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The accompanying DVD was produced by Laurel Anne Hasler, Project Manager for the Innu Language Development CURA Project, who did an excellent job from the ground up, by recording, digitizing and editing the sound files for each Lesson. She has also been responsible for implementing all revisions for this the Second Edition of the volume.

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It is our sincere hope that this volume will help transmit to others the greater understanding of the Innu language and culture that we ourselves have gained from the people of Sheshatshiu.

Sandra Clarke and Marguerite MacKenzie

## INTRODUCTION

This volume outlines the sounds and grammatical structure of the Innu-aimun dialect spoken in the community of Sheshatshiu, Labrador, formerly known as North West River. This variety of Innu-aimun (also known as Montagnais) is similar to the Uashunnu dialect spoken in Uashau (Sept-Iles) and Matimekush (Schefferville), Quebec and is also closely related to the Innu-aimun varieties of the Quebec Lower North Shore – that is, the Mashkuannu dialect spoken in Ekuanitshu (Mingan), Nutashkuan (Natashquan), Unaman-shipu (La Romaine) and Pakut-shipu (St. Augustin). (The map on page ix shows the location of these communities.) To a lesser extent, Sheshatshiu Innu-aimun shares features with the only other variety of Innu-aimun spoken in Labrador, the Mushuau dialect spoken in Natuashish, which from a linguistic perspective is best described as Eastern Naskapi (MacKenzie (1980) contains a discussion of the use of the terms Montagnais and Naskapi).

The Innu-aimun dialects spoken in the Quebec-Labrador peninsula form a dialect continuum with the Cree dialects spoken in Central and Western Canada (see for example MacKenzie 1980 for details). The Cree-Montagnais-Naskapi grouping constitutes, both geographically and numerically, the largest aboriginal Canadian linguistic subgroup. Like Ojibwa, Blackfoot and Mi'kmaq, Cree-Montagnais-Naskapi is part of the Algonquian language family.

This volume provides an introduction to Sheshatshiu Innu-aimun for speakers of English. The orthography it uses is the revised version set out in Drapeau and Mailhot (1989) as well as Mailhot (1997), and used by Drapeau (1991), which has now been adopted as the standard spelling system. Our orthography differs from the standard, however, in that it contains the additional specification of marking for vowel length. While this orthography is relatively abstract and does not represent the speech of any particular community, it has the advantage that it can be used by Innu speakers throughout the Quebec-Labrador peninsula.

The Innu-aimun spoken in Sheshatshiu is not a homogeneous dialect. As a result of the different historical regional band affiliations of present-day Sheshatshiu speakers, there is considerable linguistic variability in the community, particularly among older speakers. Those interested are referred to items in the Further References section, particularly to MacKenzie (1980), which describes the dialects of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula; more detail

can be found in various papers by the two authors of the present volume, references for which can be obtained from general bibliographies of Algonquian. In this set of Lessons, we have opted for the most frequent pronunciations and grammatical forms that are used in the community, those that form part of the more uniform community dialect that is emerging among younger speakers.

This book of Lessons was originally written in 1982 (revised 1986) by Sandra Clarke; for the 2007 volume, she added a Lesson on a fundamental component of Innu-aimun language structure, evidential and subjective verb forms. For this edition, she has added a pronunciation guide along with an index. Marguerite MacKenzie was responsible for a range of tasks which improved immeasurably the quality of the original volume: supervising the conversion of the text to the standardized orthography described above; supervising text formatting; adding three glossaries at the end of the volume; checking many problematic points; and last but by no means least, securing funding for the production of the accompanying DVD.

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Algonquian languages are usually recognized as having three parts of speech or lexical categories: noun-like entities, verb-like entities, and particles. Unlike nouns and verbs, particles do not take inflectional endings, and are largely invariable in form. Since nouns display a much simpler grammatical structure than verbs, nouns will be dealt with first (Lessons 2-7).

## INNU COMMUNITIES IN QUEBEC-LABRADOR



## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AI verb	animate intransitive verb
an	animate
conj	conjunct (verb)
dem	demonstrative (pronoun)
dep	dependent
e.g.	for example
i.e.	in other words
II verb	inanimate intransitive verb
inan	inanimate
indecl part	indeclinable particle
indef	indefinite
indep	independent
interrog	interrogative
inv	inverse
f	female
lit.	literally
m	male
obv	obviative
pl (or p)	plural
pro	pronoun
reflex	reflexive
sg (or s)	singular
subj	subject
TA verb	transitive animate verb
TI verb	transitive inanimate verb
TI2 verb	animate intransitive verb with an object

## LIST OF PHONETIC SYMBOLS

In each case, the sound that is the approximate English equivalent appears in **bold** in the illustrative word provided. The symbols in square brackets are the actual sounds, as represented via the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA).

### Vowels

[i]	<b>see</b>	[ɪ], [ə]	<b>the</b>
[e]	<b>day</b>	[ʌ]	<b>but</b>
[ɛ]	<b>bet</b>	[o]	<b>go</b>
[æ]	<b>sat</b>	[ʊ]	<b>put</b>
[a]	<b>pot</b>	[u]	<b>soon</b>

### Consonants

[p]	<b>spot</b>	[s]	<b>stop</b>
[b]	<b>but</b>	[ʃ]	<b>shoot</b>
[t]	<b>stay</b>	[tʃ]	<b>cheese</b>
[d]	<b>day</b>	[m]	<b>man</b>
[k]	<b>scare</b>	[n]	<b>name</b>
[g]	<b>go</b>	[h]	<b>help</b>
[k <sup>w</sup> ]	<b>quite</b>	[m <sup>w</sup> ]	French <b>moi</b>
[y] <sup>1</sup>	<b>year</b>	[w]	<b>water</b>

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<sup>1</sup> The symbol [y] is used in place of the IPA symbol [j] throughout this volume.