

Activity 4a

Vowel Differences in Plains Cree “Y” Dialects

In activity 4, you were introduced to the **vowel sounds** of the Cree-Innu dialect continuum. In particular you observed how the Proto-Algonquian long vowel *e: (often spelled *e*, *ee*, *ê*, or *ē*) can differ across the dialects. However, sometimes that variation can cross-cut what is otherwise a major dialect difference based on other features. In Saskatchewan, a major dialect difference is usually recognized between Plains Cree or the “Y” dialect and Woodland Cree or the “TH” dialect (see also activity 1). With this in mind, let’s take a look at the occurrence or non-occurrence of *ē* in the dialects of Saskatchewan.

Instructions:

- ▶ Open the Linguistic Atlas found at www.atlas-ling.ca.
- ▶ Go to the ‘family’ category.
- ▶ Select the phrase “this is my older brother”.
- ▶ Click on each marker on the map and listen carefully.
- ▶ When you find the speakers listed below, copy the first word on the corresponding line.

What do you notice about the last vowel of the first word for each speaker?

- ▶ Martha Michell - Woodland Cree - North - Kinosao _____
- ▶ Minnie Mckenzie - Woodland Cree - South - La Ronge _____
- ▶ Leda Corrigan - Plains Cree - Northern - Beauval _____
- ▶ Robert Eyahpaise - Plains Cree - Southern - Beardy’s _____
- ▶ Jean Okimasis - Plains Cree - Southern - White Bear _____
- ▶ Butch Carriere - Swampy Cree - Western - Cumberland _____

Answer:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------|
| ▶ Woodland Cree - North - Kinosao | nistīs |
| ▶ Woodland Cree - South - La Ronge | nistīs |
| ▶ Plains Cree - Northern - Beauval | nistīs |
| ▶ Plains Cree - Southern - Beardy’s | nistēs |
| ▶ Plains Cree - Southern - White Bear | nistēs |
| ▶ Swampy Cree - Western - Cumberland | nistēs |

ī

Plains Cree - Northern
Woodland Cree

ē

Plains Cree - Southern
Swampy Cree