

These differences in the way in which the English and Montagnais or Naskapi language encode what is basically the same reality only cause difficulties when a speaker of one language tries to communicate in the second. This is particularly true for Indian children who have to learn to speak English. The fact that these differences occur, however, is common among the languages of the world. By learning other languages, we can be provided with an alternate way of viewing the world, and perhaps ourselves.

## 3. Dialect Differences

As explained in section 2, the dialects of Labrador Montagnais and Naskapi belong to a nation-wide continuum of dialects which include Plains Cree, Woods Cree, Swampy Cree, Atikamekw Cree, East Cree, Naskapi and Montagnais. This continuum is also referred to as the Cree Language complex.

One isogloss separates these dialects into two major groupings. The boundary reflects the fact that Proto-Algonquian \**k* is pronounced as *k* in some dialects and as *ch* in others. This substitution of *ch* for *k* is called a rule of Velar Palatalization, since a velar consonant *k* is changed to a palatal consonant *ch* whenever it occurs before a front vowel *e*, *i*, *ɛ*. Thus the dialects of this language complex split into two large groups, those which undergo the rule of Velar Palatalization and those which do not. The western group which retains *k* is referred to as non-palatalized, and the east group which uses *ch* as palatalized.

A second change subdivides both the palatalized and non-palatalized groups. The consonant which in the ancestor language, Proto-Algonquian, is \**l*, is pronounced in descendant dialects as either *y*, *n*, *ɛ*, *ɾ*, or *l*. The area covering by both types of subgroupings is shown on Map 3, while Table 2 gives examples of words which illustrate the variation.

The remarks in the remaining sections of this paper will focus on the palatalized dialects of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula. There are nineteen communities which fall into three linguistic sub-groups: East Cree, Naskapi and Montagnais. Each sub-grouped is further sub-divided according to differences in pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary. In fact the sub-division into smaller and smaller units which show linguistic differences can be carried on to the levels of each community, distinct groups within any one community and variations between individuals within a village.

## Montagnais and Naskapi

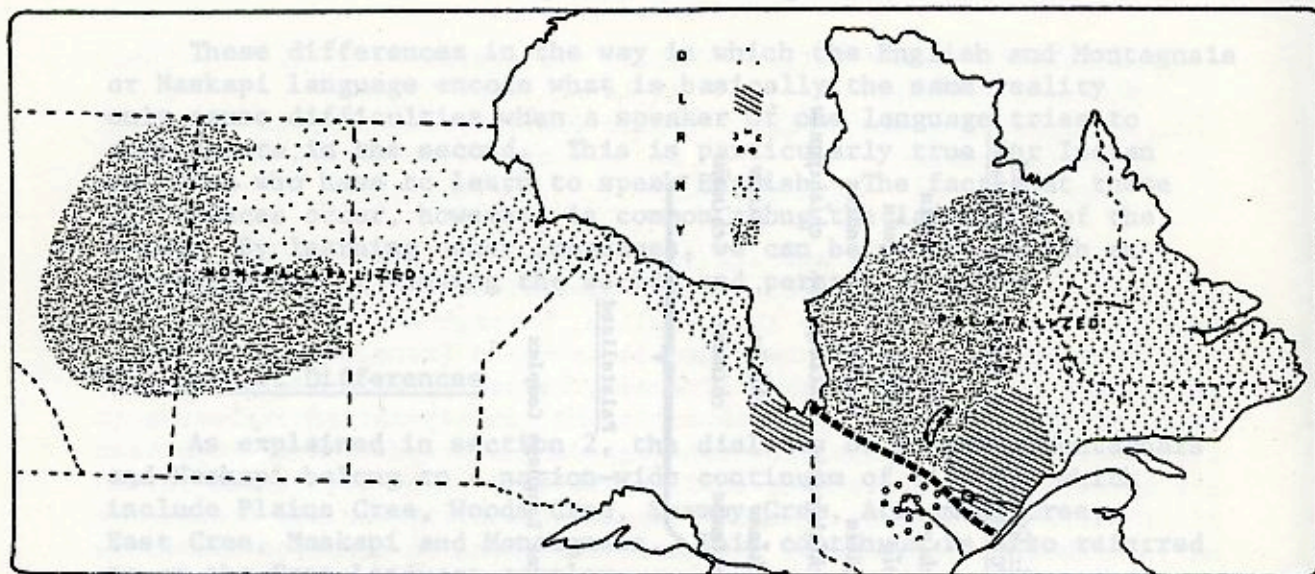
PA	Plains Cree	Woods Cree	Swampy Cree	Hoose Cree	Atkamew Cree	E. Cree FC. Nask.	W. Mont.	E. Mont. Dt. Nask.
you (s)	kīya	kīda	kīna	kīla	kīna	chīy	chīl	chīn
he	wīya	wīda	wīna	wīla	wīna	wīy	wīl	wīn
it is windy	yūtin	dūtin	nūtin	lūtin	nūtin	yūtin	lūtin	nūtin
it goes fast	kīshīpayiw	kīshīpadiw	kīshīpaniw	kīshīpaliw	kīshīpaniw	chīshīpayiw	chīshīpaliw	chīshīpaniw
it is sharp, pointed	kīnāw	kīnāw	kīnāw	kīnāw	kīnāw	chīnāw	chīnāw	chīnāw
it is long	kīnāwū	kīnāwū	kīnāwū	kīnāwū	kīnāwū	chīnāwū	chīnāwū	chīnāwū

