INNU LANGUAGE APPS AND WEB-BASED TOOLS*

Minority or endangered languages often suffer from a lack of resources, or from disparity or incoherence of those that are created. We present here a series of digital resources to teach and to maintain the Innu language. These resources have the advantage of being integrated with each other, for the sake of coherence and complementarity. By working with partners involved in the documentation and teaching of Innu, we have designed and developed various modules of online resources, linked to each other, but often unknown to teachers or learners. Our goal is to provide an overview of these resources, designed to create a rich and coherent learning environment for Innu language and culture.

The Innu language is part of the large family of Algonquian languages extending from the Atlantic to the Rocky Mountains and more specifically, part of the continuum of Cree-Naskapi-Innu languages. In 2016, Innu was spoken by more than 11,000 people in Quebec (86%) and in Labrador (14%)¹. To locate Innu, visit the **Algonquian Linguistic Atlas** (www.atlas-ling.ca). There are 21 topics of conversation in over 15 languages, about 50 speakers, and over 20,000 audio files, recorded between 2005 and 2017. Each of the eleven Innu communities and their dialects are represented. Based on this atlas, we also created an Innu conversation manual with CDs, and an Innu conversation web application for second-language acquisition and awareness of dialectal differences².

* The work reported here was made possible through grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (435-2014-1199, 856-2009-81, ARUC: 833-2004-1033) and from Canadian Heritage. It is the result of an important team effort requiring more than ten years of collaboration. We would like to thank the members of our teams and co-researchers from Carleton University, Memorial University and Tshakapesh Institute—more specifically Marguerite MacKenzie, Hélène St-Onge, Delasie Torkornoo, Claire Owen, Laurel Anne Hasler, Anne-Marie Baraby, Paula Chinkiwsky, Katie Martinuzzi, Gabrielle Lacroix, Lisa Sullivan, Mimie Neacappo and Jérémie Ambroise. We would also like to express our deepest gratitude to the Elders who have participated in the documentation of the Innu language over the years. Ninashkumanananat tshishennuat, katshi patshitinahk utaimunuau kie katshi uauitshiaushiht umenu atusseunnu etutakannit!

ALGONQUIAN LINGUISTIC ATLAS

WWW.ATLAS-LING.CA

One of our most popular online tools is the **Pan-Innu Dictionary** (dictionnaire.innu-aimun.ca). The result of an important team effort (Alliance de recherche universitéscommunautés (ARUC), directed by Marguerite MacKenzie, in collaboration with many partners, including the Tshakapesh Institute in Quebec and Mamu Tshishkutamashutau in Labrador), this dictionary was published online in 2011 and is continuously updated. It is a trilingual dictionary: Innu-English-French and contains over 27,000 entries.



- 1 http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/98-200-x/2016022/98-200-x2016022-fra.cfm
- 2 Innu conversation app. for iOS, Blackberry and Android. Published in December 2014.

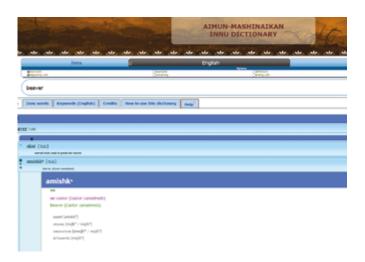
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TRILINGUAL PAN-INNU DICTIONARY

DICTIONNAIRE.INNU-AIMUN.CA

The dictionary contains grammatical information. By following links, one can start from a verb and find its conjugation pattern, or explanatory pages in an online grammar, either to its grammatical subcategory or to its type of radical.

Conjugaison app (verbe.innu-aimun.ca) is user-friendly and interactive. The pronunciation of conjugated model verbs is provided using audio files recorded in the different dialects. This promotes a standardized spelling, which is still being revised. There are over 5000 audio files in the conjugation app (recorded by Mollen and St-onge from the Tshakapesh Institute.) The work is still ongoing. This application is integrated with the online dictionary, grammar and interactive games.



CONJUGATION APP FOR INNU VERBS

VERBE.INNU-AIMUN.CA

The interactive games and online lessons (jeux.tshakapesh.ca) were first created for an audience whose mother tongue is Innu. Among other things, they provide for the acquisition and improvement of Innu literacy, vocabulary development, mastery of standardized spelling and discovery of Innu grammar. However, some modules are now also designed and used for the acquisition of Innu as a second language. The interactive lessons and exercises are available in the three dialects of Quebec (East, Central, West) and are also currently adapted for two dialects in Labrador (with an English interface). The application makes it possible to create customized courses and manage student progress.

The **oral stories database** responds to the need to preserve and transmit a traditionally oral culture without the use of written material (histoires. tshakapesh.ca). This database has the following advantages: oral stories are categorized and can be browsed by category - storyteller, theme, genre, target audience (children, adults). For each story, there is a short summary written in Innu and translated into French and English, information about the dialect, the storyteller, his or her community, and the year it was recorded. It also indicates who did what in the audio or video file, how this story can be used for teaching what themes are presented, what genres are featured (according to the Innu categories: legend, life story, discussion, etc.) and finally, the level or age group at which it is most suitable to present each story. There is also a short trilingual biography for each storyteller, found in a database of storytellers. The audio and video files are available for free download. There are three interface languages available: Innu, French and English.

Other online tools developed in recent years include:

- > The online catalogue of cultural and educational material: to show what is available in Innu (books, CDs, etc.). It is accessible via a categorized and searchable database, with online ordering and inventory management (administered by the Tshakapesh Institute). As with oral stories, for each product the level, the type, and the possible uses for teaching are indicated. The interface is in Innu and in French (catalogue.tshakapesh.ca).
- > Grammar pages: to accompany the dictionary and support teachers.
- > The terminology forum: to create new words and support translators and interpreters (terminologie.atlas-ling.ca).