

L'nuisimk (Speaking Mi'kmaq)

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Abstract

The Mi'kmaq have long been people that were hunter/gatherers, craft workers and artisans before our time. The beauty of Mi'kmaq language is its pure form of fluidity and its pure connection with the culture that has returned into the hands of its true owners, the Mi'kmaq. To return the language to the people is to undo all the harm inflicted by the Government that planned to annihilate a civilization or culture of people that were considered "savages" by taking away their mother tongue or the people's language taught to them by their parents, grandparents, family, and elders within the community. The hardships that lay ahead of the Mi'kmaq who speak English is one that is embarrassing to some, an honor to others and a burden to many. There are many reasons as to why the Mi'kmaq speakers speak their mother tongue (teaching at schools, at homes and within the community), but for those that speak English, it is an utmost shame that it was not of their own doing. We will look at how to teach the next generation through baby talk, then transition to speaking at home with both parents and children. The next transition after will be moving to speaking with other community members within the area with basic conversational phrases. The true answer to solve this problem revolves around the fellow speakers, linguists and teachers that care about preserving this respectable language. The Mi'kmaq language must be placed back where it once belonged, back into the mouths of the Mi'kmaq.

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Mi'kmaq Mother Tongue Language brought back Home

Culturally, the Mi'kmaq are one of the several tribes of the Algonquin group; the Native language is a dialect of the Algonquin language. The ancestral home of the Mi'kma'ki covered the entire Eastern and Atlantic Maritimes that ranged from Maine, Quebec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and parts of Newfoundland. These districts were the seven traditional districts that were once established as the Mi'kmaq Grand Council with one Grand Chief of all districts. The Mi'kmaq used an elaborate network of rivers, lakes, and portages to trade with other Indian tribes throughout the Northeast, including present-day Maritime Canada, Quebec, and other New England tribes. The Mi'kmaq, like other Native American people of that era, were people that survived by living off the land. The Mi'kmaq moved with the seasons, living off the coast from spring until fall and living inland in the cold winter seasons. The rivers were their highways, and the forest was their sanctuary from the harsh world that they lived in.

The Mi'kmaq language has always been one of the vital characteristics of the Mi'kmaq people, with the culture and spirituality being the other components. Loss of language and culture has made identity difficult for many, as they wonder who they are in today's world. The loss of identity ties into loss of the meaning to be Mi'kmaq, to know who you are encourages a huge aspect of your identity. Many elders will ask a person a few questions on their identity (parental lineage, home location, tribal and/or clan information, etc.), since these questions make it simple for an elder to identify who the person is and relationships in moving forward. Not knowing your language makes a person feel that they are not part of the tribe when they are asked if they know the language, this feeling has been stemming since the post residential schools that our elders went through as children. Many of today's language keepers, if you asked them where they had learned to speak their language, they will tell you that they grew up with it spoken in the home. In my many years of teaching the tribal community, from the youth to elders, I have had numerous lessons on basic conversations to basic words. When an elder asked me why I was not teaching just the youth, I explained that it was my job to teach all. As we continued talking, the elder asked me how I had come to know the language, where I told her that I grew up speaking the language. "This is where it should be taught, at home" she exclaimed. It took a long time for that thought to percolate in my head.

Many of our people have been trying to teach from schools on the reservation, to some degree of success. However, it is up to the passion of the student that wants to learn the language. Many of our people were taught the language at home through elders and family. I have spoken to many language

keepers who struggle to teach their students, as many want to learn vocabulary and certain phrases. Many of the people that we teach lose interest quite fast, but as we speak to parents, they want their children to learn the language. Why not have the parents learn the language and teach the children themselves. Our culture has always been stable for many of our people through numerous generations, our language has been preserved until recently. What has occurred since the residential schools? Where has the cultural aspect of having the Mi'kmaq language spoken at home gone? Many of our language keepers have started learning how to teach the language, from a colonized perspective. It has worked to a degree, it has reached the ears of few people that want to learn the language, but not to the ones who had it taken away. We need to start teaching the language back into the homes of our people. They need to be the teachers of their children again and to teach their own children the traditional usage of the language.

After learning the basic phrases, a child will slowly progress through many facets of socializing with their community. This allows the children to grow with the language, such as they do when interact with other children at other social activities. Children's vocabularies grow very quickly, as they learn their language through various aspects in the tribal community. Culture plays a vital role in their identity, as does language and spirituality. This trident makes our people proud of who they are and the resilience that we have gone through to make our culture and language stay alive.

Orthography

Looking at the various Mi'kmaq orthographies, Silas Rand orthography (1875) and Father Pacifique orthography (1894). Contemporary orthographies Listuguj orthography is more relevant to the Gaspé Mi'kmaq region; The Lexicon orthography was developed by Alphonse Metallic and Albert D. Deblois (1984); the Smith-Francis orthography was developed by Bernard Francis and Douglas Smith, as it was adopted by the Mi'kmaq Grand Council to be used widely in the Nova Scotia region.

*<https://archives.novascotia.ca/mikmaq/using/?Topic=orthographies#:~:text=An%20orthography%20is%20the%20representation,Silas%20Tertius%20Rand%20in%201875.>

The short vowels used in the Mi'kmaq orthography (a, e, i, o, u and a schwa [ɨ]). There are elongated vowels as well (a', e', l', o' and u'), the elongated vowel makes the vowels sound longer and can change the word that is spoken.

1. a. Epit – to be sitting

Api - bow

b. E'pit – woman

A'pi - net

Consonants are pronounced in various ways in Mi'kmaq, voiced consonants (P sounds like a B, T sounds like a D, K sounds like a G and J sounds like a J) and voiceless consonants (-k in mikjikjk as the k is voiceless as it is in the end of the plural word for turtle – mikjikj).

