CHAPTER III

VOWELS

3.0 The two series of vowels in Algonkian have traditionally been referred to as 'long' a:, e:, i:, u:, and 'short' a, e, i, u. The distinction between them has been attributed to a difference in quantity (Bloomfield, 1946:86). Functionally, the distinguishing characteristic of long vowels is that they do not undergo reduction, although linguists have questioned quantity being designated as the salient feature. Little work has been done to analyze these vowels by modern sonographic methods. The use of the feature 'tenseness' has been proposed as a replacement for 'length'. Piggott, who uses tense/lax rather than long/short to describe Odawa vowels, stated that "some realizations of the tense vowels are, impressionistically, not of a significantly greater duration than the corresponding lax vowel" (1974:108). Drapeau (1979:19) has drawn attention to the fact that all the long vowels are tense and the short ones non-tense. Tenseness can replace length in phonological analysis as is done by MacKenzie (1971).

Nonetheless, sonographic analyses which have been carried out for the Moisie and Mingan dialects of Cree-Montagnais-Naskapi indicate that the relationship between tenseness and length is more complex than the simple one-to-one relationship implied by the above: Ford (1976), Mailhot

(1975) and Drapeau (1979) have each distinguished two degrees of length for final tense vowels in the varieties of Cree-Montagnais-Naskapi spoken in Betsiamites and Sept-Isles/ Schefferville. These are the same dialects where final lax vowels are deleted and where stress is on the final syllable of the word. Drapeau indicated that all long vowels are phonetically shortened in an accented syllable (the final one). In these dialects a lax vowel a is suffixed to indicate inanimate plural and subsequently undergoes a rule of apocope. However it leaves behind a mark in the form of a lengthening of the preceding tense vowel (as well as other changes in intonation, aspiration, and final consonant, etc. as in Mailhot 1975:39):

Moisie	LNS	
uta:pa:n	uta:pa:n	'car'
uta:pa::n	uta:pa:na	'cars'
mi:cwa:p^{h}	mi:cwa:hp	'house'
mi:cwa::p	mi:cwa:pa	'houses'

A tense vowel in final position, open or closed syllable, may then be morphophonemically long or short. Ford maintained that this lengthening can apply equally to lax vowels and suggested a feature [+ accent] which doubles the length of any vowel.

An oscillographic analysis of a limited corpus was undertaken for the Mingan dialect by Martin et al (1977) in an

attempt to discover whether length is indeed a salient feature of Montagnais vowels. He measured duration, frequency and amplitude in four contexts: stressed and unstressed closed syllables; and stressed and unstressed open syllables. He also provided a close phonetic transcription for seventy-one lexical items. Martin reported that the vowels were realized as follows:

i: as [i:], [i] and [I]

e: as [e], [e:] and [ɛ]

a: as [a] and [a:]

u: as [o], [ʊ], [ʊ:] and [o:]

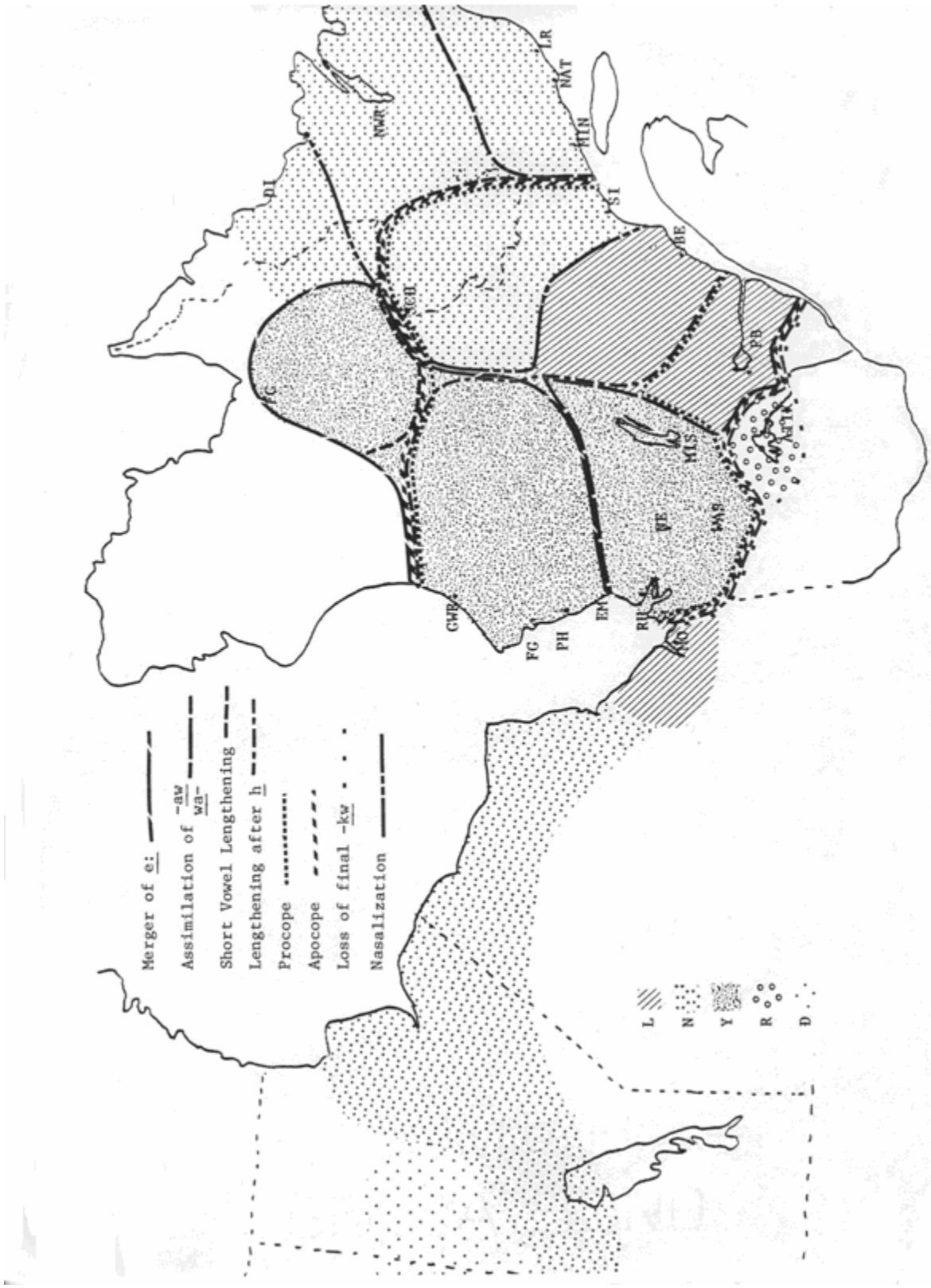
i as [i], [I] [ɨ] and [ɛ]

a as [a], [ə] [ʌ] and [ɛ]

u as [o] and [ʊ]

In addition, Martin commented that: (a) vowels (long or short) are systematically longer under stress than when not under stress, (b) vowels are always longer in an open syllable and (c) the difference between 'long' and 'short' vowels is neutralized in a stressed (final) open syllable. He concluded that in other syllables (unstressed open and closed, stressed closed) duration is the most pertinent of all the acoustic factors used to distinguish 'long' and 'short' vowels. He also pointed out that a more comprehensive study of the vowels is needed.

An examination of Martin's transcription suggests several



Map 3-1 Vowel Isoglosses (Cumulative)

hypotheses about the behaviour of 'short' vowels which will be discussed in 3.2.

3.1 Long Vowels

There is variation among the dialects with respect to the phonetic quality of long vowels. The vowel u: tends to be more like [u] towards the western side of Québec-Labrador and more like [o] towards the east. The use of the graphonic symbol < o: > for most of the non-palatalized dialects would indicate that its realization is closer to [o] than [u].

The vowel e: may vary between [e] and [ɛ]. Drapeau reported that the variant [ɛ] is used in (final) stressed closed syllables (1979:20). In the southern y-varieties of Quebec, [e] occurs before y and k and [ɛ] elsewhere.

Generally a: is [æ] in the southern y-varieties (except adjacent to w) but becomes more like [a] in the northern y-varieties. In Betsiamites, a: occurs as [ɒ:] (Drapeau 1979:20).

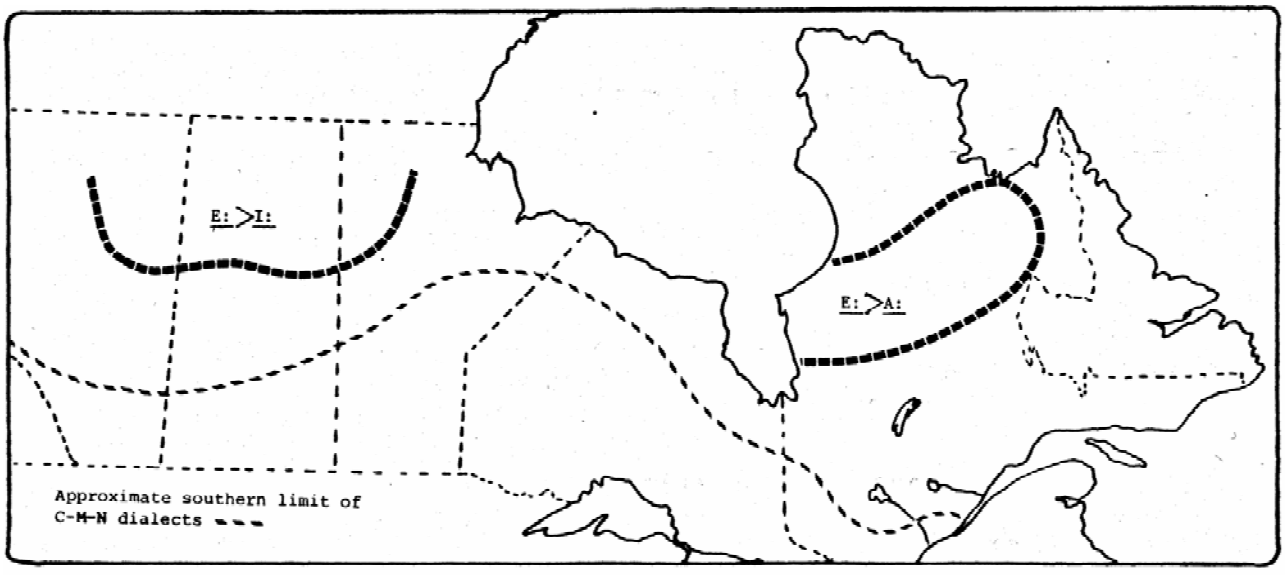
3.11 Lowering of e:

