-to-three day absences, Mrs. Wrinch visited the Native women, teaching them how to care for their children and also how to make comfortable clothing for their families" (p. 47). Clearly, Gitxsan did not need be taught how to care for their children, so I find myself curious about the perspectives of the Gitxsan women receiving these visits.

he might be accused of witchcraft or would lose esteem amongst the locals (Kelm, 1998, p. 146). Dr. Wrinch wrote:

> Perhaps you wonder how it can be policy to ever refuse these people admittance... The heathen Indians and especially the witchcrafting medicine men and women are on the watch to discredit our work and when a death occurs in the hospital, no matter how hopeless the case may have been and no matter how thoroughly all the possibilities have been explained... there are always some of them ready to blame the hospital or the doctor and to assure the relatives that they would have cured the sick one all right.
>
> (H. Wrinch, n.d., in United Church; as cited by Kelm, 1998, p. 146)

This was a time when Indigenous doctors were criminalized by missionaries and the government. Some Indigenous people in British Columbia were prosecuted for practicing witchcraft. The prosecutions confirmed the missionary and government's belief in traditional Indigenous healing, because charges only led to prosecutions when treatments were successful (Kelm, 1998, p. 159-160).[48]

The attitude toward *halaydim swanasxw* (shaman) shifted in later years. Lee (1996), a Eurocanadian medical doctor who was raised in the Chilcotin and spoke Chinook, practiced at Wrinch Memorial Hospital (formerly Hazelton Hospital) from 1957-1959. He observed that *halaydim swanasxw* (shamans) were not used very frequently during that time; however, he was of the opinion that *halaydim swanasxw* (shamans) had an important place in Gitxsan and Wet'suwet'en lives which filled a role for mental and physical health that Eurocanadian medicine could not. Lee

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[48]For example, Kelm (1998) compares two cases where Indigenous healers treated cases of rheumatism in the 1920s. In one case, a patient was cured temporarily, and charges against the Similkameen healer were dropped when the patient's rheumatism relapsed. In another case on the north coast, a healer's treatment (blowing on and massaging the knee) cured a patient's rheumatism and the healer was sentenced to 40 days in jail after he was found guilty of practicing witchcraft (Kelm, 1998, p. 158-159).

(1996) sees a connection between mental and physical health and writes, "It may well be that there is a gap in western medicine that the shaman might fill.... Western medicine deals rather poorly with a number of conditions which can only be described as the wounds and maladies of the stresses of our daily living" (p. 80). Lee (1996) describes an incident where a senior doctor called a *halaydim swanasxw* (shaman) to the hospital to treat a young woman who was unwell and recovered soon after the treatment by the *halaydim swanasxw* (shaman) (p. 79-80).

In 1930, the Hazelton Hospital was rebuilt and renamed Wrinch Memorial Hospital. The new hospital had 51 beds, upgraded utilities (plumbing and electricity), a new x-ray machine, and the third floor was dedicated to maternity (Lee, 1997, p. 44). Dr. Wrinch retired in 1936, and the hospital has been adequately staffed by doctors and nurses over most of its history, which is unlike the experiences of many Indigenous communities across British Columbia.

Dr. Wrinch was committed to his spiritual and medical missions, and Kelm (1998) writes, "Wrinch was... renowned and respected among the Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en peoples, as well as the local settlers and labourers of the Hazelton area" (p. 144) Dr. Wrinch made a long term commitment to the community and moved away after almost 40 years in 1936 when he became unwell and passed away a few years later in 1939 (Lee, 1997); (Large, 1957). He took his advocacy to the government and worked as a member of the legislative assembly for 10 years when he successfully worked towards a provincial health care bill (Lee, 1997). In 1931 the Wrinch Memorial Hospital was recognized as one of the top 10 hospitals in Canada by the World Hospitals Convention (Lee, 1997).

