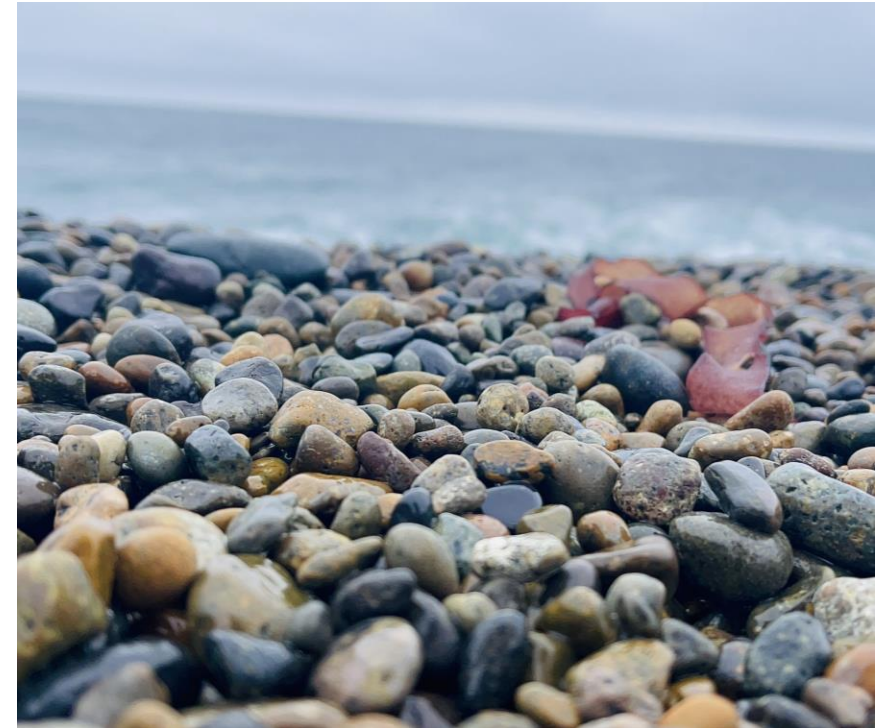


Challenges and Insights: Surveying Language Attitudes in an Endangered Indigenous Language Community

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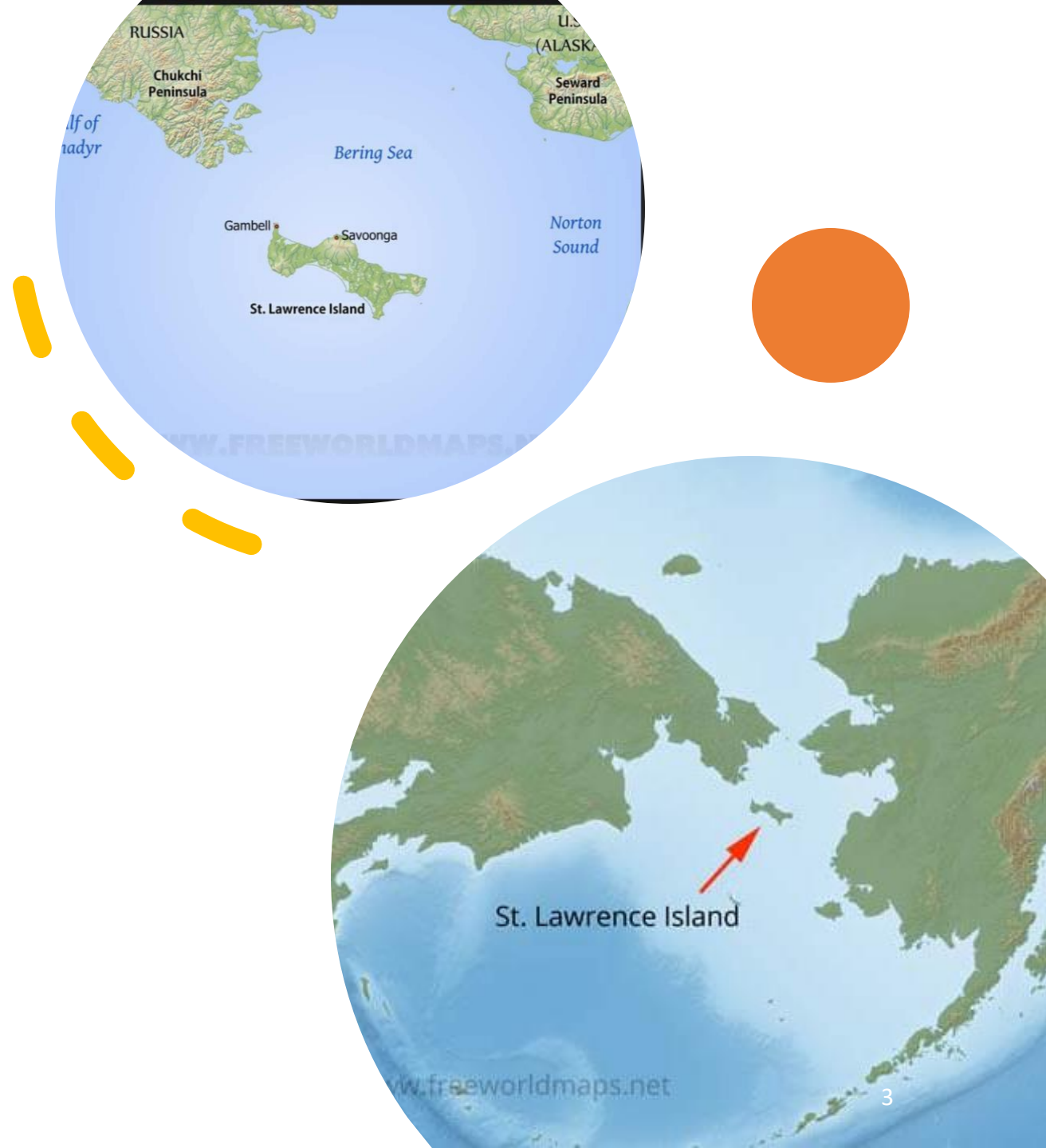


