

## LESSON 5

### THE NOUN: 1ST AND 2ND PERSON POSSESSORS

#### DIALOGUE

##### Pien mâk Mânî (Peter and Mary)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>P. { <i>Tshekuen tshîn?</i> }<br/>         { <i>Auen tshîn?</i> }<br/> <i>Mânî â tshîn?</i></p>                                   | <p>Who are you?<br/>         Are you Mary?</p>   |
| <p>M. <i>Ehe,<sup>1</sup> nîn au Mânî.</i><br/>         { <i>Tshekuen ne (or an)?</i> }<br/>         { <i>Auen ne (or an)?</i> }</p> | <p>Yes, I'm Mary. (i.e. This is me,<br/>         Mary/I'm the one (who's) Mary.)<br/>         Who is that?</p> |
| <p>P. <i>Tshân ne (or an).</i></p>   | <p>That's John.</p>  |
| <p>M. <i>Tshîn â ume tshimashinaikan?</i></p>  | <p>Is this book (here) yours?</p>  |
| <p>P. <i>Ehe, nîn an (or ne)</i><br/> <i>nimashinaikan.</i><br/> <i>Tshînuâu â ne</i><br/> <i>tshimînûshimuâu?</i></p>               | <p>Yes, it's my book.<br/>         Is that your (pl) cat?</p>  |
| <p>M. <i>Ehe, nînân ne (or an)</i><br/> <i>nimînûshiminân.</i></p>   | <p>Yes, it's our cat.</p>  |

#### VOCABULARY

<i>â</i>	(question marker)	(generally occurs after the first word of a yes-no question)
<i>an</i>	(an/inan dem pro)	that (is); alternatively, used for emphasis
<i>au</i>	(an/inan dem pro)	this (is); alternatively, used for emphasis
<i>ehe</i>	(indecl part)	yes
<i>mâuât</i>	(indecl part)	no
<i>nishtesh</i>	(an noun)	my older brother
<i>Tshân</i>	(male proper name)	John

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<sup>1</sup> While *ehe* represents the actual pronunciation, this form is also frequently spelled *eshê*.

## POINTS OF GRAMMAR

## I. The Personal/Possessive Pronoun

1	I, me, mine	<i>nîn</i>
2	you, yours (sg)	<i>tshîn</i>
3	he, him, his, she, her, hers	<i>uîn</i>
lp	we, us, ours (exclusive)	<i>nînân</i>
21p	we, us, ours (inclusive)	<i>tshînân(u)</i>
2p	you, yours (pl)	<i>tshînuâu</i>
3p	they, theirs	<i>uînuâu</i>

The pronominal forms given above, which may be translated into English as either personal or possessive pronouns, depending on the context, are used only for emphasis. Note that the 'we' pronoun in English corresponds to two different pronominals in Innu-aimun. 'We' can be **exclusive** ('me and him/her/they but not you'); in this case *nînân* is used. Or 'we' can be **inclusive** ('me and you but not him/her/they'); in this case *tshînân(u)* is used. Note that this '1st person inclusive' has a 2nd person *tsh-* marker rather than a 1st person *n-*.

## II. Possession in the Noun

## A. INANIMATE NOUNS

	POSSESSIVE PREFIX	NOUN	POSSESSIVE SUFFIX	
1	<i>ni</i>	<i>mashinaïkan</i>	-	my book
2	<i>tshi</i>	<i>mashinaïkan</i>	-	your book
lp	<i>ni</i>	<i>mashinaïkan</i>	<i>nân</i> <sup>2</sup>	our (excl) book (mine and his/hers/theirs)
21p	<i>tshi</i>	<i>mashinaïkan</i>	<i>nân/nu</i> <sup>3</sup>	our (incl) book (mine and yours)
2p	<i>tshi</i>	<i>mashinaïkan</i>	<i>uâu</i>	your (pl) book

<sup>2</sup> This is normally written *-inân*, but the *i* is deleted after a word ending in *-n*.

<sup>3</sup> While the *-inu* ending is often heard in Sheshatshiu Innu-aimun, it does not occur in all varieties of Innu-aimun.

