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## Ojibwe as Endangered Language

Ojibwe is a language that is spoken by early native people in Minnesota. This language is one of the world's most endangered languages. The reason why Ojibwe is dying is because of the age range of speakers in this language. Not many children are learning this language anymore and it is because "the government banned the practice of native traditional practices and established 'English only' boarding schools which children were required to attend" (Unknown. Ojibwe: An endangered Minnesota Language). Most of the Ojibwe speakers range from 70 years and older in the United States.

The Ojibwe language is trying to be kept alive because of its rich culture. John Whitehead has produced and edited a film called "The First Speakers: Restoring the Ojibwe Language." I believe that this film will make the Ojibwe language known around the world because not many people know about it. A film is a great way to inform people on the culture and language characteristics of a certain language. Many people are trying to revitalize Ojibwe by bringing back the Ojibwe language into charter schools. The goal for native speakers of this language is to begin a new generation of first speakers. If their plan succeeds, then I believe Ojibwe will be around in one hundred years because the children would grow up speaking Ojibwe as their primary language and can pass it on to their children. The new generation of Ojibwe speakers would keep the language alive and the elders would not have to worry about their cultural language dying. Their culture had gone through damage due to the early policies in the U.S. which caused many Ojibwe to disappear in North America. The United States wanted to assimilate the Native Americans into European Americans, which means they wanted to get rid of their cultural traditions and richness because they did not want anyone to be different. Everyone who lived in the U.S. had to follow a certain way of living.

The political influence that the Ojibwe had was bad because they were moved out from their land by the Europeans and forced into small reservations in Minnesota. The Indians were always seen as "bad" people because the whites made them seem that way to the world. Until the 1970s, the Ojibwe were finally able to continue parts of their traditions such as fishing and hunting. Suddenly, the conservationists began complaining but this did not stop the Native Americans. The treaties made over a century ago allowed the natives to fish and hunt. Since, the Native Americans were seen negatively because of the whites, movies about Native Americans were created and showed their true colors and the positive light of them. These movies caused people around the world to create a better perception on native people. Nowadays, the Ojibwe are still discriminated against but there has been an awareness of the importance of their culture.

There is prestige associated with Ojibwe because language diversity is important to our world. Ojibwe is "the antidote to global climate change, environmental destruction, and unhealthy lifestyles" (The Ojibwe People's Dictionary). Ojibwe people believe this because of the wisdom Ojibwe has and all the knowledge it contains has developed through generations. The native speakers honor Ojibwe because they have goals to keep their language alive and want to go back to how it was when everyone in their communities spoke Ojibwe. It is understood that when a language is lost so is its culture, therefore people that originally spoke Ojibwe need to pass on their knowledge onto to new generation.

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The history of the Ojibwe goes back to the days where nothing was recorded, the 1600s. Traditional stories have been passed down by generations to keep their people's past alive. The Ojibwe nation began near the Atlantic Ocean, but climate change caused them to move west. The Ottawa and the Ojibwe were close and had an alliance together. They would trade furs and soon the French became involved with this trading network as well. The Ojibwe were able to gain European goods through the Ottawa which was good because they did not encounter the white people. The problem began when the United States was born because the treaties began to bargain land between the Native Americans and the new settlers. The Ojibwe had to sell their land because they had been in debt with fur traders and that was the way of repaying them. The Ojibwe were in a land that had a great amount of copper and lumber which was very valuable for the whites and they agreed to buy their land happily. Although, the Ojibwe went through rough times, they are still today one of the largest groups of native people around.

If the Ojibwe language became extinct the cultural traditions, history, and uniqueness would be lost. Ojibwe is a language that should be kept alive because it is unique, and the people tried so hard to create their own words instead of being like other languages that borrowed from each other. The Ojibwe people have a great history, they did not let their past struggles bring them down, instead they worked hard to keep their traditions alive even though they lost their mainland. I can tell that the native speakers of Ojibwe are really trying their best to teach the new generations this language and I believe that with all the work they are doing they can achieve it.

Although Ojibwe is an endangered language, I believe it will be alive in one hundred years because the new generation will keep it alive. When something is on its way to becoming extinct it depends on us the people to keep it alive and if we really want to, we can because anything is possible.