Innu and English Structures

Marguerite MacKenzie, Julie Brittain and Laurel Anne Hasler

Based on a similar document prepared for teachers in the Cree School Board of Quebec by Julie Brittain, Marguerite MacKenzie and Marie-Odile Junker in 2010. It has been adapted for Innu with permission.

2010

Department of Linguistics Memorial University of Newfoundland



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FOREWORD

This booklet aims to provide a description of some of the principal features of the Innu language, from the perspective of someone whose mother tongue is English. It is revised from a booklet prepared for the Cree School Board in 2009 by Julie Brittain and Marguerite MacKenzie of Memorial University and Marie-Odile Junker of Carleton University. We have tried to think of the reader as a classroom teacher, and to anticipate the types of information the teacher may want to know about how, as languages, Innu and English are similar, and how they differ.

Every language in the world has a grammar – a set of rules speakers follow without, for the most part, being aware of doing so. Every language also has a vocabulary – a finite set of words that speakers combine in different ways to build sentences, or to understand other people's sentences. It is thus not surprising that the grammars of Innu and English are alike in many ways, and we highlight these similarities in this booklet. For example, one answer to the question, "How are Innu and English the same?" will be that they have many of the same parts of speech (section 1.4). Teachers can create lessons that focus on identifying these grammatical categories in both languages.

How about the differences? Clearly, any two languages we look at are going to differ in some respects. Most obviously, the words are different: the Innu word for 'man' is *nâpeu*, the Spanish word is *hombre*, and so on. The grammar rules will also differ in some, but never all, respects. As we explain in this booklet, while English adjectives are separate words (e.g., *red, black, happy, sad, soft, hard*), in Innu the same concepts are often expressed as part of the verb (section 4.1). Here, the grammars of each of these two languages have rather different ways of doing essentially the same thing. What does this mean for second language learning?

There is an academic literature which focuses on the ways in which a person's first language (L1) may interfere with the proficient learning of a second language (L2), and clearly the substance of this discussion differs depending on what the L1 and L2 are; for example, L1 Chinese/L2 Spanish will be a different discussion than L1 German/L2 Dutch. In our booklet, we provide detailed discussion of this issue for Innu speakers learning English with respect to pronunciation (Section 1.2). We also highlight some areas where the grammars of the two languages differ somewhat and in these cases recommend explicit teaching as a short cut to the children learning the point well. (See *Student Tasks* sections, marked with the symbol) Paying particular attention to these grammar points in class may help students learn more rapidly by raising their awareness of the grammars of both languages.

We wish to be very clear about one thing from the outset, however: **none of the differences between Innu and English will pose a major obstacle to an Innu speaker learning English**. To reiterate, no two languages are alike in all ways and so every learner of a second language, no matter what the L1 and L2, has challenges to overcome. Children are especially good language learners, as most adults will have noticed. For reasons science has yet to adequately explain, children are particularly well-equipped in terms of their cognitive abilities to acquire new languages. With adequate exposure to English, good teaching, and lots of practice, it is generally the case that any child can learn any language.

What we feel will help the child in learning English, and in particular in learning how to read and write, will be understanding the grammar of his or her own mother tongue (in this case Innu), and knowing how to write in the mother tongue. If students and teachers can talk about the Innu grammar and how to write in Innu, this knowledge will be transferred to English. With the appropriate pedagogical support (curriculum, materials and teaching) there is no impediment to Innu-speaking children successfully acquiring English as a spoken and written language.

1. OVERVIEW

1.1 VARIATION: INNU IS NOT THE SAME EVERYWHERE

There are two dialects of Innu spoken in Labrador: one in **Sheshatshiu** and one in **Natuashish**. As students often move from one dialect area to another, it is important that teachers be aware of these differences.

Although the two dialects often have different pronunciation and vocabulary, a common spelling system - also used in the Innu communities in Quebec - is used in many cases.

The following table shows a few words that are different in the dialects spoken in Sheshatshiu and Natuashish:

English	Sheshatshiu	Natuashish
ten	kutunnu	peikunnu
eight	nishuaush	nianeu
it's snowing	mishpun	piuan
Friday	namesh	namesh-muakan
far	kâtâk ^u	uâiu

There are also grammatical differences between the two dialects. For example, the animate plural ending in the **Mushuau dialect** (spoken in Natuashish) is *–ats*, whereas in the Sheshatshiu dialect (and other dialects of Innu) it is *–at*:

English	Sheshatshiu	Natuashish
mitten	ashtisha	ashtisha
mitten s	ashtish at	ashtish ats
child	auass	auass
children	auass at	auass ats

Note: Through this manual, the standard spelling of the animate plural ending –*at* will be used.



The Cree-Montagnais (Innu)-Naskapi language family in Canada is made up of a number of dialects. Although they have different names, Naskapi and Cree are closely related to Innu. Dialect variation is found in all languages.



A map of the dialects with the pronunciations of many words and phrases can be found at: <u>www.atlas-ling.ca</u>.

1.2 INNU AND ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION

When Innu children learn to speak English they often make certain pronunciation errors that are the result of interference from their first language, Innu. As Innu speakers are increasingly bilingual, and hear English regularly on TV, their pronunciation of English will improve, but spelling difficulties often arise from pronunciation differences while children are learning the rules of English spelling.

The same spelling difficulties occur for children who speak non-standard varieties of English, for instance rural Newfoundland or African American dialects. Therefore, good teaching of the pronunciation of English words and rules of spelling is important for everyone.

TEACHING TIP 💖

A useful handbook, *From Cree to English* by Marilylle Soveran (c. 1968), focuses on Plains Cree and contains valuable explanations and pronunciation drills for teachers, most of which can also be used with Innu students. A copy of this book is available for download in the references section of the <u>www.eastcree.org</u> website at: <u>http://eastcree.org/en/resources/Soveran_Cree_to_English.pdf</u>

An explanation of how to do a pronunciation drill, including examples of contrasting word pairs from Soveran's book, appear in the Appendix.

CONSONANTS AND VOWELS

Innu has fewer consonant and vowel sounds than English. This means that Innu children learning to speak English have to learn to hear and pronounce several **new sounds**. Until they can do this, they will use the closest sound from Innu in place of the English one.

For example, an Innu child might replace the *r* or *l* in an English word with *n*. This replacement of unknown sounds (and grammar) by known ones in the early stages of learning a new language is referred to as **interference** from the first language.

Speakers of Innu may experience interference in pronouncing particular letters, pairs of consonants, some vowels, and most consonant clusters in English.

Original English Name	Resulting Innu Name	Change in Pronunciation
Mary	Mânî	<i>r</i> is replace by <i>n</i>
Andre	Ântane	<i>a</i> is inserted before <i>r; r</i> is replaced by <i>n</i>
Pierre	Pien	r is replaced by n
Marguerite	Mânikanet	<i>r</i> is replaced by <i>n</i> ; <i>i</i> is inserted before <i>k</i>
Matthew	Mâtiu	'th' is pronounced t
Helen	Enen	'h' is deleted; l is replaced by n

Examples of this process occur in the traditional Innu pronunciation of proper names:

Note: These pronunciation difficulties are not serious obstacles to understanding what a student is saying and usually resolve themselves as the student gets older.

STOP CONSONANTS AND AFFRICATES

Stop consonants are consonants that momentarily stop the air as it leaves the mouth. English has six **stop consonants**: *p*, *b*, *t*, *d*, *k*, and *g*. These consist of three pairs of voiced/voiceless stops: p/b, t/d, and k/g. When the voiced members of these pairs (b,d,g) are pronounced, the vocal cords vibrate, giving a louder sound. The voiceless stops (p,t,k), on the other hand, have no vibration and are closer to whispers.

Additionally, there is a voiceless/voiced pair of **affricates**: *ch/j*. These sounds begin with a stop (followed by a fricative), and we will include them in this description of stop consonants.