## B. ANIMATE NOUNS

	POSSESSIVE PREFIX	NOUN STEM	POSSESSIVE MARKER <i>-im</i>	POSSESSIVE SUFFIX	
1	<i>ni</i>	<i>mînúsh</i>	<i>im</i>	-	my cat
2	<i>tshi</i>	<i>mînúsh</i>	<i>im</i>	-	your cat
1p	<i>ni</i>	<i>mînúsh</i>	<i>im</i>	<i>inân</i>	our (excl) cat
21p	<i>tshi</i>	<i>mînúsh</i>	<i>im</i>	<i>inân/inu</i>	our (incl) cat
2p	<i>tshi</i>	<i>mînúsh</i>	<i>im</i>	<i>uâu</i>	your (pl) cat

Any possessed noun obligatorily takes a possessive **prefix** denoting the **person** of the possessor, as follows:

1st person possessor (sg or 1st person pl 'exclusive'):	<i>ni-</i>
2nd person possessor (sg, pl, or 1st person pl 'inclusive'):	<i>tshi-</i>

Further, if a noun is possessed by a **plural** possessor, a possessive **suffix** is obligatory, as follows:

1p	<i>-inân</i>
21p	<i>-inân/-inu</i>
2p	<i>-uâu</i>

In addition, an animate noun that is possessed generally bears an *-im* possessive marker, which occurs immediately **after** the noun stem and **before** a plural possessive suffix. While this *-im* does not generally occur with inanimates, it may be found after inanimates ending in a diphthong, such as *shûniâu* 'money' or *meshkanau* 'path'. Nouns ending in *-n* or *-m* generally do not take the *-im* (e.g. *massin* 'shoe', *mîtshishuâkan* 'table', *mîtshim* 'food'), but there are a number of exceptions here (e.g. *ni* + *natûkun* + *im* 'my medicine').

## III. Phonetic Variation

## A. THE POSSESSIVE PREFIX

As seen above, the normal shape of the possessive prefix is:

1st person:	<i>ni-</i>
2nd person:	<i>tshi-</i>

If, however, the noun to which the prefix is attached begins with any vowel other than *u-/û-* (that is, with the vowels *i-, î-, e-, a-, â-*) the consonant *-t* is inserted between the prefix and the noun:

- 1: *nit -*  
2: *tshit-*

Examples:

<i>nit + assî</i>	my land
<i>tshit + apuî</i>	your paddle

If the noun begins with *u* or *û*, the shape of the prefix is as follows:

- 1: *n-*  
2: *tsh-*

Examples:

<i>n + ushpuâkan</i>	my pipe
<i>tsh + ushpuâkan</i>	your pipe

## B. THE *-im* POSSESSIVE MARKER

When attached to a noun ending in a consonant, the possessive marker appears as *-im* (Group 1 below). When suffixed to a noun ending in the labialized consonants *-k<sup>u</sup>* or *-m<sup>u</sup>*, however, the suffix is *-m*, and the raised *u* is lowered in writing (Group 2). Should the noun end in a vowel or diphthong, the possessive marker will appear as *-m* (Group 3). As in the case of the locative suffix, a noun ending in a diphthong such as *-au*, *-âu* or *-eu* deletes the final element of the diphthong. As well, many nouns ending in *-û* replace this vowel with *-îm* (Group 4).

### 1. *-im* marker<sup>4</sup>

<i>uâpush</i>	rabbit	<i>nuâpushim</i>	my rabbit
<i>uiâsh</i>	meat	<i>nuiâshim</i>	my meat
<i>tshîman</i>	match	<i>nitshîmanim</i>	my match
<i>nishk</i>	goose	<i>ninishkim</i>	my goose

<sup>4</sup> Nouns ending in *-ss* take a lengthened vowel (*-îm*) in the possessive marker (e.g. *tshitauâssîm* 'your child').

