LESSON 20

EVIDENTIAL, SUBJECTIVE AND RELATED VERB FORMS

DIALOGUES / READING PASSAGES

I.   Uniâm mâk Shîmûn

U.	*Nuâpâtâu atîkᵘ.*	I see caribou tracks.
S.	*Pimûteshapan atîkᵘ.*	A caribou must have walked by.
U.	*Ehe, tâtakat atîkuat nete kâtâkᵘ.*	Yes, it seems that there are some caribou way over there, in the distance.

II.   (John is in another part of the house)

U.	*Nipâu â Tshân?*	Is John asleep?
S.	*Ehe, nipâtak.*	Yes, he must be/seems to be asleep. (since I can hear him snoring)

III.   Nuîsh mâk Shûshân (who is surprised to find John awake)

N.	*Nipâu â Tshân?*	Is John asleep?
S.	*Mâuât, ekâ nipâuâ an.*	No, I can see that he's not asleep after all.

IV. (Mary Anne has just poked a piece of meat to see if it's cooked)

Uiâsh tshîshtetak.	The meat must be cooked.

V. (There is a smell of cooked meat in the house)

Ueshâushâm! Mîtshim ute ka-takuanûtakâ.	Oh! It seems to me that there is food here.

VOCABULARY

kâtâkᵘ	(indecl part)	far away
tshîshteu	(II verb)	it is cooked
uâpâteu	(TA verb)	s/he sees his/her/its (an) tracks
ueshâushâm[1]	(indecl part)	Oh!, My goodness!

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[1] The local pronunciation of this word is **uîshâushâm**, as on the recording.

POINTS OF GRAMMAR

I.   The Evidential (Verb) Suffixes *-tak* and *-shapan*

The suffixes *-tak* and *-shapan* occur with independent verb forms in Innu-aimun. The meaning or function attached to these forms is best described as 'evidential': both of these endings indicate that speakers are basing their statement on some sort of evidence, often indirect in nature, rather than on direct observation or experience of an event (hence the term 'indirect' used to describe these forms by Drapeau 1984).[2] That is, verbs containing the suffix *-tak* or *-shapan* indicate that speakers do **not** have first-hand knowledge or experience of the state of affairs they are describing.

The past form *-shapan* (which also occurs as *-sha*) is typically used to represent an event that speakers conclude must have occurred prior to the present of speech, but one that they themselves did not witness directly. All that they experience or perceive is the present-time result (as in the case above where the existence of caribou tracks strongly suggests that a caribou must have passed by sometime earlier). The non-past or present suffix *-tak*, on the other hand, represents an event that, from the available evidence, speakers conclude must be ongoing at the time of speech, but one that they have not yet fully confirmed through direct attestation.

In both types of cases, the evidence available to speakers is usually sensory. Thus in the examples on the previous page the speaker infers via auditory means (hearing someone snore) that someone is asleep; likewise, using this suffix enables a speaker to represent that her conclusion that a piece of meat must be cooked is not based on the direct experience of taste, but is arrived at via some other (less direct) sensory evidence, such as touch. In some Quebec varieties of Innu-aimun (Betsiamites, Lower North Shore), the evidence in question can be hearsay, or a verbal report. That is, *-tak* or **-shapan** may be used in cases where someone else has told the speaker about an event – even in cases where the person has learned about the event from television or radio. Drapeau (1984) provides examples of this usage, which does not seem to occur in Sheshatshiu. For a detailed discussion of the uses of the evidential in Sheshatshiu Innu-aimun and related varieties, see James,

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[2] Drapeau, Lynn. 1984. Le traitement de l'information chez les Montagnais. *Recherches amérindiennes au Québec* 14.4: 24-35. Some of the examples in this Lesson are based on Drapeau's work.

Clarke and MacKenzie (2001).[3] As they point out, the -*tak* and -*shapan* forms are also regularly used to represent events where speakers cannot completely trust their direct perceptions – for example, cases where objects are too far away in the distance for speakers to be sure that they are identifying them correctly, as in Dialogue I on page 127.