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Innu does not have this voiceless/voiced distinction, and therefore only the four voiceless sounds are written in Innu: *p*, *t*, *tsh*, and *k*. Each of these has several possible pronunciations, either more like the English voiceless sounds *p*, *t*, *tsh*, *k* or like the voiced ones *b*, *d*, *g*, *j*.

For an Innu child learning English, then, the minimal pairs '**p**in/**b**in,' '**t**in/**d**in,' '**ch**ar/**j**ar,' '**c**ome/**g**um' will sound virtually the same. As a result, an Innu child may pronounce pairs like these exactly the same way.

POINT OF INTEREST:

The letter sequence **tsh** is the Innu equivalent of English **ch**. Writing **tsh** in Innu instead of **ch** is the result of the French-based writing system. Here are some equivalences between the consonant sounds:

English	Innu
p/b t/d	р
t/d	t
ch/j	tsh
k/g	k
s/sh/z	sh or ss
h	h
m	m
n	n
у	i
w	u

TEACHING TIP 💖

The difference between the pairs of English sounds can be taught by use of a pronunciation drill in which students must hear and pronounce pairs of problem words like the ones given in the following table:

Voiceless	Voiced
puck	buck
tab	dab
cab	gab
chin	gin
card	guard

See further examples of contrasting word pairs from Soveran in the Appendix. **FRICATIVE CONSONANTS**

Fricatives are consonants that make a hissing sound when pronounced. English has <u>nine</u> fricatives, four voiceless/voiced pairs *f/v, th* (as in 'those'), *th* (as in 'thick'), *s/z, sh/zh* and *h*. Innu, on the other hand, has only <u>three</u>: *s, sh,* and *h*.

As expected, an Innu speaker who is learning English will substitute the nearest equivalent sound in Innu when speaking in English: **p** for *f*/*v*; **t** for *th*; and **s** or **sh** for *s*/*z*, *sh*/*zh*.

TEACHING TIP 💖

These English sounds can also be taught by use of a pronunciation drill in which students learn to hear and pronounce pairs of problem words like the ones given in the following table. In the case of f/v and th/d/t, not only do students need to distinguish between fricatives and stops but also between voiceless/voiced pairs of fricatives:

f/v	p/f	b/v
ferry/very	pair/fair	berry/very/(ferry)
wafer/waver	supper/suffer	rebel/revel
safe/save	leap/leaf (leave)	dub/dove/(duff)
th	t/th	d/th
theft/then	tin/thin	den/then/(ten)
ether/either	sheeting/sheathing	udder/other/(utter)
bath/bathe	bat/bath	tide/tithe/(tight)

Similarly, words that contain the voiceless/voiced pairs *s*/*z* and *s*/*/zh* will present the same difficulties, and can be practiced by students as a pronunciation drill:

s/sh	s/z	sh/zh
see/she	seal/zeal	masher/measure
masses/mashes	prices/prizes	thresher/treasure
muss/mush	lice/lies	dilution/allusion

More suggestions for drilling these and other problem sounds can be found in the Appendix. $^{\%}$

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CONSONANT CLUSTERS

With practice, students will learn to pronounce the new sounds, particularly at the beginning of words. It is relatively easy to hear the difference between consonants when they occur before a vowel. However, it is much more difficult to hear and pronounce these sounds when they occur in **consonant clusters**.

Innu has far fewer consonant clusters (less than twenty) than English (which has more than two hundred). One strategy Innu speakers use to make these clusters pronounceable is to insert a vowel between the consonants (for example, saying *Ântane* for *André*). Innu children may have difficulty in both hearing and pronouncing these clusters. It is to be expected, then, that they will also have difficulty in spelling them. Teachers have confirmed that this does happen.

Clusters ending in *s* or *z*, which mark the plural and possessives of nouns (pa**nts**, ba**nds**, Joh**n's**, au**nt's**) as well as the third person singular present tense (hit/hi**ts**, stand/sta**nds**), may be difficult for learners since the -*s* may be hard to hear or pronounce.

POINT OF INTEREST

Also, the *-ed* past tense in English (pass/passed, buzz/buzzed), which has several pronunciations, is often deleted. If the student does not write the *-ed* ending because it is not pronounced, the teacher may think the student is unaware of the existence of the past tense, which may not be the case. Other problem pairs include: can/can't, could/couldn't, should/shouldn't. Telling children to pronounce *can't* as *cannot* or *shouldn't* as *should not* is not a good option since this is not natural English and not frequently heard in everyday speech. The aim should instead be to make children aware of the casual style of speech most frequently used.

VOWELS

The pronunciation of **vowels** is less problematic. Innu has four vowels (a, e, i, u) but each written vowel can be pronounced at least two ways, as illustrated in the table below (from Clarke and MacKenzie's *Labrador Innu-aimun: an introduction to the Sheshatshiu dialect*).

Innu Spelling		Sound	Exa	ample
â		ranges from a in 'f a t' to a	tshi â shk ^u	gull
		in 'f a ther'	p â shu	s/he is dry
а	(1)	as in English 'sof a '	n a mesh	fish
	(2)	as in English 'b u t'	pet a m ^u	s/he hears it
	(1)	as in English 's ay '	n e te	over there
			tâpu e	really
е			mâtsh e shu	fox
	(2)	as in English 'm e t'	e shk ^u	still, again
			ishku e ss	girl
		as in English 'b ee '	sh î pu	river
î			m î na	berries
			n î p î sha	tea
		as in English 'b i t', 'th e ',	n i shk	goose
i		'sof a '	n i pî	water
			am i shk ^u	beaver
û		varies between 'o' of	k û n	snow
		't o ne' and 'u' of 'J u ne'	k û kûsh	pig
u	(1)	ranges from vowel in	âk u shu	s/he is sick
	(2)	'p u t' to vowels in 'd o ' or	mashk u shu	grass, hay
	(3)	't o ne'	m u k ^u	just, but
			mîkushî u	s/he is red

Note: The **circumflex accent** (^) indicates a long vowel.

TEACHING TIP 💖

Vowel pronunciation exercises can be found in the Soveran book, if needed. 💖

VOWEL QUALITY

Innu vowels noted as 'long' are not distinguished from 'short' vowels simply by phonetic quantity or length, but also by quality or **timbre**.

As in English, short vowels in Innu tend to be reduced to a neutral centralized [ə] as in 'the', unlike long vowels, which preserve their distinct quality. Among younger speakers, the short vowels *i* and *a* have almost completely fallen together, so that the first syllable of words like *nimish* and *namesh* are indistinguishable.

The rounded vowels [û] and [u], while not always distinguished – for example, both are realized as [o] in a final open syllable – may be differentiated in word-initial position. Thus word-initial \hat{u} is heard as [o], while word-initial u may be pronounced [wə], [wo] or [o], depending on its historical origin.

DIPHTHONGS

Diphthongs are combinations of two vowels, as shown in the following table:

eu	close to English 'mayo'	ishku eu	woman
au/âu	as in English 'l ou d'	nuâpam âu	I see him/her
îu	as in English ' you '	mîkush îu	s/he is red
ei	as in English 'd ay '	ut ei	his/her heart
ai	as in English 'm ay '	m ai kan	wolf
ui/uî	as in English 'ph ooey '	ар иî	oar, paddle

1.3 THE SIZE OF WORDS

English uses many separate words and few prefixes and suffixes. Innu, on the other hand, uses <u>hundreds</u> of different prefixes and suffixes that combine with verbs, and, to a lesser extent, with nouns.

A simple English sentence might consist of five or six words, but the same information can be conveyed in Innu using just one or two words.

For example:	Nika mishta-muâtîkuen.	(2 words)
	'I ate a lot of caribou.'	(6 words)

POINT OF INTEREST

There are far more verbs in the Innu language than nouns. Of approximately 27,000 Innu words in the pan-Innu dictionary 5,000 are nouns and 20,500 are verbs. The rest are words like adverbs, pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, etc.