In most of the dialects of Cree-Montagnais-Naskapi there are four phonemic 'long' vowels: i:, e: u: and a:. In the northern y-area of the palatalized dialects,

however, e: has collapsed with a: in all words except the one for 'yes':

Southern y	Northern y	
na:pe:w	na:pa:w	'man'
ne:te:	na:ta:	'over there'
iskwe:w	iskwa:w	'woman'
enikamut	a:nikamut	'whenever he sings'
e:he:	(n)i:hi:	'yes'

A comparable merger has been reported for some dialects of Plains Cree (Pentland 1979:104). There, e: has fallen together with i: rather than with a:, so that na:pew is pronounced as na:pi:w. Wolfart indicated that the y-dialects of Plains Cree can be split on the basis of this feature into a northern and southern group, as can the y-dialects of Quebec (1973:11).



Map 3-2 Merger of e:

The merger of e: and a: took place historically in the palatalized dialects after k had been palatalized to c. Thus ke:ka:t 'thing' becomes ce:ka:t and finally ca:ka:t. If the merger had occurred prior to velar palatalization, the present pronunciation of 'thing' in the northern y-varieties would be ka:ka:t < ke:ka:t. The merger would have then removed the environment for the palatalization of the first k.

The a: vowel which results from this merger then participates in those rules which back and round a: in the vicinity of w (3.42).

Map 3-2 shows the communities in which this rule of e: lowering operates. At Eastmain, the majority of speakers merge the vowels but inconsistently. This village is at the southern boundary of the area where e: becomes a:. The change of e: to a: there may be considered a recent innovation. Furthermore, the inhabitants of the village include many families who have moved in from neighbouring communities in the south and the north. When the post of Old Factory, mid-way between Eastmain and Paint Hills, was closed and the population relocated, some families settled at Eastmain. The Old Factory speakers did not use the e: vowel.

One extended family, originally from Rupert House to the south, use both e: and a:, as do Rupert House speakers.

Throughout their several generations of residence among Eastmain speakers, this aspect of their dialect has changed very little. As well, they have their trapline the farthest inland of any Eastmain family, sharing a boundary with Mistassini and Nemiscau people.

The older Mistassini people who have territories to the north-west of the Mistassini hunting area, towards Paint Hills and Fort George have acquired the [æ] variant of e:, mainly in initial position.

The variation between [ɛ] and [æ] for e: is correlated with the location of the family hunting group territory. This indicates that, for the hunting people, attachment to a particular post is not the only important non-linguistic variable affecting speech. Year-round residence in a community is a recent phenomenon. The usual pattern, until relatively recent times, was that eight to ten months were spent on the hunting territory, where frequent contact was had with people from the neighbouring territories. Those families which had the hunting grounds on the periphery of a community's territory, would then have had neighbours who could easily have been attached to a completely different community.

The Betsiamites data recorded by Cowan (1974) and Drapeau (1979) give only a single instance of a change of e: > a:, in the word for 'spoon'. Both writers provide

amikwa:n rather than the expected e:mikwan. Further investigation may reveal whether this is a chance sound shift or the beginning of the sound change discussed above.

3.12 Backing and rounding of a:

Whenever a: is preceded by w it is rounded to [ɔ:]. When followed by w, it is backed to [o:], as is the case at Mistassini:

/ita:pame:w/	>	[Itæ:pm̥ew]	'he sees him so'
/wa:pame:w/	>	[wɔ:pm̥ew]	'he sees him'
/niwa:pama:w/	>	[niwɔ:pm̥ɒ:w]	'I see him'

The a: between two occurrences of w, is backed and rounded to [o:], with optional loss of the w:

/miywa:siw/	>	[miyɔ:su:]	'it is pretty'
/miywa:w/	>	[miyo:w]	'it is good'
/e:cinwa:c/	>	[ɛcinɔ:c]	'as it is long'
/cinwa:w/	>	[cino:w]	'it is long'

These two rules do not serve to distinguish one dialect from another. They appear to be in general use in many Cree dialects and are reported for the west coast of James Bay by Ellis (1964:1-6) and for Betsiamites by Drapeau (1979:20). In the northern y-group of Quebec rounding and raising occur between the high glides w and y not just between w. The Fort George [miyo:yhtam] < miywa:yihtam,

'he likes it' illustrates this. For Moose and Swampy, Pentland reported that in rapid speech, e: is raised before w as in [skwɔ] < iskwe:w. (1979:116).

3.13 Loss of w before [ɔ:]

Once a: has been backed and/or rounded, the preceding w may be deleted in the environment C_V:. This is a feature of casual style, rapid speech and youth:

/mwa:kw/	>	[mwɔ:kʷ~mɔ:kʷ]	'loon'
/kwa:pahamw/	>	[kɔ:phəm]	'he scoops it'
/cinwa:ce	>	[cinɔ:ce:]	'if it is long'

The loss of w in some words has become categorical for younger speakers.

In inter-vocalic position, w preceding a: may be deleted in rapid speech, causing a preceding short vowel to be deleted as well.

/wi:ciwa:kan/	>	[wi:cɔ:kan]	'companion'
/ciwa:pama:wa/	>	[cɔ:pm̥a:we]	'do you see him?'
/nituwa:pahta/	>	[n̥tɔ:hth]	'fetch it!'

The backed and rounded vowel [ɔ:] indicates the former presence of a preceding w. Young speakers may also delete w before e: :

/itwe:w/	[i:twe:w~i:te:w]	'he says'
/nituwe:yime:w/	[ntwe:yme:w~nte:yme:w]	'he wants him'
/twe:huw/	[te:hu:]	'it lands from the air'

3.2 Short vowels

In the palatalized dialects of Cree-Montagnais-Naskapi the short vowels i, a and u are subject to a large amount of phonetic variation: deletion, assimilation, neutralization, lengthening and rounding. The non-round i and a are more often affected than u which remains relatively stable. In addition, short vowels normally carry weak or secondary stress if there is a long vowel in a word.

Variations in phonetic realization of short vowels cannot be simply represented, by the use of isoglosses, as being discontinuous. Variation is distributed throughout any single community according to the age and family affiliation of the speakers. This is also the case within the entire group of communities. As well, individual speakers show variation relative to their speed of utterance. The treatment of short vowels in Cree-Montagnais-Naskapi is an excellent topic for a variability study of the type which has been carried out for English by Labov (1972).

3.21 Assimilation to semi-vowels

The semi-vowels y- and w often modify neighbouring short vowels. i in particular is always assimilated to either glide. u is always assimilated to w but never to y. The assimilation of a varies according to community and lexical item. In all cases of assimilation to a glide the result is a phonetically tense vowel [i:] or [u:]

3.22 Assimilation to y

The sequence iy is phonetically indistinguishable from i:y both in the palatalized and non-palatalized dialects (Pentland 1979:115). In the palatalized varieties a is often raised to [i] before y with the result that [iy] < ay and iy do not contrast. This occurs with greatest regularity between two consonants or between a consonant and a long vowel. Pentland reported this for the non-palatalized varieties also (1979:114).

If the sequence ay in initial position is followed by a long vowel, a rule of procope or lengthening or raising may operate before the assimilation rules. When a stop is prefixed, however, assimilation to y then takes place:

	Mistassini	Ft. George	LNS
/aya:w/ 'he has it'	[ya:w]	[i:ya:w]	[a:ya:w]
/nitaya:n/ 'I have it'	[ɳtiya:n]	[ɳtiya:n]	[ɳtiya:n]

The following Mistassini examples illustrate the fact that sequences of aya, iya, iyi, become [i:]:

/kwayaskw/	>	[kwi:skw]	'straight, correct'
/apiyane:/	>	[api:ne]	'if you (s) sit'
/ayahc/	>	[i:hc]	'different'
/iyiniw	>	[i:nu]	'Indian, person'

In final position, iy becomes [i:]:

/nipiy/	>	[nipi:]	'water'
/asiniy/	>	[əsini:]	'stone'

At Davis Inlet, where y is often replaced with n, the above words are nipi:n 'water' and asini:n 'stone'. This indicates that any pan-dialectal analysis of Cree-Montagnais-Naskapi must retain the final sequence of iy at the systematic level.

There is raising of a before y in the majority of palatalized communities. In eastern Quebec-Labrador ay may become [ey] but on the western side of the peninsula ay becomes [i:]. The Lower North Shore communities generally retain ay as [əy] while the neighbouring Moisie speakers to the west use [ey]. Further west, Betsiamite speakers, as well as those on the east coast of James Bay, use [i:].

