

Peskotomuhkati Latuwewakon
(Passamaquoddy Language)

by

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Submitted to the Department of Linguistics and Philosophy
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree
of
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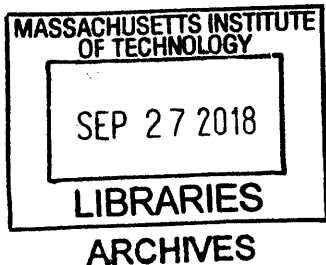
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ABSTRACT

Over the decades, Passamaquoddy has been taught in many ways and many forms. Some have tried using object identification and word(s) learning while others have tried teaching writing and reading via a phonetic form of English pronunciation. While all teaching methods and learning in any form is valid and valuable, we must first understand that the Passamaquoddy orthography is only a cut down version of the English orthography (using 17 characters plus an ‘). This cut down version of English characters with a Passamaquoddy grammar overlay is “still” English and can cause confusion for the adult learners of our language. And phonetic pronunciation and spelling is only as good as how we pronounce as set of letters in English. The spelling of words will vary by how our hearing processes the sounds.

The methods I am presenting are not new to teaching but are new to teaching adult learner of Passamaquoddy here in our territory. I will outline the use of TPR (Total Physical Response), Picture method of discovering verb forms and practical sentences.

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This learning experience has been enlightening and amazing, both mentally and emotionally. Mentally, there have been many challenges with time, space, travel and the logistics of a full course load at 59 years of age. Emotionally, the knowledge of the potential benefit to help save, support and promote the love of our language just makes my heart swell. When a person learns some new knowledge, it comes with a great responsibility to others. Carrying this knowledge forward to benefit the Passamaquoddy Tribal people is my honor and I look forward to the challenge and experience.

Kci woliwon psite wen! (thank you everyone)

Introduction and Writers Note

Why language and why now? Healing and Wellness.

How does one identify one's self? Each individual has their own narrative as to: who they are and why they exist, though most may not give this identity any forethought. If asked, people may identify themselves by race, gender, age group, religion or by association to certain groups. But what about their language? Most people do not understand the origins of their existence, where they come from, their original customs or their original traditions and language. I am generalizing a bit because some certainly learn and are taught their language and customs by their family; whatever their ethnic background may be. Tribal people of this continent are included here as well, but there have been many forms of genocidal practices of this government to rid themselves of the "Indians" problem. One example of this, is the Indian boarding schools which prohibited Natives from speaking their language or practicing their culture. The theme of these schools was "kill the Indian and save the child". These boarding schools were in existence from the late 1800's through the 1930's. This was the height of language loss for many tribes on this continent.

Being removed from your family and being forcibly prohibited from speaking your language created many psychological traumas for many Natives and their families. This practice caused many who experienced this boarding school trauma to not speak their language and to not teach their language to their children in hopes that their children would not have to experience the same trauma as they did.

I think these traumatic experiences of language loss not only affected those that experienced them but also affected their children and their grandchild. We call this experience "historical trauma". We as tribal people are still experiencing the effects of this loss. These traumas' have manifested into a wide range of negative issues for our people. And, I think that by restoring and strengthening our language will help empower and restore pride in our tribal people. Healing and wellness could be a direct result of language learning. Tribal people need and want to know their language which could also lead to them learning more about the culture. The current structure and status of our language is around 7 to 10 percent fluency depending on which study is used. The Passamaquoddy language is in a phase of recent written development. Our language was not written and did not have orthography until the latter half of the twentieth century. The language has survived for tens of thousands of years, being passed down orally.

In talking with fluent speakers who don't read or write this new system, I came to know that they have an innate command on the grammar of our language, knowing what form of nouns and verbs to use in the correct context. And if you match their fluency with the development of the orthography, the new writing system fits with the spoken language with a few exceptions. Of course this is the only way the developers of the written language could make it work. An example of this: *back in 1996 I asked my mother about the word for "toast", she thought for a moment and said /dʌst/.* In our orthography, the "t" that is not next to a consonant or is

preceded by an apostrophe (') becomes a voiced "d" while the "t" that is next to a consonant remains an unvoiced "t". My mother never saw or heard about the writing system yet she innately knew how to pronounce this English word in a Native way. Making the "t" at the beginning or the end of the word a voiced "d" and making the "t" at the end of the word unvoiced. Now, the /dʌst/ is not a Passamaquoddy, it is one that is just said with the Passamaquoddy accent. But my mother knew not to make the unvoiced "t" sound because of the sounds near it... it could have been any word with "t" followed by a vowel.

