

Activity 9

Nouns in Prairies dialects: Michif

Many nouns in the dialects spoken in the Canadian Prairies are similar, with a few exceptions. These exceptions are what sets the Michif language apart.

Instructions:

- ▶ Open the Linguistic Atlas found at www.atlas-ling.ca.
- ▶ Go to the 'At the school' category.
- ▶ Select the phrase for each of the words listed.
- ▶ For each number, click on each marker on the map and listen carefully.
- ▶ When you find the speakers listed, copy the word on the chart below.
- ▶ Then, answer the following questions.

How are the nouns different in Michif?

1. What do you notice about the words in Michif; do they resemble any of the other dialects?
2. How do you say 'my' and 'your' in Michif vs in Plains and Swampy Cree?

	Marguerite Sanderson Swampy Cree - Western	Jean Okimasis Plains Cree - Southern	Leda Corrigan Plains Cree - Northern	Grace Zoldy Michif
table				
door				
chair				
book				
your book				
my book				

If you have done Activity 4a, you should have noticed the same vowel difference between the Northern and Southern Plains Cree for the words *door* and *chair*.

3. Listen to the French translations by clicking the green button in the bottom right hand corner of the screen. Do you hear the similarities between the Michif and French nouns? Fill in the French column below.

4. Now, listen to the same phrases for Rita Daniels and fill in the words.

	Marie-Odile Junker French	Rita Daniels Métis Cree
table		
door		
chair		
book		
your book		
my book		

5. Compare the words for 'door', 'chair' and 'book' in Métis Cree with those in the other dialects. What does Métis Cree resemble?
6. Compare the word for 'table' in Métis Cree with the other dialects. What do you notice?

Answers:

	Marguerite Sanderson Swampy Cree - Western	Jean Okimasis Plains Cree - Southern	Leda Corrigan Plains Cree - Northern	Grace Zoldy Michif
table	mīcisowināhtik	mīcisowināhtik	mīcisowināhtik	en tab
door	iskwāhtēm	iskwāhtēm	iskwāhtīm	en port
chair	tēhtapiwin	tēhtapiwin	tīhtapiwin	en shez
book	masinahikan	masinahikan	masinahikan	aeñ livr
your book	kimasinahikan	kimasinahikan	kimasinahikan	toñ livr
my book	nimasinahikan	nimasinahikan	nimasinahikan	moñ livr

	Marie-Odile Junker French	Rita Daniels Métis Cree
table	la table	latap
door	la porte	iskwāhtēm
chair	la chaise	tēhtapiwin
book	un livre	masinahikan
your book	ton livre	kiya kimasinahikan
my book	mon livre	nimasinahikan

1. These Michif words don't resemble any of the other dialects.
2. In Plains and Swampy Cree, 'my' = *ni* and 'your' = *ki*. In Michif, 'my' = 'moñ' and 'your' = 'toñ'.
3. The French forms are much closer to the Michif forms, though they are not identical.
4. ---
5. Métis Cree resembles Plains and Swampy Cree for these (and most) words.
6. The word for 'table' in Métis Cree looks more like the words for 'table' in Michif and French. People often say that there is more French influence in Métis Cree than in other dialects of Cree.