Mi'kmawe'l Kinu'taqnn (Mi'kmaq Alphabet)

Vowels

Short Vowels

A - A as in Father

E - E as in Met

I - I as in Bit

O - O as Over

U - U as in Put

Long Vowels

A' - A' as in Palm

E' - E' as in Where

I' - I' as in Sit

O' - O' as in Go

U' - U' as in Sue

i or ' (schwa) - O as in Apron or U as in Tub

Consonants

P - If used next to consonants except next to l, m, n (**P** as in **Pat**)

pjsilasi [upjila'si] - welcome

sounds like **P** at the end of the word

sisip [sizip] - water fowl

If used elsewhere (**B** as in **Ball**)

pemiet [**b**emiyed] - s/he walks

epi't [eh-**bid**] - woman

T - If used next to consonants except to l, m, n (**T** as in **Toy**)

keselet [gessellet] - s/he stinks

If used elsewhere (**D** as in **Door**)

tia'm [diam] - moose

Tuma [**D**ooma] - Thomas

J - If used next to consonants except to l, m, n (**CH** as in **Church**)

mikjikj [migjig**ch**] - turtle

ejkwit [e**ch**wid] - sneeze

If used elsewhere (**J** as in **Jim**)

jipji'j [jibjeej] - bird

jinm [jeenm] - man

K - If used next to consonants except to l, m, n (**K** as in **Cake**)

kwimu [kwimoo] - loon

meskilk [mesgilk] - s/he is big

If used elsewhere (**G** as in **Go**)

piku'n [bigoon] - feather

nemi'k [nemeeg] - I see him/her

L - L as in **Like**

M - M as in **Me, Him**

N - N as in **Can, New**

W - W as in **Will, How**

S - S as in **Sit, Was**

Y - Y as in **Yes, Grey**

Q - Q makes the guttural sound (Ach) like a German word (Bach)

Consonant to Consonant Combination (Glides)

Upon teaching conversational phrases to the adults in the tribal community, there was a constant struggle to read the phrases, as each consonant and vowel may change in certain dynamics. Some of the phrases have just consonants, which is a struggle for English speaking tribal members, as they struggle to find how to say such phrases. This lesson had to be completed prior to moving forward. The explanation that some consonants are vowels plagued the students, as the explanation that (l, m and n) are at times vowels had to be taught. In (2a and 2b), we can clearly see that the word is all in consonant format, but if we describe the consonants rule, then the word becomes clear. (2a) Mtl n becomes (em-del-n) and (2b) kmt n becomes (gem-den), as the consonants have a silent "e" sound before the consonants, which is identified as a vowel.

2. a. Mtl n – ten

b. Kmt n – mountain

Vowel to Consonant Combinations (Diphthongs)

Vowel to consonant combinations is widely used in the language, as the short vowel clusters with consonants to create sounds that require a consonant (*w* or *y*). These combinations are used in the suffix format. Many of the combinations are used together to formulate different words (pitew for broth and pitewey for tea and *tia'm* for moose and *tia'mewey* for moose meat, where two diphthongs are utilized to produce a word).

aw sounds like **ou** [out]

a'w sounds like **ow** [wow]

ay sound like **i** [hike]

ai sound like **eye**

ew no English sound

e'w no English sound

ey sound like **a** [cake]

ei sound like **ay** [clay]

iw sound like **ew** [view]

ow sound like **oa** [oak]

* from No'kmaq Village (2017)

Nouns (Animate/Inanimate Plurals)

Animate and Inanimate pluralization has been very problematic to explain to the students, as it is itself very difficult to understand as well. It is not a very simple explanation to give. The plural for animate nouns is -k and the plural ending for inanimate nouns is -l. Quinn (2019) demonstrates a variety of 'family' categories that are utilized by the Algonquin languages.

3. Animate-assigning 'families' in Northeastern-area Algonquian languages
 - a. people, animals, spirits, luminaries, representations of these (pictures, glyphs, playing cards-gaming pieces/balls, [coins])
 - b. substantial trees (e.g., pine but not [alder])
 - c. fluid containers

- d. thorns-quills-feathers-scales/flakes
- e. gum-swellings-substantially squishy fruits/berries-root
- f. vegetables-[bread products]
- g. net-{rope/cord}
- h. snowshoe-[footwear]-handwear
- i. shirt-jacket/{coat}
- j. breechcloth/diaper
- k. wheels-disks

A list of nouns is compiled in a graph below to view how this in/animate assignment works, with some examples that became intriguing to the author. Such as high bush cranberry and cranberry being both inanimate, in comparison to the blackberry/blackberry bush and hawthorn berry/hawthorn berry bush both being animate in the category of squishy/berries category.

Whereas we have a handful of clay being animate and an island of clay being inanimate, which was baffling. However, after consulting with my advisors, when a small amount of a certain object in comparison to another, it is understandable that (rock – kuntew; rocks – kuntal) is inanimate, whereas (mountain – kmtn; mountains – kmtkn) is animate. A bottle of water or a lump of clay is easier to hold and manipulate in any form than a body of water or an island of clay.

There are some characters that are told in past stories as well that appear as animate objects, as they play a character of some sort that is an ally of the hero or the opposition. Elemental characters are typically cast in a story as a person, which would give the name of such element in the form of animacy (such as spirit, thunder, star, and comet).