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Health services have since been expanded to the Gitxsan villages. The Gitxsan Health Society offers a "continuum of health care services.... [with a] holistic approach" in *Sigit'ox* (Glen Vowell), *Anspayaxw* (Kispiox), and *Gitanmaaxs* (Gitanmaax) based on Gitxsan and Eurocanadian health and medical services (Gitxsan Health Society, n.d.). *Gijigyukwhla* (Kitseguecla) have their own health centre (Gitsegukla, n.d.), *Gitwangax* has a health authority (Gitxsan Education Society, n.d.), and Gitanyow has Gitanyow Human Services which "is governed by a Health Board which consists of a representative from each of the four traditional Gitxsan Clans: Wolf, Frog, Grouse and Eagle" (Gitanyow Human Services, n.d.).

6.6 Chapter Conclusion

This purpose of this chapter, *Historical Context: Health and Medical Care*, was to situate the Elders' knowledge and life experiences in the climate of the historical time period in which they gave birth. By including their perspectives in this chapter, the Elders are contributing to decolonization because Gitxsan perspectives from this time period on *Lax Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory) are missing from the literature.

A thorough exploration from multiple perspectives of the local history of midwifery and medicine on *Lax Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory) (Gitxsan Territory) is still missing from the literature. Local oral histories are the key to a future documentation project.

In the following chapter, *Chapter 7 Conclusion: A Gitxsan Research Methodology*, I wrap up the thesis by reflecting on how working within a decolonizing and Indigenist (Wilson, 2007) project on *Lax Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory) has shaped the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project.

7 Conclusion

"In attempting to understand Indigenous knowledge and its processes of knowing, we recognize that the existing knowledge system used in educational systems must be interrogated. This means challenging Eurocentric researchers, their methodologies, and their investigators' skill. Often this interrogation causes discomfort. Grasping the holistic structure and processes of Indigenous knowledge requires an investigator's assumptions and perspective to stretch and develop. The researcher will have to explore uncharted territory without a conventional map." – Battiste and Youngblood Henderson (2000, p. 33)

The *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project was a collaboration between myself, Catherine Dworak, and Dr. M.J. Smith, educator, author, and Gitxsan storyteller, in which we talked to three Gitxsan Elders to learn about the language of pregnancy, childbirth, and life with a newborn. By becoming a part of the project, the Elders also took on a role of sharing their knowledge and personal life experiences related to this transitional period of a woman's life with her baby.

The main goal of this thesis is to contextualize the knowledge of the Elders, to frame their knowledge and experiences in a way to make them meaningful to the reader, and to give them a place within the project. *Chapter 1 Introduction* acknowledges the Gitxsan Nation and situates their territory and language. *Chapter 2 My Background* situates me (the graduate student) within the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project and gives the reader an idea of what brought me to become involved in a project on *Lax Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory). *Chapter 3 Gitxsan Moons and the Seasonal Round* uses the Gitxsan moon cycle to guide the reader through the traditional seasonal round and some of the laws and rituals related to women and children in transitional periods of their lives. *Chapter 4 Process* provides a detailed

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description of how we worked together to document the information presented in this thesis. *Chapter 5 Perinatal Language* presents language that we documented and an outline of how linguistic analysis can be used as a tool for learning language. *Chapter 6 Historical Context: Health and Medical Care* presents a local history focused on the confluence between Gitxsan and Eurocanadian health and medical care, with a specific focus on obstetric care. In researching and writing about the local history, I identify gaps in documentation of Gitxsan perspectives on this topic. Finally, in the current chapter, *Chapter 7 Conclusion: A Gitxsan Research Methodology*, I reflect on what working from within a Gitxsan research methodology means for a project that focuses on the sensitive and personal topic of pregnancy, childbirth, and life with a newborn.

The goal of the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project was to document language related to the perinatal period and to make the project meaningful to all project partners. In doing so we strove to honour the Elders not only as experts in *Gitxsanimx̱*, but also as knowledge bearers and as women with significant life experiences.

Dr. M.J. Smith was instrumental in ensuring that the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project contributes to Gitxsan epistemological knowledge. Having someone like Dr. M.J. Smith guide a researcher in this way means that the research process is also educational for the researcher. Gitxsan are experienced researchers, and in the Gitxsan research tradition, research and education are intertwined; research is a way to learn together and to learn from each other (M. J. Smith, 2004). M. J. Smith (2004) writes:

> ... I consulted *Hanamuxw* [Joan Ryan] *Gitxsan* Chief, Elder and adviser for this study... She stated that research is instructional. It teaches you

new information and adds to your store of knowledge. It has epistemological significance. It also improves the core content of your curriculum material. Teaching is research. It is both a way of being and an ontological orientation. Research is an inquiry that promotes openness and acceptance of new ideas that in turn enhances the teaching experience. Research is an inquiry into the experience of teaching. The *Gitxsan* have been researching and teaching since time immemorial and now it has found a place in Indigenous research.

