Mapping dialectal variation using the Algonquian Linguistic Atlas

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INTRODUCTION

- Demonstration of interactive dialectal feature maps, a new development of the Algonquian Linguistic Atlas (atlas-ling.ca)

- Utility of Algonquian Linguistic Atlas for linguistic analysis

- Utility of Atlas for creation of new terminology
Created from a conversational manual designed for East Cree

Intended as pedagogical tool, community participation on a volunteer or on-demand basis

2004 – prototype developed
2005 – made into a map due to community demand
2010 – expanded to include other Algonquian languages
LANGUAGES AND DIALECTS (IN 2017)

- 16 languages - 47 dialects/communities
  - 52 speakers
  - 19 000+ sound files
CONVERSATION APPS

- 21 topics of conversation in 9 Innu dialects, 3 Atikamekw dialects, 5 East Cree dialects
THE INTERACTIVE DIALECTAL MAPS

- Platform for assessing various linguistic variables and coding their variants
- Plotting of variables to display in an interactive Google map
FEATURES: PALATALIZATION

Atlas Feature Map Video.mp4
Research undertaken with Interactive Dialectal Maps

- Bottom-up direct study of features allows for:
  - Comparison & contrast full continuum of varieties
  - Identification of recurring isoglosses
  - Visualization of variation on cumulative maps
    - Cumulative dot plots and maps generated in R (R Core Team, 2013; Hadley & François, 2016; Hadley, 2009)
  - Answer questions in Algonquian literature
ADDRESSING QUESTIONS IN ALGONQUIAN LITERATURE: AFFILIATION OF EAST CREE

Is East Cree more closely related to Innu-Naskapi (Wolfart 1973; Pentland 1979) or should it be distinguished from other palatalized varieties (MacKenzie 1980)?
Our data shows that although *lexically* East Cree has more in common with Western Cree dialects, it is *grammatically* closer to palatalized dialects.
AFFILIATION OF EAST CREE

Affiliation of East Cree Coinciding Isoglosses

A) Western Cree
- where.animate
- that.inanimate
- question particle
- noun incorporation 'to trap'
- noun incorporation 'to hunt'
- hortative
- -is + -im

B) East Cree

C) Innu-Naskapi

Grammatical

Lexical

Phonological

Variable
- ten
- Sunday
- store
- soon
- socks
- snowing
- Saturday
- pencil
- nine
- hat
- five
- far away
- eight
- door
- coat
- chair

Prefixation before /o/
- Palatalization
- PA
- Fricativization

Community

Buffalo Lake
- White Bear
- Blakely Lake
- Kuniac
- Moose Lake
- Norway
- Amisk
- Moosonee
- Waskia
- Wabun
- Muskeg

Papastall
- Pasama
- Kawatiski
- Uashat mak Mani
- Ektogna

Nabumet
- Natuashish
- Attawins
- Neechee
- Sheenue
- Pakuorue
How to account for Atikamekw’s lexically distinctiveness (as noted by MacKenzie 1980).

- Dialect of Cree by Michelson in 1933 (Béland 1978).
- Mix of Ojibwe and Cree (Quaife 1921 in Béland 1978)
- Algonquin-Ojibwe dialect (Davidson 1928 in Béland 1978)

Our data shows that where Atikamekw is lexically distinct from other Cree dialects, it shares features with Anishnaabemowin varieties.
ATIKAMEKW DISTINCTIVENESS

Atikamekw Phonological and Lexical Distinctiveness

Map showing the distribution of Atikamekw variants in Canada with labels for Oji-Cree, Anishnaabemowin, Nishnaabemwin, and Algonquin.
LIMITS

- 1 speaker/community
  - Does the speaker reflect their community?
  - Only geography as a variable is considered – comparisons using sex, age, mobility, etc. unavailable for true variation study

- Non-exhaustive data

- Single responses
IMPLICATIONS FOR DOCUMENTATION AND CREATION
ANALYSIS OF VARIATION IN DERIVATIONAL MORPHOLOGY: “BUILDING” FINALS
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