There are hundreds of verb endings in Innu, while there are only a few in English: (-*s*, -*ed*, -*en*, -*ing*). Many Innu verbal suffixes function as subject or object **agreement** (Section 1.6), allowing speakers the option of leaving the nouns out. Innu sentences therefore tend to have fewer words than their English equivalents, but the Innu words contain more information. On the other hand, English sentences will have more words with the information spread across many different words.

1.4 PARTS OF SPEECH

Innu has many of the same **parts of speech** as English, including: nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and so on. However, the proportion in the vocabulary is different. For example, in Innu many concepts are expressed by verbs rather than by nouns. For this reason, there are many more verbs in Innu than in English (and consequently fewer nouns).

Main parts of speech	Innu	English
Nouns	✓	~
Verbs	✓	✓
Adverbs	✓	✓
Prepositions	✓	✓
Adjectives	no	\checkmark

Grammatical parts of speech	Innu	English
Pronouns	✓	✓
Subordinating Conjunctions	✓	✓
Coordinating Conjunctions	✓	✓
Demonstratives	✓	✓
Quantifiers	✓	✓
Articles	no	✓
Preverbs	✓	no

Traditionally, only three parts of speech have been recognized in Innu and related languages: **verbs**, **nouns** and **particles**. As the set of particles includes any word that is neither a verb nor a noun, this is quite a large set. For this reason, particles are further subdivided according to their function and/or meaning, for example:

- particles of location, such as *pîtukamît* 'inside'
- particles of manner, such as *shassikut* 'suddenly'
- particles of quantity, such as *apishîsh* 'a little'

1.5 NOUNS: GRAMMATICAL GENDER

In French, nouns are either masculine or feminine: for example, *le chalet* 'the cabin' (masculine) vs. *la maison* 'the house' (feminine). This grouping of nouns is called Gender and the Gender of the noun affects the choice of word that goes with the noun (*le* agrees with a masculine noun and *la* agrees with a feminine noun).

Innu nouns are also divided into two groups: **animate** and **inanimate**; this division is also referred to as Gender.

Animate and inanimate nouns have different plural markers: -(*a*)*t* for animate and -*a* for inanimate, as shown in the following:

Innu (animate)	English
auâss	child
auâss at	children
Innu (inanimate)	English
utâpân	car
utâpân a	cars

While there are a few exceptions, generally things that are animate (living) in the real world are also grammatically **animate**. Things that are inanimate (non-living) in the real world, on the other hand, tend to be grammatically **inanimate**. We see evidence of this general rule applying in the examples above, where *auâss* 'child' belongs to the animate gender class (forming the plural with *-at*) and *utâpân* 'car' belongs to the inanimate gender class (forming the plural with *-a*).

1.6 AGREEMENT

Agreement is an extremely important feature of Innu. By **agreement**, we mean what happens when one word changes its form to match a grammatical feature, such as Gender, of a neighbouring word.

English has very little in the way of agreement, French has a good deal more, and Innu has a great deal more even than French. We begin our overview of Innu agreement with a brief look at agreement in English and French.

AGREEMENT IN ENGLISH

English has very little agreement. In Standard English, we see it in the verbal system; the (non-past tense) verb takes an –s if the subject is third person singular (*he/she/it*). This is an example of subject-verb agreement.

'l/you/we/they <u>sleep'</u> vs. 'he/she/it <u>sleep</u>s'

The –s on the end of the verb appears when the subject is 'he', 'she' or 'it' (third person singular).

AGREEMENT IN FRENCH

French exhibits a richer **subject-verb agreement system** than English. In the table below we see that the suffix on the verb changes depending on the subject:

French	English
je parl e	l speak
tu parle s	you speak
il/elle/on parl e	he/she/it speaks
nous parl ons	we speak
vous parl ez	you speak
ils/elles parl ent	they speak

Another type of agreement commonly found in the world's languages is **agreement between nouns and adjectives**. We also see this in French, where an adjective matches the Gender and Number (singular/plural) of the noun it describes, as in the following:

French	English
grand homme	great man
grand s hommes	great men
grand e femme	great woman
grand es femmes	great women

AGREEMENT IN INNU

In Innu, verbs take different suffixes and prefixes depending on the **Gender** (animacy), **Number**, and **Person** (of the subject, and frequently also of the object, if there is one).

Here is one set of possible verb endings in Innu for the verb stem *nipâ*- 'sleep', which has an animate subject:

English	Innu
l sleep	ni nipâ n
you sleep	tsh inipâ n
she/he sleep s	nipâ u
we (me and him) sleep	ni nipâ nân
we (me and you) sleep	tshinipâ nânu

you (plural) sleep	tshinipâ nâuâu
they sleep	nipâ uat(s)

If the subject is grammatically inanimate, there are no 'you/me' (first and second person) forms; the subjects of Inanimate Intransitive verbs are third persons, as shown in the following example of an Inanimate Intransitive Verb (VII):

English	Innu
it is white	uâpâu
they are white	uâpâu a

Because the verb carries so much information, it isn't necessary to use the subject in the sentenceⁱ. In the following sentence, for example, the Innu word for 'you' (*tshîn*) is unnecessary because the verb already has a prefix (*tshi*-) that means 'you':

Tshinipâ**n.** 2nd+sleep+non-3rdsubject 'You are sleeping.'

In the above example, the verb agrees with the subject (the second person pronoun *tshîn '*you') allowing it to be dropped from the sentence. In a case like this, *tshîn* would be used if the speaker wanted to emphasize <u>who</u> is doing the sleeping:

Tshîn tshinipân. '<u>You</u> are sleeping.'

In Innu, the verb may also inflect to agree with its object (**object-verb agreement**), allowing the speaker the option of dropping both (or either) the subject and the object from the sentence.

In the sentence below, for example, so long as we know we are talking about dogs, *nîn* and *atimuat* may be dropped:

Nuâpamâuat. 'I see them (the dogs).' (nîn) (atimu+at) n+uâp+amâu+at 1st dog+an.pl 1st+see+an.object+an.pl

1.7 WORD ORDER

An issue that follows directly from that of agreement is what we refer to as **word order** – the ordering of the basic building blocks of a simple sentence (subject, object and verb). Many languages have strict ordering for these elements. In English, for example, the normal word order is Subject-Verb-Object:

I see dogs SUBJECT VERB OBJECT If we change this order, but do not wish to change the meaning of the sentence, the sentence becomes ungrammatical, as shown in the following:

*dogs	see	Ι
OBJECT	VERB	SUBJECT

WORD ORDER IN INNU

What about Innu? It is generally true of languages that have a great deal of agreement that a simple sentence like "I see dogs" normally won't contain three words: 'I', the subject, 'dogs' the object, and 'see' the verb. Innu is like this. Because the verb already refers to the subject and the object, there is often no need to use additional words to convey this information.

This means that when we look through Innu texts to see in which order the elements **subject**, **verb**, and **object** occur, we rarely find all three elements, making it hard to determine the most common pattern.

What we <u>can</u> say is that in a simple sentence in Innu several different orders of subject, object, and verb are possible, and that the word chosen as the first word in the sentence tends to be the focus of the sentence. So, for the Innu sentence 'I see dogs', while any order is correct if we have all three words, the word that is placed first tends to be the one the speaker wants the listener to pay greater attention to.

The following sentences show this shifting emphasis:

FOCUS ON SUBJECT	nîn	<i>atimuat</i>	<i>nuâpamâuat</i>
	^{SUBJECT}	OBJECT	^{VERB}
	'lt's <u>me</u> (not him) who	o sees dogs.'
FOCUS ON OBJECT	atimuat	nîn	nuâpamâuat(s)

OBJECT SUBJECT VERB 'It's <u>dogs</u> that I see (not cats).'

