

# Presentation to the 25th ANNUAL STABILIZING INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES SYMPOSIUM

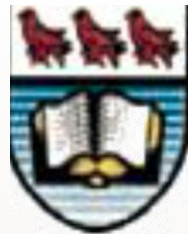
University of Lethbridge, Alberta – June 7-9, 2018

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liiyiyiu ayimihtaau

# Let's talk our language



**University  
of Victoria**

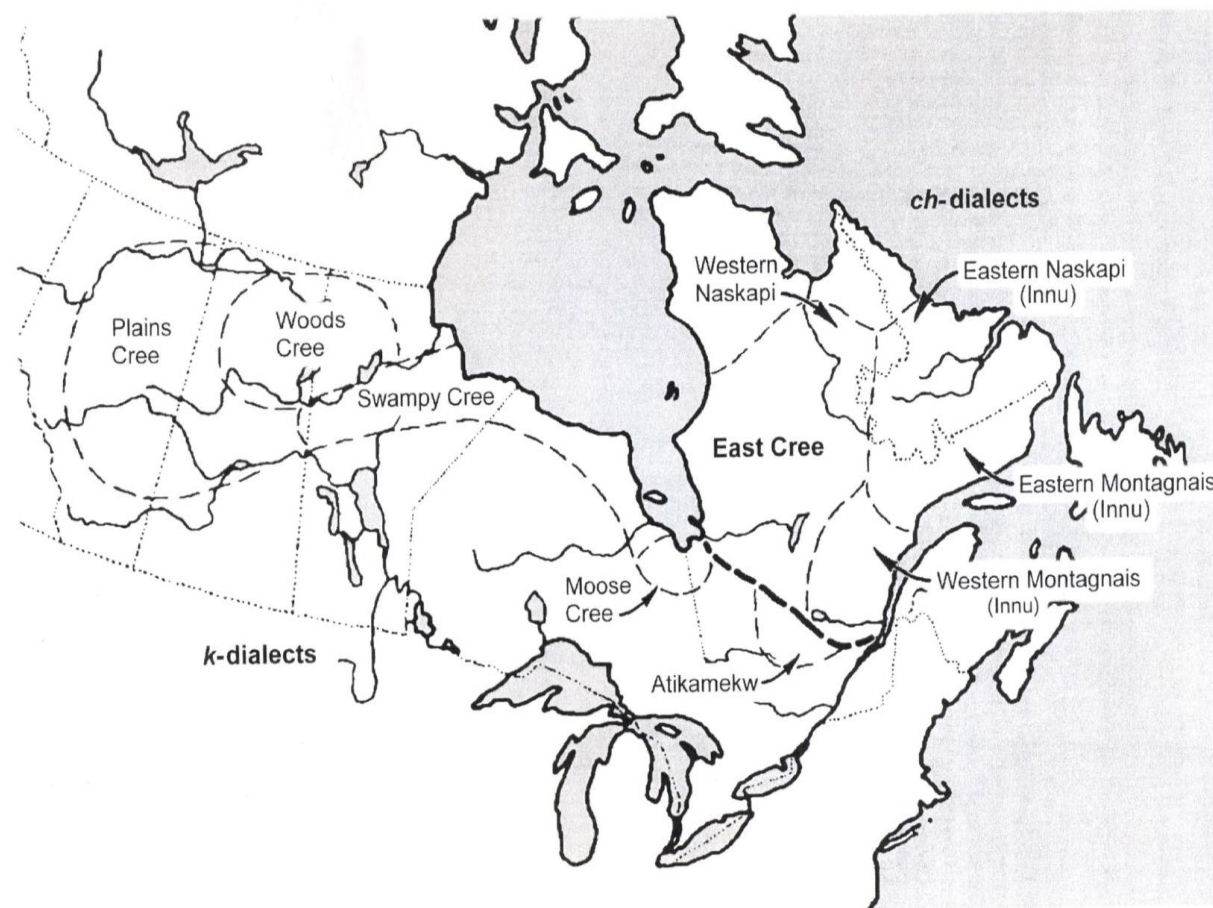
### East Cree Dialects

East Cree can be divided into two main dialects, Southern and Northern, which have different pronunciations represented by different spellings, as well as different grammatical features and vocabulary. The Northern Dialect does not pronounce the vowel *e*, represented by the syllabic symbols  $\nabla$ ,  $\nabla$ ,  $\nabla$ ,  $\nabla$ ,  $\nabla$ , etc. Instead the roman symbols *ea* and syllabic symbols  $\nabla$ ,  $\nabla$ ,  $\nabla$  are used, except in personal names. The Northern Dialect includes the communities of Whapmagoostui (formerly Great Whale), Chisasibi (formerly Fort George), and Wemindji. The Southern Dialect is divided into the Coastal (Eastmain, Waskaganish, Nemaska) and Inland (Mistissini, Oujé-Bougoumou and Waswanipi) sub-dialects. A number of differences in the dialects are noted but much more research is needed in this area.

