LESSON 2

ANIMATE VS. INANIMATE
(NOUNS AND PRONOUNS)

Inanimates: that (over there) (non-proximal)

Tshekuân	$\left\{\begin{array}{l} an? \\ ne? \\ neme? \end{array}\right\}$	What is it, what's that?[1]
Mashinaikan	$\left\{\begin{array}{l} an. \\ ne. \\ neme. \end{array}\right\}$	It's/that's a book.

Massin an.	It's/that's a shoe.
Mishtik^u an.	It's/that's a stick.
Natûkun an.	It's/that's medicine.

Animates: that (over there) (non-proximal)

$\left\{\begin{array}{l} \textit{Tshekuen} \\ \textit{Auen} \end{array}\right\}$	$\left\{\begin{array}{l} an? \\ ne? \end{array}\right\}$	Who is it, who's that?
Ishkueu	$\left\{\begin{array}{l} an. \\ ne. \end{array}\right\}$	It's/that's a woman.

Nâpeu an.	It's/that's a man.
Nâpess an.	It's a boy, that's a boy.
Ishkuess an.	It's/that's a girl.
Auâss an.	It's/that's a child.

Inanimates: this (here) (proximal)

Tshekuân ume?	What's this?
Mîûsh ume.	This is a suitcase.
Mîtshishuâkan ume.	This is a table.
Tetapuâkan ume.	This is a chair.

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[1] The curly bracket indicates that any one of the three possibilities may be chosen. While **Tshekuân an**? is best translated 'What is it/What's that?', the other two possibilities mean 'What is that over there?', with **neme** referring to something farther away from the speaker than **ne** does.

Unâkan ume.	This is a plate.
Utâpân ume.	This is a car.[2]

Animates: this (here) (proximal)

Tshekuen ume?	Who is this?
Innu ume.	This is an Innu person.
Innu-utshimâu ume.	This is a chief.
Natûkunîsh ume.	This is a doctor.

Also

Tân an mashinaikan?	Which book?
Tânite tekuâk mashinaikan?	Where is the book?

VOCABULARY

an	(an/inan dem pro)	that
auâss	(an noun)	child
auen	(an interrog/indef pro)	who, someone[3]
innu	(an noun)	(Innu) person, human being
ishkuess	(an noun)	girl
ishkueu	(an noun)	woman
mashinaikan	(inan noun)	book
massin	(inan noun)	shoe
mishtik^u	(inan noun)	stick
mishtik^u	(an noun)	tree
mîtshishuâkan	(inan noun)	table
mîûsh	(inan noun)	suitcase, box
nâpess	(an noun)	boy
nâpeu	(an noun)	man
natûkun	(inan noun)	medicine
natûkunîsh	(an noun)	doctor
ne	(an/inan dem pro)	that
neme	(inan dem pro)	that

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[2] If **ume** is placed before the noun, it would have more of an adjectival function, i.e. 'this suitcase (here)', 'this chair (here)'.

[3] When **auen** is not the first word in its clause, it functions as an indefinite pronoun meaning 'someone'. The interrogative pronouns **tshekuen** and **tshekuân** function in the same way.

tân	(indecl part)	which, how
tânite	(indecl part)	where
tekuâk	(inan locative *be*; question form)	is[4]
tetapuâkan	(inan noun)	chair
tshekuân	(inan interrog/indef pro)	what, something
tshekuen	(an interrog/indef pro)	who, someone
ume	(inan & an dem pro)	this
unâkan	(inan noun)	plate, dish
utâpân	(inan noun)	car
utshimâu	(an noun)	boss, chief

POINTS OF GRAMMAR

I.   Animate and Inanimate

All nouns in Algonquian belong to one of two genders: **animate** or **inanimate**.

Animates include nouns referring to
-   persons
-   animals
-   most trees and plants
-   certain objects which seem logically inanimate, but which are represented or viewed as possessing animate qualities, e.g.

tshishtemâu	tobacco
ushpuâkan	pipe
apuî	oar, paddle
anûshkan	raspberry
mishtik[u]	tree (also appears as 'stick', inanimate)
ashinî	stone, rock (both animate and inanimate)

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[4] The verb **tekuâk** is in a special form of the verb **takuan** known as the conjunct, which is required in certain types of clauses. The conjunct is introduced in Lesson 15.

Inanimates include nouns referring to
- entities viewed as non-living, i.e. most objects with the exception of a small set including those mentioned above

Additional Vocabulary

Animate

ashâm	snowshoe	*mînûsh*	cat
atîkᵘ	caribou	*mûsh*	moose
atimᵘ	dog	*namesh*	fish
mâtsheshu	fox	*nishk*	goose
maikan	wolf	*uâpush*	rabbit

Inanimate

akûp	coat, dress, jacket	*shûniâu*	money
âshûkan	bridge	*tshîman*	match
metuâkan	toy	*uâpikun*	flower
pâssikan	gun	*ûsh*	boat, canoe
utenau	town		

II. Demonstrative, Interrogative and Indefinite Pronouns

Although definite and indefinite articles as such do not exist in Innu-aimun, the language possesses a full range of pronominals: demonstratives, interrogatives and indefinites. These may display different forms for animate or inanimate gender, as follows (note that only the singular form is provided):

Demonstratives[5]

	Animate	**Inanimate**
this	*ume* (pronounced [mwe])	*ume* (pronounced [mwe])
that	*ne*	*ne/neme*

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[5] This list represents only the most common demonstratives; others will be introduced later, e.g. Lesson 5.

Interrogatives/Indefinites

Animate	**Inanimate**
tshekuen/auen	*tshekuân*
who, someone	what, something

III. Existential *be*

As many of the sentences on page 9 demonstrate, no verb corresponding to the English verb 'be' denoting existence (i.e. existential 'be') is normally used in Innu-aimun. However, locative (i.e. locational) 'be' is expressed by such verbs as *tâu* (an) and *takuan* (inan).

EXERCISES

I.   Translate the following Innu-aimun sentences into English:

1. *Tshekuân ume?*   *Mishtik^u ume.*
2. *Tshekuen ne?*   *Auâss an.*
3. *Auen ume?*   *Ishkuess ume.*
4. *Tshekuân neme?*   *Mîûsh an.*

II.   Translate the following English sentences into Innu-aimun:

1. What's that?   That's a book.
2. Who's that?   That's a man.
3. What's this?   This is a table.
4. Who's this?   This is a woman.