LNS	Sch.	Bets.	
uš̀akay	uš̀akey	uš̀aki:	'his skin'
pu:tay	putey	pu:ti:	'bottle'
š̀a:kaikan	š̀a:keikan	š̀a:ki:kan	'lake'

At Northwest River, where speakers have had contact with both the Lower North Shore and the Moisie dialects, raising of a before y is variable:

uṣ̀akay	>	[uṣ̀əkəy]	'his skin'
ci:pay	>	[ci:pey ~ ci:pəy]	'spirit, ghost'
nitawakay	>	[nitu:key~nitu:ki:]	'my ear'

Mistassini speakers also show variation in the pronunciation of ci:pay 'ghost' as [ci:pəy] or [ci:pi:] and pu:tay 'bottle' as [pu:tay] or [pu:ti:].

3.23 Assimilation to w

In the palatalized dialects, i is always assimilated to a following w. The result may be a phonetically short or long vowel, depending on subsequent rules:

	Mistassini	Betsiamites	
/apiw/	[əpu:]	[pu]	'he sits'
/mi:cisuw/	[mi:tsu:]	[mi:tsu]	'he eats'

Proto-Algonkian nouns ending in -*Cyiwa show variation in Cree-Montagnais-Naskapi dialects. The words for 'mountain', 'river', and 'mud' illustrate this:

	*wacyiwi	*si:pyiwa	*asiskyiwi
Plains	waci:	si:pi:	asiski:
Mistassini	uci:	si:pi:	asiscu:
Moisie	ucu:	ṣ̀i:pu:	aṣ̀iscu:

Assimilation to w

PA	Atikamekw	Mistassini	Ft.George	Moisie	NWR/LNS	Davis I.	
*wacyiwi	-	waci:	wuci:	ucu:	wacu:	-	'mountain'
*waʔsˋaskˋwa	ucaskw	watskw	wuciskw	uciskw	waciskw	waciskw	'muskrat'
*takwani	takun	takun	takun	takun	takwan	takwan	'there is'
*amiθkwaki	amiskuk	(a)miskuc	amiskuc	amiskut	amiskwat	amiskwats	'beavers'
*walawi:wa	uruwi:w	wi:wi:w	wi:wi:w	unawi:w	wanawi:w	weywi:w	'he goes out'
*wela:kani	ura:kan	wi:ya:kan	wi:ya:kan	una:kan	una:kan	una:kan	'dish'
*awe:n-	awi:n	(a)we:n	uwɔ:n	we:n	a:we:n	awe:n	'who'
*wehtawakayi	uttu:kay	uhtu:ki:	uhtawkiy	u:tu:key	utu:key	wi:htu:kan	'his ear'
*mye:xkanawi	me:skanu	me:skanu:	me:skanaw	me:skanu:	me:skanaw	me:skeyaw	'road'
*u:te:wenali	u:te:nu	ute:na:w	ute:naw	ute:nu:	ute:naw	ute:nəw	'town'
*le:kawi	ne:ku	ye:ka:w	ya:ka:w	ne:ku:	ne:kaw	ne:ku:	'sand'
*nimiwa	[ ]	ni:mu:	ni:mu:	ni:mu:	ni:mu:	ni:mu:	'he dances'
*nekamuwa	[ ]	nikamu:	nikamu:	nikamu:	nikamu:	nikamu:	'he sings'

Figure 3-1

All the palatalized n- and l- speakers have generalized the ending iw > [u:] in the words for 'mountain' and 'river' while Plains speakers have generalized iy > [i:]. Mistassini speakers use the iy variant in these two words, but iw > [u:] in 'mud'.

Records in the Montagnais language from the-seventeenth and eighteenth centuries give "shipiw", šì:piw 'river' without assimilation of the i to w. Presumably the iw > [u:] coalescence is recent.

Assimilation of i to a preceding w also takes place as exemplified by Mistassini /ci-u:ta:mahw-itin/ > [cu:ta:mhutin] 'you hit me'. As noted by Pentland (1979:10), Proto-Algonkian *we and *wi become u after a consonant or a word boundary, so that the sequence wi is rare. He did note variation between wi and u before y as in apuy ~ apwiy, 'paddle'. Drapeau reported that, at Betsiamites, stressed interconsonantal u is pronounced [wə] (1979:19):

/tipa:cimuwin/ > tipa:cimun [tepa:tsemwən] 'story'

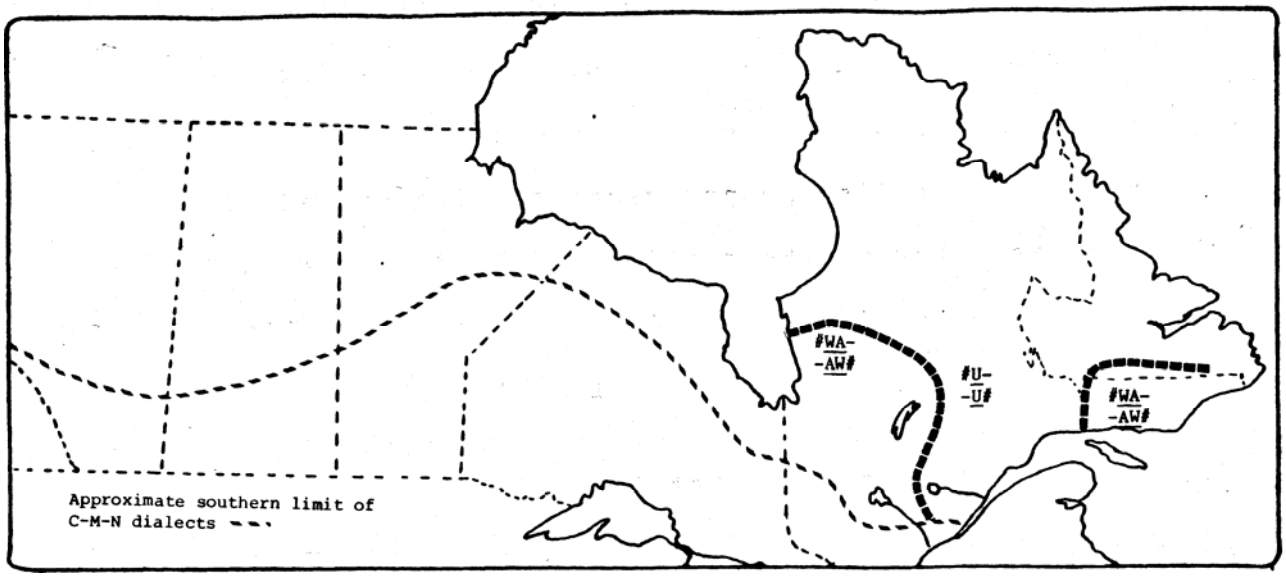
The majority of her examples, however, were derived from the sequence -CVwin although she analyzes it as /Cun/. It is unlikely that -CVwin became -Cun and then [Cwən]. Most probably --CVwin was always pronounced as [-Cwən]. At nearby Mistassini, most sequences of -CVwin can be heard as such in slower speech, although in rapid speech there is coalescence to [-Cu(:)n].

Short u assimilates to a following w to give [u:] in some dialects and [u] in others. The rules for the production of a short or long vowel remain to be investigated and await detailed phonological studies of individual dialects. For speakers of n- and l- dialects in Quebec-Labrador there is, as mentioned above, neutralization of long and short vowels in final syllables.

Pentland stated that in Plains Cree final u:w and uw do not contrast as they do in Woods or Swampy Cree (1979:115). This is also the case in the y-dialects of Quebec (MacKenzie 1971).

The assimilation of a to w is complete in the central palatalized communities: Pointe Bleue, Betsiamites, Sept-Iles and Schefferville. In the Lower North Shore communities, the sequence wa and aw remain unchanged:

	Moisie	LNS	
/ne:kaw/	ne:ku:	ne:kaw	'sand'
/me:skanaw/	me:skanu:	me:skanaw	'road'
/ute:naw/	ute:nu:	ute:naw	'city'
/waciw/	ucu:	wacu:	'mountain'



Map 3-3 Assimilation of a to w

In the southern y-community of Mistassini, the assimilation of a to w has spread to only certain lexical items:

/wacyiw/	>	waci: - uci:	'mountain'
/wacaskw/	>	wacaskw	'muskrat'
/me:skanaw/	>	me:skanu:	'road'
/ye:kaw/	>	ye:ka:w	'sand'

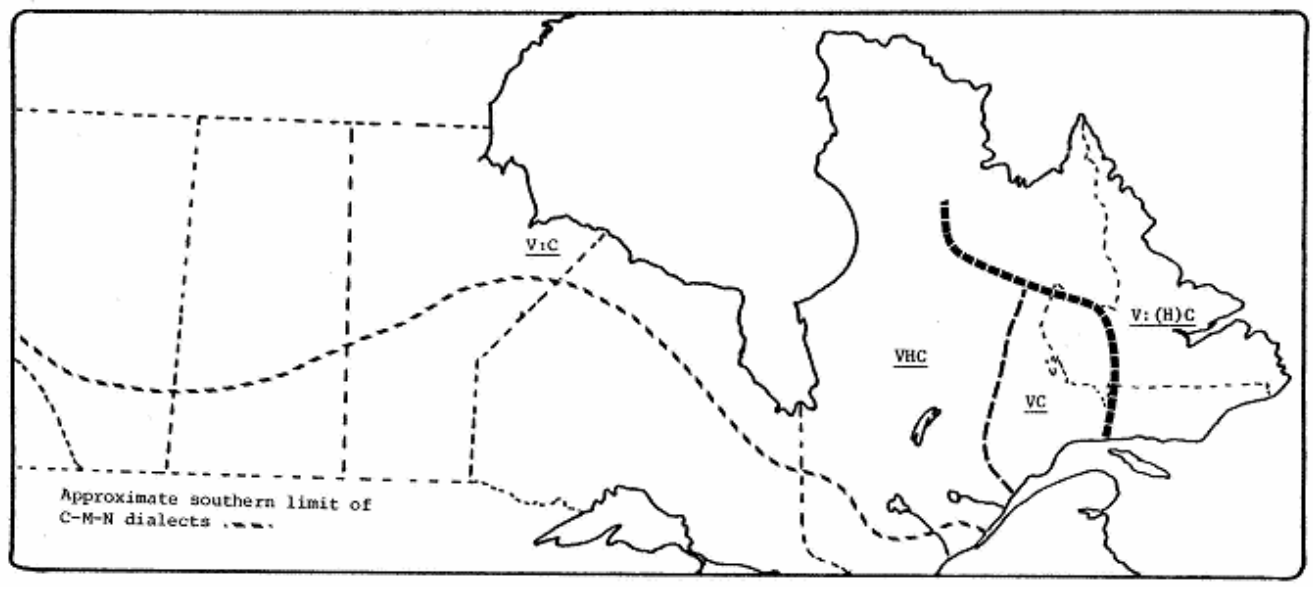
In the northern y-community Fort George, initial wa becomes [wʊ] as in [wʊci:] for waci: 'mountain'.

