

TEXT-BASED GRAMMAR IN CREE LANGUAGE EDUCATION

by

Freda Ahenakew

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
of the University of Manitoba
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

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PREFACE

This thesis is meant as a guide to the use of literary texts in Cree language teaching. There are now a number of textbooks on Cree but the sentences they use to illustrate Cree grammar are often disjointed or unidiomatic.

I hope that students and teachers of Cree will find it useful to have an introduction to Cree grammar that builds up slowly. Although some examples were constructed to highlight a particular point of grammar, most of the illustrations come from a collection of spontaneously told Plains Cree texts recently recorded in Saskatchewan.

Looking for grammatical examples in them is only one of the many ways that running texts can be used in the classroom. These texts are told in literary form and include funny stories and personal experiences as well as the advice of the elders.

My work in Cree linguistics was supported by the Northern Studies Committee, University of Manitoba and by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. I am especially grateful for a travelling fellowship from the E. J. McMurray Trust.

During my studies at the University of Manitoba, I had a lot of moral support and practical help from my family and friends in Saskatoon and Winnipeg. I cannot list them all but I want to especially thank Dick Carter, Jenny Greensmith, Wes Hogman, John Nichols, David Potter, Pam Smith, Ellen Robinson, Ray Wiest and, finally, Chris Wolfart who was my graduate advisor and Arden Ogg who will never want to type another table.

This book is dedicated to Ida McLeod who for years worked tirelessly in the teaching of Cree and set such an example of both nēhiyāwiwin and nēhiyawēwin.

INTRODUCTION

In speaking and understanding a language we make use of different patterns:

- sounds,
- words,
- sentences,
- meanings.

When linguists analyze a language, they group these patterns under the following headings:

- phonology,
- morphology,
- syntax,
- semantics.

These are the same patterns which a student must cope with in learning a second language.

In teaching a language, we usually deal with one area at a time. In fact, we can only present one minute "piece" of language structure at any one time. Minimal units of language teaching are organized in a step-by-step procedure -- but in reality a speaker uses all of them at once.

Each of these smallest units (and each of the larger patterns into which they can be combined) has to be illustrated by examples, and students need a great deal of practice for each "piece". But they also need to see how the "pieces" fit together into the overall pattern. This is where texts have their place in the language curriculum, because they are live examples of how the language works.

CONNECTED SPEECH

For languages that have been taught in schools for many years, there is a wealth of teaching materials at all levels. A well-designed French course, for example, would normally include short stories (with simple sentences) or modern plays (with lots of dialogue) to teach students to handle whole sentences. At first, these sentences need to be simple but as students become more confident, the material also can become more complex.

If a language teacher wanted to follow a similar approach for Cree, what could one use? The only Plains Cree books with consistent spelling that were not translated into Cree are the Plains Cree texts from Saskatchewan which Leonard Bloomfield collected in 1925. But using these formal texts would be like asking students who are just learning English to jump right into Shakespeare (or at least Jane Austen).

BOOKS ABOUT CREE

If you look up "Cree" in the subject catalogue of any large library, you will find many other books about the Cree language. To review all of these would, of course, take up a whole book by itself, but we will discuss a few of the problems typically found in such works.

Dialect

Cree sounds differ quite dramatically from dialect to dialect, and Cree is spoken all the way from Hudson's Bay to the Rockies. Even words and sentences that sound alike may not mean the same thing to all Cree speakers.

Let us start by looking at some actual examples of an eastern Cree dialect and compare them to Plains Cree. The eastern Cree examples are taken from the Spoken Cree of C. Douglas Ellis (1983) which is based on the Cree spoken at Albany Post on the west coast of James Bay (JBC); the Plains Cree examples (which are my own) represent the central Saskatchewan dialect heard on the Atāhkakoḥp, Mistawāsis and Pitihkwahākēw reserves.