(M. J. Smith, 2004, p. 42-43; italics in original)

The people living on *Lax Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory) have always used research and education to expand their knowledge about the world around them (M. J. Smith, 2004).

This thesis has documented a process of language learning, Indigenist research, and decolonization. It has also documented stories about pregnancy, childbirth, and life with a newborn. Both language and birth have potential to be ridden with complex emotions because of our history of colonialism and racism. The perinatal period is also a vulnerable and transformative part of a person's life which can make it a sensitive topic to share. The Gitxsan teaching, learning, and researching methodology ensures the research project honours the Elders' knowledge and experiences because by its nature the focus goes beyond acquiring results and data. All project participants can be considered teachers, learners, and researchers. When this philosophy is embraced, project partners are accountable to each other, because they become invested in each other and they commit deeply to a relationship built on transparency, equality, and trust.

By agreeing to contribute to the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project, the Elders made a commitment to not only share their knowledge and experiences of the peri-

natal period, but also to document their experiences of racisism and prejudice. The Elders persevered through times of difficulty, and their stories and strength build a connection between the past and the future (Moayeri & Smith, 2010). I grew to love the Elders. I wept to learn about their treatment. I was overcome with gratitude that they shared a part of their life's journey with me. Their voices, laughter, and stories will live forever in my heart.

K̲'amgwit' 'wihl Lax̲ Ha Gi 'nisim,

Sabax̲

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Appendix 1: Correspondence with the Gitxsan Chiefs' Office

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Simgigyat,

In this letter I would like to ask your permission to engage in a language and culture documentation project with the Gitxsan Community. I am working under the guidance of Dr. M.J. Smith who is helping me to create a project that respects Gitxsan values, traditions, culture, and expectations. This is important for me because, as an outsider, I am aware that not all researchers have prioritized the wishes of Communities when working in First Nations Communities. Simply put, I'd like this to be a collaborative project that belongs to the Gitxsan Nation and includes as much Gitxsan involvement as possible.

My home is in Smithers,[49] and I am currently a Masters student in the Linguistics program through the University of Victoria. I am grateful that Dr. Smith has kindly agreed to facilitate the project and to be a culture and language guide. My work is also being supervised by Dr. Suzanne Urbanczyk at the University of Victoria. I feel that Dr. Smith and Dr. Urbanczyk's experience and expertise will be valuable to me to produce a project that respects and is beneficial to the Gitxsan Community.

I want to emphasize that my priority is to commit to a long-term relationship with the Gitxsan Nation that will continue to grow after the completion of my Masters degree. I also want our project to be useful to the Gitxsan Community, so this is

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[49]I moved to *Lax̲ Yipxwhl Gitxsan* (Gitxsan Territory) a year after beginning the *Limxhl Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* project.

why I'd like to seek greater Community approval for this project.

My interest is in *Gitxsanimx̱* and how it's connected to pregnancy, childbirth, and the newborn. In many First Nations Communities, a lot of knowledge, language, and practices surrounding this important point in the life cycle have been drowned out by Western medical practices and attitudes. In this project we'd like to speak with Elders to document some of their knowledge and stories about pregnancy, childbirth, and the newborn.

At this point, I would like to tell you a little about myself. My parents came to Canada from Poland in the mid and late 1970s. I was born in Prince George, and I grew up in Squamish. My parents both came from an upbringing in which spending time on the Land (*na polu*) has always been important, and they transferred a strong sense of respect for the Land to my sister and me. I grew up mushroom picking in the forests, hiking in the mountains, and discovering curious and amazing things under rocks and in streams. My mom and I moved to Smithers in 2007, and in 2011 I started a Masters Degree in Linguistics at the University of Victoria. I always had an interest in pregnancy, birth, and newborns, and my passion really took off when I completed Birth Doula training in September 2012. Birth is powerful. A positive birth experience that respects the parents and values their point of view, knowledge, and intuitions can be a transformational experience.