FOCUS ON VERB (ACTION)

nuâpamâuatatimua(s)tnînVERBOBJECTSUBJECT'I see dogs (I don't hear them).'

2. NOUNS AND PRONOUNS

2.1 NOUNS

2.1.1 NOUN SUFFIXES

Types of noun suffixes found in English and Innu:

Suffix	Language
plural number	English and Innu
possessive	English and Innu
diminutive	English and Innu
locative	Innu only
obviative	Innu only

2.1.2 NUMBER: SINGULAR AND PLURAL FORMS

Innu uses suffixes on nouns and pronouns to indicate that the word is plural. Verbs can also be marked with a plural suffix if they **agree** with a plural noun.

For nouns, there are two different plural endings: one for animate nouns and another for inanimate nouns.

Note: As in most languages, a singular noun has no suffix to mark it as singular.

Animate noun			
shîshîp	-at	shîshîp at	
'duck'	plural suffix	'ducks'	
Inanimate noun			
mashinahikanan	-а	mashinahikanan a	
'book'	plural suffix	'books'	

2.1.3 POSSESSIVE/POSSESSED NOUNS AND OBVIATION

In English, a noun can be represented as **possessed** by a first, second or third person by combining it with *my*, *your*, *her/his*, *our*, *their*. In Innu, however, this information is conveyed in a single word.

In the following example, the owner of the book is encoded in a **prefix**:

Innu	English
(inanimate noun, singular)	
ni mashinaikan	my book
tshi mashinaikan	your book
u mashinaikan	her/his book
ni mashinaikan inan	our (mine and his) book
ni mashinaikan inan	our (mine and yours) book
tshi mashinaikan auâu	your (plural) book
u mashinaikan auâu	their book

These possessed forms may be made plural in the normal way for inanimate nouns, as seen below:

Innu (inanimate noun, plural)	English
ni mashinaikan a	my book s
tshi mashinaikan a	your book s
u mashinaikan a	her/his books
ni mashinaikan inana	our (mine and his) books
ni mashinaikan inana	our (mine and yours) books
tshi mashinaikan auâua	your (plural) book s
u mashinaikan auâua	their books

Possessed animate nouns in Innu

If the possessed noun is **animate**, the possessive is formed differently for third persons (*his/her/their*). Also, an additional (possessive) suffix (*-im*) may be required. If the possessed noun is **plural**, the animate plural suffix follows the *-im* possessive suffix. We illustrate this latter point first, for first and second person forms:

Innu (animate noun)	English
nishîshîp im at	my ducks
tshishîshîp im at	your ducks
nishîshîp im inanat	our (mine and his) ducks
nishîshîp im inanat	our (mine and yours) ducks
tshishîshîp im uâuat	your (plural) ducks

OBVIATION

Animate nouns possessed by third persons (*his/her/their*) require an **obviative** suffix. Adding this suffix has the effect of allowing the noun to be interpreted as either singular or plural, and it is ungrammatical to mark such forms with the animate plural suffix *-at*.

English	Innu (animate noun)
his duck/ducks	ushîshîpim a
their duck/ducks	ushîshîpimuâu a

Note: While there are exceptions, in general the possessive *-im* suffix does not attach to possessed inanimate nouns.

But how does possession work in Innu when you want to name the possessor (for example *the girl's book, Simon's cat* and so on)? In this case, the name of the possessor appears to the left of the possessed noun and everything else we describe above remains unchanged:

Possessed inanimate noun			
Ânî u-mashinaikan-(a)	auâss-at	u-mashinaikan-(a)	
Annie 3-book-(plural)	child-plural	3-book-(plural)	
'Annie's book(s)'	'The kids' boo	ok(s).′	
Possesse	Possessed animate noun		
Ânî u-shîshîp-im-a	auâss-at(s)	u-shîshîp-im-uâu-a	
Annie 3-duck-poss-obv	child-plural	3-duck-poss-pl-obv	
'Annie's duck/ducks'	'The kids' duo	ck/ducks'	

As we have learned in this section, the **plural inanimate** and **animate obviative** suffixes sound the same (both are -a). This is a common phenomenon in language. In English, for example, we see this with the possessive -s (*Peter's hat*) and the -s suffix found on certain verb forms (*Peter wins the race*.)

Obviative marking is required on nouns in certain other situations, such as when both the subject and object of a verb are animate third persons (that is, for a VTA). The following example illustrates this:

Mueu tekanep**a** Anî.

eat(VTA) pancake-obv Annie 'Annie is eating pancakes.'

2.1.4 LOCATIVES AND DIMINUTIVES

Nouns can take a locative suffix, which indicates direction or position in space. The basic form for this suffix is -it, but may be just -t. A noun may also take a diminutive suffix, which indicates that something is small. The basic form for the diminutive suffix is -iss or -ss.

Noun	Diminutive	Locative
mîtshuâp 'house	mîtshuâpîss 'small	<i>mîtshuâpît '</i> in, to,
	house	from the house'
ashinî 'rock'	ashinîss 'stone'	ashinît 'on the rock'

2.2 PRONOUNS

2.2.1 PERSONAL PRONOUNS

There are personal pronouns in Innu that, like those in English ('she', 'he', 'l', 'you', 'they', 'we', etc.), are separate words.

In Innu, however, these pronoun words are only used to give emphasis to a sentence. For example, to emphasize that <u>I</u> am the one who wants to do something, I might say:

> **Nîn**, n+uî+ tûten. 1st 1st +want+do.something (1st person) <u>'I</u>want to do it.'

To emphasize that 'he' (not someone else) did something:

Uîn $k\hat{a}+t\hat{u}t\hat{a}k$. 3^{rd} past+do.something (3^{rd} person) <u>'He</u> is the one who did it'.

In English, we achieve this same effect by putting extra **stress** on the word (indicated by the bold type in the translations).

There are seven categories of personal and possessive pronouns in Innu:

Person (singular)	Innu	English
1 st	nîn	l, me, mine
2 nd	tshîn	you, yours
3 rd	uîn	she, her, hers,
		he, him, his, it

Person (plural)	Innu	English
1 st (me and him)	nînân	
1 st (me and you)	tshînân	we, us, ours
2 nd (you-all)	tshînuâu	you, yours
3 rd	uînuâu	they, them, theirs, its

"WE" INCLUSIVE AND EXCLUSIVE

As shown in the above table, Innu makes a distinction that English does not. By using two different pronouns for "we", Innu grammar lets us know whether the person we are talking to is included in the first plural ('we, us, ours'). If the 'we' **excludes** the person we are talking to, *nînân* is used; if the 'we' **includes** this person, then *tshînânû* is used. This difference also appears in all the verb conjugations (when pronoun information often appears as prefixes to the verb) and in the possessive forms of nouns.

When we say, for example, 'we are leaving' in Innu, we have a choice of verb endings, depending on whether the person we are speaking to is included:

nitshîtûtenân	'we (he and I) are leaving' (exclusive)
tshitshîtûtenânau	'we (you and I) are leaving' (inclusive)

POINT OF INTEREST

The table on the previous page also demonstrates that in English there are more pronoun forms than there are in Innu. There are a few reasons for this. The most important reason is that in English (but not in Innu) the form of the pronoun often changes to reflect its **grammatical role** in the sentence (a phenomenon referred to as

case). If we take the first singular form in English as an example, we see that as a subject it is 'l', but its object form is 'me' and its possessive form is 'mine':

<u>I</u> ate the cake. (subject) Caroline saw <u>me</u>. (object) I think that's <u>mine</u>. (possessive)

We have seen that Innu distinguishes between an **inclusive** and **exclusive** first person plural, a distinction English lacks. Conversely, we see that English makes a distinction that Innu lacks; in the third person, English distinguishes male (he, him, his) from female (she, her, hers) and has yet another pronoun reserved for inanimate (or sometimes non-human) entities (it). Innu uses the same form (*uîn* (singular), *uînuâu* (plural)) to refer to both male and female (there is no 'he/she' distinction). The English third plural pronoun lacks a 'he/she' distinction (they/them/theirs).