Non-palatalized Palatalized

## Two Widespread Dialect Differences in the Cree Language Complex

Table 2

## Montagnais and Naskapi



Non-Palatalized and Palatalized Dialects

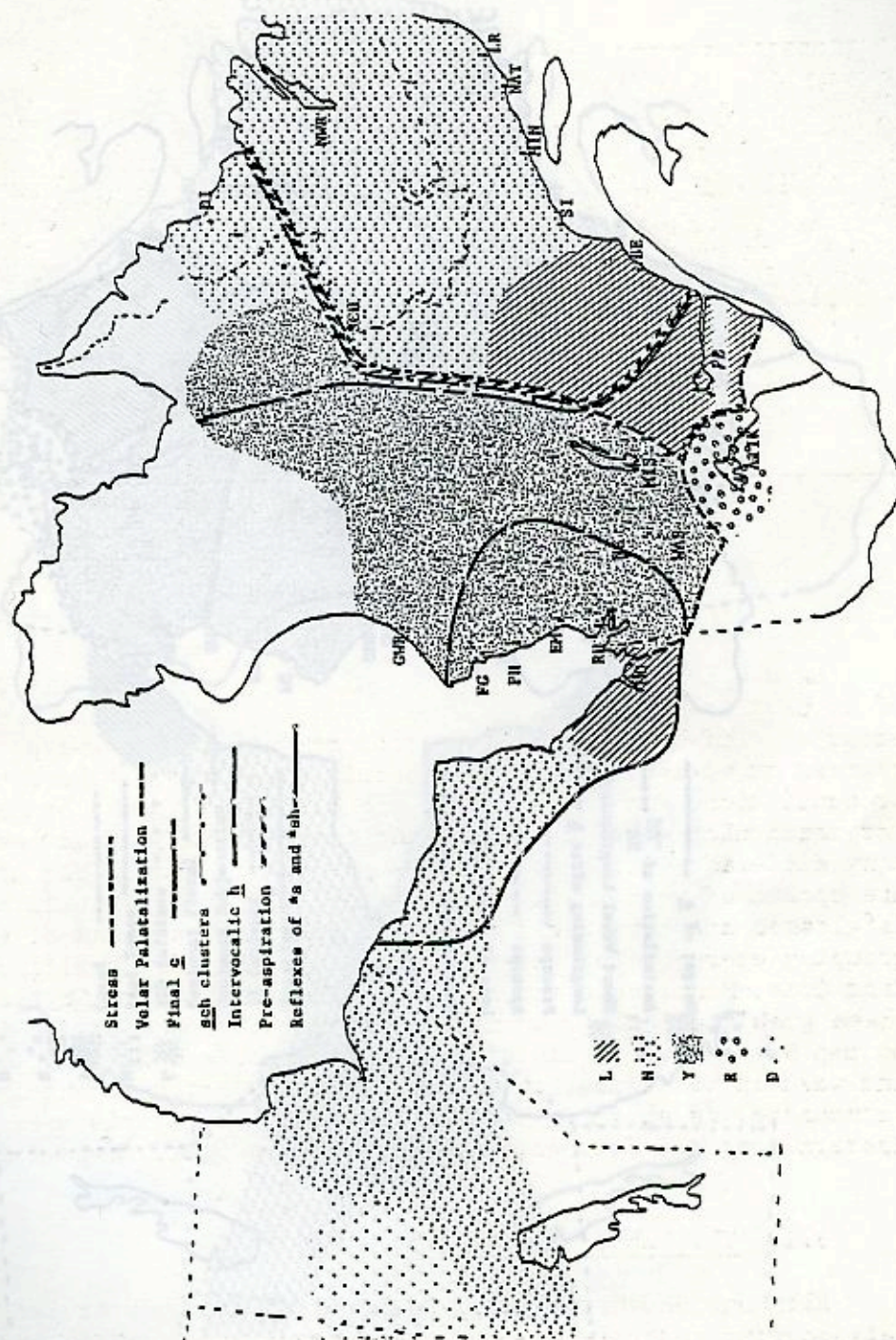
Map 3

Maps 4 through 8 show the isoglosses, or linguistic boundaries of particular linguistic features. It is clear that the isoglosses occur at different places depending on whether pronunciation, grammar or vocabulary are considered. Just within the area of pronunciation, for instance, it can be seen that the boundaries for particular vowel and consonant changes are located between many different villages. This is one reason that a set of dialects are spoken of as a chain or continuum. If, however, all the isoglosses are considered together, distinct patterns of sub-grouping emerge. In Quebec-Labrador, the largest groupings are East Cree, Montagnais and Naskapi. The area covered by each of these groups and the communities which comprise them are illustrated on map 9. A further division of Montagnais and Naskapi into eastern and western varieties, on the basis of how Proto-Algonquian \*1 is pronounced, is shown on Table 2. Western Montagnais uses *l* while Eastern uses *n*. Fort Chimo Naskapi uses *y* while Davis Inlet uses *n*.