Paradigms follow for both an AI *i*-stem and a TI verb. In the 1st and 2nd persons, -*tak* and -*shapan* follow the fully-formed independent indicative non-past form + the connective vowel –*â*. In 3rd person forms, -*tak* and -*shapan* follow the full independent form in the TI; in the AI, however, they replace the person suffix -*u*, and a short theme vowel is lengthened before the suffix is added. The obviative follows a largely similar pattern, except that the obviative marker -*(i)nî* is inserted directly prior to -*tak* and -*shapan.* The 3rd plural suffix -*at*, as well as the obviative suffix -*a* or -*î*, follow these evidential markers.

AI *âkushu* 's/he is sick'

	-*tak* (present) forms	It turns out that ...
1	*nitâkushinâtak*	I am sick
2	*tshitâkushinâtak*	you (sg) are sick
3	*âkushîtak*	s/he is sick
3'	*âkushinîtak(a)*	s/he (obv) is sick
1p	*nitâkushinânâtak*	we (excl) are sick
21p	*tshitâkushinânâtak*	we (incl) are sick
2p	*tshitâkushinâuâtak*	you (pl) are sick
3p	*âkushîtakat*	they are sick

	-*shapan* (past) forms	It turned out that ...
1	*nitâkushinâshapan*	I was sick
2	*tshitâkushinâshapan*	you (sg) were sick
3	*âkushîshapan*	s/he was sick
3'	*âkushinîshapanî*	s/he (obv) was sick
1p	*nitâkushinânâshapan*	we (excl) were sick
21p	*tshitâkushinânâshapan*	we (incl) were sick
2p	*tshitâkushinâuâshapan*	you (pl) were sick
3p	*âkushîshapanat*	they were sick

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[3] James, Deborah, Sandra Clarke and Marguerite MacKenzie. 2001. The encoding of information source in Algonquian: evidentials in Cree/Montagnais/Naskapi. *International Journal of American Linguistics (IJAL)* 67.3: 229-263.

TI *uâpâtam^u* 'it turns out that s/he sees it'; 'it turned out that s/he saw it'

	-tak (present) forms	*-shapan* (past) forms
1	*nuâpâten**â**tak*	*nuâpâten**â**shapan*
2	*tshuâpâten**â**tak*	*tshuâpâten**â**shapan*
3	*uâpâtam**û**tak*	*uâpâtam**û**shapan*
3'	*uâpâtamin**î**tak(a)*	*uâpâtamin**î**shapanî*
1p	*nuâpâtenân**â**tak*	*nuâpâtenân**â**shapan*
21p	*tshuâpâtenân**â**tak*	*tshuâpâtenân**â**shapan*
2p	*tshuâpâtenâu**â**tak*	*tshuâpâtenâu**â**shapan*
3p	*uâpâtam**û**takat*	*uâpâtam**û**shapanat*

II. The Representation of Evidential Meaning in Contexts involving Conjunct Verbs

In contexts in which a conjunct verb form is called for, there is no separate set of inflectional suffixes to represent evidential meaning, that is, to indicate whether or not a speaker has had firsthand experience of an event. In such instances, speakers must have recourse to conjunct dubitative forms, as in the following examples, which include the main clause negator *apu*, plus connective particles such as *ekue* which normally require the conjunct:

*Apu nip**â**kue.*	It turned out that s/he was not asleep.
*Ekue[4] nûtekush**u**âne.*	And then it seems that I fell asleep.
*Ekute uetîtâuku**â**kuenit nikâu(i)pan.*[5]	This is where they must have met my late mother.

Recall, however, that in cases where the main verb is 'think', no conjunct form is required in the embedded clause.

Tâpue eukuan nitânish, 'tshutinikûshapan shâsh', itenimeu.	Indeed it is my daughter; 'he must have already taken you', he was thinking.

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[4] *ekue* is the standard spelling, although the word is often pronounced as *kuet*.

[5] The past tense marker *-pan* may also be attached to names and kinship terms to designate a person who is deceased.

