

## LESSON 9

### PREVERBS; AI TRANSITIVE-LIKE VERBS (TI2)

#### DIALOGUE

##### Pinûte mâk Shîmûn

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|---|--|
| <p>P. <i>Tânite etât Tshân?</i></p>   | <p>Where is John?</p>  |
| <p>S. <i>Sheshâtshît nete tâu.</i><br/> <i>Uâpannitî<sup>1</sup> tshika takushinu, kie</i><br/> <i>ushîma tshika takushinnua.</i></p>                 | <p>He is at Sheshatshiu.<br/>         He will be coming tomorrow<br/>         and his younger brother will<br/>         be coming too.</p>                         |
| <p>P. <i>Uîpat â tshika nâtshi-kussen?</i></p>  | <p>Will you be going fishing early?</p>  |
| <p>S. <i>Ehe, uîpat nuî tshîtûten, kie</i><br/> <i>nûtâu(i) tshika nâtshi-kusseu.</i></p> <p><i>Ek<sup>u</sup> tshîn, tshika nâtshi-nataun â?</i></p> | <p>Yes, I intend to leave early, and<br/>         my father will be going<br/>         fishing.</p> <p>What about you, will you be<br/>         going hunting?</p> |
| <p>P. <i>Ehe, uâpâkî pût nipâ tshî tshîtûten.</i></p>   | <p>Yes, I could leave tomorrow<br/>         maybe.</p>   |

#### VOCABULARY

<i>ka</i> ( <i>tshika</i> in 3rd person)	(preverb)	will (i.e. future marker)
<i>kie</i>	(indecl part)	and, also
<i>kusseu</i>	(AI verb)	s/he fishes
<i>nâtshi-</i>	(preverb)	be going to
<i>nete</i>	(indecl part)	(way) over there
<i>pâ</i> ( <i>tshipâ</i> in 3rd person)	(preverb)	should, would
<i>pâ tshî</i> ( <i>tshipâ tshî</i> in 3rd person)	(preverb)	could, might
<i>pût</i>	(indecl part)	maybe, perhaps, probably

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<sup>1</sup> This ending, a 3rd person obviative, is palatalized in Sheshatshiu Innu-aimun, and pronounced as if it were *-ntshî*. *Uâpannitî* is an obviative verb form that occurs when the main verb has a 3rd person subject; otherwise the form is *uâpâkî*, as in the last line of this dialogue.

<i>takushinu</i> <sup>2</sup>	(AI verb)	s/he comes, arrives (by foot)
<i>tshîtûteu</i>	(AI verb)	s/he leaves (by foot)
<i>uâpannitî</i>	(II verb (obv))	tomorrow (lit. 'when it is daylight')
<i>uî</i>	(preverb)	want, try to
<i>uîpat</i>	(indecl part)	early

## POINTS OF GRAMMAR

## I. Preverbs

## A. ABSTRACT PREVERBS

A number of preverbs exist in Innu-aimun. Some of these are fairly abstract in meaning, being similar to the modal auxiliaries of English (e.g. 'may', 'can', 'will', etc.). A list of these preverbs is provided below:

Preverb		Example	
<i>ka</i>	future marker	<i>tshika tshîtûten</i>	you will leave
<i>pâ</i>	should, would	<i>nipâ pimûten</i>	I should walk
<i>pâ tshî</i>	could, might	<i>tshipâ tshî âkushin</i>	you could be sick
<i>tshî</i>	ability (can, be able to)	<i>nitshî pimûten</i>	I can walk
<i>tshî</i>	perfective event	<i>tshî tshîtûteu</i>	s/he has left
<i>uî</i>	want, intend to	<i>nuî aimin</i>	I want to talk

Note that *tshî* meaning 'past' or 'perfective' does not seem to occur as frequently as the *tshî* of ability. Further, perfective *tshî* may be found with a verb in the past tense. In addition, the *uî* preverb may be translated as 'be trying to', as in *uî pûshu* 's/he is trying to leave', and also as 'tend to, be about to', etc., as in *uî tshimuan* 'it looks like it will rain'.

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<sup>2</sup> In Innu-aimun, verbs for 'arriving' and 'leaving' must specify the means of accomplishing the action. Thus, *pâpanu* means 's/he arrives by plane' while *pâpâtâu* is equivalent to 's/he arrives by running or by wheeled vehicle'. Similarly *pûshu* means 's/he leaves by vehicle, e.g. car, plane, boat, train' while *tshîtshipâtâu* may be translated as 's/he leaves by running or by wheeled vehicle'.