Mi'kmaq	English	Animate	Inanimate	Reasoning
mnnoqon(k)	yellow birch	x		tree
pugu'skw(k)	dead and dry yellow birch	x		tree
wijkwe'tlaqan(k)	birch dish/platter	x		container
kwitn(l)	canoe		x	container
a'su'n(l)	blanket		x	rope
me'koqomkwej(l)	dogwood		x	basket making plant
wisqoq(k)	ash tree	x		basket making plant
likpenikn(l)	basket (ash)		x	basket

munti(l)	sack/bag		x	container
kawioqolaqan(l)	quill box		x	container/quill
skinaqanmusi(k)	wild raisin bush	x		plant
poqwa'lamkewei(l)	chokecherry		x	plant
pkumanaqsi(k)	blueberry bush	x		plant
pkuman(l)	blueberry		x	berry
nipman(l)	high bush cranberry		X	plant
su'n(l)	cranberry		X	berry
ajioqjemaqsi(k)	blackberry bush	X		plant
ajioqjemin(k)	blackberry	X		berry
ko'koinaqsi(k)	hawthorn berry bush	X		plant
ko'komin(k)	hawthorn berry	X		berry
aloqomanaqsi(k)	grapevine	x		plant
aloqoman(l)	grape		x	berry
jijjawiknej(k)	raisin	x		food/berry
kawaqtejkumusi(k)	gooseberry bush	x		plant
kawaqtejk(l)	gooseberry		x	berry
ki'kwesuaskw(l)	muskrat root		x	medicine
wisawkweskl(l)	golden thread		x	root/rope
weljemajkewe'l(l)	sweetgrass/lilacs		x	string/plant/medicine
kesaluejijit(k)	burdock	x		plant/quill/medicine
kinikwejij(k)	thistle	x		plant/quill
kawigsaw(k)	thistle/thorn	x		quill
poqomaqn'skw(l)	cattail		x	plant
sqoljui'kan(l)	toadstool/mushroom		x	plant
lketu(k)	mushroom	x		plant
puksuk(l)	firewood		x	tree
lo'ks(k)	log	x		
tmoqta'w(k)	log/beam	x		
lo'ksi'kan(l)	log house		x	
wenji'kuom(l)	house		x	

kmtn(k)	mountain	x		
kta'n(l)	ocean		x	
musikisk(l)	sky		x	
nipukt(l)	forest		x	
puktew(l)	fire		x	
mtlu'tew(l)	smoke		x	
ukju'sn(l)	wind		x	
maqamikew(l)	ground		x	
wowj(k)	quicksand pit	x		
pka'w(k)	clay (handful)	x		
pqa'lu'skw	clay (mountain)		x	
mjijaqamij(k)	spirit	x		Character
kaqtukwewe'sm(k)	thunder (spirit)	x		Character
u'n(l)	fog		x	
kloqowej(k)	star	x		Character
puktewit(k)	comet/meteor/shooting star	x		Character

Pronouns

Pronouns in the Mi'kmaq language have a few dynamics that make the language very intriguing to many students. When asking a person, (me'talek - how is s/he), it is in reference to a person, where (me'talek nekm - him/her, how is s/he) is a correct sentence to use as well. The pronouns used do not refer to a person in their gender, but as a person as in the English aspect of "you".

When speaking of inclusive and exclusive, it is based on who is included or excluded in the conversation. The first person can be included or excluded in the conversation, which changes the wording from Ni'n as a singular to Kinu (me and others but not you) when discussed as an exclusive and Ninen (we include you) as inclusive. A conversation can have characters in the story included or excluded in the sentence, it all depends on the perspective of who is talking. The second and third person remain the same when it comes to being exclusive or inclusive from a first person's perspective.

4.	Singular	Dual (2)	Plural (3+)
1st Person	Ni'n - Me	Kinu (Exclusive)	Ninen (Inclusive)

2nd Person	Ki'l - You	Kilew	Kilew
3rd Person	Nekm - Them	Nekmow	Nekmow

Negation

Negation is discussed to provide adequate conversational phrases that allow a student of the language to know how to express that they do not want to engage in. Many will learn how to say, "I am hungry" and other phrases, but negation will teach them how to say, "I am not hungry".

First person perspective is written in the format as it describes the person that is speaking, "me" or "I". When we start including the second person, this is the other person that is with the first person, then we have the third person.

When inflecting an intransitive verb that contains a consonant at the end of the word, nothing is changed within the first-person form of the verb. However, in the second (-n) and third person (-k) form, we see a change in the suffix.

5. **Words ending with a consonant:**

1st person	(Nothing)	'I'
2nd Person	-n	'you'
3rd person	-k	'he/she'

When a verb that ends with a consonant, negation is a suffix -u, which goes before the person suffix. In the following examples, for "you are not hungry", you would have "mu kewisin-u'-n", where the -u is the negative suffix and the -n is the suffix for the second person. In some cases, where there is an -u, we may see -uw. This is one of the reasons why the third person negated form has a -k; as the w counts as a consonant, as we would see -k in the third person suffix, rather than -t.

Kewisin?	Are you hungry?
Kewisin	I am hungry
Mu kewisinu	<u>I</u> 'm not hungry
Mu kewisinu'n	<u>You</u> are not hungry
Kewisink	S/he is hungry
Mu kewisinu'k	S/he is not hungry
Kewisinek	They are hungry (2 ppl)
Mu kewisunukik	They are not hungry (2 ppl)
Kewisinultijik	They are hungry (3 or more)

Mu kewisinulti'k

They are not hungry (3 or more)

When the ending occurs with a vowel, the endings change in comparison to the endings with a consonant as first person (-y), second person (-n) remains the same and third person (-t) changes as well.

6. **Words ending with a vowel:**

1st person	-y	'I'
2nd person	-n	'you'
3rd person	-t	'he/she'

When a verb that ends with a vowel, negation is a suffix -u, which goes before the person suffix. In the following examples, where the -w is the negative suffix and changes e before w to o "mu keselow".