### 3.1. The Labrador Dialects

Although Sheshatshiu and Davis Inlet are more or less neighbouring communities, the dialect spoken in one is very different in many respects from that spoken in the other. This is not surprising since Sheshatshiu dialect is part of the Montagnais

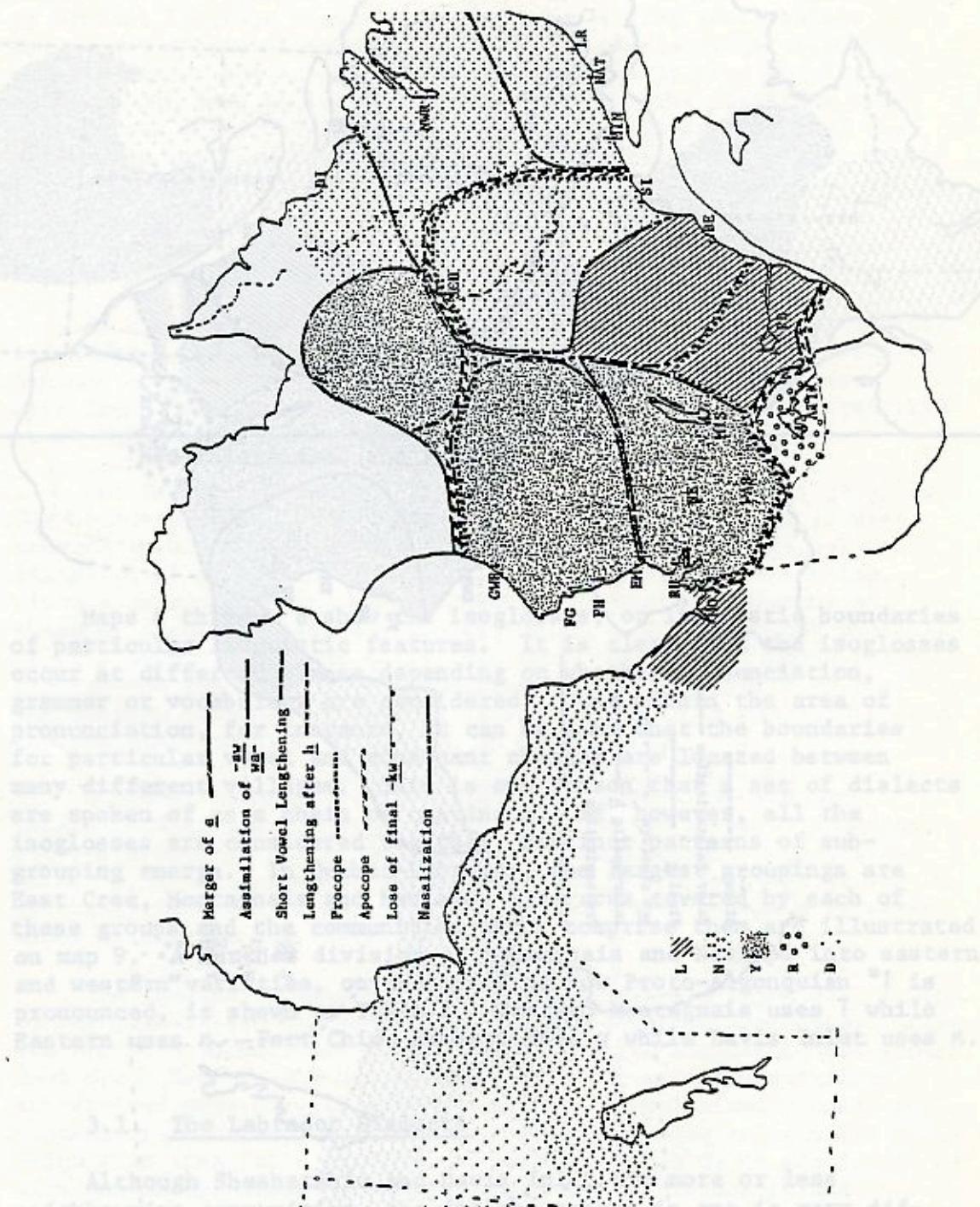