Sounds

The l which appears in the following James Bay words corresponds to a y in Plains Cree:

JBC kikiskēlimitin

'I know you' (p.38)

JBC nīla

'me' (p.38)

JBC milopaliliw

'it (obviative) is going well' (p.62)

PC kikiskēyimitin

PC niya¹

PC miyopayiyiw

These words sound different, but they have the same meaning.

Words

There are many words in Spoken Cree which are different from Plains Cree; for example, the greeting for James Bay Cree is,

wāciyē

'hello, goodbye' (p.38).

In Plains Cree this word is not used for greeting, and there is also no common word for the two meanings of JBC wāciyē. Instead, for greeting, Plains Cree uses

¹ Note the short i written before the y; for the spelling conventions used here see Ahenakew 1984:Appendix.

tānisi

'hello',

and farewell could be either

ēkosi māka

'so long'

or

ka-wāpamitin

'see you!'

ka-wāpamitināwāw

'see you (all)!'

In a similar way, the expressions used for thanking someone are entirely different in the two dialects. Where James Bay Cree has a particle,

mīkwēc

'thank you' (p.140),

Plains Cree has a verb form:

kitatamihin

'thank you'

(literally, 'you make me glad')

kitatamihināwāw

'thank you (all)'

A number of other particles, e.g.,

JBC mōšak 'always' : PC kākikē

JBC pēšoc 'near to' : PC cīki

are also different, and the two dialects do not even use the same words for the coordinating particle 'and, also, too',

JBC nēšta : PC mīna

or for the question particle,²

JBC nā : PC cī.

A list of everyday expressions that differ would be quite long; for example,

JBC šānkw-ahtay
'nine dollars' (p.260)
PC kēkā-mitātaht-nēwopēhikan

JBC māhkiy
'tent' (p.110)
PC papakwayānikamik

² The question particle nā and a verb form ka-wāciyēmitin (built on wāciyē) have also been heard as far west as James Smith Reserve, Saskatchewan.

JBC šwāp
'store' (p.110)

PC atāwēwikamik

JBC natohkolon (NA)
'doctor' (p.75)

PC maskihkīwiyiniw

These are words for things introduced by Europeans, and šwāp is a loan-word based on English shop. But words with more traditional meanings may also be completely different:

JBC natohkolon (NI)
'medicine' (p.75)

PC maskihkiy

JBC mawāpiw
'he is visiting' (p.676)

PC kiyokēw

These are just a few examples of the many words that differ from one dialect to another.

Sentences

There are also many James Bay Cree sentences which consist of familiar words but are grammatically different from Plains Cree; for example,

JBC ayāw masinahikaniliw

'he has a book' (p.106);

the Plains Cree counterpart of this sentence is,

PC ayāw masinahikan.

Another example of the same grammatical structure is:

JBC nimīlāw cīmāniliw

'I give him a canoe' (p.284)

PC nimiyāw cīmān

Ignoring the sound differences, we still see a major difference between

JBC masinahikaniliw

JBC cīmāniliw,

which have a special ending, and

PC masinahikan

PC cīmān,

which do not.

In other words, Plains Cree does not distinguish proximate and obviative forms for inanimate nouns.

Meanings

Discrepancies in meaning are often the most troublesome aspect of dialect differences, especially when the words sound exactly the same:

sīhkaciw

JBC 'he is cold' (p.692)

PC 'he is skinny'

āhtakwēw

JBC 'he moves camp' (p.153)

PC 'he moves his snares'

(cf. PC āhtokēw 'he moves camp')

Sometimes the two meanings are clearly related, e.g.,

nawaciw

JBC 'he takes a quick snack,
stops for lunch (en route)' (p.681)

PC 'he cooks (it) in the oven'

But sometimes they are not. The next is the most outrageous example; it is also from Ellis (1983:110):

matēw nikosis šwāpihk anohc.

In James Bay Cree this sentence means

'my son is not in the store';

in Plains Cree, that same meaning is expressed by a completely different sentence:

mōy āyāw atāwēwikamikohk nikosis anohc.