The fluent elders and the other fluent speakers of our communities will have a very important part in the preservation and promotion of our language revitalization projects. Though I am not a fluent speaker, I do understand most all of the language but I lack the confidence to reply back in Passamaquoddy. I am considered a fluent comprehender and there are a lot of people in our tribe that are in this same status of fluent comprehension. These comprehenders will also be a huge part of our revitalization projects as well. The point here is: we will need to come together as a tribe and prioritize the importance of maintaining and reclaiming our language. My efforts will be for the greater good of all of our Passamaquoddy people, I will share any and all information that I have or may acquire, I will promote and work with all who share these visions of language revitalization.

Phonology, Orthography

PRONOUNCING PASSAMAQUODDY-MALISEET

VOWELS — A, E, I, O, U

| Letter | English | Pa-Ma | Translation |
|-----------|---------|---------------|---------------|
| <i>a</i> | father | <i>ah.ahs</i> | 'horse' |
| <i>e</i> | bed | <i>epit</i> | 'sitting' |
| <i>eh</i> | tack | <i>ehpit</i> | 'woman' |
| <i>i</i> | machine | <i>ipis</i> | 'whip' |
| <i>o</i> | apron | <i>opos</i> | 'tree, stick' |
| <i>u</i> | dune | <i>uten</i> | 'town' |

VOWEL BLENDS

| | | | |
|-----------|-------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| <i>aw</i> | <i>how</i> | <i>awl</i> | 'road' |
| <i>ew</i> | <i>Europa (Spanish)</i> | <i>new</i> | 'four' |
| <i>iw</i> | <i>few</i> | <i>lamiw</i> | 'within' |
| <i>ay</i> | <i>pie</i> | <i>sepay</i> | 'this morning' |
| <i>ey</i> | <i>grey</i> | <i>piksey</i> | 'pork' |
| <i>uw</i> | <i>moang (oo + w)</i> | <i>ckuwye</i> | 's/he comes' |

CONSONANTS

H, L, M, N, W, Y

The letters *h, l, m, n, w,* and *y* represent sounds much the same as those in English; *h* is pronounced before a vowel, silent or lightly pronounced before a consonant. The sound of *i* is more like that in the English word "feel" than in "leaf." The sound of *w* is less rounded than in English.

C, K, P, Q, S, T

The letters *c, k, p, q, s,* and *t* have a sound that varies between "tense" and "lax," or "unvoiced" and "voiced." The particular sound depends on whether the letter occurs next to another consonant, as shown in the chart below.

| Letter | When next to another consonant, except the personal prefix <i>n-</i> 'I, we,' or when next to apostrophe, sounds like English... | When not next to a consonant or an apostrophe, or when following the personal prefix <i>n-</i> 'I, we,' sounds like English... |
|----------|--|--|
| <i>c</i> | ch | j |
| <i>k</i> | k | g |
| <i>p</i> | p | b |
| <i>q</i> | kw | gw |
| <i>s</i> | s | z |
| <i>t</i> | t | d |

Note that the consonant *c* resembles the digraph *ch* of English, while *q* resembles English *kw*. In Passamaquoddy-Maliseet, the consonant *q* is distinct from the two-consonant combination *kw*; this pair occurs only at the beginning of words where the personal prefix *k-* 'you' comes before an initial *w*; compare *kwik* (kweeg) 'you dwell' with *qin* (gween) 'really' and *qasahkan* (kwah-zah-kahn) 's/he discards it.'

APOSTROPHE

Apostrophe (') stands for an initial consonant which is no longer pronounced. It is written only at the beginning of a word and only before *c, k, p, q, s,* or *t* when one of these consonants precedes a vowel.

Greetings & Introductions

Examples:

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Tan Kahk ? | how are you? |
| Mec ,, Kil olu tan ? | I'm good/same. How about you? |
| Nuwel ntoliwis | my name is Newell. |
| Keq ktoliwis ? | What is your name? |
| Nikuwoss Mali liwisu | my mother's name is Mary. |
| Keq liwisu kikuwoss ? | What's your mother's name? |
| Nwik Sipayik | I live at Pleasant Point. |
| Tama kwik ? | Where do you live? |

These sample greeting commands accomplish a couple of different things in the language. First, these are expressions used almost every day by a lot of people here in our territory but if you are not used to making these sounds, they can be a little bit tricky. Any lack of confidence in making unfamiliar sounds can only be overcome by lots of practice. We use this section in class every week and in the later week expand on a more extended greeting. The sound combinations and grammar rules are outlined in the Pronunciation Guide (*Robert M Leavitt, 2010 — for the Passamaquoddy Language Revitalization Planning Project Indian Township, Maine — Donald Soctomah, Director*).