# Montagnais and Naskapi



Some Consonant Isoglosses

Map 4

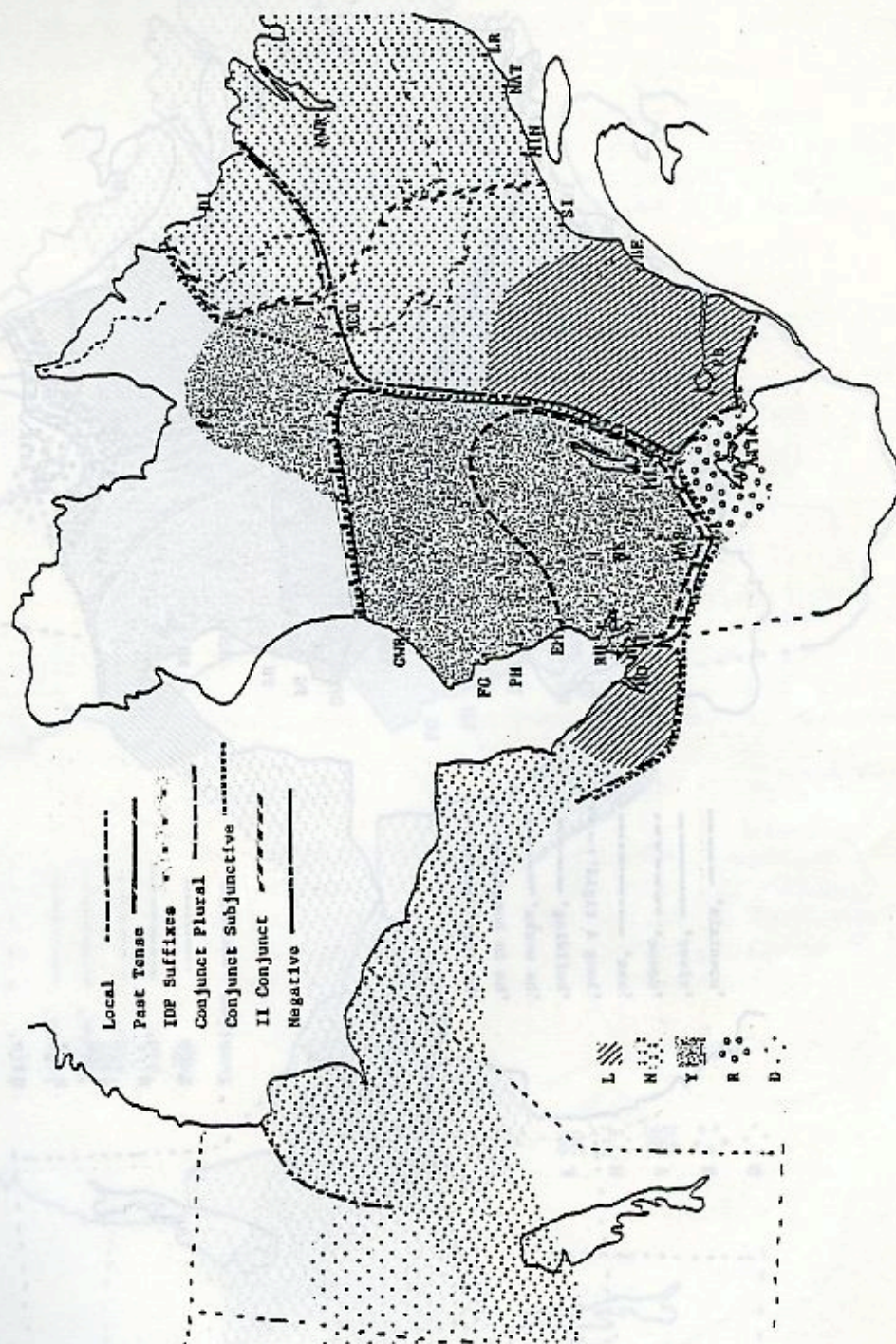
# Montagnais and Naskapi



Some Vowel Isoglosses

Map 5

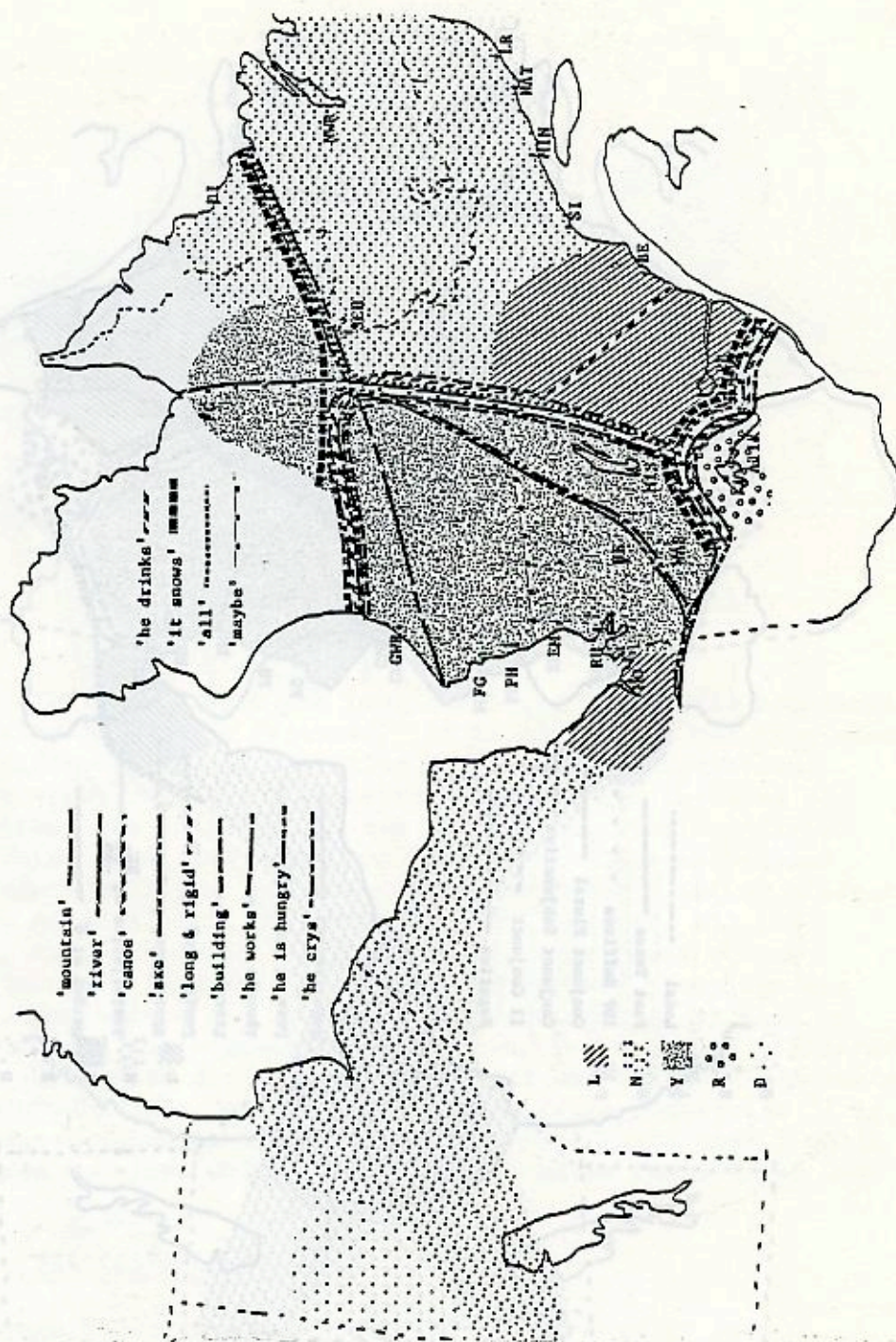
# Montagnais and Naskapi



Some Grammatical Isoglosses

Map 6

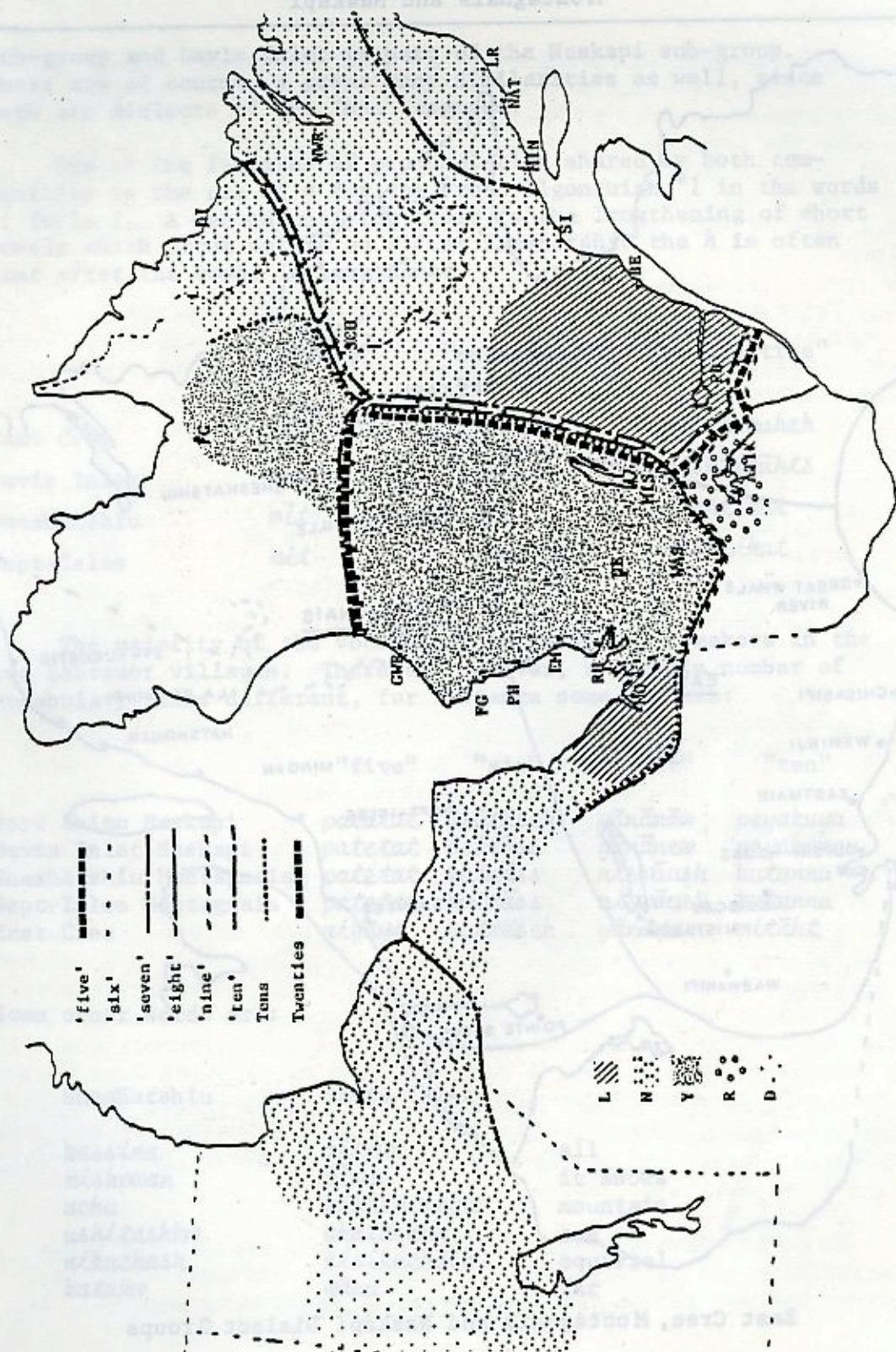
# Montagnais and Naskapi



Some Lexical Isoglosses