Aside from word-order, these two sentences differ in two places. The first is the difference between

JBC šwāpihk

'store'

and

PC atāwēwikamikohk

which has already been mentioned in the discussion of word discrepancies.³

The second difference between these two sentences is the reason why Ellis's example may be offensive to some Plains Cree readers.

Where Plains Cree has

mōy āyāw,

³ The difference between the locative endings is due to the fact that the word atāwēwikamik is based on a stem that ends in -w-, as in the plural form, atāwēwikamikwa 'stores'. When the stem atāwēwikamikw- is followed by the locative ending -ihk, the -w- and the -i- merge to make -o-.

James Bay Cree has

matēw.

To a Plains Cree reader or listener, this James Bay Cree form does not mean 'he isn't there'; instead, it sounds exactly like the Plains Cree word

matēw

which denotes sexual intercourse. In short, to a Plains Cree speaker, a harmless James Bay Cree sentence suggests rather unexpected activities in the store.

Ellis is the innocent victim of dialect differences in Cree, just like the speaker of British English who asks her Canadian landlord "to knock her up for breakfast". All languages have dialect differences -- and dialect differences do cause problems in teaching!

Style

Another problem that teachers and students need to be aware of is style. It is perfectly understandable to say in Cree

maskisina postiskam

'he puts shoes on'

but it is not very elegant. A fluent Cree speaker would not normally use this phrase except in a very specific situation:

(a) a child puts an adult's shoes on;

(b) when you want to specify that it is someone else's shoes, e.g.,

kimaskisina postiskam

'he puts your shoes on'.

For an ordinary situation, Cree speakers use

postaskisinēw

which includes a root

post-

(which is the same as that in postiskam) and the noun-like element

-askisin-

which has the same meaning but not quite the same form as

maskisin

'shoe'.

The above example illustrates the difference between NORMAL style and SPECIAL PURPOSE style. In a normal context,

maskisina postiskam

would sound odd and might earn a quip, "Does he usually go barefoot?"

There is also a distinction between normal, everyday style and ELEVATED style. In one short Plains Cree story, for example, the narrator uses five verbs that incorporate the morpheme -āwaso- 'child':⁴

kiskinahamāwaso-

wihtamāwaso-

kakēskimāwaso-

pimācihāwaso-

ohpikināwaso-

The meaning of each of these -āwaso- words can also be expressed by a combination of a verb and a noun; for example,⁵

ē-kī-kiskinahamāwasocik

'they taught their children' (2-3)

ē-kī-kiskinahamawāt otawāsimisa

'he taught his children' (2-4)

In the first example, the single verb incorporates the morpheme -āwaso- 'child'; in the second, the verb is followed by the possessed noun form otawāsimisa 'his children'.

⁴ This morpheme has a slightly different form (note the vowel lengths!) from the noun awāsis, but it has the same meaning.

⁵ These examples are from Ahenakew 1984; the number which follows each example from these texts refers to the story and paragraph.

These two parallel expressions are both very common in Cree; but the first is more elevated: it is more likely to be used in story-telling or preaching than in casual conversation. When a text uses several such words one after another, it creates the impression of formality -- it uses formal style.

This effect is increased when the speaker varies the words used for a particular action. In this case, the topic is elders trying to influence the young, and the narrator uses three different near-synonyms,

kiskinahamāwaso-

'teach one's children',

wihtamāwaso-

'tell one's children',

kakēskimāwaso-

'counsel one's children'

to talk about this subject.

Different levels of speech are found in all languages. The English sentences which follow would be used in very different situations; they represent two extreme styles:

I should be grateful for any assistance you may
be able to render.

Help!

It is important for teachers and students to be aware of the style that is being taught.

Reliability

A language student would have a hard time telling the difference between "high" and "low" style in a language in which he/she can barely say

I am hungry.

