This Michif course is primarily an aid to the acquisition of simple, everyday phrases in Michif. Language learners who are at the beginning levels of Introductory Michif, who live and/or work in communities will find this to be a useful tool in their group or independent studies. The last section includes a glossary of many of the words contained in this program and a few more which do not appear.

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**I. PRONUNCIATION**

1. The Consonants:

Ten consonants are used to write Northern Michif/Cree in the Standard Roman Orthography (SRO) in combination with the michif language.

These are: **w, p, t, k, c, m, n, s, w,** and **y**

In Northern Alberta **r** and **l** are often used in regular nouns and proper nouns.

E.g. lapatâkwa (potatoes); lapalîts (cap); lîpôpôsísa (little balls of yarn on

mukluks). Etôwâr (Edward) etc.

Almost the consonants are pronounced like their English counterparts with the exception of **p**,  **t**, **k**, and **c**.

**P** is pronounced as a sound between **p** and **b**,

**T** is pronounced as a sound between **t** and **d**

**K** is pronounced as a sound between **k** and hard **g**

**C** is pronounced a **ts**

Examples:

**P** is unaspirated\* as the **p** in the word *spin*

I. **p**îyak one IV. asa**p**â**p** thread

II. **p**îsim sun V. **p**âh**p**i laugh (imp.)

III. a**p**oy paddle VI. nîsósâ**p** twelve

**T** is unaspirated\* as the **t** in *stand*

I. **t**imîw it is deep (lake/river) IV. mís**t**ik stick/tree

II. a**t**im dog V. misí**t**a feet

III. mís**t**a**t**im horse VI. mîpi**t** tooth

**K** is unaspirated\* as the **k** in *skin*

I. **k**îsi**k**âw day IV. **k**iyâm it’s alright (it doesn’t matter)

II. mîs**k**îsi**k** eye V. mi**k**ot nose

III. **k**î**k**âc almost VI. a**k**otâ hang it up (imp.)

**C** is pronounced like**ts**

I. **c**îpay ghost/spirit IV. o**c**îk fisher (fur bearing animal)

II. a**c**imowin a story V. mî**c**iwin food

III. **c**îskwa just wait VI. a**c**imosís puppy

\*unaspirated is when making a consonant sound without a puff of air (h) between vowel and consonant.

**Note**: In this course all Cree/michif words are written in their full form and can be pronounced in the fluent form by omitting the short vowels that are written with an accent above the vowel. Examples: tân**í**si (hello, how are you?); pim**í**pahtâ (run)

**2. The Vowels**

Woodland Cree (Y Dialect) uses four vowels to make the four long vowel sounds and three short vowel sounds.

Short Vowels: **a**,  **i**, and **o**

A. **a** is pronounced as the **u** in the word *putt*

I. **a**st**a**m come here IV. ôt**a** here (locative)

II. **a**w**a**s go away V. **a**n**a** that one (animate)

III. **a**pi sit down VI. nât**a** go get it (inanimate)

B. **i** is pronounced as the **i** in *pin*

I. **i**skotîw fire IV. **i**skwîs**i**s girl

II. p**i**siw lynx V. n**i**pâ sleep (imp.)

III. k**i**nosîw fish VI. pîs**i**m sun

C. **o** is pronounced as the **o** in *nook*

I. **o**kimâw leader IV. p**o**k**o** it is a must

II. **o**tina take it (inan.) V. pip**o**n winter

III. mîcis**o** eat (imp.) VI. p**o**stiska put it on (inanimate)

Long Vowels: **a**, **î**, **ô**, and **e**. (ê)

Long vowels are written with a circumflex **^** above the vowel.

A. **â** is pronounced as the **a** in *absent*

I. **â**mô bee IV. **â**pihtaw in the centre (locative) II. n**â**pîsís boy V. mit**â**taht ten

III. **â**skaw sometimes VI. mit**â**s pants

B. **î** is pronounced as the **i** in *machine*

I. **î**sis seashell IV. tîpakohp seven

II. mînísa berries V. pîtâ bring it (inanimate)

III. k**î**sik sky VI. p**i**hp**i**hciw robin

C. **ô** is pronounced as o sound in *mood*

I. **ô**si boat IV. min**ô**s cat

II. **ô**h**ô** owl V. p**ô**tâcikanís whistle

III. m**ô**swa moose VI. p**ô**na make a fire (imp.)

D. **e** is pronounced as the **e** in *café*. This letter is not used in Woodland

Cree of Northern Alberta but is included as it is used in the Plains Cree

Language.

I. ekosi there; so then… (ay-ko-si)

II. tâpwe truly, really (tâ-pway)

III. peyak one (pay-ak)

In many of the Woodland (Sakâwîyiniw) Cree speaking communities of northern Alberta the letter **e** is often used in the non-standardized form of the spelling of Cree words, but it is not pronounced like the letter **e** (ê) that is used in Standard Roman Orthography of the Plains Cree of central and southern Alberta. It is meant to be pronounced like the long English **e** (ē). *Examples:*

**Non-standardized standardized Plains Cree English**

peyak pîyak pêyak one

kesikaw kîsikâw *kîsikâw* day

kisepesim kisî-pîsim kisê-pîsim January

wasenamawin wâsînamâwin wâsênamâwin window

iskwatem iskwâhtîm iskwâtêm door

Some Plains Cree writers do not use the circumflex **^** above the vowel **e** because it is always a long sound.

**II**. **POLITE CONVERSATIONS**:

**1**. **Basic Greeting Dialogue**

Speaker 1: Tânísi (hello, how are you?)

Speaker 2: Namôya nânítaw, ikwa kiya? (I’m okay/alright, and how are you?)

Speaker 1: Namôya nânítaw nîsta (I’m okay/alright too)

Speaker 2: Miywâsin, tâpwî

**2.** **First Greeting** (meeting someone new)

Sp. 1: Tânísi **ᑖᓂᓯ** hello, how are you?

Sp. 2: Namôya nânítaw, ikwa kiya? I’m okay/alright, and how are you?

Sp. 1: Namôya nânítaw nîsta I’m okay/alright too

Sp. 2: miywâsin mâka, tâpwî that is good, really/truly

Sp. 1: Tânísi kit-îsîhkâson? What is your name?

Sp. 2: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ nit-îsîhkâson, ikwa kiya, tânísi kit-îsîhkâson?

My name is\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and what is your name?

Sp. 1: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ niya nit-îsîhkâson. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is my name.

Sp. 1: Tânítî ohci kiya? Where are you from?

Sp. 2: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ohci niya I am from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

ikwa tânítî ohci kiya? And where are you from?

Sp. 1: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ohci niya I am from\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

* Assessment Tools – included in each of the 12 lesson plan samples
* Resource materials included in the appendices of each lesson plan sample
* Participants can contact facilitator at 780 710 7917 to discuss course materials and if assistance is needed in course work
* Lesson plans created using TQS and Second Language Implementation in Alberta Curriculum Guide