



The Importance of Revitalizing

INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

TO SUPPORT OF THE JOURNEY OF
TRUTH & RECONCILIATION IN CANADA



IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS:^(1, 2)

Indigenous - A term describing First Nations, Métis, and Inuit populations who first occupied the land now referred to as Canada.

Revitalization - To regenerate life and strength into something.

Colonialism - The practice of acquiring some or all political control over another country, populating it with settlers, and often exploiting the region economically.

WHY DO INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES NEED REVITALIZING?⁽³⁾

Following the introduction of colonialism, residential schools plagued virtually all of Canada by allowing the forcible removal of Indigenous children from their families.

Once removed from their homes, Indigenous children across the country were subject to abuse and forced to learn harmful curriculum that supported colonialist views while completely removing Indigenous practices, beliefs, and languages from the children's lives.

But, the well-being of Indigenous people is heavily related to traditional Indigenous practices that require Indigenous languages.

So, by removing Indigenous children from their culture, beliefs, and families, the loss of Indigenous languages continues to play a huge role in the poor health of Indigenous people in Canada today.

HOW DO INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES SUPPORT WELL-BEING?^(4,5,6,7)

Indigenous languages have been used for centuries to pass important messages across generations by creating words that are deeply-tied to Indigenous history, culture, spirituality, and ways of life.

But, since traditional languages are directly related to Indigenous identity, the loss of Indigenous languages leave Indigenous Peoples at a higher risk of social isolation, depression, substance abuse disorders, and suicide than non-Indigenous communities.

AN EXAMPLE OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES AND WELL-BEING:^(8,9)

Suicide rates are reported to be almost zero among Indigenous communities with high levels of Indigenous language knowledge, compared to 136 suicides per every 100,000 members of Indigenous communities with no Indigenous language knowledge.

To put this into perspective, non-Indigenous Canadians reported 8 suicides per every 100,000 people between 2011 and 2016.

Indigenous language revitalization is a

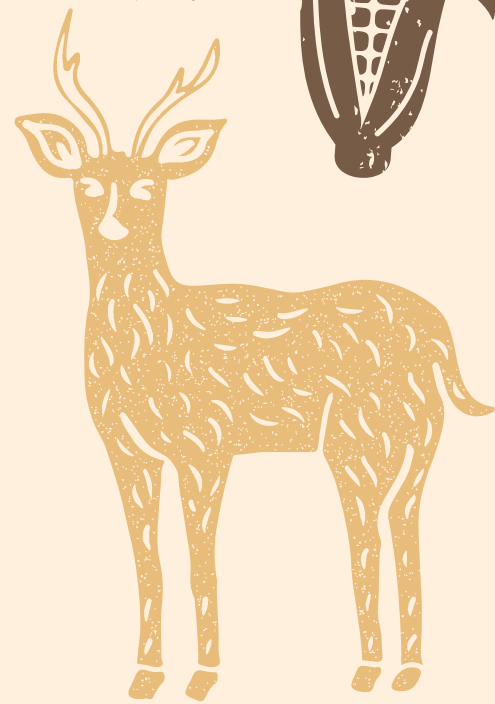
PRESSING ISSUE:

THE OPPORTUNITY TO REVITALIZE
INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES IN CANADA
IS TIME-SENSITIVE⁽¹⁰⁾

Of the 70 recognized
Indigenous languages in
Canada, over half of these
languages have less than 500
living, fluent speakers.

To put this in perspective, only
5% of Indigenous people in the
province of British Columbia
can fluently speak a
traditional Indigenous
language.

And, of the 5% of fluent
Indigenous language speakers
in British Columbia, majority
are over the age of 65.



How can you support

INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION IN CANADA?⁽⁴⁾

AS AN INDIVIDUAL,

You can encourage language revitalization simply by bringing attention to the importance of this topic, as the revitalization of Indigenous languages increases the well-being of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

For example, because Indigenous ways of living are deeply-tied to Indigenous language, increasing populations of traditional Indigenous language speakers may promote increasing use of traditional practices known to reduce environmental damages linked to climate change - which benefits everyone!