Acknowledgments

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- Many thanks to the Yupiget who worked together with us on this project, including Amaghalek Beulah Nowpakahok, Yimi Wanda Slwooko, Tevghilnguq Yuka Ungwiluk, Pakfisagiq Tamara Avalnun, Ukall Crystal Apangalook, Nighuwhaq Ina Apasengaq, members of Kaalguq Revitalization Committee, members of Akusipiginaghmeng language learning group, and many others
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Language Ecology

- Akuzipik, aka St. Lawrence Island Yupik, aka Central Siberian Yupik
- Endangered Alaska Native language
- Spoken in the two villages (Sivuqaq/Gambell and Sivungaq/Savoonga) on St. Lawrence Island, Alaska
- Around 1500 people live in these two villages



Motivation

Observations from our visits and discussions with the community:

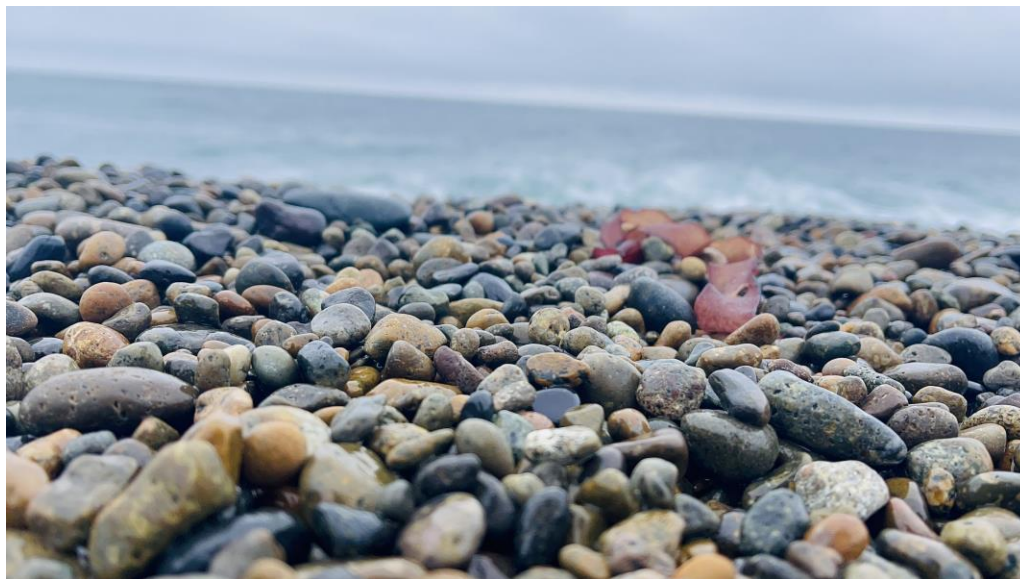
- The language is not necessarily passing on to the next generation
- Many from the younger generations can understand Akuzipik to some extent but cannot speak the language
- Speakers exhibit mostly positive attitudes about their language, but usage varies



Questions

- What is the status of Akuzipik vs. English in the community?
- What types of attitudes do the community members hold towards the language?
- Is the language moving towards language shift or stable bilingualism?





A community-wide survey

What does the literature say?

Oceania

- State of Indigenous Languages in Australia-2001 (McConvell and Thieberger, 2001)
- Second National Indigenous Languages Survey (NILS2) (Marmion and Troy, 2014)

Africa

- A Linguistic Survey of Adoptives in Venda (Madiba, 1994)

Americas

- A Linguistic Survey of the Upper Yuat (Davies and Comrie 1985)
- The Linguistic Survey of Ottawa Valley (Pringle and Padolsky, 1983)
- Linguistic attitudes toward Shipibo in Cantagallo: Reshaping indigenous language and identity in an urban setting. (Sánchez et. al., 2018)

Literature shows...