Jijimai/Keseley	I stink
Mu Jijima'w/Keselow	<u>I</u> don't stink
Jijima'n/Keselen	You stink
Mu Jijima'wn/Keselown	<u>You</u> don't stink
Jijimat/Keselet	S/he stinks
Mu Jijima'k/ keselek	<u>S/he</u> doesn't stink

Mother Tongue

One of the benefits of having a spoken mother tongue is that parents are around their children more than anyone in their early stages of life and throughout. The benefits are that we can utilize baby talking within the first months of infancy, which can be transferred into pure vocabulary in the latter months. Baby talking tends to have some formality of the dialect of the language included, with some forms of verb-oriented sounds that animals make or ways that some objects are used. The transfer of the vocabulary is simple and efficient, as the child grows, they mimic sounds or spoken language around them, this creates specific formations in their mouth (teeth, muscles in mouth, tongue, etc.) which help to create specific sounds in the language spoken at home. Mi'kmaq spoken at home while the baby grows into infancy helps to develop a large vocabulary of words, which later become basic conversational phrases. One of the other benefits of having the mother tongue concept introduced at home is to bypass all the lessons taught later in life. In many communities, the main language spoken in the tribal communities has become the English language, which tends to overtake the tribal

community's main language spoken. If we introduce the language from infancy, we can start having young tribal members speaking the language and slowly revitalize the spoken language through an at home environment. The Indigenous languages were first spoken at home by families that were close to the children, as the language was slowly taken away, this concept of speaking the language at home has become more difficult within the past generations. However, reintroducing the mother tongue aspect back to the families is the first step towards language revitalization. With this, we can have everyone learn in smaller vocabulary that will expand as the child progresses, along with the family that speaks.

Baby words

The beginning of these lessons would have the parent or caretaker of the child have some sample baby words spoken on a regular basis, as the words progress through the child's early life, a broader vocabulary is formed. Some of the words are very simple, as the safety of the child is concerned, the parent would let the child know not to touch or eat anything that is on the floor or within reach. The words that are heard at an early age would be (a' – don't touch) with (ju'jjj – any bug/dirt on floor), this would let the child know not to touch the object or to place it in their mouth with an extension of other comments (such as iaki – something is dirty). Some other words heard would be in correspondence with how closely the word associates with the Mi'kmaq word (e.g., po'po – horse , as a horse in the Mi'kmaq language is tesipow), where the emphasis of "po" is sounded twice to emphasize the ending of the phrase. Another phrase that will slowly direct into direct language is "pa'pa – go to bed" in the mother tongue to emphasize "ajimpa' – go to bed", as the last phrase of the word "ajimpa" is repeated twice again to let the child know to go to bed (e.g., "pa'pa").

A' –	don't touch	Nu'nu –	bottle
l'aq –	Yucky	O'o –	something is wrong
laki –	something is dirty	Pa'pa –	go to bed
layya –	sore	Pi'pi –	baby
M'ma' –	kiss	Po'po –	horse
M'po' –	ghost	Pu' –	defecate
Mi'mi –	food	Ta –	don't
Na'na –	bread	Ta'ta –	Dad

Ta'taji'j –	granddad	Wili –	belly button
Ti'ti –	doll	Nana –	Food
Wowo –	dog	Ju'jjj –	Bug (any bug/dirt on floor)

Transition from Baby Talk to Conversing

Parents speak to their children like they do with any other adult after a certain time that a child has grown. The baby talk slowly disappears and the conversational phrases slowly begin to unravel in the ears and mouths of the children. Socializing with other children helps to assist the child to build their vocabulary and phrases heard by their peers. Parents are more using everyday phrases at this point and slowly introducing other vocabulary to their children, as they both venture in this world together.

A'a –	isn't that right	Pi'si –	to urinate
Ala –	that one	Qalipu –	caribou
Ali kali –	hide me	U't –	this one
E'e –	Yes	Ula –	this one
E'pit –	Woman	Ikatu –	leave it alone
Jipji'j –	bird	Jikla'si –	go away
Ji'nm –	man	Jiksitui –	listen to me
Kekka –	look	Jukue' –	come here
Kiju' –	mom	Jukwa'tui –	bring me...
Kiju'ji'j –	grandma	Ke' ankami –	Look at me
La'li –	take me there	Miji –	eat
Lie' –	go over there	Mijisi –	eat
Li' –	make it	Mnja'si –	get up
Na –	here	Mpasama'si –	lie down
Ni'n –	me	Mukk tla'tekew –	don't do that

Mukk sama'tu –	don't touch	Tluey –	say...
Nisa'si –	get down	Kelu'kw tela'teken –	good job
Pa'si –	sit down	Koqwey menuweken –	what do you want?
Tepiaq na –	that's enough	Menueken –	do you want
Kesalul –	I love you	Ansma nike –	Right this second
Jukue –	Come here	Kliskeni –	Hold my hand
Nisa'si –	Get down	Lmu'j –	Dog
Kewisin –	Are you hungry?	Ni'kmaq –	My family
Ketu samqwan –	Are you thirsty?	Nsukwis –	My aunt
Apoqnmui –	Help me	Nijan –	My baby
Nisia'q –	It fell	Njiknam –	My brother
Kaia'q –	It's all gone	Ntus –	My daughter
Ika'tu –	Put it down	Nujj –	My father
Talukwen –	What are you doing?	Nuji'j –	My grandchild(ren)
Kekkam –	Look at that	Nukumi –	My grandmother
Nemi't –	Do you see?	Nkij –	My mother
Welalin –	Thank you	Nuluks –	My nephew
Weliaq katu –	Your welcome	Nsm –	My niece
Ankami –	Look at me	Nkweij –	My sister (younger)
Jiksitui –	Listen to me	Nmis –	My sister (older)
Amalka –	Dance	Nkwis –	My son
Tu'e –	Get out	Nklamuksis –	My uncle
Piskwa' –	Come in		