How can you support

INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE

REVITALIZATION IN CANADA?⁽⁴⁾

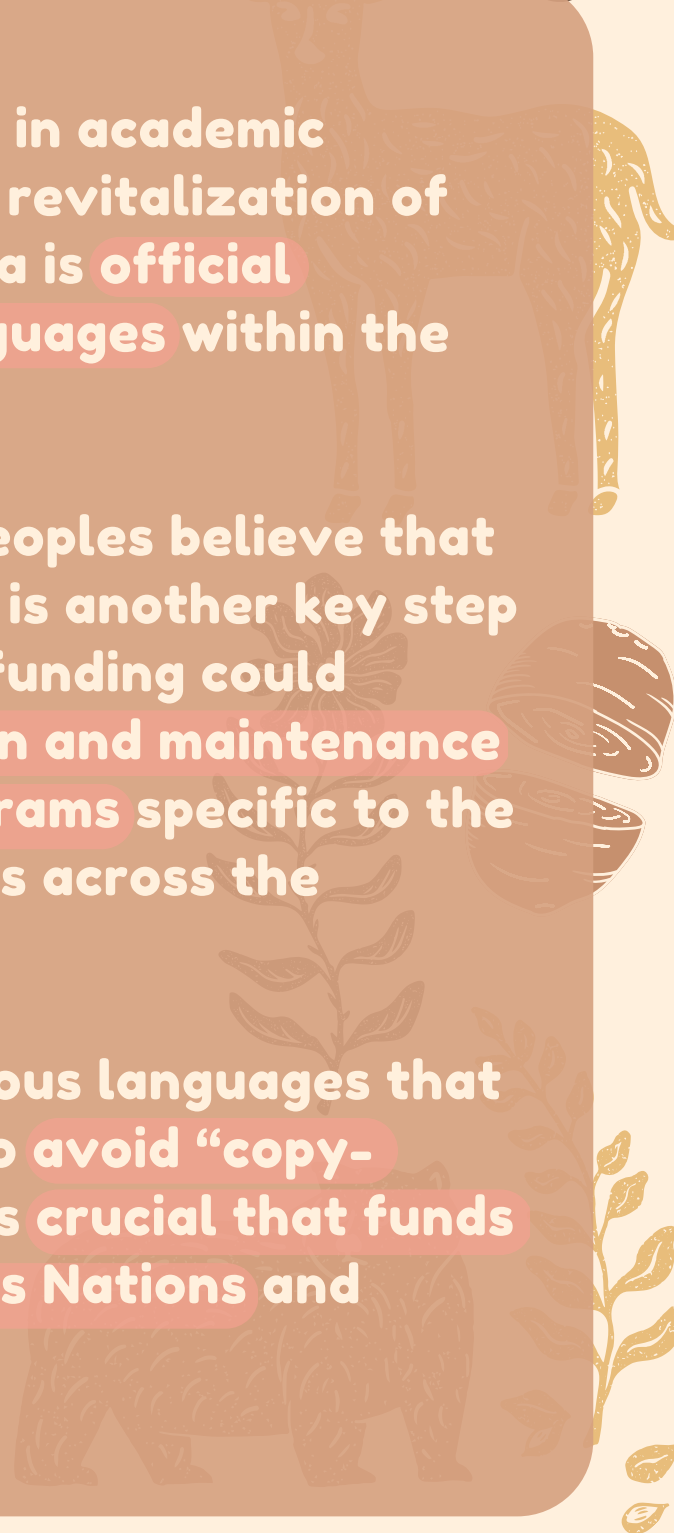


AS A NATION,

Reflected by Indigenous voices in academic literature, a crucial step in the revitalization of Indigenous languages in Canada is **official recognition for Indigenous languages within the Canadian government.**

In addition, many Indigenous Peoples believe that **increased government funding is another key step in revitalization, as increased funding could support Indigenous-led creation and maintenance of regional revitalization programs specific to the numerous Indigenous languages across the country.**