All these surveys have limitations in their models, and they recommend revisions/changes in their survey



Recommend a pilot survey before doing the actual survey

A pilot survey

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Research Questions

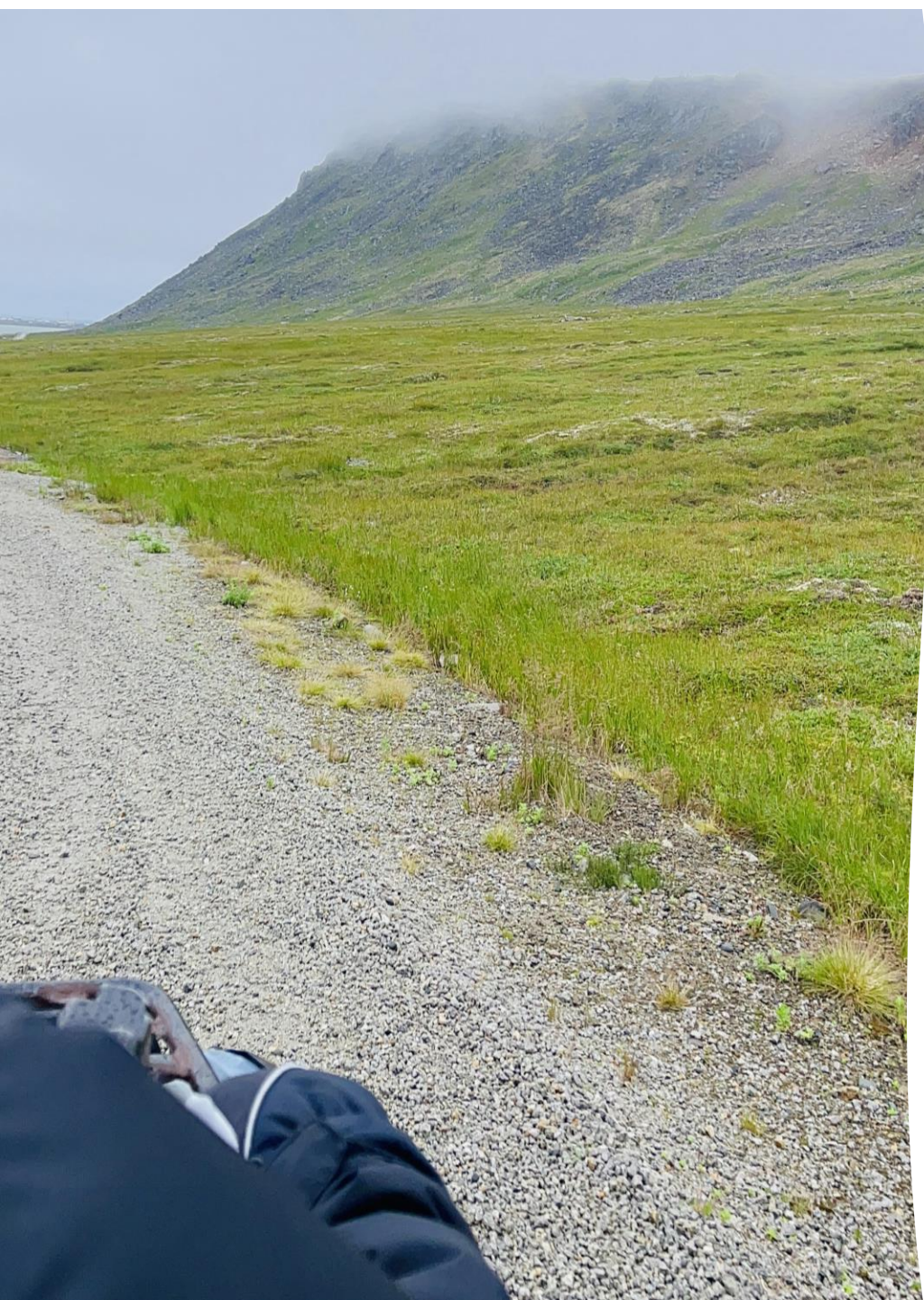
1. What strategies are effective in designing a survey questionnaire tailored to explore language dynamics* and understand community perspectives (especially in the case of Akuzipik or similar language situations)?
2. What are the potential challenges and limitations associated with conducting surveys on language dynamics, and how can these challenges be mitigated to enhance the validity and reliability of survey results (especially in the case of Akuzipik or similar language situations)?

*Language Dynamics: Language status, attitudes to language, co-existence of the majority language



Methodology

- Developing a comprehensive language survey
- Administering the survey
- Collecting feedback on the survey