2.2.2 OTHER PRONOUNS

Other types of pronouns in Innu include **demonstratives** (this, that, these, those), **question words** (who, what), **focus words** (s/he is the one), **hesitation words** (the uh uh one...), **pronouns of doubt** (it must be him/her/it), **question pronouns of doubt** (I wonder which one), and **absentative words** (the missing one).

These pronouns, which are single words, can be animate or inanimate and can have plural and obviative suffixes, just like nouns.

TEACHING TIP 💖

Notice that the same word is used in Innu for the **indefinite pronoun**, the **interrogative pronoun** and the **noun**. Innu students should be made aware of this as they might generalize a single English form to cover all the Innu uses of *auen* or *tshekuân*. [®]

Animate		
auen who, someone, a person		
auenitshenat who (plural), some people		
Inanimate		
tshekuân	what, something, a thing	
tshekuân a	what, something (plural), things	

The Innu demonstratives \hat{u} 'this' and *an* 'that' are used to modify nouns in order to point to things.

a/the man *nâpeu* this man *ume nâpeu* that man *ne nâpeu*

The use of the articles 'a' and 'the' is one of the most difficult things to master in English as a Second Language (ESL). This grammar point should also be taught to Innu students as the grammars of English and Innu differ in this area. [®]

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

QUESTION 1

English nouns take plural –s (e.g. two cats) or possessive –s (e.g. the cat's tail). These suffixes sound the same but have different meanings. What about Innu nouns?

ANSWER:

The suffix –*a* can have two different meanings in Innu. It can mark a **plural** or an **obviative**:

Plural -a		Obviative –a	
massin	shoe	shîshîp	duck
massin a	shoe s	shîshîp a	duck (obviative)

POINT OF INTEREST:

Innu nouns must be marked **obviative** in certain grammatical constructions. In the following example, *shîshîp* 'duck' is **obviative** because the sentence contains two **animate third persons** ('child' and 'duck'):

Uâpamepan shîshîp**a** an auâss. 'That child saw (a) duck(s).'

Note: English does not have an equivalent to the obviative suffix found in Innu.

HOMOPHONY:

In all languages we find cases where two or more affixes that differ from one another in function have the same pronunciation (as discussed above). This phenomenon is referred to as **homophony**. This should not present difficulties for learners. Students may find it interesting to know that both English and Innu nouns exhibit **homophony**.

TEACHING TIP 💖

Teachers can teach this point by creating a special class that focuses on how nouns work in Innu and in English. This will help students understand the grammar of both languages better, and help them remember confusing points of grammar in their second language.

More generally, we see that Standard English has three different –s suffixes:

- the plural noun suffix –s
- the possessive suffix, 's, and
- the third person verbal agreement suffix -s (when the subject of the verb is *he/she/it*, the (non-past) verb takes an *-s*.).

Finally there is an increasingly common fourth use of 's in English, as an abbreviation for *is* in *she's tall*, or *he's talking*.

QUESTION 2

Why do Innu-speaking children sometimes mix up the pronouns she and he?

ANSWER:

There are several reasons for mixing up the masculine and the feminine pronouns, which include *him/her, her/his, her/him, hers/his*.

One reason is that Innu is a **non-sexist language** when it comes to personal pronouns and uses only one word (*uîn*) to mean either *he* or *she*, and one pronominal prefix (*u*-) to mean *his* and *her*.

Another reason might be the transfer of the obviative category to a gender category. Innu distinguishes between an **obviative** third person and a non-obviative (**proximate**) third person. It is possible that bilingual speakers transfer the Innu category of obviation to the English category of gender for pronouns, using for example *he* for the proximate (this one) and *she* for the obviative (the other one).

If student mix up *he* and *him*, or *she* and *her*, this is because Innu does not distinguish whether the emphatic pronoun *uîn* bears a different case (marking the difference between the subject *(he)* or the object function (*him*).

TEACHING TIP 💖

This is an area of the grammar where the teacher can highlight the differences between English and Innu for his or her students. A special lesson can be designed to draw the children's attention to the differences. ^(*)

QUESTION 3

How is the possessive different in Innu and in English?

ANSWER:

There are two main ways of expressing a possessive relationship in English. In general, we add -'s to the possessor when it is a living (animate) thing:

dog	>	the dog's leg
Mary	>	Mary's son
teacher	>	the teacher's book

We don't usually add the possessive -'s to a non-living (inanimate) possessor, so it would not sound right to say the table's leg or the house's door, even though tables have legs and houses have doors. Here we use the other possessive construction: the leg of the table and the door of the house.

TEACHING TIP 💖

The distinction between living (animate) and non-living (inanimate) things is very important in Innu grammar so it should be easy for the teacher to explain how the English possessive rule works. ^(*)

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Animate and inanimate nouns take different plural markers (see 1.5). When nouns appear as part of a sentence, along with a verb, the distinction between animate and inanimate is usually marked on the verb too, as agreement (see 1.6).

Here's a difference between English and Innu that can be explained to students: in Innu, the possessive form of a word differs depending on whether the thing that is possessed (for example *book*, in *the teacher's book*) is animate or inanimate (see 2.1.3). This is similar to French, where what matters is the gender of the thing possessed, not the gender of the possessor, as in English.

Animacy	Innu Noun		macy Innu Noun Possessed Innu Noun		sed Innu Noun
inanimate	massin	shoe	u massin	his/her shoe	
animate	ashtish	mitten	ut ashtish a	his/her mitten(s)	

Also, in many dialects of English, some possessive relationships between two inanimate things may be expressed as a **compound** construction so that the following expressions are equally correct:

Compound form	"of" possessive	
the table leg	the leg of the table	
the house door	the door of the house	
the book cover	the cover of the book	

QUESTION 4

Why is spelling with an **apostrophe** s ('s) a problem for Innu students?

ANSWER:

This is difficult for all speakers of English. The use of the apostrophe added to possessive forms of a noun needs special attention in class even for students speak English as their first language. The teacher should give the students lessons in the correct usage of this item of grammar. [®] Lots of practice and reinforcement will help them remember the few simple rules for correct usage:

The boy's book. (<u>One</u> boy owns the book.) The boys' book. (<u>More than one</u> boy owns the book.)

3. VERBS

Innu speakers are used to adding many endings to verbs. There are hundreds of verb suffixes in Innu, encoding a large amount of information about things like who does what, to whom, when, how, and so on. English, on the other hand, only has a few verb suffixes: *-s*, *-ed*, *-en*, *-ing*. This is called the **verb inflection**.

In addition, the Innu verb itself is made up of many meaningful parts that include meanings expressed in English by adjectives and adverbs (section 5). We focus here on the inflection of the verb.

3.1 VERBS DO NOT HAVE AN INFINITIVE FORM

In the dictionary, Innu verbs appear in the **third person** (he/she/it) form. This means an Innu verb always has a subject (noun or pronoun) that appears either as a separate word or as agreement prefixes and/or suffixes on the verb (see 1.6). The following forms have third person subjects (encoded as agreement) and are referred to as **citation forms** (the form a word takes when it is listed in a dictionary).

Citation forms			
(how the word appears in the dictionary)			
nipâu	s/he sleeps		
mîtshishu	s/he eats		
uâpâu	it is white		

3.2 FOUR BASIC VERB TYPES: VAI, VII, VTA, VTI

There are four basic verb types in Innu:

VAI	verb, animate intransitive
VII	verb, inanimate intransitive
VTA	verb, transitive animate
VTI	verb, transitive inanimate

English and French verbs agree with their subject (I see, he sees). Innu verbs agree with their subject in some cases, but if they take an object, they will agree with their object. This is one reason why, when there is only one form of a verb in English (say, 'write'), there will be several different forms of the same verb in Innu, depending on the **transitivity** of the verb, and the **animacy** of the subject (or object, if there is one).