Please feel free to contact me with your feedback and/or questions.

Sincerely,

Catherine Dworak

GITXSAN TREATY SOCIETY
OFFICE OF THE GITXSAN HEREDITARY CHIEFS

October 30, 2013

Catherine Dworak
PO Box █████
████████████████████
Smithers, BC, V0J 2N0

Dear Ms. Dworak

RE: Your project on the Gitxsan language

This confirms our support for your Language and Culture Documentation Project. You intend to speak with Elders to document their knowledge and stories about pregnancy, childbirth and the newborn. The methodology of your research will be of interest to us, and we expect that all your work, including interviews, notes and summaries to be stored in the Gitxsan archives.

In addition to Dr. Jane Smith we suggest you stay in contact with Anita Davis, Skayan as well. Her email is attached. This may expand the knowledge base to be inclusive of all elders with this knowledge.

Yours Sincerely

Gordon Sebastian
Executive Director

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Appendix 2: Giksan Orthography

Table 6 presents a "Key to Orthographic and Phonemic Representations" (Forbes et al., 2017, p. 88). The Gitksan Orthography is under the column heading "Orth.," the phonemic representation in the Americanist Phonetic Alphabet is under the column heading "APA," and International Phonetic Alphabet (International Phonetic Association, 2015) symbols are under the column heading "IPA" where APA and IPA symbols differ. The Gitksan Orthography was originally presented in Hindle & Rigsby (1973; as cited by Forbes et al., 2017) and has since been modified for the version included in this appendix (Forbes et al., 2017). See also Brown et al. (2016) for a thorough discussion of the sounds of *Gitxsanimx̱*, *Gitxsenimx̱*, and *Gyaanimx̱*.

Orth.	APA	(IPA)	Orth.	APA	(IPA)	Orth.	APA	(IPA)
a	a		ḵ	q		t'	t̓	
aa	a:		ḵ'	q̓		tl'	ƛ̓	t͡ɬ'
b	p		kw	kʷ		ts	c	t͡s
d	t		kw'	k̓ʷ		ts'	ċ	t͡s'
e	e		l	l		u	u	
ee	e:		'l	l̓		uu	u:	
g, gy	k	kʲ, c	m	m		w	w	
g	q		'm	ṁ		'w	ẇ	
gw	kʷ		n	n		x	x	xʲ, ç
h	h		'n	ṅ		x̱	χ	
hl	ɬ		o	o		xw	xʷ	
i	i		oo	o:		y	y	j
ii	i:		p	p		'y	ẏ	j
j	c	t͡s	p'	ṗ		a, i, u	ə	
k, ky	k	kʲ, c	s	s		', –	ʔ	
k', ky'	k'	kʲ', c'	t	t				

Table 6: *Key to Orthographic and Phonemic Representations Note:* Reprinted from *Three Gitksan Texts*, by Forbes et al. Copyright 2017 by University of British Columbia Working Papers in Linguistics 45.

Appendix 3: Gitxsan Pronouns

These charts present "Gitxsan Pronouns" (UBC Gitksan Research Laboratory, p.c., May 3, 2012). These charts are presented here to identify pronouns during linguistic analysis. In order to know which pronoun to use in speech or writing, the learner needs to learn the concepts of independent vs. dependent sentences (and words that signal these sentence categories) and intransitive vs. transitive verbs (UBC Gitksan Research Laboratory, p.c., May 3, 2012).

Intransitive Verbs
Independent Sentences:	Series 3 Subjects
Dependent Sentences:	Series 2 Subjects

Transitive Verbs
Independent Sentences:	Series 2 Subjects, Series 3 Objects
Dependent Sentences:	Series 1 Subjects, Series 2 Objects*
	(*except 3rd person plural:
	Series 1 Subject, Series 3 Object)

Series 1 "Preverbal Clitics"

	Singular	Plural
1st Person	=n, ni=, na=	dip
2nd Person	=m, mi=, ma=	=m, mi=, ma=…=sim
3rd Person	=t	=t…diit

*Note that the Preverbal Clitic pronouns occur before the main verb.