### East Cree Communities (map)



Source: ᐃᓴᓴᓴᓴᓴᓴ ᓴᓴᓴᓴ ᓴᓴ ᓴᓴᓴᓴᓴᓴᓴᓴᓴ ᓴᓴᓴᓴᓴᓴᓴᓴᓴ  
 Eastern James Bay Cree Dictionary-Northern Dialect  
 2012 Cree Programs, Cree School Board



# Fort George Island Residential Schools

- 5 Residential Schools from 1930's-1970's
  - Anglican mission
  - Catholic mission
- Students came to Fort George from other communities
- Post 1970 students were sent out to other residential schools and placed in non-Indigenous boarding homes in the south.
- CHCC has documentation and photographs that we have acquired over the years

# Other Impacts

- Residential School
- Hydro Electric Development
- Town Relocation
- Inter-generational effects
- Language Shift
  - Dabiyiyuu Iyimuwin





# Grassroots organization

- Fort George Heritage working group was formed
- Community level involvement
- Importance of Elders involvement
- Language is the foundation and strength of who we are



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## Chisasibi Heritage and Cultural Centre

is a place of cultural renewal, honouring ancestral values through *Aayaanischa* representing cycles of reciprocal learning, knowledge, and connecting generations-past, present and future...



# Partnership CHCC & UVic CALR Program

- CALR was customized to meet the goals of the CHCC
- Cultural Renewal
- Ancestral values through *Aayaanischa* representing cycles of reciprocal learning, knowledge, and connecting generations-past, present and future.
- The powerful significance of the intangible, living heritage was incorporated into many of the courses, by documenting and studying stories, songs, memories, emotions, language, and expressions.



# CALR courses:

- Cohort was entire staff of CHCC, Elders involved in designing courses, choosing instructors, attending courses,
- LING 180A: Dynamics of Indigenous Language Shift
- LING 180B: Issues, Principles and Best Practices in Language Revitalization
- KEY concepts from LING 180AB used in other work – Kipp (1999)  
*Encouragement, Guidance, Insights, and Lessons Learned for Native Language Activists Developing Their Own Tribal Language Programs*
  - Never ask permission, never beg to save the language
  - Don't debate the issues
  - Be very action-oriented; just act
  - Show, don't tell. (Just do it!)

# CALR courses:

- LING 159: Indigenous Language 1 [course challenge] remaining 6 courses taught in Cree



- LING 181: Introductory Linguistics for Language Revitalization
  - Writing systems, dialects, different word-formation processes
- LING 182: Language Learning, Language Revitalization and Social Action
  - Worked in teams, based on work environment and departments to develop action plans

# CALR courses:

- Continued to develop projects started in LING 181 and 182
- LING 183A: Field Methods for Language Preservation and Revitalization: Documentation and Recording



- LING 183B: Field Methods for Language Preservation and Revitalization: Project Development
  - Annual Gathering at Fort George in July



# CALR courses:

- Remaining courses were held in new cultural building, November, 2017
- LING 186: Language in Indigenous Culture
  - a focus on the language used in traditional activities, the *Chihkaapaash* legends, stories, cultural practices, methods and protocols, along with the impacts and implications of social change on language
- LING 187: Special Topics in Language Revitalization: Language Revitalization in Cultural Heritage Interpretation
  - language embedded in traditional activities including language loss, revitalization and preservation with a focus on values, ethics, protocols and traditional ways of knowing.

## *Nituhchaamuwin*

It is said that *the HEART of a language are its speakers and when a language dies it is because the people do not use it.* Our language is tied to ancestral lands and natural environment, this is the place that our language is sustained and strengthened and in the words of our community Elders, we learn by listening, watching and doing!



## *Nituhchaamuwin con't.*

- *Nituhchaamuwin* evenings were held in the community with local knowledge-keepers
- As a community based organization, CHCC is building a strong cultural base and offers support to local schools where language and culture is taught at the elementary and secondary levels.