	Four realizations in Innu for the English verb 'to write'					
VII	Intransitive verb with inanimate subject	mashinâ teu	'it is written'			
VAI	Intransitive verb with animate subject	mashinâ shû	'he/she (his/her name) is written'			
VTI	Transitive verb with inanimate object	mashina im "	'he/she is writing something'			
VTA	Transitive verb with animate object	mashina imueu	'he writes (his/her name) to someone'			

As you can see, these four verb types have different endings. This is due in part to agreement (verb inflection), but also in part to the fact that VAI and VII verb pairs are usually distinguished from each other by having distinct **suffixes** (referred to as **finals**). Likewise, VTA and VTI verb pairs are distinguished by having different finals.

INTRANSITIVE VERBS

Intransitive verbs only have a subject. The subject may be animate or inanimate.

An Animate Intransitive (VAI) verb agrees with its animate subject

Mînûsh uâpishîu. cat is.white 'The cat is white.'

An **Inanimate Intransitive (VII)** verb agrees with its inanimate subject.

Mîtshuâp uâpâu. house is.white 'The house is white.'

TRANSITIVE VERBS

Transitive verbs have a subject and an object. The object may be animate or inanimate.

A Transitive Animate (VTA) verb agrees with its animate object.

Nuâpamâu mînûsh. I.see cat 'I see a cat.'

A Transitive Inanimate (VTI) verb agrees with its inanimate object.

Nuâpâten mîtshuâp. I.see house 'I see a house.'

Note: Every Innu verb is classified as belonging to one of these four categories.

TEACHING TIP 💖

When teaching English verbs, teachers should be aware that Innu speakers might be looking for English equivalents to these Innu distinctions. On the other hand, grammatical concepts like **transitivity** should be relatively easy for Innu speakers to master, if they are provided with Innu examples.

Exercises could include comparing verbs in the Innu and English dictionaries. 💖

3.3 TENSES

Innu has past, present and future tenses for verbs:

Tense	Description	Example
Present	The verb as it appears in the	mîtshishû
	dictionary is already present	'she eats'
	tense.	
Future	In main clauses (section 6.3), the	tshika mîtshishû
	verb is made future tense by	'she will eat'
	adding a preverb .	
Past	In main clauses (section 6.3), the	mîtshishu pan
	verb is made past tense by	'she ate'
	adding a suffix .	

Note: The verb and preverb are written as separate words.
If students encounter problems learning to master English *-ed* past tense forms, it could also be because:

1. The *–ed* suffix has different pronunciations:

she/he lov ed	pronounced as 'd'
she/he look ed	pronounced as 't'
she/he land ed , paint ed	pronounced as 'id'

The past tense pronunciation should be formally taught to students. There are many resources for teaching this, and for showing students the rules.

2. It is often difficult to hear the past tense *-ed* because it is not always a full syllable so it is easy to leave it off in pronunciation and in spelling. Even English speakers forget to add this ending when writing. Lots of special exercises are needed to practice this.

3. Many verbs do not use *-ed* to make the past tense. The English 'strong' verbs change the vowel instead of adding an ending, like *sing - sang*, *run - ran*, *think - thought*. Some strong verbs do not change, like *hit – hit*, or *put - put*. Again, the teacher can focus the attention of students on these special cases with classes and practice. [®]

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

QUESTION 1

Why do students have difficulty keeping tenses consistent in a piece of writing (for example, all past tense)?

ANSWER:

In Innu, the past tense is often used in the first sentence of a story to set the scene and then the present tense is used for the rest of the story.

Also, many of the grammatical prefixes and suffixes added to Innu verbs have less to do with tense and more to do with what is referred to as **modality**. By modality we mean the encoding of distinctions such as whether an event happened in reality or in a dream, reference to things that appear to be so (expressing uncertainty), things that might have happened, or could potentially happen. It could be that students are paying more attention to these aspects of language than to tense, or it could be that they are transferring Innu modality distinctions onto English tenses.

TEACHING TIP 💖

We recommend special teaching to help students keep English tenses consistent. Ideally, in advanced Innu classes, the use of rich Innu conjugation systems will be taught and studied in narratives and legends. [®]

QUESTION 2

Does Innu have a suffix like the English continuous -ing?

ANSWER:

No. The **continuous –ing** (as in 'he is reading') does not exist in Innu. Innu verbs can be translated into English with or without the *-ing*, according to the context.

French speakers encounter the same difficulty learning English. This English suffix must be specially taught, as there is an important difference in meaning in English between non-progressive forms, sometimes referred to as the **habitual**, and the progressive form of the verb, which is formed with auxiliary *be* and *-ing* suffixed to the principal verb. The progressive form refers to an activity in progress at the time of speaking, or one that is securely planned for the future.

Progressive vs. non-progressive forms in English		
non-progressive	She sings.	habitually, but not
or habitual		necessarily at the
		time of speaking
progressive -ing	She is singing.	action in progress at
		the time of speaking
progressive -ing	She is moving down	planned future
	south next year.	

QUESTION 3

Why do students have trouble adding -s to verbs in English?

ANSWER:

For the most part, this happens because in Standard English -s is added only to the third person (he/she/it) form of the verb in a conjugation, not to all of the forms:

Standard English dialect		
I sleep we sleep		
you sleep	you sleep	
he/she sleep s	they sleep	

Many English speakers have problems with this, too. In some dialects of English the -s is added to all forms of the verb, and in other dialects it is left off of all forms. Both options make the verb paradigm more regular:

Newfoundland dialects	African American dialects
l sleep s	l sleep
you sleep s	you sleep
she/he sleep s	she/he sleep
we sleep s	we sleep
you sleep s	you sleep
they sleep s	they sleep

As shown above, Innu has many endings, so you might think Innu speakers would find it easy to get the right ending on the English verb, but remember that even native speakers of English cannot agree on which forms take the *-s* suffix. This variation makes it harder for learners to pick up the rule. In a formal setting, such as in a school, learners of English as a second language will learn the rules for Standard English (add *- s* to third person forms). This is an area of the grammar where the teacher can explain the rule to his or her students. ^(%)

Another reason why children might have difficulty using -s on the verb is that the pronunciation of this suffix varies depending on the final sound of the word it is added to:

she/he sleep s	pronounced as 's'
she/he run s	pronounced as 'z'
she/he watch es	pronounced as 'iz'

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TEACHING TIP 💖

This is an area of the grammar where the teacher can easily explain the rules to his or her students. There are lots of English as a second language books and on-line resources (http://www.better-english.com/easier/thirdpers.htm) that explain the few simple rules at work here and that provide practice exercises for learners.

The past tense suffix in English (*-ed*) also has three different pronunciations depending on the final sound of the word it is added to (section 3.3). ^(b)

QUESTION 3

Does Innu have **modal** verbs like 'might/may', 'can/could', 'should/ought' to and 'would'?

ANSWER:

No, but much of what English does with modal verbs is done in Innu either with **preverbs** or **inflectional suffixes** on the verb.

English **modals** are verbs that appear to the left of the principal verb, expressing ideas such as the future, likelihood, ability, obligation, as well as conditionality:

- (1) She will help you. (future)
- (2) She might/may help you. (likelihood)
- (3) She can/could help you. (ability)
- (4) She **should/ought to** help you. (obligation)
- (5) She **would** help you. (conditionality)

Innu **preverbs** are small words that are part of the verb, acting much like a prefix. There are approximately 20 preverbs in Innu, most of which do a grammatical job, expressing roughly equivalent ideas to those that English encodes with modals. The non-grammatical preverbs express ideas equivalent to English adjectives and adverbs.

4. ADJECTIVES AND ADVERBS

4.1 ADJECTIVES

Unlike English, there are no separate words in Innu that function as adjectives. Instead, adjectival ideas are expressed through the use of verbs.