Map 7

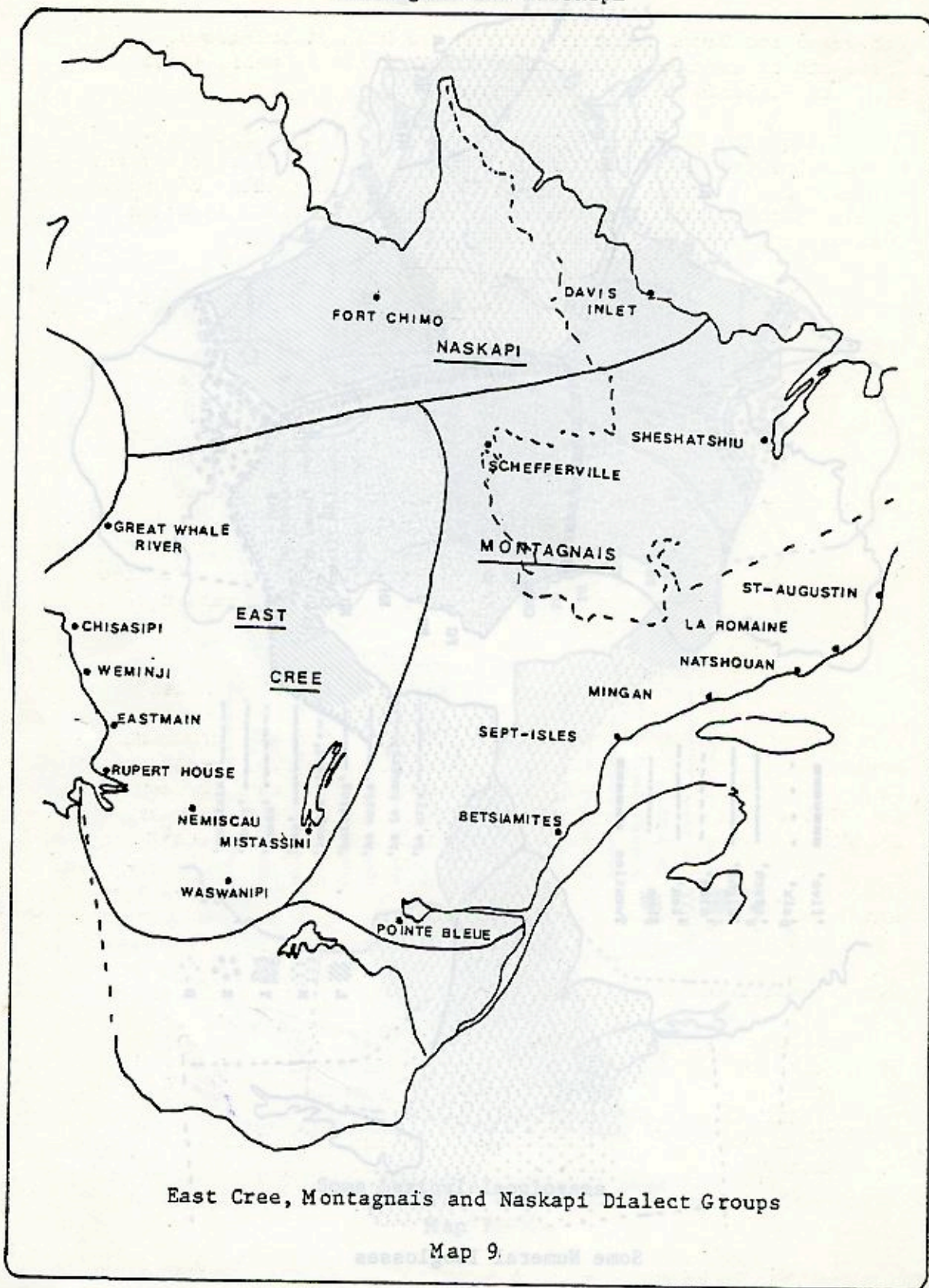
# Montagnais and Naskapi



Some Numeral Isoglosses

Map 8

# Montagnais and Naskapi



East Cree, Montagnais and Naskapi Dialect Groups

Map 9.

# Montagnais and Naskapi

sub-group and Davis Inlet is part of the Naskapi sub-group. There are of course, a great many similarities as well, since both are dialects of the Innu language.

One of the features of pronunciation shared by both communities is the use of *n* for the Proto-Algonquian \**l* in the words of Table 2. A second unifying trait is the lengthening of short vowels which occur before an *h*. At Sheshatshiu the *h* is often lost after the vowel is lengthened.