The student also cannot tell whether the sentences in the textbook are idiomatic or not. It is not enough for a sentence to consist of Cree words and to have the right prefixes and suffixes: the words also have to be connected in the proper way.

Some sentences may be grammatically correct and still unidiomatic, e.g.,

nāpēw atimwa wāpamēw.

Each word in this sentence (which is from Wolfart & Carroll 1981:26) is a correct Cree word, and any Cree speaker would understand what it means. But it seems very unlikely that a Cree speaker would ever utter such a sentence (unless he wanted to talk about any old man seeing any old dog).

In normal Cree, this sentence would at least have to include a demonstrative pronoun such as ana 'that', as in

ana nāpēw atimwa wāpamēw.

'That man sees the dog.'

or even a discourse particle such as ēkwa 'now',

nāpēw ēkwa wāpamēw atimwa.

'The man sees the dog now.'

At least now the sentence sounds almost normal.

Many sentences found in books about Cree are not even syntactically well-formed. In their discussion of the conjunct mode, Wolfart & Carroll (1981:75) use an example which again has the proper endings but is syntactically odd:

mēkwā ē-pimohtēt, ispatināw wāpahtam.

'While he walked, he saw a hill.'

In normal Cree, the mēkwā would have to be included in the verb complex:

ē-mēkwā-pimohtēt, ispatināw wāpahtam.

The only possible way in which the same meaning would be expressed in a separate word, could be by the particle mēkwāc:⁶

⁶ Perhaps the mēkwā is, in fact, a typographical error for mēkwāc.

mēkwāc ē-pimohtēt, ispatināw wāpahtam.

It is only one sound that distinguishes mēkwā from mēkwāc, but it makes a lot of difference.

Many sentences which sound odd in isolation might go unnoticed when they occur in connected discourse. This is another argument for using texts.

TEACHERS

The problems we have discussed are obvious to any speaker of the language, but the solutions are not. To figure out what is wrong with a sentence requires some technical knowledge of how languages work.

Many people seem to have the notion that just because you are a fluent speaker of a language you ought to be able to teach it, too. This idea is simply preposterous; still, it is an assumption that is often made when it comes to hiring Indian teachers. I wonder how many school boards would let their English or French courses be taught by someone without years of special training. Fluency, in any language, is just not enough.

TEXTBOOKS

The only set of Plains Cree lessons generally available in print is the book of Mary Edwards, Cree: an intensive language course. This textbook, which was first published in 1954, also has sentences which are quite unidiomatic; for example,

itwēwak, "niwīsakēyihtēnān nicihcīnāna".

'They said their hands hurt.' (p.37)

This sentence would sound better if the itwēwak 'they say' followed the direct quotation, "niwīsakēyihtēnān nicihcīnāna" '"our hands hurt"'.

Two reasons why many of the sentences in this book sound odd may well be that, first, they were English sentences translated into Cree or, second, that they are isolated sentences.

The first is a weakness common to many books about Cree, and the second is a fundamental problem shared by all second language textbooks. But the major problem with the Mary Edwards book has nothing to do with phonology, morphology or syntax. It is the content of many of her example sentences.

Even sentences which to some users of the book may seem harmless can be disturbing to others. For instance:

māka namōya wīhkāc kīspowak.

'But they never have enough to eat.' (p.33)

-- does this mean that they [the women, as opposed to the men] are gluttons, or that they are so deprived that there is never any food?

Many other sentences and dialogues are much more explicit; many lessons, for example, are full of sentences dealing with the bad effects of alcohol:

ēkāwiya kiya kisiwāsi!

'Don't you get angry!'

ēkāwiya kīskwēpē, ayamihā!

'Don't get drunk, pray!' (p.25)

niwīkimākan kī-kisiwāsiw.

'My wife was angry.'

kī-kīskwēpēw cī?

'Was he/she drunk?' (p.24)

kī-kīskwēpēwak cī?

'Were they drunk?'

ēha, ēkosi āhkosiwak.