Series 2 "Suffixes" and "Possessives"

	Singular	Plural
1st Person	-'y	-'m
2nd Person	-n	-si'm
3rd Person	-t	-diit

Series 3 "Independent Pronouns"

	Singular	Plural
1st Person	'nii'y	'nuu'm
2nd Person	'niin	'nisi'm
3rd Person	'nit	'nidiit

Table 8: *Gitxsan Pronouns Note*: Reprinted from *Gitxsan Pronouns*, by Gitksan Research Laboratory, p.c., May 3, 2012. Reprinted with permission.

Appendix 4: Gitxsan Glossing Guide

Table 9 presents a modified version of the "Gitxsan Glossing Guide" (UBC Gitksan Research Laboratory, p.c., Oct. 21, 2015). Many years of research has gone into documenting the information for this chart, and it is still in progress. The morphemes (ie. word parts) in this chart represent a variety of grammatical function words. For example, the morphemes [=aa], [naa], and [yaa] are used at the end of yes-no questions (ie. their grammatical function is to turn a sentence into a yes-no question). It takes time and patience to learn about and become familiar with the grammatical concepts represented by these morphemes. I often research new or unfamiliar terms online and spend time looking closely at the Gitxsan sentence that the morpheme is in to teach myself and improve my understanding of how these morphemes are used. Some usage notes have been added in brackets in the first column below morphemes.

Table 9: *Gitxsan Glossing Guide Note*: Adapted from *Gitxsan Glossing Guide*, by Gitksan Research Laboratory, p.c., Oct. 21, 2015. Used with permission.

Morpheme	Gloss	Description	Part of Speech
a (a=hl)	PREP	preposition	preposition
-a / -m	ATTR	attributive	suffix
a-	PFX	?	prefix
=aa / naa / yaa	Q	yes-no questions	end particle
-aa / -a'a	DETR	detransitive	suffix
an-	NMLZ	instrument? nominalizer?	prefix
anoo<u>k</u>	DEON.PSBL / like	deontic possibility in some cases – in other cases – "like"	modal
an (an-t)	AX	transitive subject extraction	dependent marker
ap / <u>k</u>'ap	VER	verum operator	front particle
-as<u>x</u>w / -sxw / -'sxw	ANTIP		suffix
Cə ("C" means) any consonant	DUR	durative aspect	prefix to verbs

Morpheme	Gloss	Description	Part of Speech
-d / -t /-ə	T	"T" suffix	suffix?
-da	3PL.INDP	3rd person plural	person suffix
da'ak̲xw / da'ak̲hlxw	CIRC.PSBL	circumstantial, possibility	modal
daa	SPT	spatiotemporal	front particle
dahiida (plural of *diya*)	QUOT.3PL	quotative complex: 3pl inflection	quotative
di- / da-	COM	comitative transitive	prefix
-dii / -dix	IMPRS	impersonal	person suffix
=dii (nee=dii)	FOC	focus	general enclitic
-diit	3PL.II	3rd plural, series I & II	person suffix
dim	PROSP	prospective	front particle
dip	1PL.I	series I, 1st plural	pronoun, person clitic
dip	ASSOC	plural version of =t (not the pronoun)	connective
diya	QUOT.3SG	quotative	quotative
doosda	across	direction (across)	predicate?
alp'a / elp'a	RESTR	domain restriction	
ga-	DISTR	plural / distributive	prefix
g̲a'a / g̲o'o	LOC	locative	preposition
gabi	CNT.AMT	count amount	noun
g̲an	PCNJ	phrasal coordinator	conjunction, preposition
g̲an ('*nit g̲an 'wihl* 'that's why')	REAS	reason clause	front particle
g̲asg̲oo	MS.AMT	mass amount	
=g̲at	REPORT	epistemic, reportative	evidential clitic
g̲ay	CNTR	contrast?	front particle
=gi	PR.EVID	remote? distance?	end particle