Parents conversing with children

After speaking with many language keepers, asking them how they had become fluent in their language, many will specify that they received much of the fluency at home. This knowledge obtained was with other elders from the community speaking to one another, as children were asked not to interrupt an adult conversation. Many cultural aspects were slowly introduced to the child, they would understand other aspects of the Mi'kmaq culture as well. The primary goal was to have the child understand the ancestral mannerisms that the Mi'kmaq have utilized for centuries, but eventually all of this would slowly slip away, just as the elders of the community will as well. Elders would not be around to discuss their childhood, to speak the older language and to assist in the cultural exchange of knowledge.

Mi'kmaq language keepers learn the language traditionally from home, the family would have helped their siblings to understand the language through vocabulary at first and then through basic conversation. The lesson that is required for conventional parents is to speak to their children daily through simple commands that parents tell their children. As time progresses, parents and children will slowly expand their own vocabulary through learning with one another. One of the hardships of parents learning the language is time, as for children it is the simplicity of connectivity of what they learn at school or from their language teachers in different formats. The parents do not see their children as much, as it is primarily when the children are not in their school setting and when the parents are not at work.

The main goal in this lesson is to teach the parents how to speak to their children in the language throughout the time that they spend with them, from waking up from bed in the morning to falling back asleep at night. Parents have little time to interact with their children nowadays, as life takes over, along with work. These lessons make learning suitable for both parents and children, having the lessons correlate during the times that both are available to one another.

Morning

Parents:

Mnja'si - Get up! (from bed)

Children:

➤ Ketuski me' - I'm still tired

Weli eksitpu'k - Good morning

Tukwie	Wake up (1 person)	
Tukwiewk	Wake up (2 persons)	
Tukwia'tikw	Wake up (3 or more persons)	
	→ Ms't Tukwia'tikw	Everyone Wake up
	→ Ms't Tukwia'tikw aqq Knita'q	Everyone Wake up and Get dressed
	→ Ms't Tukwia'tikw aqq Minjita'q	Everyone Wake up and Get out of bed
Kna'si	Get dressed (1 person)	
	→ Li'e Ala' tet aqq Kna'si	Go Over there and get dressed
Kna'tikw	Get dressed (2 persons)	
Knita'q	Get dressed (3 or more persons)	
	→ Knita'q Ms't	Get dressed Everyone
	→ Lta'q Ala' tet aqq Knita'q	Go Over there and get dressed
Minja'si	Get out of bed (1 person)	
Minja'tikw	Get out of bed (2 persons)	
	→ Ke' Nenaqa'tikw aqq Minja'tikw	Please Hurry up and get out of bed
Minjita'q	Get out of bed (3 or more persons)	
	→ Ke' Ms't Minjita'q	Please Everyone Get out of bed
	→ Ke' Minjita'q aqq Knita'q Ms't	Please Get out of bed and Get dressed Everyone

Breakfast

Kitu' eksitpukataln? -	Would you like breakfast?	
		➤ E'e, kewisin - Yes, I'm hungry
Moqo, mu ni'n kewisinu -	No, I'm not hungry	
Koqwey ketutmn? -	What would you like?	

Lunch/Dinner

Koqwey wela'kowey? - What's for supper?

Koqwey nakwekewey? - What's for lunch?

Ki'kli'kwej - Chicken

Na kat weliaq - That's good

Mu ni'n wikt mew - I don't like that -

Apukjik mijisulti'kw?- Are we eating soon?

E'e apukjik - Yes, soon

Kewisin - I'm hungry

Aq elt ni'n - So am I

Kitu' samuqwan? - Are you thirsty?

E'e, kitu' samuqway - Yes, I'm thirsty

Moqo, mu ni'n kitusamquow - No, I'm not thirsty

Koqwey kitu samuqwan? - What would you like to drink?

Te'kpaq samuqwan - Cold water

Mijisi Eat (1 person)

→ Juku'e Mijisi

Come Eat

→ Juku'e, Pa'si aqq Mijisi

Come, Sit and Eat

Mijisikw Eat (2 persons)

→ Ke' Nenaqa'tikw aqq Mijisikw

Please Hurry up and Eat

Mijisoltikw Eat (3 or more persons)

→ Jukwita'q aqq Mijisoltikw

Come and Eat

→ Ms't I'mu'tikw Na'te'l aqq Mijisoltikw

Everyone Stay There and Eat

Somqwa Drink (1 person)
Somqwa'q Drink (2 persons)
Somqoltikw Drink (3 or more persons)

→ Ke' Somqoltikw Please Drink
→ Ms't Nenaqaita'q aqq Somqoltikw Everyone Hurry up and Drink

Homework

Taluekwen? - What are you doing?
Elukwey - I'm working
Koqwey elukwatmn?- What are you working on?
Homeworkm elukwatm - I'm working on my homework
Ta'nuk kisa'tesk? - When will you finish?
Apukjik – Soon

Playtime

Amilijka Play (1 person)
Papikw Play (2 persons)
→ Tu'atikw aqq Papikw Go out and Play
Papoltik Play (3 or more persons)
→ Tu'ita'q aqq Papoltik Go out and Play
→ Ms't Tu'ita'q aqq Ke' Papoltik Na'te'l Everyone Go out and Please Play There
→ Ke' Ms't Lta'q Ala' tet aqq Papoltik Please Everyone Go Over there and Play