III. The 'Subjective'

Independent (but not conjunct) verbs may likewise appear with the discontinuous verbal affix *ka- ... -(u)â*, that is, with the prefix *ka-* followed by a verb + the *-(u)â* suffix. This form has been termed the 'subjective' by Drapeau (1986).[6]   Subjective forms are used for events that a speaker is reluctant to represent as factual in the real world; instead, they are represented as in some way 'experiential', or as the speaker's mental constructs – notably, events that occurred in a dream; subjective perceptions, impressions or opinions; vague recollections; or surprise in light of the discovery of an unexpected happening.

Umûshûma ka-nâtâkaunikuâ ishinueu.	She is dreaming that her grandfather is taking her back to the shore.
'*Ka-mishta-minu-tshîshikâuâ*', *ishinam*ᵘ.	'The weather's very nice', s/he dreams.
(Ka-)nishîuennâuâ.	I seem to be hungry (after all).

The following represents the AI and TI subjective paradigms in the present (non-past) tense. The form of the subjective is very similar to that of the evidentials outlined above. Thus in the 1st and 2nd persons the *-(u)â* suffix follows a fully-formed independent indicative plus the long vowel *-â*. With 3rd person plural subjects, a short stem vowel is again lengthened, and in 3rd plural and obviative forms, the *-(u)â* suffix is followed by plural or obviative endings. Note that the *ka-* prefix is often not pronounced, particularly in the 1st and 2nd persons.

	AI ('be sick')	**TI** ('see it')
1	*(ka-)nitâkushinâuâ*	*(ka-)nuâpâtenâuâ*
2	*(ka-)tshitâkushinâuâ*	*(ka-)tshuâpâtenâuâ*
3	*(ka-)âkushuâ*	*(ka-)uâpâtamuâ*
3'	*(ka-)âkushinuânî*[7]	*(ka-)uâpâtaminuânî*
1p	*(ka-)nitâkushinânâuâ*	*(ka-)nuâpâtenânâuâ*
21p	*(ka-)tshitâkushinânâuâ*	*(ka-)tshuâpâtenânâuâ*
2p	*(ka-)tshitâkushinâuâuâ*	*(ka-)tshuâpâtenâuâuâ*
3p	*(ka-)âkushûtî*	*(ka-)uâpâtamûtî*

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[6] Drapeau, Lynn. 1986. Entre le rêve et la réalité: Le mode subjectif en montagnais. In William Cowan (ed.), *Actes du dix-septième congrès des algonquinistes*, 101-120. Ottawa: Carleton University.

[7] The sequence *-nuânî* is pronounced as *-nuenî* in Sheshatshiu.

For some speakers, the ***ka- ... -(u)â*** subjective forms can also combine
with a past tense independent indicative, to represent, for example, a
dream that occurred in the past, or an impression that the speaker held
prior to the moment of speaking, as in:

> *Ek^u mâshten kâ uâpamitân*   And the last time I saw you, you
>   *(ka-)tshimishta-apishîssishî(â).*   seemed (to me) to be very small.

Subjective forms often co-occur with an evidential suffix, whether ***-tak*** or
-shapan, as in the following cases:

> *Ka-nipâshapanuâ.*   It turns out that s/he was asleep.
> *Ekâ tshimuanîshapanuâ.*   It must not have rained (e.g the
>   ground isn't wet).
> *Pâkueshikan ka-tâtakâ.*   There seems to be bread here.

Note that after ***-tak***, the suffix is ***-â*** rather than ***–uâ***, as in the final
example above.

IV. *ka- .... -(u)â* in Relative Clauses

The ***ka- ... -(u)â*** form also occurs in non-past relative clauses, as in:

> *ne nâpeu ka-tâuâ*   that man (who is) over there
> *ne ka-mîtshishuâ eukuan an*   that person (who is) eating over
>   *nishtesh*   there is my older brother

The meaning of this relative clause construction is 'that one among
others', i.e., it singles out a person or object. The construction is common
among younger speakers, who also seem to use it as a more general
present-tense relative clause marker. Relative clauses in ***ka- ... -(u)â*** are
not negated; rather, an alternative construction employing the more
usual conjunct is used, as in:

