

Activity 7

Etymologies and sound differences in Michif: Days of the week

Michif combines vocabulary from Plains Cree and French, but when words from either Plains Cree or French come into Michif, they sound different than in the original language. This activity will provide an example of these differences between the source language and Michif.

Instructions:

- ▶ Open the Linguistic Atlas found at www.atlas-ling.ca.
- ▶ Go to the 'days' category.
- ▶ Select the phrase for each of the days of the week.
- ▶ For each day, click on each marker on the map and listen carefully.
- ▶ When you find the speakers listed below, copy the word on the chart below.

Answer the following questions:

- 1) Do the days of the week in Michif look more like Plains Cree or like French?
- 2) What is the major sound difference between French and Michif at the end of each word (except for *Sunday*, where the same sound difference comes at the beginning of the word)?
- 3) Listen to the words for *Wednesday* and *Friday* in French and in Michif. What do you notice about the middle 'r' in these words?

What are the words for the days of the week?

1. Grace Zoldy – Michif
2. Jean Okimasis – Plains Cree - South
3. Marie-Odile Junker – French (green button in bottom right hand corner)

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1							
2							
3							

Answers:

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	jimañsh	laeñji	marjii	mikarjii	zhwiijii	vañdarjii	samjii
2	ayamihēwi -kīsikāw	pōni- ayamihēwi -kīsikāw	nīso- kīsikāw	nīsto-kīsikāw	nēwo- kīsikāw	niyānāno- kīsikāw	mātinawēwi -kīsikaw
3	dimanche	lundi	mardi	mercredi	jeudi	vendredi	samedi

1. The days of the week come from French rather than Plains Cree.
2. ‘di’ /di/ in French normally becomes ‘jii’ /dʒi/ in Michif.
3. The ‘cr’ /kʁ/ et ‘dr’ /dʁ/ consonant clusters become ‘kar’ /kaʁ/ and ‘dar’ /daʁ/ in the words for Wednesday and Friday; in other words, Michif splits up the consonants followed by ‘r’ with a vowel.