2. **-m marker** after *-k<sup>u</sup>* or *-m<sup>u</sup>*

<i>mashk<sup>u</sup></i>	bear	<i>nimashkum</i>	my bear
<i>kâk<sup>u</sup></i>	porcupine	<i>nikâkum</i>	my porcupine

3. **-m marker** after *-au*, *-âu*, *-eu*

<i>meshkanau</i>	path, road	<i>nimeshkanâm<sup>5</sup></i>	my path, road
<i>ishkueu</i>	wife, woman	<i>nitishkuem</i>	my wife, woman
<i>nâpeu</i>	husband, man	<i>ninâpem</i>	my husband, man
<i>uâu</i>	egg	<i>nuâum<sup>6</sup></i>	my egg

4. **-îm marker** with nouns ending in *-u*

<i>shîpu</i>	river	<i>nishîpîm</i>	my river
<i>pitshu</i>	gum	<i>nipitshîm</i>	my gum

5. **Absence of possessive marker**

<i>assî</i>	land	<i>nitassî</i>	my land
<i>apuî</i>	paddle	<i>nitapuî<sup>7</sup></i>	my paddle
<i>mîtschim</i>	food	<i>nimîtschim</i>	my food
<i>akûp</i>	coat	<i>nitakûp</i>	my coat
<i>assîk<sup>u</sup></i>	pail	<i>nitassîk<sup>u</sup></i>	my pail
<i>ashâm</i>	snowshoe	<i>nitashâm</i>	my snowshoe

IV. **Yes-No Questions**

In cases where there is no question-word as such (e.g. 'what? where? when? why? how?'), a question is formed through the insertion of the particle *â* after the first word of the sentence.

*Mânî â tshîn?*

Are you Mary?

*Tshîn â ume tshimashinaikan?*

Is this book (here) yours?

<sup>5</sup> The final vowel of words ending in *-au*, like *meshkanau*, is lengthened before the possessive, locative and diminutive suffixes.

<sup>6</sup> *Uâu* is an exception in that it does not drop the final *-u* when the *-im* suffix is added.

<sup>7</sup> Younger speakers regularize many nouns which do not take the *-im* suffix by adding it to words such as *apuî* > *nitapûm*, which then resembles other stems ending in a diphthong.

## EXERCISES

I. In each of the following, give the appropriate possessed form of the noun supplied:

1.	<i>assîk<sup>u</sup></i>	pail	my pail
2.	<i>ishkueu</i>	woman, wife	your (sg) wife
3.	<i>apuât</i>	paddle	my paddle
4.	<i>tetapuâkan</i>	chair	your (sg) chair
5.	<i>tshishtemâu</i>	tobacco	your (pl) tobacco
6.	<i>pineu</i>	partridge	my partridge
7.	<i>shîshîp</i>	duck	my duck
8.	<i>meshkanau</i>	path	your (pl) path
9.	<i>mashk<sup>u</sup></i>	bear	our (incl) bear
10.	<i>kâk<sup>u</sup></i>	porcupine	your (sg) porcupine
11.	<i>pimî</i>	oil	our (excl) oil
12.	<i>ânapî</i>	net	your (sg) net
13.	<i>shûniâu</i>	money	your (pl) money
14.	<i>ushpuâkan</i>	pipe	my pipe
15.	<i>unâkan</i>	plate	our (incl) plate
16.	<i>namesh</i>	fish	our (excl) fish
17.	<i>mishtik<sup>u</sup></i>	tree	our (excl) tree
18.	<i>auâss</i>	child	your (pl) child
19.	<i>akûp</i>	coat	your (sg) coat
20.	<i>atîk<sup>u</sup></i>	caribou	our (incl) caribou

II. Reply in Innu-aimun to the following questions on the basis of the model:

<i>Eukuan â ne tshutâpân?</i>	Is that your car?
<i>Ehe, nîn an nutâpân.</i>	Yes, that's my car.

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1. <i>Eukuan â ne tshinâpem?</i>    | 5. <i>Eukuan â ne nimûkumân?</i>       |
| 2. <i>Eukuan â ne tshipimîmuâu?</i> | 6. <i>Eukuan â ne nishûniâminân?</i>   |
| 3. <i>Eukuan â ne tshitauâssîm?</i> | 7. <i>Eukuan â ne tshushpuâkan?</i>    |
| 4. <i>Eukuan â ne tshitassîuâu?</i> | 8. <i>Eukuan â ne tshitatîkuminân?</i> |