There is also variation in the treatment of -awaC- sequences. In the central area (Rupert House to the Moisie) uhtawakay becomes [u(h)tu:ki:] 'his ear'. On the Lower North Shore the output is [uhtwakey] while in the northern y-area it is [uhtawkay].

3.3 Lengthening of Short Vowels

3.31 Lengthening of short vowels before h

In the eastern palatalized dialects there is a lengthening of short vowels before pre-aspirated stops. In some cases the pre-aspiration is then lost. This phenomenon is not merely compensatory lengthening for the loss of pre-aspiration such as that reported by Ellis for a northern dialect of Western James and Hudson Bay (1962). Fort Chimo and Davis Inlet speakers retain pre-aspiration in many words while Lower North Shore speakers retain it in word-final position only. The regions where lengthening takes place within the palatalized dialects are shown on Map 3-4.



Map 3-4 Short Vowel Lengthening

Short Vowel Lengthening Before h

Mistassini	Moisie	LNS	NWR	Ft. Chimo	
wa:pahtam	wa:patam	wa:pa:tam	wa:pa:tam	wa:pa:htam	'he sees it'
tahka:w	taka:w	ta:ka:w	ta:ka:w	ta:xa:w	'it is cold'
miht	mit	mi:ht	mi:t	mi:ht	'firewood'
e:mihkwa:n	e:mikwa:n	e:mi:kwa:n	e:mi:kwa:n	a:mixwa:n	'spoon'
akuhp	akup	aku:hp	aku:p	aku:f	'coat, dress'
pimuhte:w	pimute:w	pimu:te:w	pimu:te:w	pimu:hta:w	'he walks'

Figure 3-2

Examples of words in which lengthening occurs are cited in Figure 3-3.

Schefferville speakers lose h in both intervocalic and pre-consonantal position and generally do not lengthen a preceding short vowel. Mailhot, however, indicated that lengthening occurs variably in mono-or di-syllabic words. She thought that in the Lower North Shore dialects, the vowel which occurs before a pre-aspirated stop is, in fact, not lengthened, but simply tensed (1975:31-2). Confirmation would seem to be a matter for oscillographic analysis. Unfortunately, crucial examples are not included in Martin's study of vowel length in the Mingan dialect (1977).

At Davis Inlet a is lengthened before inter-vocalic h which then becomes n (2.9) so that sa:kahikan becomes [sa:ka:nikan] 'lake' and mahikan becomes [ma:nixey] 'wolf'.

The one environment where the rule which lengthens short vowels before pre-aspirated stops is blocked, occurs between the homorganic consonants n and t as illustrated below:

Mistassini	miniwe:yihtam	'he likes it'
Davis Inlet	miniwe:ni:tam	"
LNS and NWR	miniwe:ntam	"

The lengthening rule is blocked only in Lower North Shore and North West River varieties. If the rule of short vowel deletion is ordered before that of lengthening, the Lower North Shore form for 'he likes it' is produced:

	LNS	Davis Inlet
	/minwe:nihtamw/	/minwenihtamw/
deletion	minwe:nhtamw	-
lengthening	-	minwe:ni:htamw
other rules		
	[minwe:ntam]	[minwe:ni:htam]

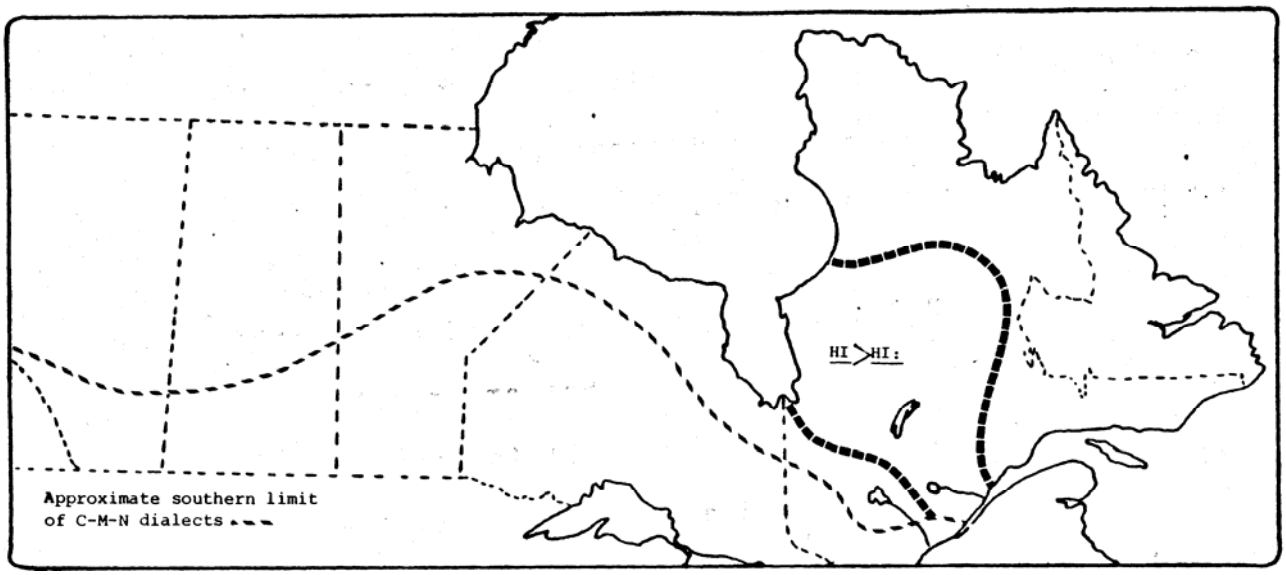
Although the form nihtawakay 'my ear' provides an environment for blocking the lengthening rule, the surface form [ni:tukay] occurs in the Lower North Shore dialects. The occurrence of the lengthened [i:] could be explained by the fact that a morpheme boundary intervenes between the n and the following vowel, since 'ear' is a dependent noun.

3.32 Lengthening of i after h

The y-dialects of Quebec which retain inter-vocalic h have a rule which lengthens short i whenever it follows h. Most lexical items which have the sequence

-hi- have been formed either with the causative morpheme -ih- or the TI instrumental morpheme -ah-:

Swampy-Moose	Mistassini	
masinahikan	masinahi:kan	'book'
kiwanihitin	ciwanihi:tin	'I lose you'
mahikan	mahi:kan	'wolf'



Map 3-5 Lengthening after h

In those varieties where h becomes a glide y, lengthening of a following i does not take place. At Davis Inlet h becomes n (2.7) in sequences of -ahi- and lengthening does not take place:

/masinahikan/	>	masina:nikan	'book'
/mahikan/	>	ma:nikan	'wolf'

3.4 Loss of short vowels

The non-round short vowels i and a are subject to deletion in many environments, usually when they carry weak stress. The back rounded short vowel u is never deleted but can become devoiced to [w] in medial and final position. The extensive syncope of vowels in medial position is one of the characteristics of the velar palatalized dialects (Michelson 1939:80). It provides the environment for the rules of affricate dissimilation of c which render so many lexical items unintelligible to speakers of non-palatalized dialects. For instance, maskisin 'shoe' occurs as massin in eastern Quebec.

Rules of short vowel deletion exist for some of the non-palatalized dialects, but are relatively restricted in their application. Ellis reported deletion of a and i between a stop and a homorganic nasal or sonorant l where natawe:lihtam 'he wants it' becomes [ṇtawe:ltam] (1964:1-6). Similarly, Béland recorded the forms [wa:pm̥e:w] < wa:pame:w 'he sees him' for Atikamekw (personal communication). Pentland (1979:119) reported syncope of unstressed i but not a in western Cree dialects. No non-palatalized variety, however, has generalized rules of short vowel loss to the same degree as the palatalized varieties.