Survey Objectives

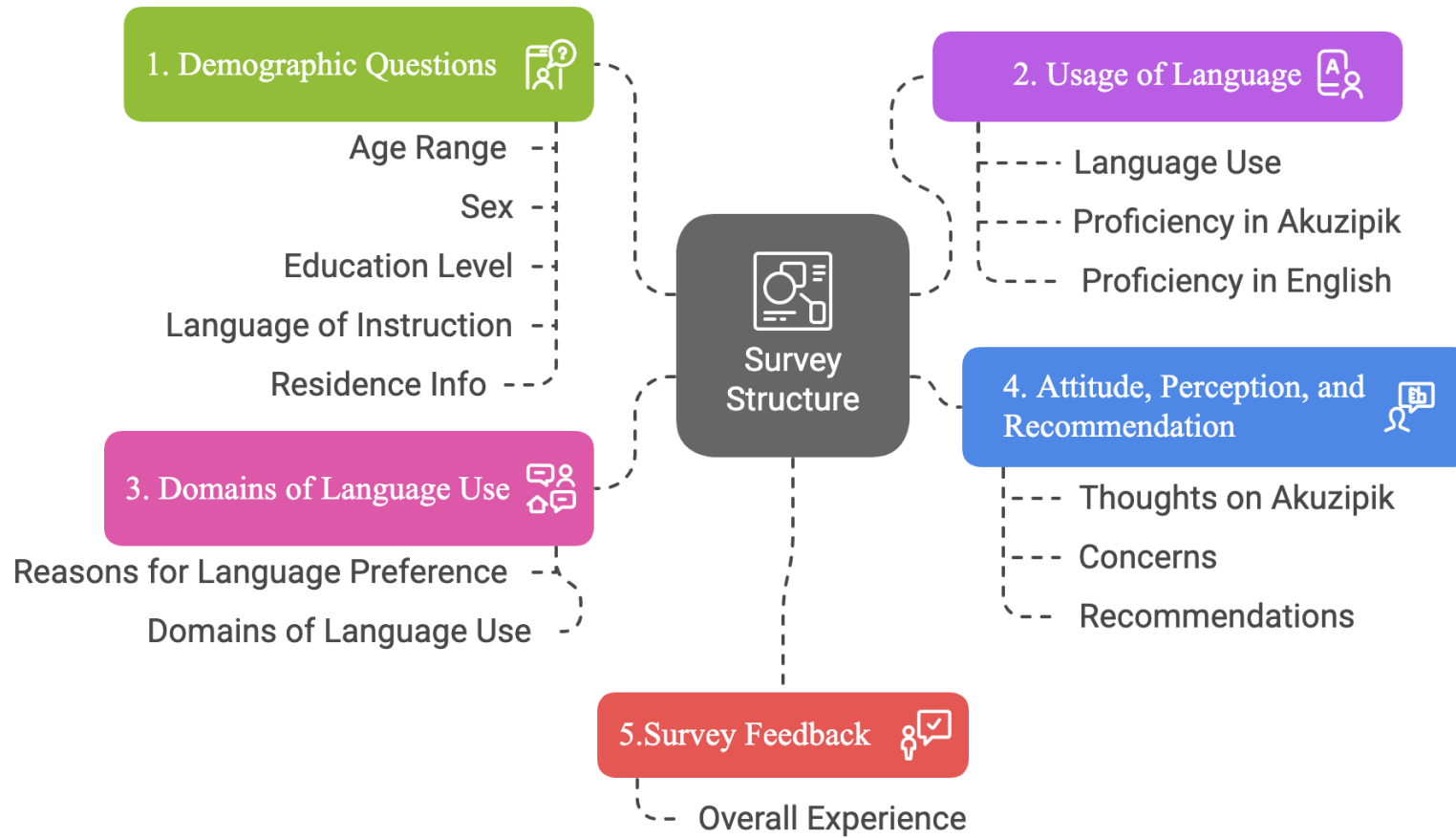
- Gain insights into the state of Akuzipik
- Identify prevailing attitudes towards Akuzipik within the community
- Determine whether the coexistence of Akuzipik and English indicates a robust bilingualism or raises concerns about language loss
- Gather practical and culturally sensitive recommendations from the Akuzipik community

Survey

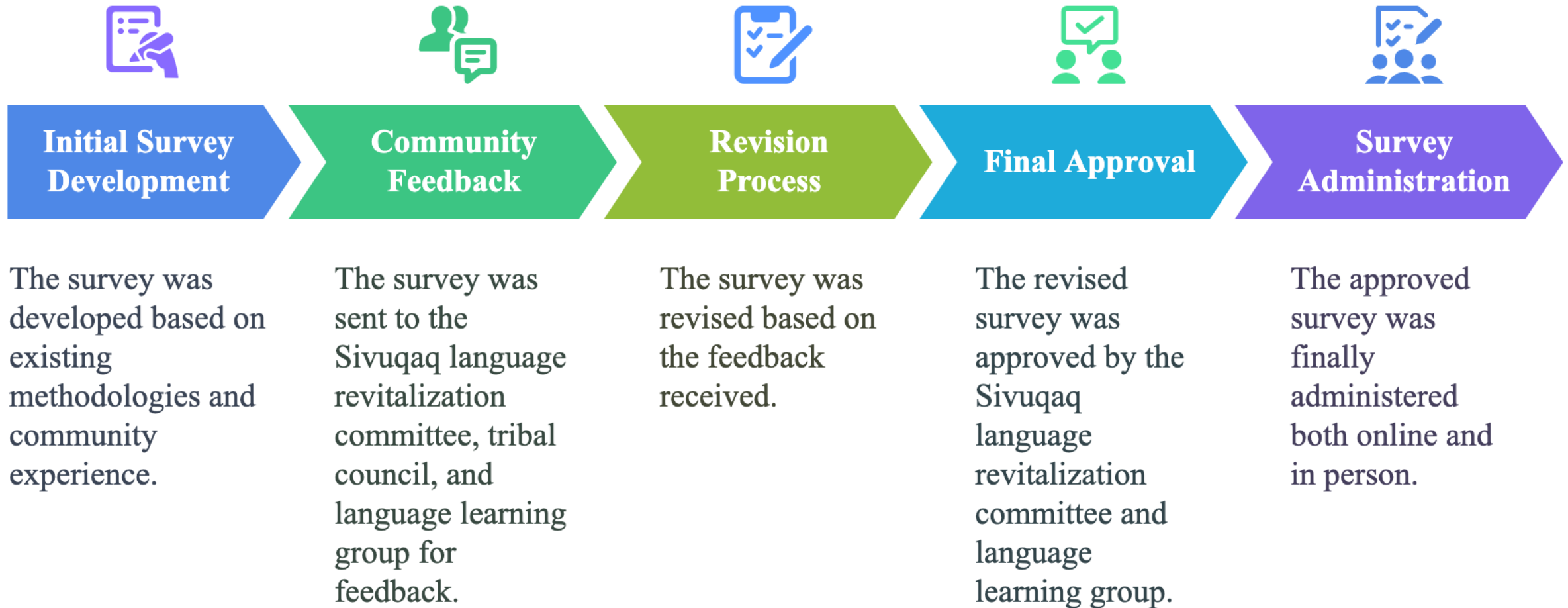
- The survey questionnaire included a combination of closed-ended and open-ended questions.
- The survey was offered both online and in-person.
- In-person interviews were audio recorded.