Night

Li'e Mpo'qaniktuk Go to sleep (1 person)
La'tikw Mpo'qaniktuk Go to sleep (2 persons)
→ Mnikena'tikw aqq La'tikw Mpo'qaniktuk Get undressed and Go to sleep

Lta'q Mpo'qaniktuk	Go to sleep (3 or more persons)	
→ Ms't Lta'q Mpo'qaniktuk		Everyone Go to sleep
Mnikena'si	Get undressed (1 person)	
Mnikena'tikw	Get undressed (2 persons)	
→ Ke' Mnikena'tikw		Please Get undressed
→ Ke' Nenaqa'tikw, Mnikena'tikw		Please Hurry up, Get undressed
Mnikenita'q	Get undressed (3 or more persons)	
→ Ms't Mnikenita'q		Everyone Get undressed
→ Mnikenita'q aqq Nenaqaita'q		Get undressed and hurry up
Lisima'si	Lay down (1 person)	
Lisima'tikw	Lay down (2 persons)	
Lisimi'ta'q	Lay down (3 or more persons)	
→ Lisimi'ta'q Ms't		Lay down Everyone
→ Ke' Ms't Lisimi'ta'q		Please Everyone Lay down

Commands

Tet	Here (any # of persons)	
Ula' Tet	Right Here (any # of persons)	
Na'te'l	There (any # of persons)	
Ala' Tet	Over There (any # of persons)	
Kisna	Or (any # of persons)	
Ke'	Please (any # of persons)	
Ms't	Everyone/All (any # of persons)	
Juku'e	Come (1 person)	
→ Ke' Juku'e		Please Come

Jukwa'tikw	Come (2 persons)	
	→ Ke' Jukwa'tikw Ula Tet	Please Come Right Here
Jukwita'q	Come (3 or more persons)	
	→ Ke' Ms't Jukwita'q	Please Everyone Come
Ke' Jukwita'q Ms't	Please Come All	
Li'e	Go (1 person)	
	→ Li'e Na'tel	Go There
La'tikw	Go (2 persons)	
Lta'q	Go (3 or more persons)	
	→ Ms't Lta'q Na'te'l	Everyone Go There
	→ Ke' Ms't Lta'q	Please Everyone Go
Tu'e	Go out (1 person)	
Tu'atikw	Go out (2 persons)	
Tu'ita'q	Go out (3 or more persons)	
	→ Ms't Tu'ita'q	Everyone Go out
	→ Ke' Ms't Tu'ita'q	Please Everyone Go out
	→ Ke' Tu'ita'q	Please Go out
Qama'si	Stand up (1 person)	
Qama'tikw	Stand up (2 persons)	
Qami'ta'q	Stand up (3 or more persons)	
	→ Ke' Qami'ta'q Ms't	Please Stand up Everyone
Pa'si	Sit Down (1 person)	
Pa'tikw	Sit Down (2 persons)	

Pita'q	Sit Down (3 or more persons)	
	→ Ms't Pita'q	Everyone Sit down
	→ Jukwita'q Tet Ms't aqq Pita'q	Come Here Everyone and Sit Down
Nenaqa'si	Hurry up (1 person)	
	→ Nenaqa'si Juku'e Tet	Hurry Come Here
Nenaqa'tikw	Hurry up (2 persons)	
	→ Ke' Nenaqati'kw aqq Tu'atikw	Please Hurry up and Go out
Nenaqaita'q	Hurry up (3 or more persons)	
	→ Nenaqaita'q Ms't	Hurry up Everyone
	→ Ke' Ms't Nenaqaita'q	Please Everyone Hurry up
Naqa'si	Stop (1 person)	
Naqa'tikw	Stop (2 persons)	
Naqaitaq	Stop (3 or more persons)	
	→ Ms't Naqaitaq Ula' Tet	Everyone Stop Right here
	→ Ms't Naqaitaq aqq Wantaqaitaq	Everyone Stop and Calm down
Jiklasi	Go away (1 person)	
	→ Jiklasi Nate'l	Go away there
Jikla'tikw	Go away (2 persons)	
Jikli'ta'q	Go away (3 or more persons)	
	→ Jikli'ta'q Ms't	Go away Everyone
	→ Ke' Ms't Jikli'ta'q Ula' tet	Please Everyone Go away Right here
Skma	Wait (1 person)	
	→ Qama'si Tet aqq Skma	Stand up Here and Wait
Skma'q	Wait (2 or more persons)	

→ Skma'q Tet

Wait Here

Skmtikw

Wait (3 or more persons)

→ Qami'ta'q Tet aqq Skmtikw

Stand up Here and Wait

Other phrases

Don't Yell -	Mu'k-se'skewew	Why Not? -	Koqwey Wjit
Eat It -	Malqute'n	Don't Punch Anyone -	Mu'k Taqamow Wen
Sit -	Pasi	Don't Kick Anyone -	Mu'k Tekteskawow
Stand Up -	Kaqamasi	Wen	
Yes -	E'e	Don't Throw Anything -	Mu'k Elekow Koqwey
No -	Moqwa	I'm Sorry -	Meskei
Run -	Ketwi'kiyan	I'm Very Sorry -	Mawins'kei
Don't Run -	Mu Ketwikimu	Finally -	Klapis
Enough -	Tepiyaq	Wait -	Esgma
Maybe -	Jiptuk	Bring It To Me -	Jukwa'tuwe
Maybe So -	Etuk Jel	I'm Sad -	Welmaita'si
Me -	Ni'n	I'm Angry -	Wekai
You -	Ki'l	I Know Him/Her -	Nenak
You guys -	Kilow	I'm Strong -	Melkik'nai
Who? -	Wen	I'm Playing -	A'milasi
Which? -	Teken	Help Me -	Apokonmui
What? -	Koqwey	I'm Going Slow -	Powa'si
When? -	Ta'n	I'm Going Fast -	Kesikawa'si
Where? -	Tami	Where are you going? -	Tami Elien