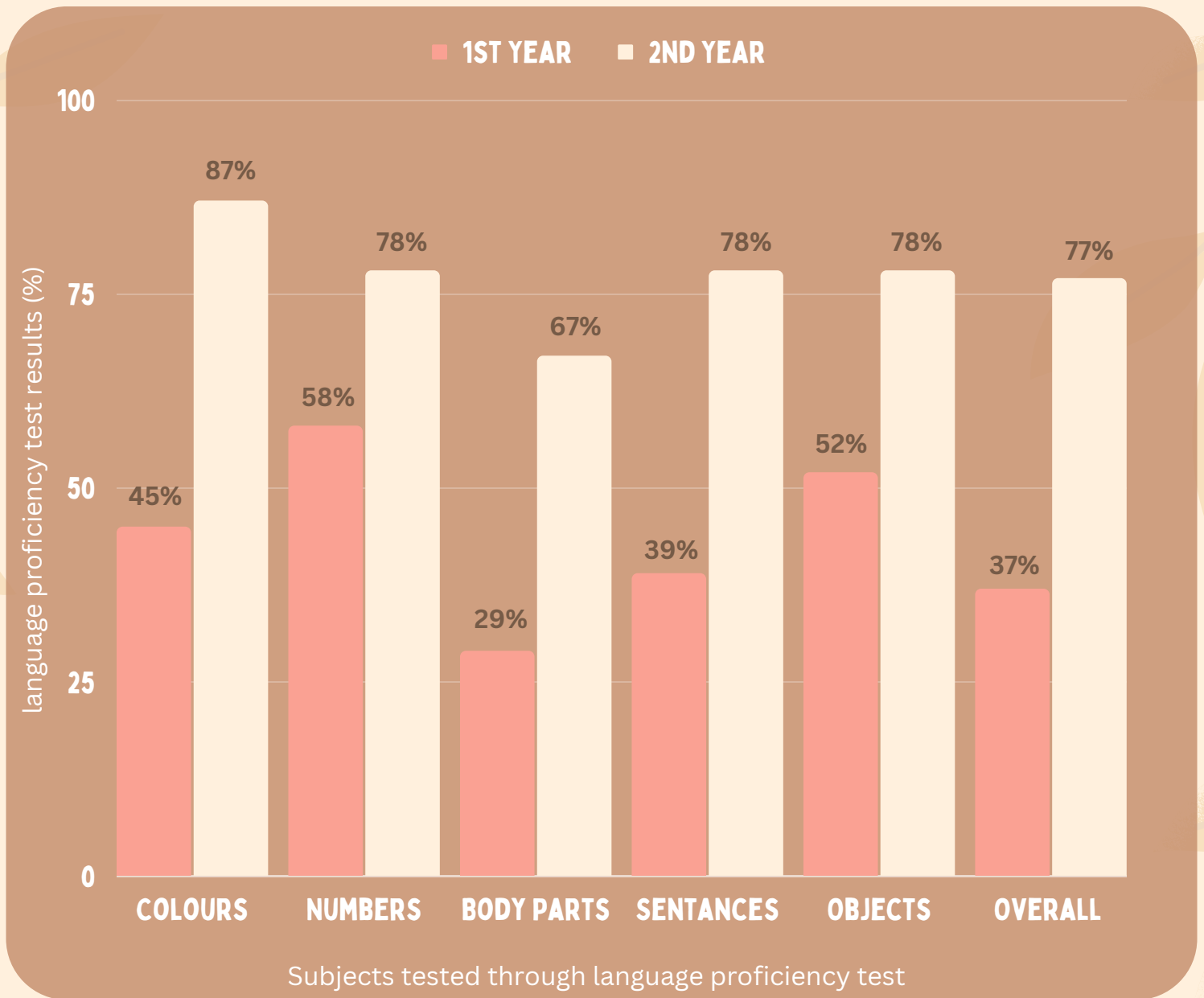
Due to the diversity of Indigenous languages that exist in Canada and the need to **avoid “copy-paste” program techniques, it is crucial that funds are dispersed among Indigenous Nations and communities above all else.**



The benefits of

INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE

REVITALIZATION PROGRAMS IN CANADA⁽¹¹⁾



As seen in research conducted at an Indigenous immersion school on the border of Lake Huron, offering children a space to develop skills in traditional Indigenous languages has been extremely successful, resulting in students receiving a 40% increase in their overall average scores on Indigenous language proficiency tests between their first and second year attending the school.

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