'Yes, and now they are sick.' (p.37)

All of the following examples are from a single page (p.82):

kī-pakamahwēw owīkimākana tipiskohk.

'He hit his wife last night.'

kīhtwām kī-kīskwēpēw.

'He was drunk again.'

kīskwēpēskiw.

'He is always drunk.'

namōya kita-kī-pōni-kīskwēpēw.

'He can't stop getting drunk.'

Alcoholism is, of course, a fact of life but were these the only sentences available to illustrate the grammatical patterns of Cree? There are many positive aspects of reserve life that could be used in grammatical drills -- rather than perpetuating the stereotype image of "the drunken Indian".

When a revision of the Edwards book was being prepared by Ida McLeod, herself an experienced Cree teacher and a speaker of Plains Cree, she was not allowed to change any of the example sentences. The only corrections she was permitted to make were in the area of orthography, grammar and style.

Even the two revised editions published by Ida McLeod (1979, 1982) still require further revisions, especially in the area of sentence structure and style. In view of the restrictions on changes in the content, however, what point is there in working on the linguistic aspects of this book?

No book is perfect, as we all know, but this is a serious problem for a textbook. Ideally, as Ida McLeod has urged many times, the next Cree textbook ought to be written by Cree speakers.

A TEXT-BASED APPROACH

Many of the problems we have discussed can be avoided if teaching materials are based on real Cree.

But where do you find that? As previously mentioned, there are no suitable readers for the y-dialect; therefore, the responsibility is on Cree speakers to develop appropriate teaching materials.

There are two ways in which we can do this. The first is for fluent Cree speakers to develop dialogues on various themes such as family life and community activities. The speakers would use spontaneous, everyday Cree for such dialogues to make them sound completely natural. The other alternative is to prepare classroom materials based on running texts.

This thesis explores the second option: the use of texts in Cree language teaching.

The first advantage of texts is that students at any level can learn to recognize affixes, words and phrases in their natural context. But there are other reasons for using traditional texts rather than specially constructed dialogues or stories. Texts are

literary works with a form of their own. In addition, the content of such texts offers valuable insights into Cree life, traditional and contemporary.

Most Cree teachers are, of course, familiar with Cree literature but very few of them have much experience in the use of texts for language teaching. In this thesis, therefore, I will present a series of comments on language teaching to go with a collection of Plains Cree texts from Saskatchewan which have been prepared for teachers and students: wāskahikaniwiyiniw-ācimowina.

NOUN INFLECTION

Words do not always have the same form. The noun stem awāsis-, for example, may either appear as

awāsis

'child'

or as

awāsisak

'children'.

The first form, which has no special ending, is called SINGULAR; the second form, with the ending -ak, is called PLURAL.

This chapter looks at the various forms in which nouns may appear.

INFLECTIONAL DISTINCTIONS

Noun inflections show a number of distinctions which together connect the noun to the other parts (nouns or verbs) of the sentence.

Gender

Nouns in Cree fall into two classes: ANIMATE and INANIMATE.

These two classes have different plural endings:

pēyak awāsis (animate)

'one child'

nīso awāsisak

'two children'

pēyak maskisin (inanimate)

'one shoe'

nīso maskisina

'two shoes'

The plural ending -ak is used with the animate stem awāsis-, and the plural ending -a with the inanimate stem maskisin-. Knowing the plural of a noun is the easiest way of telling whether it is animate or inanimate.

The distinction between animate and inanimate nouns is called GENDER. This is a grammatical term which indicates that the two sets of nouns take different plural endings.

The two GENDER CLASSES also each have their own set of pronouns, for example,

awa awāsis (animate)

'this child'

ōki awāsisak

'these children'

ōma maskisin (inanimate)

'this shoe'

ōhi maskisina

'these shoes'

These same two sets of pronouns are also used in full sentences:

awāsis awa. (animate)

'This is a child.'

maskisin ōma. (inanimate)

'This is a shoe.'