Morpheme	Gloss	Description	Part of Speech
gi- (gi-geenix)	place/last	locative nominal prefis	prefix
go'osun (go'o-s-xwin)	LOC=PN= DEM.PROX	locative "here"	demonstrative
go(')o- (go(')o=hl, go(')s=s, goo(')-y)	LOC	"at" or "to"	preposition
gun (gwin)	JUSS	jussive, "make someone do"	pre-v clitic
guu	HAB		
gwiis- (gwila)	blanket	blanket	prefix
ha- (ha'nii)	INS	instrumental	prefix
helt	many/much	"many", "a lot", etc.	predicate
=hl	CN	common noun connective	connective
hinda ('nda)	WH	how, where, when	WH-word
hla / hli (*hla oots'in'y* 'my soul')	PART	nominalizer?	pre-nominal clitic
hlidaa	PART=SPT	when, whenever	?
hlaa	INCEP	inceptive	dependent marker
hlis	PFV	perfective?	aspectual marker, dependent marker
-i- / -a- / -yi-	TR	transitive marker independent clauses	suffix
-ii	like	resemblance suffix	suffix
-il / -al (eg. *ts'imil*)	[no gloss]	probably derived from *wil*	

Morpheme	Gloss	Description	Part of Speech
=ima= / =ima'= / =imaa= (*nee=imaa=dii* [NEG=EPIS=FOC])	EPIS	epistemic, plain second position clitic	modal clitic
-in (*mitxw* (intransitive) *midin* (transitive))	CAUS2 [CF CAUS1]	transitivizer	suffix
ii / k'ii	CCNJ	clausal coordinator	dependent marker, conjunction
=ist	QUDD	question under discussion	end particle, enclitic
-it / -at	SX	intransitive subject extraction	suffix
ji / ja (mooja, upja)	IRR	irrealis	front particle
k'inaa	so.and.so	"so-n-so"	noun
k'i'y k'eekw k'yul	one one.ANIMAL one.HUM		predicate
-'l	SFX	T completive	
ligi	DWID	domain widener	
lip	SELF		pre-predicate clitic
loo (*loo-t* [obl.3SG.II] 'to/for her/him'; *a-loo=hl*)	OBL	oblique	preposition
-'m	1PL.II	series II, 1st plural	pronoun, person suffix
=m, mi=, ma=...=sim (*ma=...=sim* [2.I...2PL])	2.I=...=2PL.I	series I, 2nd plural person clitic	pronoun
=m, mi=, ma=	2.I	series I, 2nd plural	pronoun, person clitic

Morpheme	Gloss	Description	Part of Speech
-m / -a	ATTR	attributive	suffix
- 'ma (*sit'aa'maa* "start" [CAUS-SIT-DETR])	DETR	detransitivizer	suffix
masimhiida	QUOT.2PL		quotative
miya	QUOT.2SG		quotative
-n	2SG.II	series II, 2nd singular predicate suffix	pronoun; person suffix
=n, ni=, na=	1.I	series I, 1st singular person clitic	pronoun, preverbal clitic
na	RECP	each other, reflexive plural?	prefix, pre-predicate clitic?
'nakw (don't confuse with *'nakw-* "long, far")	INEVD	indirect evidential	dependent marker
nee= (nee=dii) [NEG=FOC]	NEG	negative	
'nidiit	3PL.III	series III, 3rd plural	pronoun
'nihl	['NIT]=CN	contraction	
'nim	DES	desiderative	pre-predicate clitic
nim	1SG.I=PROSP	n=dim 1st person prospective situations; easily confused with 'nim	
'niin	2SG.III	series III, 2nd singular	pronoun
'nii'y	1SG.III	series III, 1st singular	pronoun
'nisi'm	2PL.III	series III, 2nd plural	pronoun
'nit	3SG.III	series III, 3rd singular	pronoun
niya	QUOT.1SG		quotative
'nuu'm	1PL.III	series III, 1st plural	pronoun
-s	PASS	passive	suffix
=s	PN	proper noun connective	connective