When are you going? - Ta'n Elien	Go outside. -	Kujumu'k Liya
I'm going home. - Emiyey	Play outside. -	Amalijka Kujumu'k
Are you going home? - Emiyen	Now -	Nike
Come back here. - Ji'kuwey U'tet	My Male Friend -	Nitap
Don't go there. - Mu'k Liyow Nate'l	My Female Friend -	Nitape'skw

Basic Conversation

Teaching the tribal community has been a challenge, as we face many that want to speak the Mi'kmaq language but are met with many other obstacles. Time is the biggest aspect, that is the reason for many students who do not attend the community classes. The Cultural and Historic Preservation department has hired two Language Keepers for the Mi'kmaq Nation to assist in preserving the Mi'kmaw language. The Language Keepers have developed one day a week for community members to come to a site to understand the Mi'kmaw language. The understanding of the basic language phrases came into context, as the curriculum was being developed. Within the various Mi'kmaw nations in Atlantic Canada, there are various curriculums already developed to assist the language teachers. One such small curriculum developed is with No'kmaq Village (2017) which already had many basic phrases developed to teach the adult student. Teaching adult students has been a challenge as they do not want to start from the very beginning. In teaching the basic Conversations aspect, we also would go from the very beginning of the lessons as well to help the student comprehend the aspects of learning the very basics. As we progressed, the students found out that learning the very basics first was ideal, but the students feel that they have already missed out so much. The Basic Conversations aspect has been edited, as we asked permission prior to doing so and asked permission to use by the developers of the curriculum.

Ilnu ne't ki'l?	Are you an Indian?
Lnuis'in ki'l?	Do you speak Mi'kmaw?
Kijka'jjik	A little
Nestm, katu mu l'nui'siw	I understand, but don't speak
Mu-l'nui'su.	I do not speak Mi'kmaw.

Ketu'-kina'masi l'nui'suti. I want to learn the Mi'kmaq language.

Wetnu'kwalsi l'nui'si. I am trying to speak Mi'kmaw.

Tal-teluen l'nuituk ...? How do you say ... in Mi'kmaw?

Greetings & Farewells

Kwe'. Hello.

Pjila'si. Welcome. (to 1 person)

Pjilita'q. Welcome. (to more than 1)

Nmu'ltes. See you. (to 1 person)

Nmu'ltoqsip. See you. (to more than 1)

Nmu'ltes sapo'nuk. See you tomorrow.

Nmu'ltesnen. See you then.

Nmu'ltes apukjik. See you later.

Nmu'ltes app. See you again.

Tlewistutisun app. I'll be talking to you again.

Juku'etisk. Come again.

Juku'etisk app. Come back again.

Wela'lin. Thank-you. (to 1 person)

Wela'lioq. Thank-you. (to more than 1)

Wela'liek. Thank-you. (from many to 1)

Weliaq. You're welcome.

Mukk-wi'tmu. Don't mention it.

Taliaq? What's happening?

Mu-talianuk. Nothing is happening.

Ta'n pekisinn	When did you arrive? -
Kiskuk pekisinn	I arrived today -
Tami wejien?	Where were you? -
Niknaq wejiey	I was at my house -
Sa'q kespi nmu'l.	It's been a while since I've seen you.
Welta'si na nemu'l app.	I'm glad to see you again.
Welta'si emitukwalin.	I'm glad you came to visit me.
Welta'si na nike' pekisin.	I'm glad you came.
Nmu'ltesnen?	We will see you later/again?
Nmu'ltes welo'nuk?	Will I see you tonight?
Nmu'ltes sapo'nuk?	Will I see you tomorrow?
Kiskajein?	Are you ready?
Suel kiskajein?	Are you almost ready?
Kiskajei.	I am ready.
Mu-kiskajeiu.	I am not ready.
Kiskaje'k	S/he is ready.
Mu-kiskaje'k.	S/he is not ready.
Eskma.	Wait.
Eskmali.	Wait for me.
Miamuj eliey.	I must go.
Ketu' maja'si.	I want to leave.

Getting to Know Someone

We'n na kujjewijik	Who are your parents?
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Nujjewijik na...	My parents are...
Taluisin?	What is your name?
Ni'n teluisi ...	My name is ...
Nina'...	I am ...
Taluisit?	What is her/his name?
Nekm teluisit ...	Her/his name is ...
Wen ...?	Who ...?
Wen na ...?	Who is ...?
Wula na ...	This is ...
Nenaq...?	Do I know?
Nenat...?	Do You (singular) know?
Nenuatl...?	Does He/She know?
Nenu'kw...?	Do We (Inclusive) know?
Nenaq~tt...?	Do We (Exclusive) know?
Nenuoq...?	Do You (Plural) know?
Nenua'titl...?	Do They know?