Structure of the Language Survey



Survey Development and Approval Process



Survey Administration

- **Limited Participants:** Kept small due to the pilot study's scope.
- **Diverse Representation:** Included participants of varying ages, education levels, and language proficiency.
- **Flexible Access:** Available both online and offline.





Survey Administration

- Data Collection: Summer 2024
- **Total Number of Participants: 15**
 - Online: 11
 - In person-4

Survey Analysis



Analysis



Discussing challenges encountered in survey development and administration



Reflecting on successful aspects of survey administration



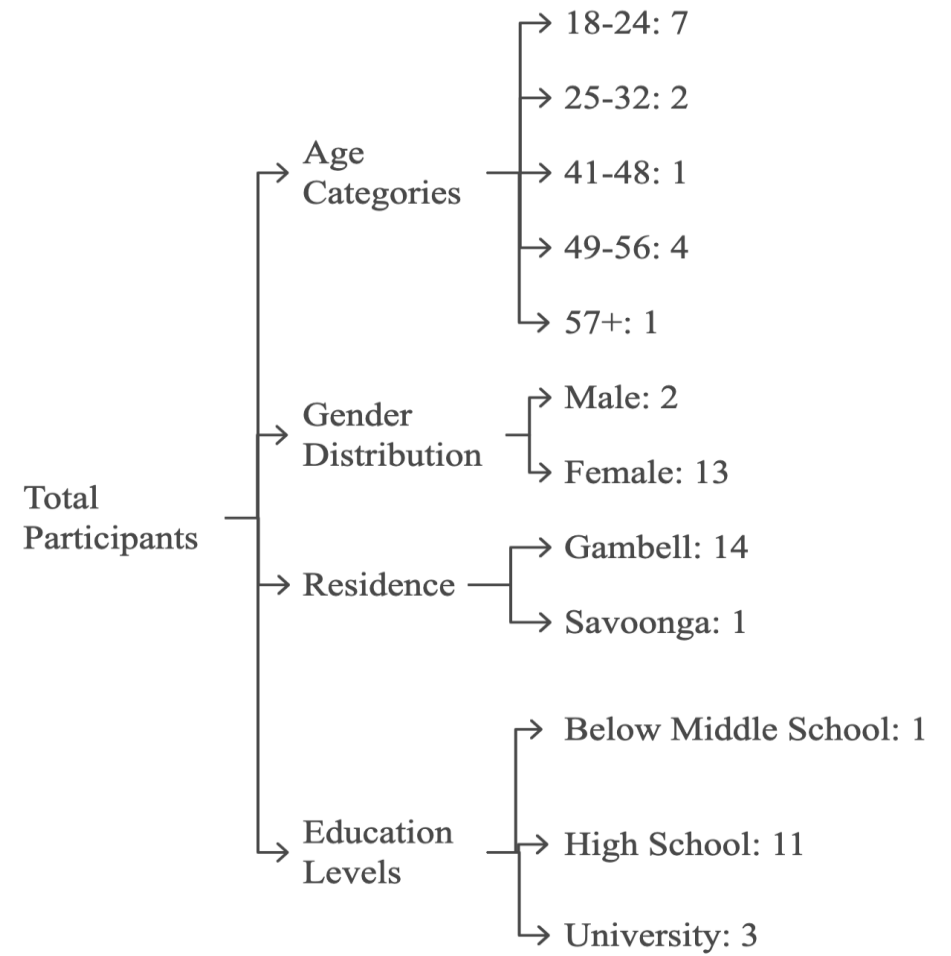
Analyzing the responses to the survey questions



Analyzing participants' reactions to the survey



Participant Demographics Flowchart



Findings

- **Status of Akuzipik**
 - Still in practice, but not used as widely as before
 - Younger generations tend more towards English
 - English is preferred for public and social communication
- **Attitude Towards Akuzipik**
 - Mixed but mostly positive
 - Strong cultural pride and emotional connection to Akuzipik



Findings

- **Bilingualism or Language Loss?**
 - The languages coexist, but English dominates most settings.
 - English tends to be the default.
 - Positive views on bilingualism exist, but concerns about English dominance persist.
 - Trend suggests a language shift rather than sustained bilingualism.