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Morpheme	Gloss	Description	Part of Speech
si-, sa-, su- (eg. *sa-cake* "make a cake")	CAUS1 [CF CAUS2]	?	prefix
=sa / =si (*tun=sa*) [DEM=PROX]	PROX	proximal	end particle, general enclitic
sgi	lie.on	locative predicate (singular)	predicate
sgi (sgi=dim)	CIRC.NECESS	circumstantial, necessity	modal
sil (sil ga-)	COM	comitative	pre-predicate clitic
-si'm (eg. *wan-si'm* "sit yourselves")	2PL.II	2nd plural, series II	pronoun, person suffix
sim (also *sm* and *saam*)	true	real, true	pre-predicate clitic
-t (*nee=dii bax̱-t* [NEG=FOC run-3SG.II] "he didn't run")	3.II	series II, 3rd singular	pronoun, person suffix
-t	SPASS	passive of state	
=t (*nee=dii=t gya'a-n* [NEG=FOC=3.I see-2SG.II] "he didn't see you")	3.I	series I, 3rd person	pronoun, person clitic
=t (*bax̱=t Jonne* [run =DM John] "John ran")	DM	determinate	connective
t'a	EXIST.INAN	*ḵ'ay dit'ahl maaxws* "there's still snow (on the ground)"	predicate

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Morpheme	Gloss	Description	Part of Speech
-txw (also -*xw*)	PASS		suffix
'wa (*saa guu'wa* "impersonate")	DETR	detransitivizer	suffix
wihl (wila wihl wildiit)	[WIL]=CN	?	?
'wihl	around	?	pre-predicate clitic
wil	LVB	light verb "do"; noun "doings"; "be"	predicate
wil / win	COMP	complementizer	dependent marker
wila (la)	MANR	"how"; "in the manner that..."; "about"	pre-predicate or front particle?
wilk'ii / wilk'y	LVB.one	"right away" (complementizer/do; clausal conjunction/one)	
wisi'm (wil-si'm)	[wil-si'm]	this is *wil* ("do") with *si'm* (person marking)	
x̲- (eg. *x̲coffee*)	EXPER	"ingest" or "receive" (gift, etc.)	nominative prefix
xs- / ks-	SUPER	superlative prefix	prefix
-xw	PASS	argument adjuster	suffix
-'y	1SG.II	series II, 1st singular	pronoun, person suffix
yukw	IPFV	imperfective	dependent marker
(t)un, (dip)un, (goos)un, (as)un (t=xwin)	DEM.PROX	=xwin	demonstrative

Morpheme	Gloss	Description	Part of Speech
(t)ust, (dip)ust, (goos)ust, (as)ust (t=xwist)	DEM.DIST		
unanalyzed morpheme	?		

Appendix 5: Interview Questions

1. How many children did you have?

2. Can you tell of their births?

3. Did you like being pregnant?

4. How did you know you were pregnant?

5. Did you smoke or drink during your pregnancy?

6. During your pregnancy, when did it start feeling like you had a baby inside you?

7. Where were your children born?

8. Did you know aout what would happen in labour and birth? Did anyone explain it to you? Who told you what to do?

9. Did anyone help you during labour and birth?

10. How long were you in labour?

11. Was it difficult? How were your labour pains?

12. When it came time to push, how did you know what to do?

13. What positions did you use for birth?

14. Did you cry out while you were giving birth?

15. Can you talk about your water breaking? What did you do when your water broke?

16. Do you remember the moment of holding your baby for the first time?

17. Where was your husband while you were giving birth?

18. Did anyone help you look after the baby?

19. How did you feed your babies? Did you breastfeed?

20. What ceremonies took place after the birth (if any)?

21. What did your mother do with the afterbirth?

22. Did the baby have her own blanket?

23. When did you consider the baby a baby? When did the baby have a spirit?

24. Do you remember the births of any of your brothers and/or sisters?

25. Did your mother go to the hospital for her own births?

26. Is there anything special that you'd like others to know about what they should do and not do while they're pregant?

27. Is there anything special that you'd like others to know about what they should do and not do while they're giving birth?