3.41 Loss of initial short vowels (procope)

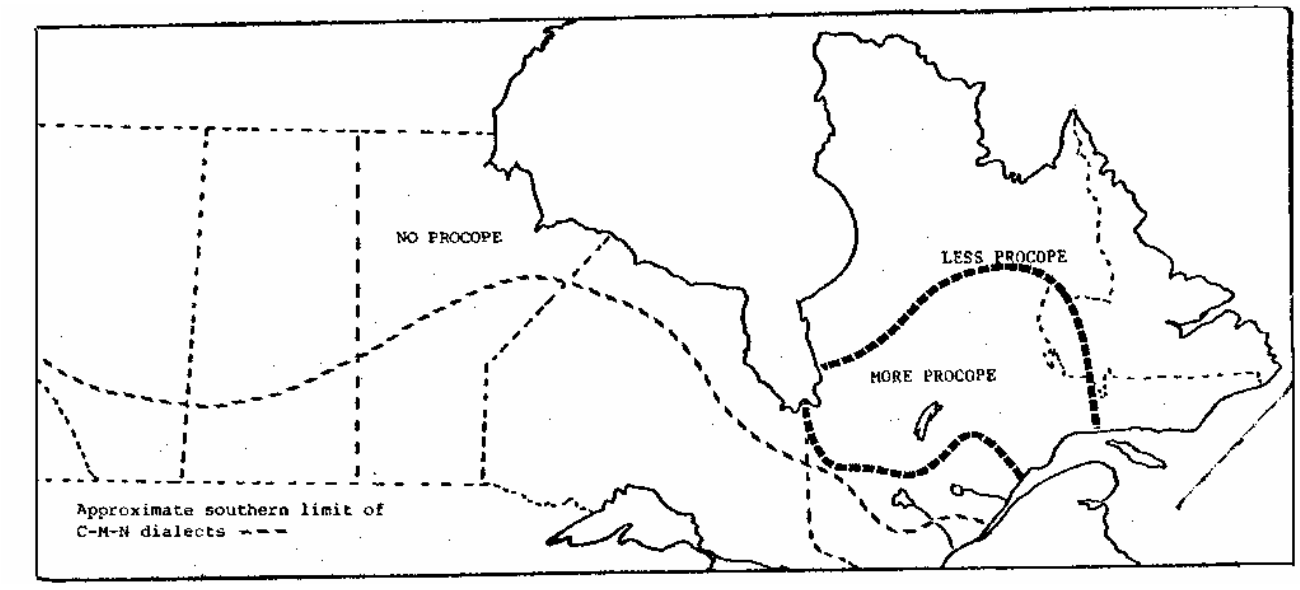
In initial position a and i (but seldom u) are

often deleted as in the Mistassini examples below:

iskwe:w	>	[skew:w]	'woman'
awa:s	>	[wa:s]	'child'
ispimihc	>	[spimihc]	'above'

Procope is most general in the southern -y Betsiamites and Moisie varieties. In the Lower North Shore varieties, initial short vowels are neutralized with long vowels and the procope rule is blocked.

'beaver'	amiskw
Neutralization	a:miskw
Procope	-



Map 3-6 Procope

Cowan (1976:332) gave an example of the relatively great, but not total, retention of initial a and i in the speech of an 85-year-old man as contrasted with that of a 50-year-old. At Betsiamites and in the Moisie communities

the initial short vowel is generally lost, except in formal speech. In the southern y-communities there is variation according to speed and style of speech.

When a prefix is added to a word, deleted initial short vowels are restored. For those dialects where the vowel was lengthened, it is shortened. An epenthetic t is inserted before a non-round short vowel and a prefix ending in a short vowel. Insertion of the t before u is variable.

Mist	[wa:s]	'child'
	[ṇtəwa:sʲi:m]	'my child'
	[skew:w]	'woman'
	[ntiskwe:m]	'my wife'
P.B.	[a:kuhp]	'dress'
	[ṇtəkuhp]	'my dress'
LNS	[i:skwe:w]	'woman'
	[ṇtiskwe:m]	'my woman'

Drapeau has presented evidence for Betsiamites showing that not all instances of initial i undergo procope. Certain words have i: where i would be expected historically and this [i:] alternates with [i] when a consonant is prefixed:

[i:ssiswe:w]	'he says'
[nitissiswa:n]	'I say'

She posited a prior stage in the language when a rule of neutralization of short and long initial vowels existed (3.7). The rule of procope came into competition with it before initial i became i: in all words. Initial a was not affected by the neutralization rule (1979:26).

Mailhot (personal communication) has stated that in the Moisie dialects initial i becomes tense in some lexical items (before t or sp in all examples) but undergoes procope in others (before sk):

/ite:nitamw/	[i:te:ntəm]	"he thinks it"
/ite:w/	[ite:w]	"he says"
/ita:cimuw/	[itæ:cɨmu]	"he tells"
/ispis/	[ispəs-]	"as, so"
/iskute:w/	[s̀kute:w]	"fire"
/iskan/	[s̀kən]	"all (day)"

A limited amount of procope has been reported for one non-palatalized dialect only, Atikamekw. Béland (1979:137) has written that initial a of one set of demonstratives is always deleted (4.31).

3.42 Loss of Final Short Vowels (Apocope)

Pentland's statement that Proto-Algonkian word final vowels are usually lost in Cree applies to both palatalized and non-palatalized varieties (1979:116). In the palatalized varieties, the loss is more widespread. Among

Loss of Final Short Vowels

	Ft.George	Mistassini	Pte. Bleue	Bets.	Moisie	LNS	Ft.Cimo	
mihta	mihth	mihth	mihta	mətte	"mit	mi:ta	mi:hta	'firewood (pl.)'
akuhpa	akúhph	akúhph	akuhpa	"kup	"kup	aku:pa	aku:fa	'coats, dresses'
ukusisa	ukús	ukusa	ukussa	ukusse	ukussa	ukussa	ukusa	'his son'
te:we:hikan-a:skwa	-	-	te:we:hikan-a:skwa	te:we:ikan-askwe	te:we:ika"n-a:skw	te:we:ikan-a:hkwa	ta:wa:ikan-a:skwa	'drum sticks'
uta:pa:na	uta:pá:nh	ata:pá:nh	uta:"pa:n	uta:"pa:n	uta:"pa:n	uta:pa:na	uta:pa:na	'cars'
api	ɛp	ap	api	pe	[ ]	api	api	'sit!'
nikamu	nikam	nikam	nikamu	nə"kum	[ ]	nikamu	nikamu	'sing!'

Note: Mailhot (1975) represents the whole set of compensatory features by the symbol ".

Figure 3-3

the non-palatalized dialects the western varieties may retain word-final vowels on particles, pronouns and mono-syllabic stems. Eastern non-palatalized varieties retain these vowels only on mono-syllabic stems with short vowels. In the palatalized varieties a final short vowel can be heard only occasionally on a mono-syllabic stem, and indicates a wish to emphasize the word. Pentland states that the rule of loss of Proto-Algonkian word final vowels is an innovation which is spreading from east to west within the non-palatalized dialects. It is clear that this innovation is even more generalized in the palatalized dialects:

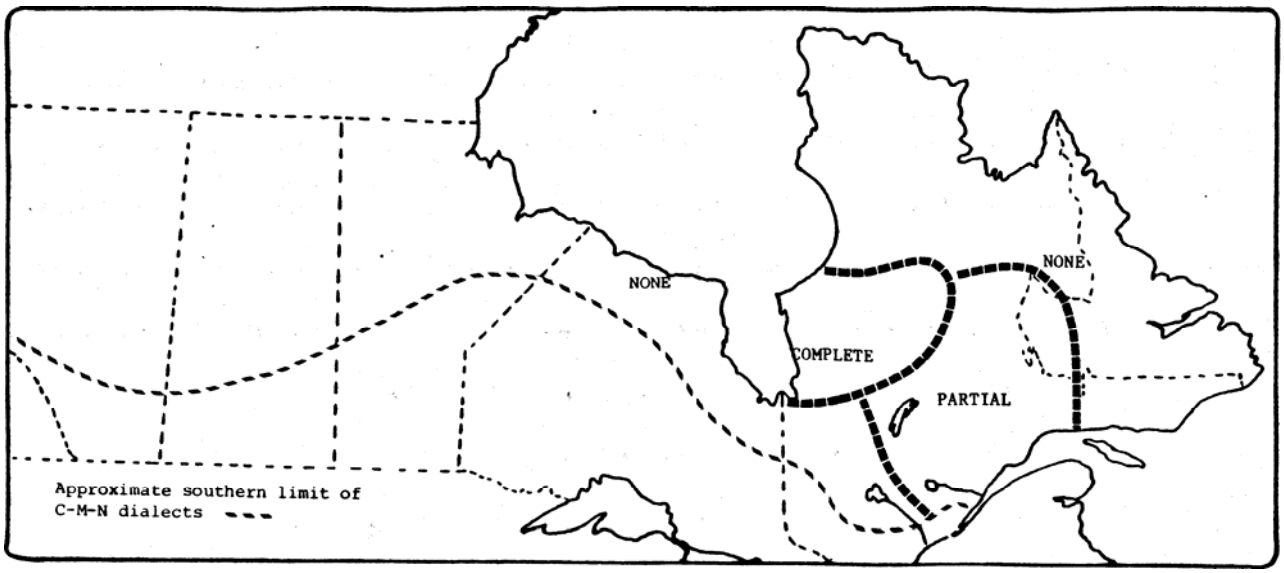
Plains	Albany	R.H.	S.I.	
niska	niska	nisk	nisk	'goose'
mihti	mihti	miht	mit	'firewood'
wa:wi	wa:wi	wa:w	wa:w	'egg'

All synchronic instances of retention of final short vowels a and i in the palatalized dialects arise from the addition of obviative or inanimate plural suffixes to nouns; addition of TI Imperative marker; or deletion of suffixes to form AI Imperative verb forms.

nita:nis	'my daughter'
uta:nisa	'his daughter'
wa:w	'egg'
wa:wa	'eggs'
uta:maham	'he hits it'
uta:maha	'hit it'

ni:miw 'he dances'

ni:mi 'dance!'



Map 3-7 Apocope of i and a suffixes

Map 3-7 shows the areas where the suffixes a and i are dropped. On James Bay's east coast there is total apocope of a. Inland at Mistassini, a is retained after the sibilants s, š and h. At Pointe Bleue the vowel remains in mono- and di-syllabic words and after -skw- Betsiamites keeps the suffix [-e] in monosyllabic words and after -skw- while in the Moisie area it is retained only after s (Mailhot 1975:39). All the communities to the east and north of these retain short vowels. Figure 3-4 gives examples from various dialects.