> *Neme mîtshuâp nuî âpashtân*   I want that house that isn't white.
>   *ekâ uâpât.*
> *Nuî âpashtân neme metuâkan*   I want that toy that isn't broken.
>   *ekâ pîkupanit.*

V. Forms in -*(â)pan*

In terms of their form, the evidential and subjective verb paradigms are similar, in that, in the 1st and 2nd persons at least, they are based on fully inflected independent indicatives followed by the connective vowel -*â*. A very similar paradigm occurs in which the (past) suffix -*pan* occupies the slot of -*tak* or -*shapan*. In such cases, the verb must also include a modal-like abstract preverb, e.g. *pâ* 'should, would', *pâ tshî* 'could' or *uî* 'want/intend to'. The meaning is always one of a counterfactual, non-realized event, as in the following case, where the first clause is in the past conjunct dubitative:

> *Shîueniânâkue ni**pâ***   If I were hungry, we would eat. / If I had
>   *mîtshishunâpan.*   been hungry, we would have eaten.

A full paradigm is provided below for the AI *â*-stem verb *nipâu* 's/he is sleeping/asleep'. The meaning is '(I) could have slept' (but did not).

1	*nipâ tshî nipânâpan*	I could have slept
2	*tshipâ tshî nipânâpan*	you (sg) could have slept
3	*tshipâ tshî nipâpan*	s/he could have slept
3'	*tshipâ tshî nipânîpan(î)*	s/he (obv) could have slept
1p	*nipâ tshî nipânânâpan*	we (excl) could have slept
21p	*tshipâ tshî nipânânâpan*	we (incl) could have slept
2p	*tshipâ tshî nipânâuâpan*	you (pl) could have slept
3p	*tshipâ tshî nipâpanat*	they could have slept

VI. Negating Evidential and Subjective Verbs

As noted in section II above, the negative form corresponding to **evidentia**l -*shapan* forms is the conjunct dubitative present. An example follows, which represents an event that the speaker did not become aware of until after the fact:

> *Apu nipâkue.*   It turned out that s/he was not asleep.

Unlike most other independent verbs, which are negated with the particle *apu* (+ conjunct verb), **subjective** forms are negated with the particle *ekâ* (almost always pronounced as *kâ*) and are unchanged from their non-negated forms. After *ekâ*, the *ka-* subjective prefix is not pronounced (and will not be represented orthographically). *Ekâ* is also used as the negator when the subjective combines with the evidential. Some examples follow:

Ekâ pimûteshapanûtshe.	(From the evidence), it's as if they haven't walked by yet.
Nâsht ekâ nitshissenitenâuâ.	It seems to me that I don't really know it.

As to the *-tak* **evidential**, it is regularly negated by using the negative subjective + *-tak*, as in *(e)kâ nipâtakâ* ('S/he doesn't seem to be asleep').

EXERCISES

I.   Translate the following sentences into English:

1.   *Tshuâpamâu â ne ekâ uâpâtamua?*
2.   *Ekâ tshimuanûtakâ.*
3.   *Mîneshapan atîkua.* (i.e., recently killed caribou)
4.   *Nipetuâtakuat atimuat.*
5.   *Tshuâpâtenâtak â ûsh nete kâtâk^u?*
6.   *Tshipimûtenâuâshapan anite âku.*
7.   *Nimishken ka-uâpâuâ mashinaikan.*
8.   *Ekâ pîtuâtakâ shâsh.*
9.   *Shâshish ekâ tshitatussenâuâ anite Sheshâtshît.*
10.   *Mîtshiminu ka-mînuetakâ.*
11.   *Mîtshiminu ka-mishkamûtakâ.*
12.   *Pâkueshikan ka-tâtakâ.*

Additional Vocabulary

âku	(indecl part)	behind and out of sight
mîneu	TA verb	s/he gives it to him/her
mînueu	AI verb	s/he gives things away

II.   Translate the following into Innu-aimun, excluding words in italics:

1.   She dreams that it is snowing.
2.   You seem to be hungry (*after all*).
3.   The woman who is sick is asleep.
4.   It must have rained (*since the grass is wet*).
5.   She could have eaten (*but did not*).
6.   The dog must be sick (*I see that he threw up*).