# Certificate in Aboriginal Language Revitalization

An Academic Partnership Between the Division of Continuing Studies, the Department of Linguistics and the En'owkin Centre





# Program Design

- CALR works in partnership with communities to customize the content and delivery of the program to make it **authentic** and **relevant**
- Students learn linguistic concepts through the structure of their own Indigenous language
- Elders and fluent speakers are involved in advising, teaching and mentoring roles
- Students have practical opportunities to apply their new skills in language documentation and recording
- Community protocols and intellectual property issues are addressed

# Community Partnerships

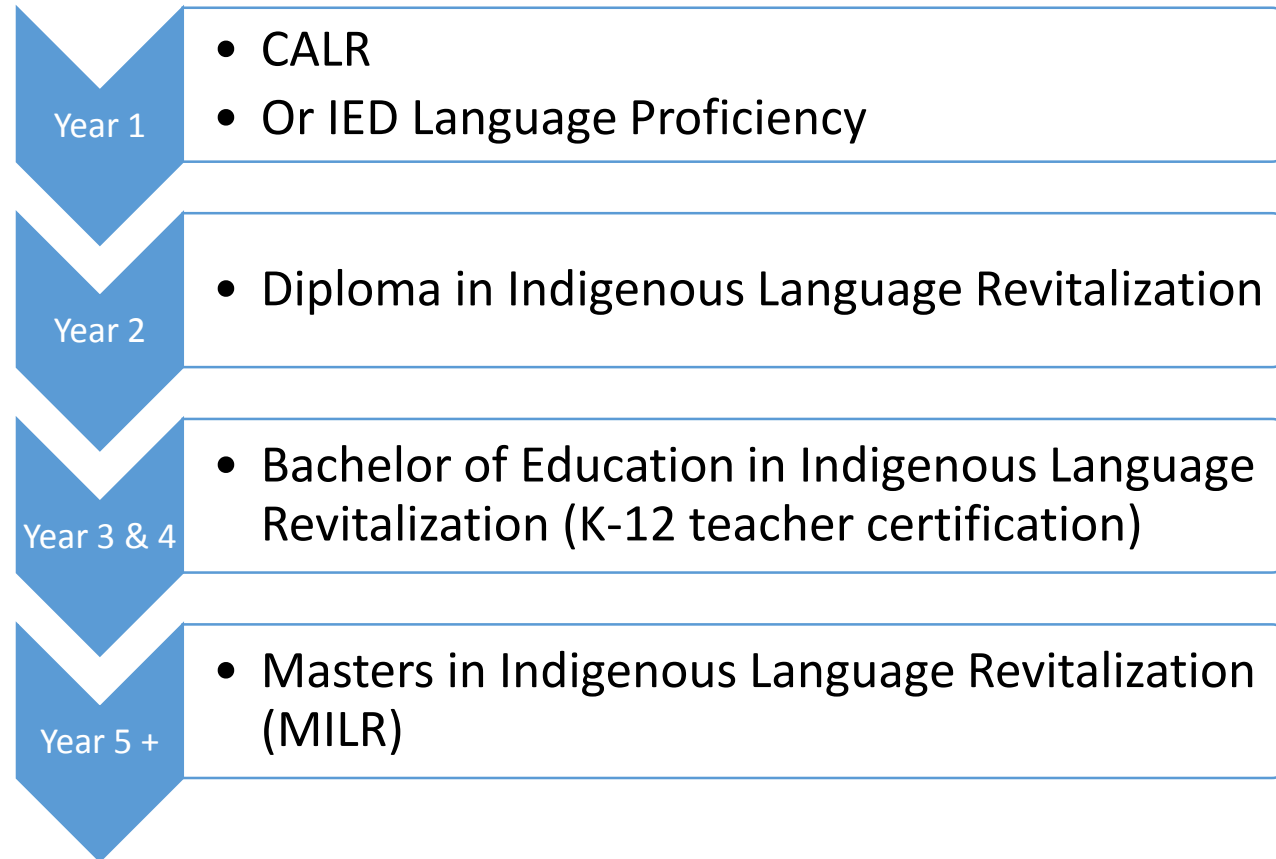
Partnerships are key to the success of CALR!

- Nunavut Arctic College in Cambridge Bay, Nunavut- *Inuinnaqtun language*
- Chisasibi Heritage & Cultural Centre, Chisasibi, QC- *Eastern Cree, Northern Dialect*
- Quuquatsa Language Society – various communities on Vancouver Island, BC- *Nuu-chah-nulth language (multiple dialects)*
- The Tłıchǫ Government in Behchokǫ, NWT- *Tłıchǫ language*
- Government of the Northwest Territories, Yellowknife, NWT- *students from various language communities: North Slavey, South Slavey, Tłıchǫ, Chipewyan, Inuvialuktun, Inuinnaqtun, Gwich'in*





# Community-based Indigenous Language Programs at UVic: A Laddered Approach



# Acknowledgement