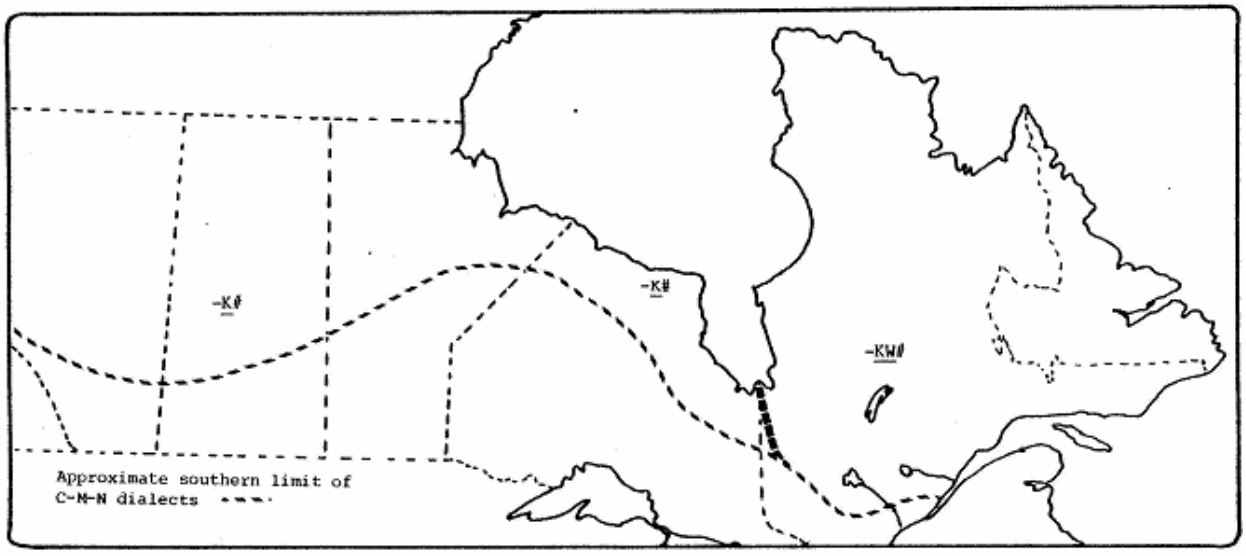
As noted above (2.2), the loss of a final short vowel which is a morphological marker always results in a phonetic

marker being left somewhere in the word. In the James Bay y-dialects this marker consists of a shift in stress. In addition, some speakers may have a whispered vowel at the end of the word, a voiceless a. In the n and l dialects described by Mailhot, stress is always final so that the deleted vowel is signaled by one of the following: (a) lengthening of the final vowel, (b) lengthening of the final consonant if it is not a stop, (c) absence of a glottal stop or post-aspiration, (d) diminution of intensity level of stress, or (e) a level tone instead of a rising one. The rules which generate these changes remain to be investigated in depth.

In some communities where final short vowels are retained, there is phonetic modification. At Betsiamites, for example, where a and i have fallen together, final a is pronounced [e]. In the Lower North Shore villages and at North West River, final short vowels are neutralized with final long vowels so that there is no contrast in a stressed (final) open syllable (Martin 1977:133).

3.421 The retention of final kw is another characteristic feature of the palatalized dialects. Michelson (1939) noted that final kw is an archaic feature of what he refers to as Montagnais-Naskapi. The only non-palatalized variety to retain these clusters is Atikamekw (Béland 1979). In a11 other non-palatalized varieties the w is dropped and

surfaces only when a suffix is added. Map 3-8 illustrates where final -kw is retained:



Map 3-8 Loss of final w after k

Moose	Atik.	E. Cree	Moisie	
atihk	atikkw	atihkw	atikw	'caribou'
atihkwak	atikkwak	atihkuc	atikut	" (pl.)
amisk	amiskw	amiskw	amiskw	'beaver'
amiskwak	amiskwak	amiskuc	amiskut	'beavers'

Post-consonantal w can be heard in the northern y-palatalized communities in the words for 'ten' mita:htw, 'three' nistw and 'two' ni:sẁ. Although there is an underlying final w in the words for 'rabbit' wa:puṣ̀ and 'moose' mu:s, it only surfaces in the plural forms 'rabbits' wa:puṣ̀uc and 'moose' mu:suc. The palatalized communities to

the south and east have mita:ht 'ten', nist 'three' but ni:sˋw 'two'. In the non-palatalized dialects described by Pentland (1979), the post-consontantal w remains only if the following short vowel also remains as in mu:swa 'moose'.

Word-final w occurs morpho-phonemically after t, s, sˋ, m and n in a few lexical items. After the nasals m and n final w is deleted in all dialects.

Moose	Mist.	Ft. G.	
atim	atim	atim	'dog'
atimwak	atimuc	atimuc	'dogs'
takuˋsin	takusin	takuˋsin	'he arrives'
takuˋsinwak	takusinuc	takuˋsinuc	'they arrive'

Final w is in the process of being lost. The process is most advanced in the non-palatalized varieties. Since final w never occurs after a nasal stop, in any dialect, this is presumed to be the earliest environment for its loss. It is retained in all palatalized dialects after k, which is the last environment for its loss. Within the palatalized varieties the rule of final w loss is most general in the southern dialects. The loss of post-consonantal w in non-final position is discussed in 3.13.

3.43 Short vowel syncope

As noted above (3.4) syncope of short vowels is common in the palatalized dialects. The prevalent environment

for syncope is found, not surprisingly, between homorganic consonants and under weak stress. Both a and i may be lost while u only loses syllabicity and is devoiced to [ʍ]. The syncope rule is clearly connected to the stress assignment rule (although this rule has not been formulated) but variation is found among the communities as to exactly which vowels are deleted. In addition, deletion increases in rapid speech.

The phenomenon of short vowel syncope becomes increasingly general from the western non-palatalized dialects to the eastern palatalized ones. In the western non-palatalized varieties, Pentland reported syncope of only i between homorganic stops and fricatives as well as between stops and nasals (1979:119). Ellis noted syncope of both i and a, but only between homorganic stops and sonorants (excluding glides), for Moose and Swampy dialects (1962:1-7).

For the palatalized variety at Betsiamites, Drapeau cited syncope of non-round short vowels between homorganic sonorants m, n, l and stops p, t as well as between a stop and a fricative or affricate (1979:32). In the Lower North Shore dialects short vowels undergo syncope between homorganic stops and nasals and between two fricatives.

At Mistassini the environments for syncope are even more numerous. Short i and a are deleted entirely; u becomes devoiced and non-syllabic but can remain as a liabilization of a preceding stop. There are almost no two classes of

consonants between which syncope does not take place in the Mistassini dialect (accents denote stress):

pímisìn	>	[pImsIn]	'he lies down'
natá:mi:pè:kw	>	[ṇta:mpekw]	'underwater'
siná:kun	>	[sna:kun]	'it appears so'
utá:mahàm	>	[uta:mhəm]	'he hits it'
usìhé:w	>	[ushe:w]	'he makes him'
nité:m	>	[ṇtɛm]	'my dog'
yú:tin	>	[yu:tṇ]	'it is windy'
ápis	>	[əps]	'string, rope'
mí:cisù:	>	[mi:tsu:]	'he eats'
ù:sikú:n	>	[u:sku:n]	'his saliva'
pé:yakw	>	[peykw]	'one'
úkusà	>	[uksə]	'his son'
típahàm	>	[tIphəm]	'he measures it'
e:htá:yan	>	[ehtayn]	'as you are there'
citákuhp	>	[stəkuhp]	'your coat'

As speech becomes more rapid, the number of short vowels which are deleted may increase: nisit 'my foot' becomes [ṇsIt] and even [ṇst].

In all the Mistassini examples, the deleted vowel is an unstressed one. A rule of short vowel syncope cannot be formulated until the principles of stress assignment are understood. The rules of apocope and procope may also be dependent on the stress pattern of a particular dialect.

Until such rules are formulated, it is possible to say only that a) syncope applies to unstressed short vowels, b) homorganic consonants provide the most favoured environment for deletion and c) the phenomenon of syncope is most generalized (occurs in the largest number of linguistic environments) in the southern y-dialects, the l-dialects and perhaps the Moisie dialects.

Syncope occurs relatively late in the application of phonological rules. The lengthening of short vowels before pre-aspirated stops occurs first:

	Mistassini	NWR	
	/wa:pahtamw/	/wa:pahtamw/	'he sees it'
lengthening	-	wa:pa:htam	
h-loss	-	wa:pa:tamw	
syncope	wa:pa:tamw		
other rules	[wɔ:phtəm]	[wɔ:pa:təm]	

In some communities, however, the syncope rule deletes a short vowel in a particular environment before that vowel can be lengthened:

	Davis Inlet	NWR	
	/wanihtamw/	/wanihtamw/	'he loses it'
syncope	-	wanhtamw	
lengthening	wani:htamw	-	
h-loss	wani:(h)tamw	wantamw	
other rules	[wəni:(h)təm]	[wəntəm]	

The syncope rule at North West River applies only to the sequence n-t, since /wa:pahtamw/ results in [wɔ:pa:tɔm] rather than [wɔ:phtəm]. The phenomenon of syncope between homorganic nasals and stops is an old rule in Cree-Montagnais-Naskapi, as is indicated by the wide geographic range of its occurrence. By the time the rule of lengthening reached the North West River and Lower North Shore speakers, the short vowel in n-t sequences was no longer recoverable, and therefore not subject to lengthening. This situation would also suggest that the rule of lengthening originated in the northern dialects of Fort Chimo and Davis Inlet. It would also suggest that syncope occurs less in those northern dialects, as it indeed does. In 3.41 and 3.61 there is discussion about competition between rules which delete short vowels and rules which lengthen short vowels in initial position. A similar competition between rules of syncope and of lengthening occurred in the eastern palatalized varieties in n-t sequences.