	"firewood"	"snowshoe needle"	"in the tree"
East Cree	<i>miht</i>	<i>amahk</i>	<i>mishtikuhch</i>
Davis Inlet	<i>mīht</i>	<i>amāhk</i>	<i>mishtikūhts</i>
Sheshatshiu	<i>mīt</i>	<i>amāk</i>	<i>mishtikūt</i>
Sept-Isles	<i>mit</i>	<i>amak</i>	<i>mishtikut</i>

The majority of the vocabulary is shared by speakers in the two Labrador villages. There are however, a certain number of vocabulary items different, for instance some numbers:

	"five"	"six"	"eight"	"ten"
Fort Chimo Naskapi	<i>patātat</i>	<i>āsūtāsch</i>	<i>yānānāw</i>	<i>peyakuyu</i>
Davis Inlet Naskapi	<i>patetat</i>	<i>āsūtāss</i>	<i>yānānew</i>	<i>peyakunnu</i>
Sheshatshiu Montagnais	<i>patetat</i>	<i>kutwāss</i>	<i>niswāush</i>	<i>kutunnu</i>
Sept-Isles Montagnais	<i>patetat</i>	<i>kutwāss</i>	<i>niswāush</i>	<i>kutunnu</i>
East Cree	<i>niyāyw</i>	<i>kutwāsch</i>	<i>yānānew</i>	<i>mitāht</i>

Some other words are:

Sheshatshiu	Davis Inlet	
<i>kassinu</i>	<i>mišiwē</i>	all
<i>mišhpwan</i>	<i>pīwan</i>	it snows
<i>uchu</i>	<i>pishkutīnāw</i>	mountain
<i>ushitashkw</i>	<i>akatāshkw</i>	axe
<i>nikuchash</i>	<i>nisikuchāsh</i>	squirrel
<i>katakw</i>	<i>wānu</i>	far

## Montagnais and Naskapi

A grammatical difference between Davis Inlet and Sheshatshiu occurs in the way that simple Independent verbs are made negative. The Independent verb for "he sleeps" is *nipāw*. In Davis Inlet, to make the negative statement "he does not sleep" a particle *nama* or *ma* is used before the verb: *(na)ma nipāw*. In Sheshatshiu, however, a different particle *apū* is used and, in addition, the verb must be used in the Conjunct form: *apū nipāt* "he does not sleep".

There are also a number of differences in pronunciation. Words which end in *-t* at Sheshatshiu, at Davis Inlet end in *-ts*. This change affects the plural marker for animate nouns and the locative marker.

Sheshatshiu	Davis Inlet	
<i>awāssat</i>	<i>awāssats</i>	children
<i>shīshīpat</i>	<i>shīshīpats</i>	ducks
<i>astishat</i>	<i>astishats</i>	mittens

In many dialects a sequence of *h* plus a consonant is a very common cluster: *hp*, *ht*, *hch*, *hk*. This *h* before a consonant, referred to as pre-aspiration, is not as widely used at Sheshatshiu since many instances of *h* have been lost.

Sheshatshiu	Davis Inlet	
<i>mīchiwāp</i>	<i>mīchiwāhp</i> or <i>mīchiwāf</i>	house
<i>ishpimīt</i>	<i>ishpimīhts</i>	above
<i>mīt</i>	<i>mīht</i>	firewood
<i>atīkw</i>	<i>atīhkw</i> or <i>atīxw</i>	caribou

The words for "house" and "caribou" indicate that a further change in pronunciation is taking place at Davis Inlet. The pre-aspirated clusters *hp* and *hk* are often pronounced as the fricatives *ɸ* and *x* respectively.

We do not have a clear idea of what facts account for these similarities and differences. Certainly the existence of social contact between groups can be expected to offer some answers. At

this time, unfortunately, little is known about the type and extent of these contacts even in the recorded past. The answers remain to be sought in the study of ethno-history and the spread of linguistic change through contacts of marriage and trade.

### 3.2. Linguistic Variation Within the Community

Among Montagnais speakers in the village of Sheshatshiu there exists a great deal of variation in the way people pronounce words and even in the vocabulary they use. The situation of variability is normal in any speech community. Because a language is continually changing, differences are found between different age groups; because language reflects social situations and relationships, difference can be expected between formal and informal contexts, the speech of men and women, higher and lower economic classes and speakers of different ethnic origin. And, of course, differences will occur between speakers who have come from different geographic regions of a country.

Within Sheshatshiu, speech differences are most noticeable between older and younger speakers and between speakers whose families are of different geographic origin. Four distinct groups of people are identified within the village: the *Uāshāu-innu* group associated with Sept-Isles; the *Maskuānu-innu* group associated with villages on the Lower North Shore of the St. Lawrence River; the *Mushuāu-innu* group associated with Davis Inlet and finally a *Sheshātshiu-innu* group. In the fall of 1981, a research project was initiated by linguists and anthropologists at Memorial University. The object of this study is the mapping of variation in features of pronunciation and grammar. A sample of 30% of the population between the ages of 14-90, was chosen and divided into four generational groups: teenagers, young adults, middle-aged and old people; equal numbers of men and women; representatives of all identified groups; people with varying degrees of education and people who had chosen either a bush-oriented or wage-labour oriented life. Information was also obtained regarding the level of education, amount of English spoken as well as degree of contact outside the community and social networks of family background. All participants were recorded as they repeated a list of several hundred words and spoke for ten minutes or more of connected discourse. The word list is designed to produce a more formal style of speech, while the free conversation should reveal an informal style.