28. Do you have any special advice for mothers today?

29. What taboos were you warned about?

30. Do you have any lullabies that you sang to your babies?

31. Other themes: reincarnation, games, terms of endearment

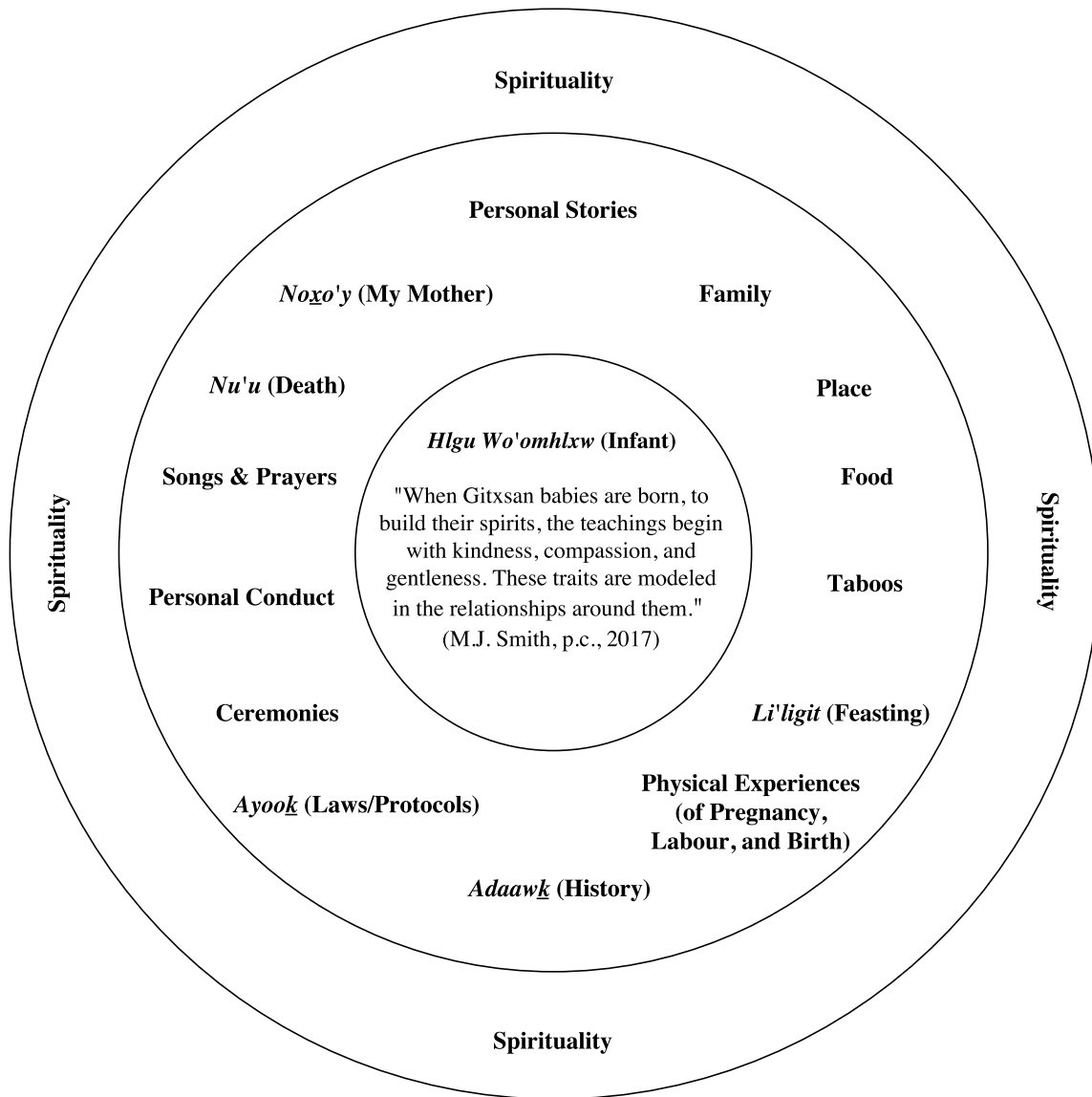# Appendix 6: Worldview of the *Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* (Infant)

Figure 9: Worldview of the *Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* (Infant) – Gitxsan Values Specific to *Hlgu Wo'omhlxw* (Infant) by M.J. Smith and C. Dworak. (Adapted from the "Philosophy Wheel of the Gitxsan" by Wii Muugwikusxw (A. Wilson) in Smith, 2004, p. 35).