3.5 Short Vowel Rounding

All the velar palatalized dialects are characterized by a rule usually referred to as vowel harmony (Michelson 1939:73). By this rule a non-back short vowel i or a will be rounded and backed to u if u or w appear in an adjacent syllable:

/mistikw/	> [mistuk]	'stick, tree'
/atimw/	> [atum]	'dog'
/pakune:ya:w/	> [pukune:ya:w]	'it has a hole'
/cinuse:w/	> [cunse:w]	'pike'

It does not seem to matter whether the non-round vowel is stressed or not. The rounded vowel which initiates the vocalic harmony may subsequently undergo a rule of reduction:

/mistikw/	>	[mistuk]	'stick, tree'
/takusinw/	>	[tukwsin]	'he arrives'

The intervening consonant may or may not be pre-aspirated:

/nikikw/	>	[nicukw]	'otter'
/atihkw/	>	[atuhkw]	'caribou'

A variation of the rule occurs in the non-palatalized dialects of Atikamekw (Béland 1978:300). In the following examples there is metathesis of the rounded back vowel and the preceding consonant:

/atimw/	>	[atiwm]	'dog'
/atihkw/	>	[atiwk]	'caribou'
/asikw/	>	[asiwk]	'merganser'

Béland stated that this metathesis occurs only when the vowel preceding -kw is i. It appears that the metathesized w is non-syllabic although Cooper's transcriptions of "askiuk" askikw 'kettle' and "nikiuk" nikikw 'otter' do not clearly support this (1945). Cooper also records several words where an assimilation of the i and w has taken place, as is normal in the palatalized varieties: "oskijuk" < uskisikw 'his eye' and "sesegatuk" < se:sse:ka:ttikw 'black spruce'. Béland did not mention any such assimilation.

Among the palatalized dialects, a metathesis is recorded in one dialect only, that of La Romaine. It is of limited occurrence and is found variably in final position in words which have undergone a rule of lengthening of short vowels before a following pre-aspirated stop. The pre-aspirated stop may then become a fricative:

atihkw	>	[ati:wx]	'caribou'
umihkw	>	[umi:wx]	'his blood'
ascihkw	>	[assi:ux]	'kettle'
askihkwa	>	[assi:kwa]	'kettles'

In communities where short vowels are lengthened before pre-aspirated stops, this lengthening rule is ordered before the vowel harmony rule:

atihkw	>	[ati:kw]	'caribou'
umihkw	>	[umi:kw]	'his blood'
askikw	>	[assi:kw]	'kettle'
mistikw	>	[mistuk]	'stick'
uski:sìkw	>	[ussi:sùk]	'his eye'

The rule of vowel harmony, does not operate at all across stop clusters with s or sì:

maskw	>	[maskw]	'bear'
amiskw	>	[amiskw]	'beaver'

The short vowel rounding rule applies after the syncope rule as is shown by the fact that [pey:kw] < pe:yakw

rather than [pe:yukw].

When vowel harmony must operate across a nasal consonant, there is a great amount of variation in whether it is or is not applied. Most frequently it is applied to disyllabic nouns, of which there are very few:

/atimw/	>	[atim ~ atum]	'dog'
/pi:simw/	>	[pi:sim ~ pi:sum]	'some'
/wa:pahtamw/	>	[wa:pahtam ~ wa:pahtum]	'he sees it'
/takus̀inw/	>	[tukws̀in]	'he arrives'

A rule of vowel harmony is operating in the ve1ar palatalized dialects and in the non-palatalized dialects of Atikamekw. The environments of its application, however, differ slightly. The rule in Atikamekw provides for metathesis of the u or w, but not necessarily for assimilation of the non-round vowel to it. Metathesis takes place in final syllables only and may operate across the nasal m in nouns as well as across k.

This rule of vowel harmony, while in common use, is especially prevalent among younger speakers. In y-dialect communities some older speakers do not have this rule in their speech at all. Other older speakers, who have the rule, can always recover the quality of the short vowel. Younger speakers, however, are losing the ability to recover the short i or a. One factor in the older speakers' ability to recognize whether [u] is underlying i or a, may be

their familiarity with religious literature in which the quality of the vowels is preserved. Most religious publications in syllabics used by East Cree speakers are written in the dialect of Moose Factory. There, no vowel harmony takes place and the original values of the vowels are retained. Older people literate in syllabics tend to write i or a while still pronouncing u. Younger literate speakers write u wherever they pronounce it. Mailhot reported that older monolingual speakers in the n- and l-dialects have the ability to recover the quality of a rounded short vowel due to their familiarity with a conservative spelling system (1975:33).

It must also be noted that the speech of an individual may contain both words which have undergone the rule of vowel harmony and others which, although they are candidates, have not done so. Tentatively, it may be stated that the rule occurs more frequently in monosyllabic forms and word-final syllables. For certain speakers, only the addition of a suffix returns the vowel in a final syllable to its original value:

mistikw	>	[mistuk]	'tree'
mistikuc	>	[mistikuc]	'trees'

This rule of vowel harmony has been innovated in the palatalized dialects within the last century. Older speakers may have the rule in their speech but they are always aware of the underlying vowel, usually restoring it when writing. In

the speech of these older and middle-aged speakers, there often occurs morphophonemic alternation between some grammatical forms which have undergone the rule and others which have not. This variation allows them to become aware of the phonetic value of the underlying vowel.

Younger speakers tend to use the form of the word which has undergone vocalic harmony in all grammatical forms. They cannot recover the underlying vowel and may be said to have phonologically reshaped the lexical item.

Regressive vowel harmony is an established rule in the Quebec-Labrador dialects. Progressive vowel harmony is a recent innovation. The young speakers at Northwest River round a short vowel in a syllable following u. As yet, the environment is restricted to that following a nasal consonant at the beginning of a word:

umaš̀inahikan > [muš̀ineykan] 'book'

The initial round vowel can be deleted after harmony has occurred. However, another example of progressive harmony suggests metathesis of the u and following nasal. The demonstrative particle 'this' is in other n-dialect communities ume:. In NWR it is mwe:, clearly metathesis. In the Moisie varieties, mwe: 'here it is' exists as a separate demonstrative along with ume: 'this one'. The demonstrative forms are discussed in 4.64.

This rule of progressive vowel rounding has not spread to many lexical items. For Davis Inlet and Natashquan [mwi:xw] and [umwi:hx], respectively, for umihkw 'his blood', have been recorded by Cowan (1974). Younger speakers at North West River use [umwi:kw] for the same word. The insertion of an unnecessary initial u in [umwɔ:kw] < mwa:kw 'loon', at Natashquan, Mingan and North West River is hypercorrection.

3.6 Short Vowel Neutralization

Short vowels which have not been assimilated, lengthened, rounded, or deleted, may be subject to neutralization. They may be neutralized either with a long vowel in initial or final position, or inter-consonantally the non-round short vowels may fall together as a single sound, [ɨ], [ə] or [i]. Neutralized vowels of the first type are usually recoverable through morphophonemic alternation (by adding a prefix or suffix). The second type occurs among older speakers for vowels under secondary and weak stress. Younger speakers in certain communities have neutralization in all possible environments and cannot recover the quality of the original vowel.

3.61 In certain communities where procope does not occur, there is neutralization of long and short vowels in initial positions. On the Lower North Shore and at Pointe Bleue a: and a become [æ], i: and i become [i] - both tense vowels; u: and u are neutralized as [ʊ]:

Neutralization

	Ft.George	Rupert Hse.	Mistassini	Pte.Bleue	Bets.	Moisie	LNS	Ft.Chimo	
amiskw	miskw	(ə)miskw	əmiskw	a:miskw	mi:s`kw	mis`kw	a:miskw	əmiskw	'beaver'
a:mu:	a:mu:	a:mu:	a:mu:	a:mu:	a:mu:	a:mu:	a:mu:	a:mu:	'bee'
iskwe:w	i:skwo:w	skwe:w	skwe:w	i:skwe:w	s`kwew	(i)skwe:w	i:skwe:w	i:skwe:w	'woman'
nakatam	nikitam	nəkətam	nəkətam	nəkətam	nikitam	nikitam	n k tam	nikitam	'he abandons it'
miht	miht	məht	miht	miht	mit	mit	mi:ht	mi:ht	'firewood' (S)
mi:tus	mi:tus	mi:tus	mi:tus`	mi:tus`	mitis`	mi:tis	mi:tus`	mi:tus`	'poplar'
pu:si	pu:s	pu:s	pu:s	pu:si	pu:s`i:	pu:s`i:	pu:s`i:	pu:si:	'embark'
nipi:	nipi:	nipi:	nipi:	nipi:	nipi:	nipi:	nipi:	nipi:	'water'
si:pa:	si:pa:	s`i:pa:	si:pa:	si:pa:	si:pa:	si:pa:	si:pa:	si:pa:	'under'
akuhpa	kuhph	akuhph	akuhph	akuhpa:	"kup	"kup	aku:pa:	aku:hpa	'coats, dresses'

Figure 3-4

a:mu	>	[æmu]	'bee'
a:miskw	>	[æmIskw]	'beaver'
ispimihc	>	[ispImIt]	'above'
u:s`	>	[ʊh]	'canoe'
uskat	>	[ʊxkɛt]	'the first time'

In the northern y-communities of Quebec i: and i are pronounced [i:] in initial position.

iskwe:w	>	[i:skwo:w]	'woman'

Drapeau reported that several words have an alternation between initial [i] and [I] after the addition of a prefix. She explained these forms as being the result of a former rule of initial lengthening which was in competition with now common rule of procope (3.41). The same phenomenon is reported for Sept-Isles by Mailhot (personal communication).

