

## Bodwéwadmimwen Abstract

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All languages can expect natural changes to occur. When a language as complex as Potawatomi with thousands of conjugations is down to its last speakers it requires a very vibrant community of speakers to keep some of these forms going in their original form.

We can look to similar languages such as Ojibwe to see certain aspects which are no longer done in Potawatomi. VTA verbs for most language learners are the most complex of the verbal patterns. The fact that to effectively speak Potawatomi one has to know so many complex patterns makes sense how when speakers try and pass on the language to the next generation it becomes a matter of necessity to pass on the simplest of forms.

For Potawatomi the complexities of the VTA conjunct for many 2<sup>nd</sup> language learners has been replaced with a passive form. A form which simplifies the pattern and makes it so that one actor is no longer accounted for. So instead of he is seen by me. He is seen but we don't know who sees him. It could be you or me or us.

I will demonstrate some of the oldest documented patterns from the Jesuit priests in the 1800's but also look at modern forms being used in different communities. I will also look at the patterns that were described by Charles Hockett in the 1940's to the patterns described by Laura Welcher in the 1990's but then compare these patterns with what we are seeing today in many communities in the 2020's.

The question then becomes do we go back in time and use those older forms or do we move forward with a perhaps more simplified version which might be easier to our learners. Also how will it affect future students if one group of students is learning a simplified form and others are learning the older more complex pattern.