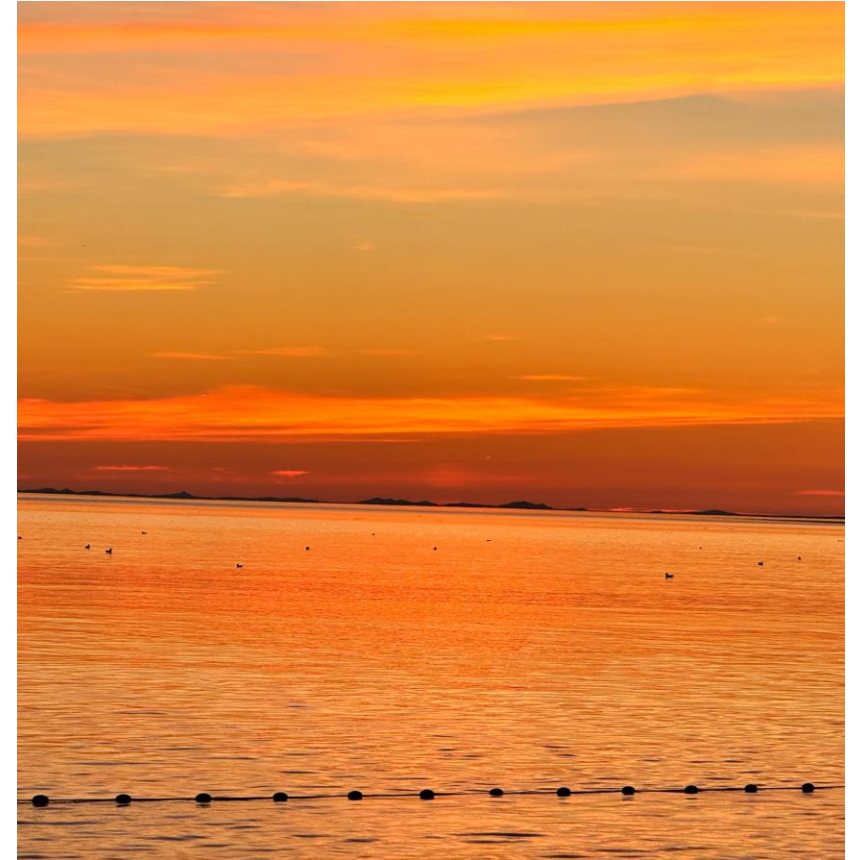


Community Recommendations for Language Preservation

- **Educational Resources**
 - Increasing Availability of language Learning Materials and increase language Classes
- **Intergenerational Learning**
 - Encouraging storytelling events where elders share cultural knowledge in the native language
- **Media Expansion**
 - Expanding media content in Akuzipik (TV, radio, social media)
- **Bilingual and Immersion Programs**
 - Integrating Akuzipik with English in education
- **Community Events**
 - Organizing traditional events where Akuzipik is the primary language

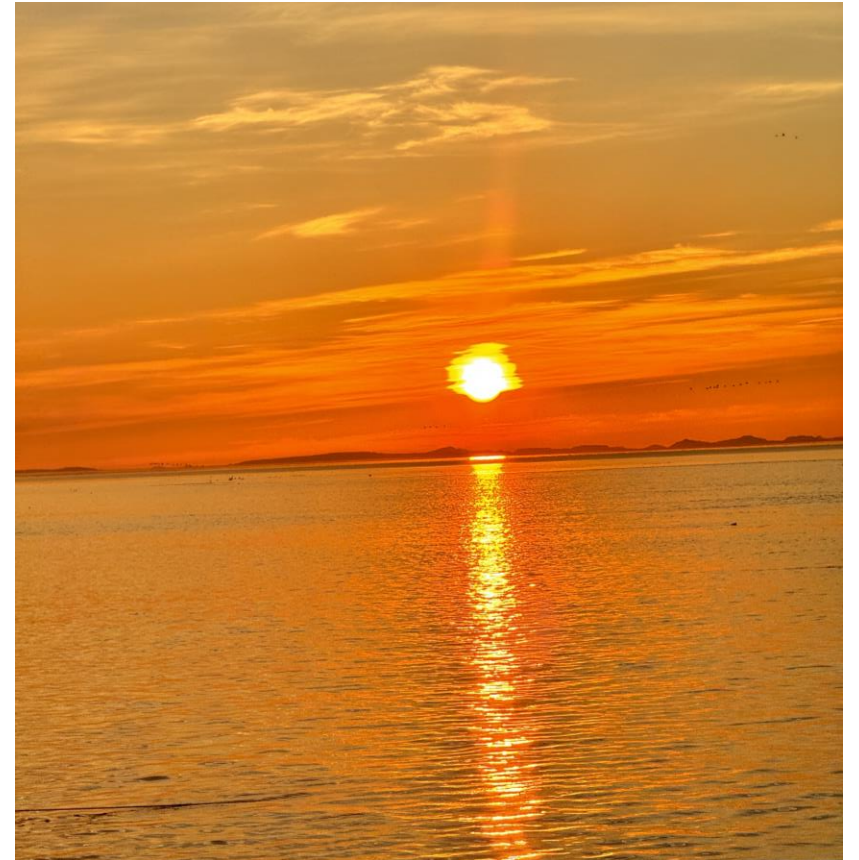
Effective Strategies

- **Community Engagement**
 - Ensured cultural sensitivity and relevance
 - Fostered community ownership and increased participation
 - Aligned survey questions with community values
- **Reviewing Existing Frameworks**
 - Provided a strong methodological foundation
 - Guided the development of targeted and comprehensive questions
- **Tailored Questions**
 - Addressed the unique needs and concerns of the Akuzipik community
 - Improved survey effectiveness and relevance