At North West River it is possible to find examples of initial short vowels which have been deleted or lengthened, or which remain lax:

iskute:w	>	[iskʊte:w ~ skʊte:w]	'fire'
amiskw	>	[mIskw ~ mIskw ~ æmIskw]	'beaver'

Since North West River has ties with both the Moisie communities where procope is predominant and the Lower North Shore where neutralization predominates, this variation is not surprising. No doubt a correlation exists between the use of one or other of the rules and the community affiliations

of the speakers.

The oscillographic studies done by Martin for Mingan showed a neutralization of vowel quality for orthographically long and short vowels (3.0). There is little correlation between the length marks used by native speakers and the phonetic length of the vowel. The forms in double quotation marks have length marked with ˆ by the native speakers themselves. The phonetic transcriptions are from Martin et al (1977) where [T't] represents a fortis stop.

u:s	"ûh"	['ʊχ]	'canoe'
u:hu:	"uhu"	[ʊ'xʊ]	'owl'
u:te:	"ûte"	[ʊT'te]	'here'
uta:s	"utâh"	[ʊT'tah]	'his socks'

Although tenseness does not correlate with the native speakers' marking of length, certain vowels are phonetically longer than others:

a:hcikw	"âtshukw"	[a:'ts^{s}ʊk]	'seal'
acikw	"atshukw"	[aT'ts^{s}ʊk]	'snot'
usuw	"uhu"	[ʊ'χʊ]	'he boils'
uhte:w	"utew"	[ʊ:'te ŭ]	'it boils'

It seems that vowels which are lengthened because of a loss of pre-aspiration are distinguished by length rather than tenseness. Other long vowels in Martin's list which are derived from short vowels before a pre-aspirated stop also

are transcribed with length. So, however, are a number of vowels which are historically long. The relationship between synchronic and historical length of vowels has not yet been investigated in detail.

3.62 In those eastern palatalized dialects which preserve final short vowels, the difference between long and short is neutralized in a final open syllable (Martin et al 1977):

pu:si	[pʊ'hi]	'embark!'
nipi:	[nip'pi]	'water'
una:kana	[ʊna:'na]	'cups'
sì:pa:	[çi:'pa]	'under'

This is true for non-low vowels at Betsiamites and Pointe Bleue. In these communities a does not neutralize with a: in final position; they are pronounced [ɛ] and [a] respectively. Drapeau further stated for Betsiamites that all long vowels are shortened in a final stressed syllable, but that in a closed syllable differences between tense (long) and lax (short) vowels are maintained (1979:20).

3.63 Between consonants, i and a may fall together, especially when not under primary stress. In some communities young speakers collapse the vowels even under primary stress.

Drapeau reported that among the young speakers at Betsiamites, a and I have fallen together almost everywhere as [ə] (which she represents orthographically as "e") (1979:19). She further distinguished a small set of words in which historical #iC has become #i:C, rather than undergoing procope (3.41). A certain number of words became lexicalized with initial i: before the rule was overtaken by the procope rule. The vowel returns to lax [I] or [ə] when a prefix is added.

In the northern y-area, short a under stress becomes raised to [ɛ]. Otherwise it is neutralized with i to [I]:

citakuhp	>	[stɛ́kuhp]	'your coat'
nakata:w	>	[nikitá:w]	'he abandons him'

These are just the dialects where e:, often [ɛ], has collapsed with a: as [a:] and no merger of [ɛ] < a and e: occurs. For the northern y-dialects the rules of lengthening initial i and raising stressed a are ordered before the short vowel neutralization.

At Rupert House, stressed i may be realized as [ə] as in [məht]< miht 'firewood' and [n̩sət] < nisit 'my foot'.

Clarke (personal communication) reported that younger speakers at North West River have collapsed inter-consonantal i and a as [ɨ].

There is evidence that neutralization is spreading to the short round vowel u as well. Béland observed that all short vowels are centralized in weak syllables so that the penultimate vowels in a:sukan 'bridge, pier, wharf' and asikan 'stockings' are phonetically identical(1978:302). Drapeau (1979) recorded "uspətən" for uspitun 'his arm' and "mələpəlu" for minupalu: 'it goes well' whereas Lemoine (1901) provided "ushpitun" and "milupalu" for the earlier stage of the Betsiamites dialect.

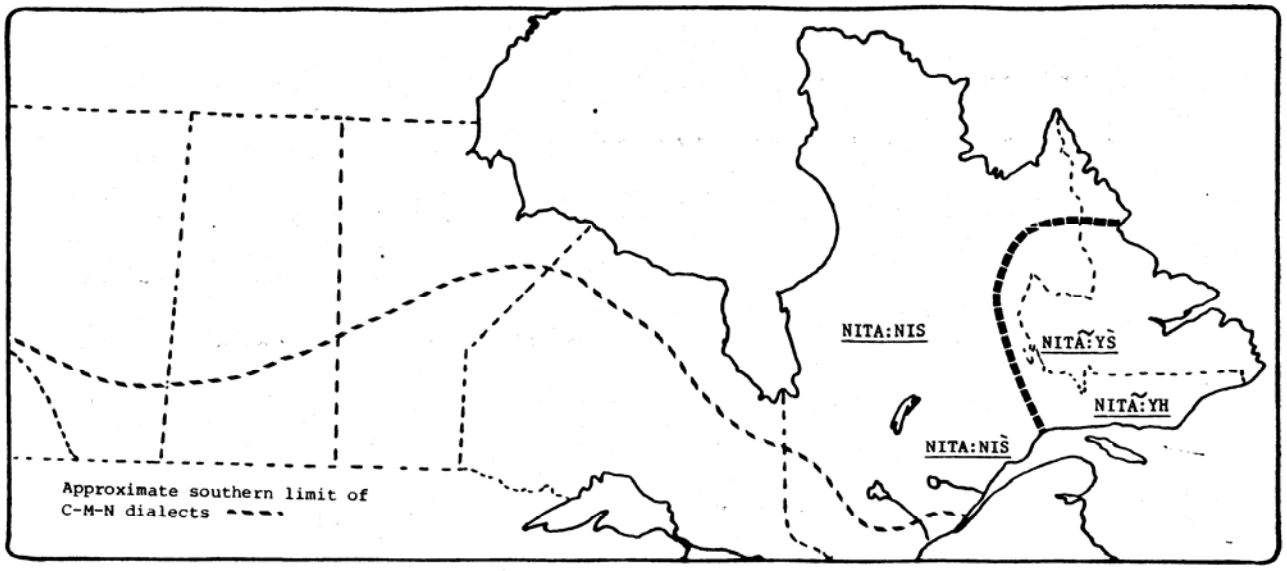
For Sept-Isles, Mailhot (personal communication) reported that young speakers use the following forms:

atusse:w	>	[təsse:w]	"he works"
mi:tus	>	[mi:təs]	"poplar"
pa:tus	>	[pa:təs]	"until"
minupaniw	>	[mənəpənu]	"it goes well"
minumi:cisuw	>	[mənəmi:cisu]	"he eats well"

3.7 Nasalization

Nasalization of vowels is generally absent from Cree-Montagnais-Naskapi. Nevertheless, in most of the n-dialects certain sequences have been nasalized. In the following examples from North West River it is demonstrated that this is due to the effect of the nasal consonant n, which is then deleted:

/nita:nisˋ/	>	[nitã:ysˋ]	'his daughter'
/wanisˋamw/	>	[wãyham]	'he carves it'
/wanisˋiniw/	>	[mãysˋinu:]	'he is lost'



Map 3-9 Nasalization of 'nita:nisˋ'

Map 3-9 shows the extent of nasalization of the word ni:ta:nisˋ, 'my daughter'. This is the only item which is consistently nasalized within every community where nasalization occurs.

At North West River and Mingan, the word wanisˋiniw 'he is lost' is recorded as [wãysˋinu] while for Mingan there is [wãyham] < wanisam 'he carves it'. These examples indicate that the rule of nasalization applies to sequences of -a(:)ni-. After the first vowel becomes nasalized, the nasal consonant is deleted and the second vowel becomes non-syllabic:

	/nita:niṡ/	/waniṡiniw/	/wanihamw/
nasalization	nitãniṡ	wãniṡiniw	wãnihamw
n drops	nitã:iṡ	wãiṡiniw	wãihamw
[- syllabic]	nitã:yṡ	wãyṡiniw	wãyhamw
other rules	[ṇtãyh]	[wãyṡinu:]	[wãyham]

The form [wanta:w] for wanihta:w 'he loses it' demonstrates that the syncope rule bleeds nasalization rule by altering the sequence -aniht- to [-ant-].

Besides these relatively transparent forms, there also exist problematic examples of nasalization in the Lower North Shore communities of Natashquan and La Romaine:

masinahikan	>	[maṡinãykan]	'book, paper'
caṡahikan	>	[cahãykan]	'broom'
ci:te:kahikan	>	[ci:te:kãykan]	'calendar'
cipaham	>	[cipãym]	'he closes it'
cipe:tu:n	>	[cipe:tð:n]	'you hear me'
nipe:ta:kw	>	[nipe:tã:kw]	'he hears me'

Although none of these sequences has an underlying nasal consonant as part of the nasalized sequence, in all but the last example, there is a nasal consonant elsewhere in the word. In the first four examples there might be a possibility that the nasalization rule had been generalized to sequences of [-ay]. This cannot, however, serve as an explanation of the final two examples.

The innovation of nasalized vowels in dialects which have been in contact with French for several hundred years presents an interesting case of language contact. At this time, too little data exists to be able to formulate an adequate phonological description of this process.