You can see from the examples that if you are not familiar with the sound of the Passamaquoddy/Maliseet orthography and the grammar rules, things could be challenging. Not to fear, these are verbally explained for each of the words in the exercise, and then each person in turn asks the next person the question in the greeting. This allows each example to be spoken and heard from each person in the class. In the example "tan kahk" (how are you), the "T" is voiced because the grammar / pronunciation says, when the "T" is not next to a consonant or an apostrophe, or when following the personal prefix n (I, we) sounds like English "D". This rule is the same for the C, K, P, Q and S as well as the T. So in the second word/part of this question, the K makes two different sounds. The first K in "kahk" makes a voiced sound like the English "G" and the second "G" is next to the consonant "H", so it becomes unvoiced and this makes the English sound of "K". For this example the "a" will sound like the "a" in the English word *father* making the example sound like /daun gawk?/.

In the response to this question, the reply is *mec kil olu tan* (I'm good/the same) and how about you. The "C" in *Mec* will be voiced because of the rule stated above, the "K" in *kil* will be voiced as well for the same reason and *tan* we have discussed previously. This example response then will be /mej gill olu daun/.

In the next example of *my name is and what is your name*, there are examples of the personal prefix "N" and the combination of consonants together. The personal prefix "N" in *ntoliwis* allow the "T" to remain voiced because of the exception even though there are two consonants together. And this personal prefix "N" is either spoken softly or not at all depending on the speaker. The "S" is also going to be voiced based on the rule mentioned above. So this example sounds like /Nuwel dau li wiz/. In the response *keq ktoliwis*, the "Q" will be voiced (qw) and the "KT" in *ktoliwis* are both unvoiced creating a sound not used by English speakers and the "S" will be voiced as well, thus this example will sound like /gegwo kto li wiz/. The "KT" sound requires lots of practice for students to be comfortable.

In the example of *my mother's name is and what is your mother's name* there are two additional notes to make, one is the double "ss" in both *nikuwoss* and *kikuwoss*, the two consonants together make the "S" unvoiced causing the "ss" to sound like English "s". The other note would be the "N" and "K" at the beginning of each word. The "N" is for reference to my mother and the "K" is making reference to your mother. These example sound like /nig oo woss Mali li wi zu/ and /gegw li wiz u gig oo woss/.

In the final example in this section *I live at Pleasant Point* and *Where do you live* (nwik Sipayik and tama kwik) shows us additional examples of what we have covered so far. One note is the "N" and "K" in nwik and kwik are prefixes for "I and me" and "you and yours" like in the previous example for mother.

Picture Method

Example-verbs used:

| | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|
| Nomiya | I see him/her/it (animate) |
| Nomiyak | I see them (animate) |
| Nomihtun | I see it (inanimate) |
| Nomihtunol | I see them (inanimate) |
| Ntuwikha | I draw him/her/it (animate) |
| Ntuwikhak | I draw them (animate) |
| Ntuwikhomon | I draw it (inanimate) |
| Ntuwikhomonol | I draw them (inanimate) |

This picture method of teaching is one of the most fun, effective and interactive way to engage students. It has everyone involved and they get hear and see how each verb form is used. The verbs in Passamaquoddy have many forms, singular animate, plural animate, singular inanimate, plural inanimate and others in "person" form i.e. 3rd person, etc.

The basic setup is to have pictures of animate objects like people or other living things like trees, berries and also have some pictures of inanimate objects like tables, chairs, cars. Some groups of items in Passamaquoddy can be both animate and inanimate like silverware and some berries. There is some sort of order to what is animate and inanimate but speakers just know and learners can know by the ending of the pluralized verb: if the plural verb ends in a "k", the item/object is animate and if the plural verb ends an "l", the item/object is inanimate. Generally, if it is living, was living or holds water, it is animate and if it is not alive or can't hold water, it is inanimate. Again, there are exceptions to these guidelines.

See rows below, I would lay out the pictures of these items on a table. Here, I am writing them out but in practice you just have the picture, i.e. a picture of a boy, a picture of a man and a picture of a spoon in row 1 and so on for each subsequent row. Row 1 is for animate singular, Row 2 is for animate plural, Row 3 is for inanimate singular and Row 4 is for inanimate plural.

| | | | |
|-------|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| ROW 1 | skinuhsis (boy) | skitap (man) | emqan (spoon) |
| ROW 2 | skinuhsisok (boys) | skitapiyik (men) | emqanok (spoons) |
| ROW 3 | tuwihput (table) | saht (blueberry) | mitsut (fork) |
| ROW 4 | tuwihputiyil (tables) | sahtiyil (blueberries) | mitsutiyil (forks) |