Effective Strategies

- **Flexible Administration**
 - Accommodated diverse preferences for accessibility and participation
- **Question Formatting**
 - Included open-ended options to encourage detailed, nuanced responses
- **Audio Recordings in Interviews**
 - Captured emotional and tonal nuances for deeper insights
 - Enabled more natural, comfortable conversations with participants



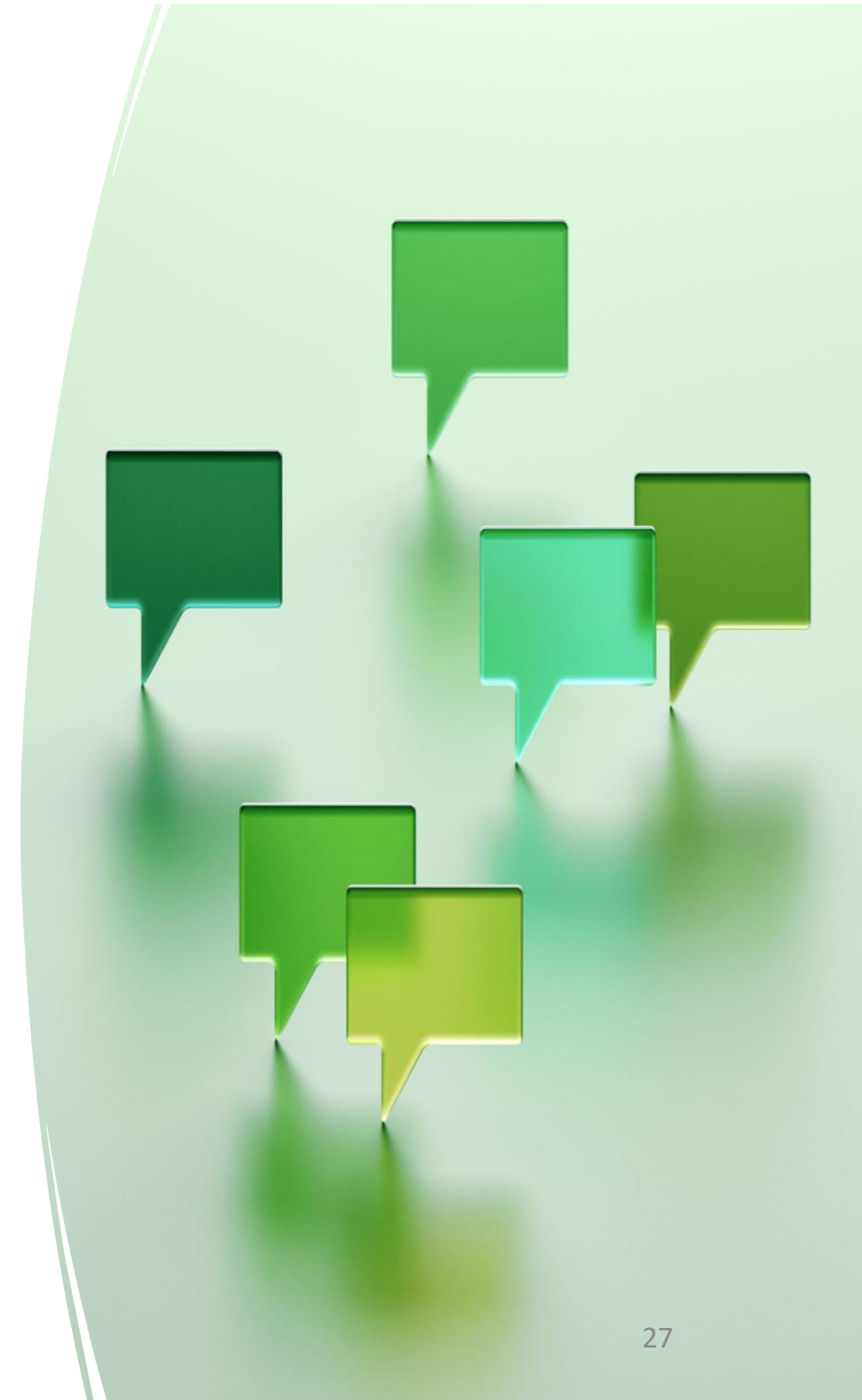
Challenges & Limitations

- Designing the survey questions
- Gaining the trust of the community as outsiders
- Logistical issues

