

Algonquian Conference Abstract
L2 Potawatomi language use
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In this paper, I focus on the use of Potawatomi by proficient L2 learners. In particular, I look at the word order and conjunct use by L2 speakers compared to that of L1 speakers as documented in the literature in order to view possible sites of language variation and change in progress (Welcher 1998, 2003; Lockwood 2017; Lewis 2020; Kasper to appear). Based on existing literature on language variation in endangerment scenarios, I expect some alternative ways of expressing complexity to arise. Seeing as word order and the conjunct are influenced by pragmatics, they are two areas of the grammar I expect to change, as they are likely to be acquired later, especially by adult L2 learners.

The data analyzed here comes from four L2 speakers, all of whom are Potawatomi. The task was to narrate the events of a short video with no dialogue in the hopes that particular word orders and conjunct forms would appear as they should be pragmatically felicitous (Fairbanks 2009; Lewis 2016).

In this paper, I show that there are some ways that L2 speakers use word order both similar to L1 speakers and different from them, and I show that the use of the conjunct by L2 speakers is much different from that of L1 speakers. In my analysis, I offer possible explanations as well as walk through a linguistic analysis of the variation. This is the first work of its kind for Potawatomi that looks at language variation and change by L2 speakers.