

Activity 1a

Sound Differences in Cree-Innu

The Algonquian language family is made up of many Aboriginal languages found in North America such as Cree, Innu, Ojibwe and Micmac. The mother language is called Proto-Algonquian. The daughter languages have themselves many children called dialects. The Linguistic Atlas website, www.atlas-ling.ca illustrates many of the languages and dialects of Cree-Innu. These languages make up a continuum of dialects that change slightly from one to the next. **The original ‘l’ sound** in the mother language has changed over time into the sounds that can be heard in the different daughter languages. For example, in Plains Cree this ‘l’ sound has changed to ‘y’ but in Woodland Cree it has become ‘th’. Notice that the original ‘l’ sound has been kept in the Pessamit dialect of Innu even though it is spelled with ‘n’ as in the standard Innu orthography.

Instructions:

- ▶ Open the Linguistic Atlas found at www.atlas-ling.ca.
- ▶ Go to the ‘weather’ category.
- ▶ Select the phrase “It’s windy.”
- ▶ Click on each marker on the map and listen carefully.
- ▶ When you find the speakers listed below, write the first sound that you hear and copy the written word on the corresponding line.

What is the first sound that you hear?

	First Sound	Written Word
▶ Helene St-Onge - Innu - Pessamit	_____	_____
▶ Alice Lalo - Innu - Pakut-shipu	_____	_____
▶ Silas Nabinicaboo - Western Naskapi	_____	_____
▶ Louise Blacksmith - East Cree - South - Inland	_____	_____
▶ Leda Corrigan - Plains Cree	_____	_____
▶ Martha Michell - Woodland Cree - North	_____	_____

Answer:

	First Sound	IPA*	Written Word
▶ Innu - Pessamit	l	/l/	nutin
▶ Innu - Pakut-shipu	n	/n/	nutin
▶ Western Naskapi	y	/j/	yuutin
▶ East Cree - South - Inland	y	/j/	yuutin
▶ Plains Cree	y	/j/	yōtin
▶ Woodland Cree - North	th	/ð/	thōtin

(*IPA= International Phonetic Alphabet)