Then each verb from above is paired with a row, the verbs: nomiya, nomiyak, nomihtun and nomihtunol all mean English “I see” and would be represented by a picture of an “eye”. They will also correspond to a row for animate singular and plural and inanimate singular and plural. This same pattern holds true for ntuwikha, ntuwikhak, ntuwikhomon and ntuwikhomonol which all mean English “I draw/write” and would be represented by a picture of a “pencil”.

| | | |
|-----------------------------|------------|---------------|
| ROW 1 - Animate singular: | Nomiya | Ntuwikha |
| ROW 2 - Animate plural: | Nomiyak | Ntuwikhak |
| ROW 3 - inanimate singular: | Nomihtun | Ntuwikhomon |
| ROW 4 - inanimate plural: | Nomihtunol | Ntuwikhomonol |

Keep in mind that there may or may not be any written words on either the pictures of the objects or the picture of the verbs; this is an oral exercise. There may or may not be any written words because some students want to learn to spell in which case we could add the written words to the objects and the verbs. But it will still be an oral exercise.

First, you take the picture of the “eye” and hold next to the picture of the boy in row 1 and say “nomiya skinuhsis” (I see the boy). Then you hold the picture of the “eye” next to the picture of the boys in row 2 and say “nomiyak skinuhsisok” (I see the boys). Then you hold the picture of the “eye” next to the picture of the table in row 3 and say “nomihtun tuwihput” (I see the table). Then you hold the picture of the “eye” next to the tables in row 4 and say “nomihtunol tuwihputiyil” (I see the tables). You continue with the “eye” picture for all of the items in the table. Then you would switch to the “pencil” picture and repeat the process. You only use Passamaquoddy in this exercise and all the students repeat the sentence after you. This is an example of how the picture method works, in practice you should have 8 to 10 items in each row and you could use up to 4 different verbs.

Things to note here are: the plurals of the verbs match the plurals of the objects: nomiyak and skinuhsisok are both plurals and they both end in “k”. The same is true for nomihtunol and tuwihputiyil, they are both plurals and they both end in “l”.

Total Physical Response (TPR)

This method of language teaching was developed by James Asher, a professor emeritus of psychology at San Jose State University. It is based on the combination of language and physical movements. This is another fun way to learn and to get all students to fully participate in the learning process. There aren’t any written words for these exercises. The teacher says the command (sentence) while at the same time mimicking the action desired. It is a great method of teaching in any language but the difference between Passamaquoddy and English is the commands like English “sit” can be for all or just one person. While Passamaquoddy use singular and plural form of “sit” when communicating to all or just one person. Having one person sit in Passamaquoddy would be “opin” where if you told the class to sit, you would use Passamaquoddy “opultiq”. The table below outlines the differences between singular “kil” and plural “kiluwaw” (you or all of you) for each of the commands. When I use the singular “kil” form, I will usually preface it with a name like “Philip opin”, when I address the class I would say “opultiq”. Again, when using this method, you always do the action at the same time you are saying the word or words. You also have to be logical, don’t use sehken if they are already standing or don’t use coness if they are not in motion.

These commands can also be used in a game like “Simon Says” though my game is called “Nuwel itom”. This is played at a fast pace and the students have a lot of fun and learn the commands at the same time.

| <i>Singular “Kil”</i> | <i>Plural “Kiluwaw”</i> | English |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Sehken | Sehkolotiq | Stand |
| Opin | Opultiq | Sit |
| Coness | Conessultiq | Stop |
| Qolopess | Qolopessultiq | Turn around |
| Kakawuhs | Kakawapasultiq, | Walk fast |
| Menakaci Qolopess | Menakaci Qolopessultiq | Turn around slowly |
| Sameht Pemsokhas | Samehtuk Pemsokhas | Touch the floor |
| Sameht Koniyakon | Samehtuk Koniyakonuwal | Touch you head(s) |
| Samehlan Epeskomakon | Samehluk Epeskomakon | Touch the ball |
| Samehlan Kotkuk | Samehluk Kotkuwak | Touch your knee(s) |

Closing – Parting ways

Apc-oc knomiyul - I will see you again.

Apc-oc knomiyulpa - I will see you (group / more than one) again.

Apc-oc knomiyulpon - We (2 of us leaving) will see you again.

Like the greetings, these simple parting commands accomplish a couple of different things in the language. These are command used almost every day by a lot of people here in our territory but frequently people will shorten their parting words to “apc-oc” which literally mean again in the future. And they are unsure how to address when leaving more than one person. We use this section in class every week and practice each of the three examples.

References:

PRONOUNCING PASSAMAQUDDY-MALISEET

Robert M Leavitt, 2010 — for the Passamaquoddy Language Revitalization Planning
Project Indian Township, Maine — Donald Soctomah, Director

Passamaquoddy/Maliseet Language Portal: pmportal.org