# Montagnais and Naskapi

Although the results of this survey will not be fully analyzed until 1983, several patterns of variation have emerged. There is a distinct difference between older and younger speakers, and formal and informal styles. As well, the regional origin and affiliations of specific family groups is reflected in their speech patterns.

The speech of the older generation is generally characterized by a more careful pronunciation. In the speech of the younger generation initial vowels and whole syllables are often left out.

<u>Older</u>	<u>Younger</u>	
ashtish	shtish	mitten
ashām	shām	snowshoe
ashinī	shinī	stone
metuwākan	metuwān	toy
mīchishuwākan	mīchishuwān	table
tāpishkākan	tāpishkān	headscarf

Many teenagers have added *y-* to the words beginning in *ā-*.

āpatin	yāpatin	it is useful
ānew	yānew	he places him
āshtuwaym	yāshtuwaym	he extinguishes it

Certain variations of pronunciation can be used in more than one situation. This is the case of the pronunciation of *sh* as *h* as, for instance, in the following words:

<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Innovative</u>	
ashinī	ahinī	stone
pineshīsh	pinehīsh	small bird
apishīsh	pihīsh	a little
ustesha	usteha	his older brother

## Montagnais and Naskapi

The innovative pronunciation tends to be used more frequently by young speakers. It is also used by older speakers in informal style - when using a formal style, these older people generally use the conservative pronunciation. It is suspected that young speakers would use the forms with *h* in both formal and informal styles. In addition, there is a sub-group of older speakers who also use the *h* forms in both styles; these are people whose family background is connected with Lower North Shore Montagnais villages of Mingan, Natashquan, La Romaine and St-Augustin and who belong to the *Maskuānu-innu* group. In the dialects spoken on the Lower North Shore, the change of *sh* to *h* occurs not only between two vowels, but also at the beginning or end of a word, or before a consonant.

Conservative Sheshatshiu	Innovative Sheshatshiu	LNS	
<i>apishish</i>	<i>apihish</i>	<i>apihih</i>	a little
<i>shīpū</i>	<i>shīpū</i>	<i>hīpu</i>	river
<i>nishtesh</i>		<i>nisteh</i>	my elder brother
<i>ishpimīt</i>	(same as Conservative)	<i>ihpimīt</i>	above
<i>mashkw</i>		<i>mahkw</i>	bear

Some individuals from Sheshatshiu who have very strong family ties to the Lower North Shore villages, especially St-Augustin, may be expected to have a higher percentage of *h* in all positions in the word in their speech. In addition, the social factor of situation may trigger changes in pronunciation. A member of the *Maskuānu-innu* group may have a low percentage of *sh* changed to *h* when speaking to a member of the *Uāshāu* group, but switch to a high percentage of *h* when speaking to a relative from St-Augustin or when visiting Lower Shore communities.

The speech of members of the *Mūshuāu-innu* group at Sheshatshiu is marked by pronunciation and vocabulary from the Davis Inlet dialect, such as final *-ts* instead of *-t*, as described in 3.1. But since the *Mūshuāu-innu* speakers are continually interacting with speakers of other dialects within the village, they will most likely use both *-ts* and *-t* in their daily speech sometimes saying *napeuts*, sometimes *napeut* "men".

In the Sept-Isles dialect, a different ending is used to mark the past tense of verbs. "I slept" is *ninipātī*, while at Sheshatshiu

it is *ni-nipāh*. The speech of members of the *Uāshau-innu* group within the community may use both forms of the past tense, thereby marking the geographic origin of their families' ties with Sept-Isles.

The situation of extensive variation within this Labrador Montagnais community provides a real laboratory for the study of sociolinguistic variation and of historical change with a language. It is expected that the completion of the research study on linguistic variability recently undertaken will make a significant contribution to the understanding of how language works in real life, rather than in a grammar book.

#### 4. Language and Education

##### 4.1. Native Language in the Schools

When Montagnais and Naskapi children in Labrador first begin school, they speak little or no English. The schooling available to them, however, is almost exclusively in English. This situation, which is very common in the Northern areas of Canada, has unfortunate consequences for the quality of education.

In both Indian communities of Labrador there is a day school, operated by the Roman Catholic School Board, which children attend. At Sheshatshiu, kindergarten through grade eleven is offered, while at Davis Inlet only the elementary grades are offered. Until now children who wish to attend higher grades have had to leave the village for Happy Valley, Labrador City, Corner Brook or St. John's. More often than not students who attempt to further their education in a larger centre are unsuccessful; of the many reasons contributing to this situation, language is a very important one.

Speakers of Montagnais and Naskapi are in a minority-language situation within Newfoundland and Labrador since there are, at most, eight hundred speakers. Minority languages are common throughout the world. Within Canada as a whole, every language except English is in the minority. Within Newfoundland, Gaelic, French, Inuttut, Micmac, Montagnais, Naskapi and formerly, Beothuck, formed minority speech communities.

Historically, it has been considered desirable that minority speakers learn and use the language of the majority, as part of their assimilation in the Canadian melting pot. More recently, however, "there has developed a more 'pluralistic' view of education, the aim of which is to preserve to a degree the language and culture of ethnic minorities" (Clarke and MacKenzie 1980b:205).