In this case, the first part of the verb or noun expresses what translates into English as an adjective. Constructions corresponding to English 'be+adjective' are expressed through verbs, while adjectives that accompany nouns (e.g., <u>blue</u> ocean, <u>red</u> ball, <u>black</u> hair, referred to as **attributive adjectives**) are expressed through a relative clause or a complex noun.

Expressing an adjectival idea with an Innu verb		
uâpâu it is white (VII verb)		
uâpau mîtshuâ	a house is white	
mîtshuâp kâ	a house that is white	
uâpat(s)	= a white house	

Most common English adjectives exist as Innu verbs, but correspond to several Innu verbs, depending on the size, shape or other properties of the object the adjective describes.

For example, in addition to the general verb *uâpâu* 'it is white', illustrated above, there are many other verbs with the same beginning, whose ending indicates the property of the object:

Inanimate <i>uap-</i> verbs		
<i>uâpâpekan</i> it (string-like) is white		
uâpâpishkâu	it (stone, metal) is white	
uâpekan	it (sheet-like) is white	
uâpâuakâu	it (granular) is white	
uâpâshkuan	it (stick-like) is white	

All Innu verbs also take into account the gender (animacy) of their subject. Therefore all of these verbs come in pairs, one to apply to inanimate things (as above), and one to animate things (as below).

Animate <i>uap-</i> verbs		
<i>uâpâpetshishîu</i> it (anim, string-like) is white		
uâpâpissishu	it (anim, stone, metal) is white	
uâpetshishu	it (anim, sheet-like) is white	
uâpâuatshishuat	they (anim, granular) are white	
uâpâshkushîu	it (anim, stick-like) is white	

The beginning of the word that carries a meaning equivalent to an English adjective can also be found in nouns:

Expressing an adjectival idea with an Innu noun		
<i>uâpatsheshu</i> (animate)	white fox	
<i>uâpishkamik^u</i> (inanimate)	white moss	

TEACHING TIP 💖

A search for common English adjectives in the online Innu dictionary (when available in 2011) will provide more examples.

We recommend that teachers point out these differences between Innu and English, outlining the descriptive richness of the Innu language.

4.2 ADVERBS

English adverbs can be expressed either as part of an Innu verb or as separate words (the Innu part of speech referred to as **particles** (section 1.4) in traditional descriptions of Innu grammar).

When an adverb is part of an Innu verb, the adverbial meaning is found at the beginning of the verb. As in English, sometimes the same expression can be used for adverbial meaning or adjectival meaning:

tshinipipanu (VII/VAI) he/she/it is fast (adjective)

he/she/it goes fast (adverb)

The same Innu word beginning is used on nouns to express an adjectival meaning and on verbs to express an adverbial meaning:

Adjectival meaning		
nâpeu	a man (animate noun)	
mishta nâpeu	a big man	
minu âpeu	a handsome man	
matsh âpeu	an ugly man	

Adverbial meaning		
mîtshishû	s/he eats (Al verb)	
mishta- mîtshishû	s/he eats a lot	
minu- mîtshishû	s/he eats well	
matshi- mîtshishû	s/he eats badly	

This could explain why Innu second-language speakers might mix up the use of adjectives and adverbs when speaking English. We should point out also that in many non-standard dialects of English the adjectival form is used for both adverb and adjective, thereby regularizing the system. Learners of English can be confused if they are exposed to this kind of dialect variation, although it is very common in non-standard versions of English:

English	Adverb	Adjective
go slow*	slowly	a slow car
it hurts bad*	badly	a bad blow to the head
she did good*	well	a good book

Whereas English may use a separate word, the adverb, to describe how an action is performed, Innu uses one bigger verb describing the action and how it is performed. These verbs come in pairs, depending on the gender of the subject (i.e., depending on whether *something* or *someone* is sailing fast in the example below):

tshinipi-nitautshin (VII)	it grows fast
tshinipi-nitautshu (VAI)	s/he, it (anim) grows fast

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TEACHING TIP 💖

A search for common English adverbs in the Innu on-line dictionary will provide Innu students and English teachers with more examples to discuss the descriptive richness of the Innu language.

USING PARTICLES TO EXPRESS ENGLISH ADVERBS

Another way to express English adverbs in Innu is the use of **particles**. There are several kinds of particles in Innu that are used to express what adverbs express in English. They can be found in the dictionary, marked as *p*,*time* (particle, time); *p*, *manner*; *p*, *quantity*; or *p*, *space*.

Particles of time		
ushkat	at first, the first time	
shâsh	already, yet	
eshk ^u	still	
uîpat	soon, early	

Particles of manner		
tshitshue	real thing, for real	
tipân	separate, apart,	
	separately, on one's own	
nâsht	very, very much	

Particles of quantity	
mîna	again, more
mitun	completely
kâssinu all	
tâpishkut both, same	

The particles occur as separate words in the Innu sentence.

Shâsh tekash minuinnîu. already completely she is well 'She is completely well now.'

4.3 COMPARATIVES AND SUPERLATIVES

In Innu, there are ways to express the same ideas as expressed by English 'big, bigger, biggest' and 'fast, faster, fastest'.

Adjectival and adverbial **comparative** and **superlative** ideas can be expressed using an Innu particle:

it is big	<i>mishâu</i> (II verb)
it is bigg er	etatu mishâu

There does not appear to be a particle for the superlative, but the idea can easily be conveyed in context by adding the prefix *mishta-* 'big, a lot, very'.

the very big one kâ **mishta-**mishât

5. OTHER PARTS OF SPEECH

5.1 ARTICLES

Innu does not have words that translate precisely as English "a" or "the". These concepts can be conveyed by other means in the grammar of Innu.

5.2 CONJUNCTIONS

English coordinating conjunctions are expressed by particles in Innu:

Innu particle	English conjunction
mâk	and
kie mâk	or
ek ^u	then, so

Words that introduce **subordinate clauses** are often referred to as **subordinating conjunctions**. These tend to be preverbs in Innu.

In the following example from eastcree.org (grammar), the preverb *e* introduces the subordinate clause *nipaiepan namesha* 'he caught a fish'.

Minuenitam^u napeu **e** tshî nipait namesha. 'The man is happy to have caught a fish.'

5.3 PREPOSITIONS

English Prepositions are also expressed in Innu by particles, called **locative particles** in the Innu dictionary and grammar.

Locative particles		
ishpimît	above, the roof, upstairs	
pîtakamît	inside	
nîtât	below, down, low	
uâshkâ	around	

Locative particles are frequently used in combination with nouns that have a special ending, referred to as the **locative suffix**, and used when talking about place (location):

uâshkâ mîtshuâp**ît** around house-**locative** 'around the house'

5.4 QUANTIFIERS AND NUMERALS

Quantifiers are words like: some, any, more, less, a few, a little, and a lot.

Numerals are words for numbers, like: *one, two, three, first, second*, and so on.

In Innu, these words are usually expressed by particles. They do not carry number or gender, and are indicated as **particles of quantity** in the dictionary. Here are some examples:

Particles of quantity		
passe	some, a few	
mîtshet	many	
apishîsh	a little	
neu	four	
kassinu	all	

The Innu word corresponding with the English word 'each' is expressed by a process called reduplication of the numeral. For example, 'four' is *neu*, and 'four each' is *nâ*neu.

6. SENTENCES TYPES

6.1 SENTENCES AND PUNCTUATION

Like all languages, Innu has sentences and these can be either **simple** sentences, or **complex** (containing a subordinate clause).

In written Innu, the same punctuation marks are used as in English, including periods, commas, question marks and quotation marks.

Do you see him? "I'm leaving", he said to her. Tshuâpamâu â ? Nipûshin, itikû.