	1 PERSON	2 PEOPLE	MORE THAN 2 PEOPLE
How Are You?	Me'tal Wlein?	Me'tal Wleioq?	Me'tal Wlo'Itioq?
I am Fine	Welei	Weleiek	Welo'Itiek
How is He/She?	Me'tal Wle'k?	.....	.....
He/She is Fine	Wele'k	....	.....
How are They?	.....	Me'tal Wle'kik?	Me'tal Wlo'Itijik?
They are Fine?	.....	Wele'kik	Welo'Itijik

Katu ki'l?	What about you?
Mu-weleyu.	I am not well.
Me'tale'k?	How is s/he?
Wele'k.	S/he is well.
Mu-wele'k.	S/he is not well.
Metalo'Itijik kikmaq?	How is your family?
Welo'Itijik.	They are well.
Me'tale'k kujj?	How is your father?
Me'tale'k kkij?	How is your mother?
Tala'teken?	What is the matter?
Tala'teket?	What's wrong with him/her?
Tami tleyawin?	Where are you from? (to 1 person)
Tleyawi ...	I am from ...
Tami tleyawit?	Where is s/he from?
Tleyawit ...	S/he is from ...
Tami tleyawioq?	Where are you from? (to 2+)
Tleyawi'kw ...	We are from ... (inclusive)
Tleyawiek ...	We are from ... (exclusive)
Tami tleyawijik?	Where is it from?
Tleyawik ...	They are from ...
Tami-wetapekksin?	Where are your roots/ancestors from?
Wetapekksi ...	My ancestors are from ...
Tami-wikin?	Where do you live?

Wiki ... I live at ... (local)

Time & Space

Tami-eymn? Where are you?

Tami elien? Where are you going?

Ni'n eliey ... I am going ...

Tami-wejien? Where are you coming from?

Wejiejy ... I am coming from ...

Tami-eyk ...? Where is ...? (animate)

Tami-etek ...? Where is ...? (inanimate)

Niknaq. My house.

Kikuaq. Your house.

Wikuaq. His/her house.

Ketu' l'mien? Do you want to go home?

E'e, ketu' l'miey nike'. Yes, I want to go home now.

Maja'ti'kw Shall we leave?

A', maja'tinej OK, let's leave

Kujjewijik teluejik, "Elmie ansma-nike'." Your parents said, "Go home right now."

Mixed Conversation

Jukwa'l. Bring something. (anim.)

Jukwa'tui. Bring something. (inanim.)

Talamu'k? What [flavor/color/type]? (anim.)

Talamuksit? What [flavor/color/type]? (inanim.)

Kisi maqatuitis...? Can I borrow...?

Ne'a'tui.	Show me.
Iknemui.	Give it to me.
Iknemu'l.	Give it to him/her.
Wsua'tu.	Take this.
Na ta'wen.	That one.
A'sa ni'n.	It's up to me.
A'sa kil.	It's up to you.
O'pla'ketey.	I'm doing it wrong.
O'pla'keten.	You're doing it wrong.
Apoqnmui.	Help me.
Kisi apoqnmunitis?	Can you help me?
Tepaskmay.	I can do it.
Telte'tm.	I think so.
Telues?	What did s/he say?
Jiksitui.	Listen to me.
O'plwitm.	I said it wrong.
Ki's teluey.	I already said it.
Tal-lukwen?	What are you doing?
Tal-lukwe'sip?	What did you do?
Elukwey	I'm working
Koqwey elukwatmn?	What are you working on?
Homeworkm elukwatm	I'm working on my homework
Ta'nuk kisa'tesk?	When will you finish?

Wen ela'tioq?	Who are you going with?
Ta'sikl?	How many are there?
Mukk-awantasiw.	Don't forget.
Mukk-awanta'sualu.	Don't forget me.
Awanta'sianek.	I forgot it.
Mikwete'l mitisk.	Remember me.
Ewlen.	You're lying.
Mu-ewlow.	Don't lie.
Ewlet etuk.	I think s/he is lying.
Telte'tm ewlet.	I think s/he is lying.
Mektm.	I don't believe you.
Mu-sespate'tmu.	I don't care.
Talkaqnik?	How is the atmosphere there?
Welkaqnik.	Fun atmosphere.
Wen-meske'k?	Who is sad/sorry?
Wen-atkitemit?	Who is crying?
Wen-weskewe'k?	Who is laughing?
Wen-wekayik?	Who is mad?
Wen-jipasit?	Who is scared?
Ketu' maqatuwi na suliewey.	I want to borrow some money.
Wela'qnm̄in?	Do you have lots of change?
Siwien?	Are you tired?
Welinpan?	How did you sleep?

Welimpanek?	Did you have a good sleep?
Mnja'si	Get up! (from bed)
Ta's ajiet nike?	What time is it now?
L'uiknek	It is seven
Welimpayaneq.	I had a good sleep.
Winimpayaneq.	I had a bad sleep.
Welimpayooq.	S/he had a good sleep.
Winimpayooq.	S/he had a bad sleep.
Welne'pitijik.	They had a good sleep.
Wine'pitijik.	They had a bad sleep.
Metu'ek.	It's hard/difficult.
Tetuji naqamasiaq or Natli-naqamasiaq.	It's that easy.
Koqoey kisi-kinu'tmasin kiskuk?	What did you learn today?

Conclusion

The Mi'kmaq language has been slowly slipping away from the mouths of the Mi'kmaw people, the language is not spoken as much. Our elders tell us that we are defined by our language that we speak, the Mi'kmaq language defines the Mi'kmaw people, it is their language, and it is the language that been spoken for many millennia. The residential and boarding schools that were placed close to the Native Americans helped to slowly eradicate the language from the students and their lineage thereafter. However, there were a few that preserved the language through discreet means while attending the schools. The schools were meant to "take the Indian out of the child", so that the Native Americans would be "civilized", in the eyes of the people in Government, either American or Canadian. As many language keepers have strained to keep the language alive through diverse strategies, we have seen an influx of many students of the language welcoming more and more students. The philosophy of our elders was to preserve the language through speaking with one another through oral teachings. We

continue this process, as we diversify our strategies to teach in the world that we live in today through technology and theories.

Welalioq (I thank you),

John J. Dennis

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