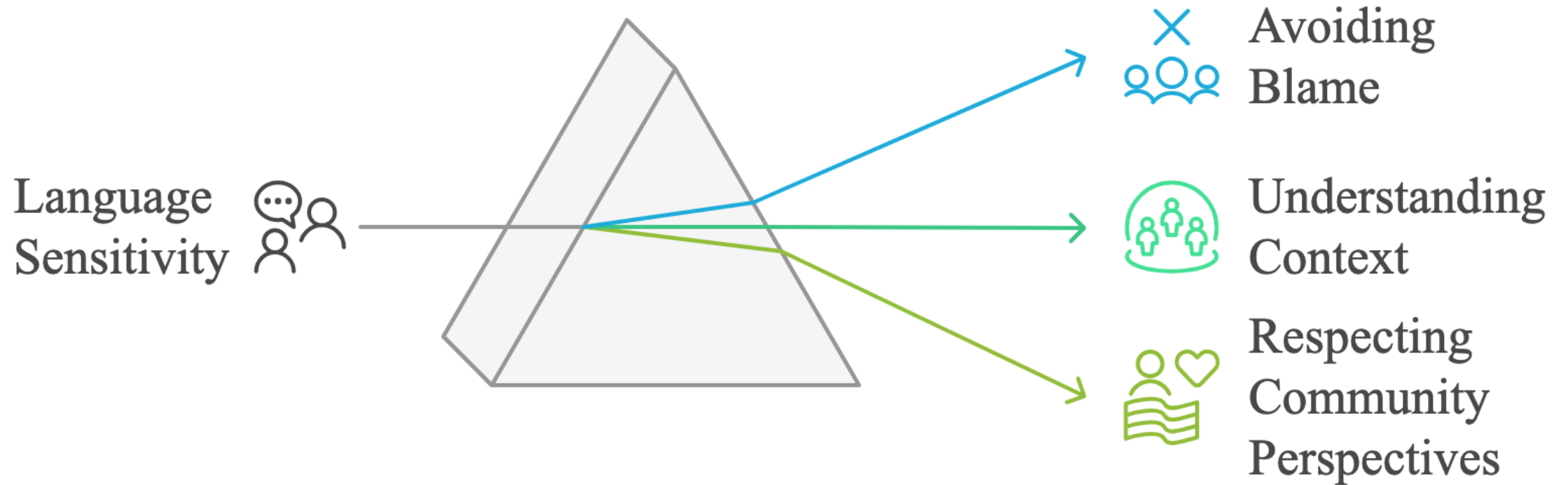


Feedback from Participants

- **Clarity**
 - Feedback indicates the survey process was clear and understandable.
- **Time Efficiency**
 - Participants found the process to be quick and efficient.
- **Ease of Response**
 - The questions were easy for participants to answer.



Piece of Feedback



Refining Methodologies for Future Surveys

- **Clear & Precise Questioning:** Improve wording to prevent misinterpretation.
- **Enhanced Engagement:** Optimize participation by offering both survey formats.
- **Streamlined Survey:** Simplify, shorten, and remove redundant questions.
- **Relevance:** Add questions on immediate concerns.
- **Clarity:** Maintain clarity and provide support.



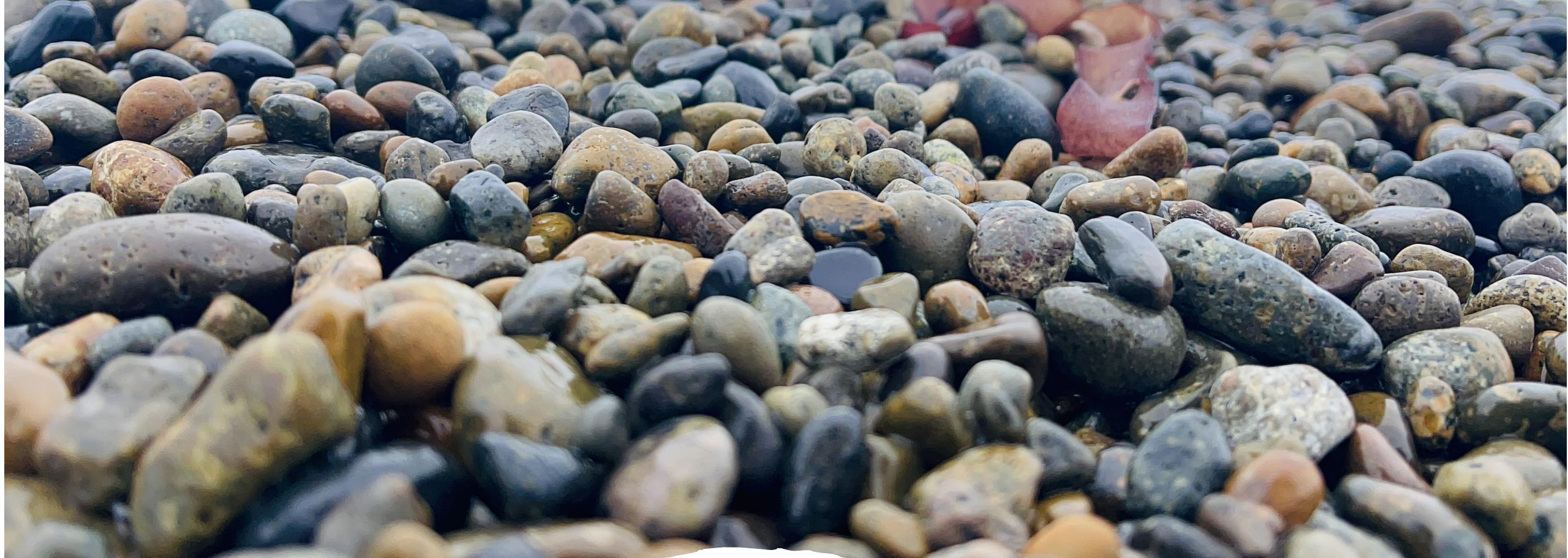
The Pilot Survey Offered



Significance of the Study

- **A step in Akuzipik language revitalization initiative**
 - Helps develop a comprehensive community-wide survey model.
 - Helps develop interventions to safeguard Akuzipik.
 - Provides actionable insights for community and interested parties.
 - Contributes to academic understanding of language attitudes.
 - Offers recommendations for developing and conducting language surveys in other similar language situations.





Igamsiqayugvikamsi!

Questions? Suggestions?



Walrus ivory carving by Malcolm
Oozevaseuk

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