TEACHING TIP 💖

Because children are not very familiar with written Innu, they will have difficulty with punctuation in English. In particular, they will have trouble identifying where sentences begin and end. It is therefore important for teachers to make a point of teaching the use of punctuation in written English. [®]

6.2 THREE BASIC SENTENCE TYPES

As in all languages, there are three basic sentence types in Innu: 1) declarative statements, 2) questions, and 3) negative statements.

The house is white. Uâpa
 Is the house white?
 The house is **not** white.

Uâpau mîtshuâp. Uâpau **â** mîtshuâp ? **Apu** uâpât mîtshuâp.

6.3 MAIN CLAUSES AND SUBORDINATE CLAUSES

A simple sentence is often referred to as a **main clause**. Sometimes one sentence is contained within another sentence; the contained clause (underlined) is referred to as a **subordinate (or embedded) clause**. All three sentence types may be subordinate. A subordinate verb in Innu takes **conjunct** suffixes and often a conjunct preverb.

Nitshisseniten e uâpât mîtshuâp.
 'I know that the house is white.'

- 2) Nikukuechimâtî uîâpât mîtshuâp.'I asked <u>if the house is white</u>.'
- Nitshisseniten ekâ e uâpâch mîtshuâp.
 'I know that <u>the house is not white</u>.'

6.4 QUESTIONS

There are several kinds of questions in Innu, just as there are in English.

6.4.1 'YES-NO' QUESTIONS

These are questions that should be answered with either 'yes' or 'no'. In Innu, as in many of the world's languages, these questions are made by adding an extra word, usually referred to as a **question particle**.

In Innu, a yes-no question is made by inserting the word \hat{a} after the word that is the focus of the question.

In English, and in many other languages, to make a yes-no question you have to change the order of the words.

Sentence type	English	Innu
Declarative statement	He is walking there.	ltûteu.
Yes-No question	Is he walking there?	ltûteu â .
Declarative statement	He left.	Tshîtûtepan.
Yes-No question	Did he leave?	Tshîtûtepan â .

Note: The voice rises at the end of the question in English, which does not always happen in Innu.

6.4.2 QUESTION WORD QUESTIONS

These begin in English with words such as: *why, who, what, where, when, how*. Here are the Innu equivalents:

<i>tân '</i> why'	tanite 'where'
<i>auen</i> 'who'	<i>tân ishpish '</i> when'
<i>tshekuân</i> 'what'	tân 'how'

In Innu, the verb ending changes when used in a wh-question. As for subordinate clause verbs, in any clause that has a wh-word, the *conjunct* set of verb endings must be used.

Sentence type	English	Innu
Declarative statement	S/he was eating.	Mîtshish upan .
Question	Who was eating?	Auen kâ mîtshish ut ?
Declarative statement	I will sleep.	Nika nipâ n .
Question	Where will I sleep?	Tânite tshe nipâ iân ?

6.4.3 QUESTIONS USING mâ

Questions can also be made by using the word *mâ* before a statement.

Sentence type	English	Innu
Declarative statement	You are eating.	Tshuî mîtshishun.
Question	You want to eat,	Mâ tshuî mîtshishun ?
	don't you?	
Declarative statement	You want to sleep.	Tshuî nipân.
Question	Don't you want to	Mâ tshuî nipân ?
	sleep?	

6.5 NEGATIVE SENTENCES

In English, there is just one negating word (*not*), regardless of whether the clause is main or subordinate. In Innu, different words for 'not' must be used in main and subordinate clauses.

Example of a negated **main clause** in Innu (uses *apu* 'not'):

Apu mîtshishut. 'S/he is **not** eating.'

Example of a **subordinate clause** in Innu (uses *ekâ* 'not'):

Nitshisseniten **ekâ** mîtshishut. 'I know that s/he is **not** eating.'

ABBREVIATIONS

1 st	first person
2 nd	second person
3 rd	third person
non-3 rd	non-third person (first or second person)
an	animate
an.object	animate object
an.pl	animate plural
IIN	Independent Indicative Neutral
obv	obviative
past	past tense preverb
pl	plural
VAI	verb, animate intransitive
VII	verb, inanimate intransitive
VTA	verb, transitive animate
VTI	verb, transitive inanimate

APPENDIX

WORD PAIRS TAKEN FROM SOVERAN'S FROM CREE TO ENGLISH

The pronunciation drill is set up as follows:

1. Choose the one particular sound distinction you want to teach. Find as many pairs of words as possible to illustrate this distinction. These should be <u>minimal pairs</u>, distinguishable because of this one feature only. For instance, if you are teaching the difference between /p/ and /b/, each pair of words must be those which are kept apart only by the difference between a /p/ and a /b/ sound.

2. For a class drill, choose up to eight pairs and arrange them as follows:

Pairs contrasting /p/ and /b/	
pill	bill
Paul	ball
puck	buck
pig	big
pack	back
pole	bowl
pike	bike

Your choice of words will depend upon the grade level of the pupils. Picture cards are best at first. These cards can be arranged-the same way as the word list above, using a large pocket chart. It is important that this be a <u>listening</u> and <u>pronouncing</u> exercise, not a test of reading skill. Unless the students can read all the words without hesitation, it is probably best to pronounce them for them and have them repeat. This has the advantage of providing a correct model for them to imitate.

3.First pronounce the words DOWN the columns, emphasizing the correct pronunciation of the sound in question.

4.Next, drill ACROSS, making sure the difference comes out clearly each time.

5. Keep drill sessions <u>short</u> and lively, making the lesson as much fun as possible. Informal conversation games are helpful.

Drills on initial consonants should be followed by drills on the same sounds in medial or final position.

Example contrasting pairs:

Pairs contrasting /p/ and /b/			
Initial	Medial	Final	
pear/bear	ripping/ribbing	mop/mob	
pox/box	roping/robbing	rip/rib	
push/bush	napping/nabbing	lope/lobe	
pound/bound	tapping/tabbing	lap/lab	
pull/bull	staple/stable	nap/nab	
punch/bunch	maple/Mable	ape/Abe	
peach/beach	dapple/dabble	cap/cab	
pouncing/bouncing		cop/cob	
path/bath		gap/gab	
pay/bay			
pus/bus			
pest/best			
peak/beak			
pail/bale			

Pairs contrasting /t/ and /d/		
tear/dear	tune/dune	tent/dent
tall house/doll house	ten/den	card/cart
beat/bead	seat/seed	tied/died
time/dime	talk/dock	tin/din
try/dry	pot/pod	town/down
to/do	lit/lid	but/bud
bit/bid	butting/budding	bleat/bleed
feet/feed	let/led	goat/goad

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Pairs contrasting /ch/ and /j/		
Initial	Final	
chill/Jill	batch/badge	
cheer/jeer	etch/edge	
char/jar	search/surge	
cheep/jeep	lunch/lunge	
chest/jest	rich/ridge	
cherry/Jerry	cinch/singe	

Pairs contrasting /ch/ and /ts/		
each/eats	hitch/hits	
pitch/pits	patch/pats	
porch/ports	batch/bats	
beach/beets	catch/cats	
coach/coats	hatch/hats	
peach/Pete's	match/mats	

Pairs contrasting /j/ and /dz/		
siege/seeds	wedge/weds	
hedge/heads	wage/wades	
forge/fords	budge/buds	
sledge/sleds	rage/raids	

Pairs contrasting /k/ and /g/		
curl/girl	coat/goat	
back/bag	tack/tag	
pick/pig	dock/dog	
buck/bug	cave/gave	
could/good	came/game	
cape/gape	tacking/tagging	
lacking/lagging	lack/lag	
rack/rag	peck/peg	
kill/gill	crow/grow	

ⁱ The same thing happens in Spanish, where you do not have to use a subject pronoun because the verb already has a suffix indicating who wants (for example) to sleep:

Quiero dormir, not
quier-o dormirYo quiero dormir.
yo quiero dormirwant-I to sleep
"(I) want to sleep"I want(I) to sleep
"I want to sleep"