Preverbs typically occupy the slot immediately after the subject prefix and before the verb. In the 3rd person, where there is no subject prefix, they occur immediately before the verb stem. Examples follow:

<i>nimî'tshishun</i>	I eat	<i>nitshî mî'tshishun</i>	I can eat
<i>nititân</i> <sup>3</sup>	I am (in a place)	<i>nika itân</i>	I will be (in a place)
<i>tshîtûteu</i>	s/he leaves	<i>tshî tshîtûteu</i>	s/he is able to leave
<i>tshitâkushin</i>	you are sick	<i>tshuî âkushin</i>	you tend to be sick
<i>nipûshin</i>	I leave	<i>nipâ pûshin</i>	I should leave
<i>tshipimûten</i>	you walk	<i>tshipâ tshî pimûten</i>	you could/might walk

### B. 3RD PERSON PREVERB FORMS

While most of the preverbs given are invariable in form, several have a slightly different shape in the 3rd person than in the 1st or 2nd person, as follows:

	1st & 2nd person	3rd person
future marker	<i>ka</i>	<i>tshika</i>
should	<i>pâ</i>	<i>tshipâ</i>
could/might	<i>pâ tshî</i>	<i>tshipâ tshî</i>

In such cases, 2nd person sg and 3rd person sg verbs display identical prefixes, as in:

<i>tshipâ tshî pûshu</i>	s/he could leave
<i>tshi+pâ tshî pûshin</i>	you could leave
<i>tshika âkushin</i>	you will be sick
<i>tshi+ka âkushu</i>	s/he will be sick

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<sup>3</sup> This verb is spelled with an *i* after the prefix in the 1st and 2nd persons; however, the initial *i*- has disappeared from the pronunciation of the 3rd person (e.g. *tâu*), and is not represented in the spelling.

## C. CONCRETE PREVERBS

Besides the preverbs listed above, a number of other preverbs with more concrete meanings also exist in Innu-aimun. These include:

<i>ishi</i> - <sup>4</sup>	thus, in this way	<i>ishi-mîtshishu</i>	s/he eats thus
<i>matshi</i> -	bad	<i>matshi-tshîshikâu</i>	the weather is bad
<i>mishta</i> -	big, a lot	<i>mishta-minu</i>	s/he drinks a lot
<i>nâtshi</i> -	to go, come and (do), be going to	<i>tshinâtshi-kussen â?</i>	are you going/coming fishing?
<i>nitâu</i> -	know how to (acquired knowledge)	<i>nitâu-mashinaitsheu</i>	s/he knows how to/can write
<i>pûni</i> -	stop	<i>pûni-atusseu</i>	s/he stops working
<i>ueshâmi</i> -	too much	<i>ueshâmi-mîtshishu</i>	s/he eats too much

## D. PREVERB COMBINATIONS

Note that the future preverb *ka* will precede any preverb with which it combines, as in:

<i>Nika tshî tshîtûten.</i>	I'll be able to leave.
<i>Tshika nâtshi-mûpin â?</i>	Will you be going to visit?

Because of their semantics, the preverbs *ka* and *pâ* do not combine with each other.

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<sup>4</sup> In the common spelling system, the convention is to separate, with a hyphen, only concrete preverbs from the verb stem.

### E. PHONETIC PROCESSES AFFECTING PREVERBS

Note that when the final vowel of a prefix comes into contact with a verb stem beginning in a vowel, certain sound changes result.

- a) If the two vowels are short, one of the vowels will disappear; if however the vowels involved are *a* + *i* or *a* + *a*, the result will be phonetically [ey], as in *tshika atusseu* [tʃəgyetʊssew] 's/he will be working'.
- b) If one vowel is short and the other long, the long vowel will remain; in addition, in an *a* + *â* or *i* + *â* sequence, the short vowel becomes the glide [y] (e.g. *tshika âkushu* [tʃəgyagoʃo] 's/he will be sick'). However, if the short vowel is *u*, this vowel will remain as well.
- c) If both vowels are long, both will be retained, with a glide – typically [y] – inserted between them (e.g. *uî âkushu* [wiyagoʃo] 's/he tends to be sick').

The standard spelling used in this grammar does not reflect the above-mentioned phonetic processes.

### II. AI Transitive-Like Verbs (TI2)

A number of verbs in Innu-aimun have the form of an AI verb with theme vowel *â*, but must be translated into English as if they were transitive, with an inanimate object. Such verbs include the following:

<i>ashtâu</i>	s/he puts/places it
<i>kâtâu</i>	s/he hides it
<i>nâshikupanitâu</i>	s/he lowers it (e.g. the price)

Since these verbs take regular AI inflectional endings following their *â*-stem vowel, they will be treated as if they were normal AI verbs, an example of which, *nipâu*, is given on page 42. They are often referred to by Algonquianists as AI+O or TI2 verbs; the latter suggests a semantic subclass of Transitive Inanimate verbs, or verbs with an inanimate grammatical object.

## EXERCISES

## I. Translate into English:

1. *Tshipâ tshî atusseuat.*
2. *Tshika uî tshîtûteu.*
3. *Tshipâ nataunâu.*
4. *Tshimishta-mîtskishun.*
5. *Uîpat nika nâtshi-atussen.*
6. *Tshuî tshîtûtenân.*
7. *Uîpat â tshika nâtshi-kusseuat?*
8. *Tshipâ mîtskishunân.*
9. *Tshika âkushu.*
10. *Nuî atussenân.*
11. *Tshika pîtutshen â?*
12. *Uîpat tshipâ tshî pûshinân.*

## II. Translate into Innu-aimun:

1. You (pl) should eat.
2. He will be sick.
3. We (excl) want to work.
4. Will you (sg) be coming in?
5. They know how to hunt.
6. We (incl) can write.
7. You (pl) should leave soon.
8. She should be here already.
9. Their children will be sick.
10. John's father might visit.
11. He wants to leave.
12. You (sg) should hunt.
13. I will be working early.
14. We (incl) want to leave.
15. Will they arrive here soon?