Animate and inanimate nouns also agree with different verbs,

e.g.,

niwāpamāw awāsis. (animate)

'I see a child.'

niwāpahtēn maskisin. (inanimate)

'I see a shoe.'

The two gender classes play an important role in the inflection of nouns, pronouns and verbs.

The animate class covers nouns for all living creatures. This group also includes such objects as rings, pants, stockings, stoves, pots, flour and stones. Since such things seem lifeless to speakers of English, animate nouns for such items create confusion in the classroom. Students always want to know why a particular noun is animate. Among articles of clothing, for example, they want to know why asikan- is animate and astotin- is inanimate:

asikan (animate)

'sock, stocking'

asikanak

'socks, stockings'

astotin (inanimate)

'hat, cap'

astotina

'hats, caps'

There is no easy answer to the question of why such nouns are animate; they simply are animate in the mind of the Cree speaker, and the evidence for this fact is obvious in the grammar:

-- the plural ending -ak,

asikanak

'socks, stockings';

-- the use of the pronoun awa,

awa asikan

'this sock';

-- the use of the verb stem wāpam-,

niwāpamāw asikan.

'I see a sock.'

Rather than look for reasons, students will simply have to memorize such nouns.

Number

In our discussion of gender (animate and inanimate), we already mentioned another distinction: nouns are either SINGULAR or PLURAL. This distinction of NUMBER is most obvious when words like 'one' or 'two' are used with the noun, e.g.,

pēyak ayīkis

'one frog'

nīso ayīkīsak;

'two frogs'

but you can just as easily say

ayīkis

'a frog'

to refer to a single frog, and

ayīkīsak

'frogs'

to refer to more than one.

The singular forms for both animate and inanimate stems have no special endings:

awāsis NA

'a child'

ayīkis NA

'a frog'

asikan NA

'a sock, a stocking'

maskisin NI

'a shoe'

astotin NI

'a cap, a hat'

In the plural, on the other hand, animate stems have the ending -ak, and inanimate stems have the ending -a:

awāsisak NA

'children'

ayīkīsak NA

'frogs'

asikanak NA
'socks, stockings'

maskisina NI
'shoes'

astotina NI
'caps, hats'

The number distinction is also found in pronouns and verbs.

Obviative

In a sentence with two animate nouns we find another inflectional distinction:

ana awāsis kī-wāpamēw ayīkisa.

'That child saw a frog/frogs.'

The noun form awāsis is exactly as illustrated before, but the noun form ayīkisa has the ending -a which sets it apart from the other nouns in the same sentence. The -a form of the animate noun is called the OBVIATIVE. In this form, there is no number distinction: ayīkisa could mean either 'a frog' or 'frogs'.

Locative

Another common noun form is the LOCATIVE which indicates location. The locative suffix is -ihk, e.g.,

asikan NA

'a sock, a stocking'

asikanihk LOC

'in a sock, in a stocking'

astotin NI

'a cap, a hat'

astotinihk LOC

'in, on a cap, in a hat'

As these examples show, the ending -ihk is used with both animate and inanimate noun stems.

The locative ending -ihk is not used with nouns for humans and animals. Instead, such nouns have a special locative ending -ināhk which means 'amongst the ___', e.g.,

kihci-mōhkomān NA

'an American'

kihci-mōhkomānināhk

'in the United States'.

PARADIGM TABLES

A set of inflected forms based on a single stem is called a PARADIGM. The two tables which follow show the noun paradigms (as used by the writer):

	ANIMATE
3	<u>asikan</u>
3p	<u>asikanak</u>
3'	<u>asikana</u>
LOC	<u>asikanihk</u>

	INANIMATE
0	<u>astotin</u>
0p	<u>astotina</u>
LOC	<u>astotinihk</u>

Note that inanimate nouns do not mark the obviative.

Complete paradigms are difficult to find in a small set of texts. As the following examples show, all the noun endings occur in the texts, but with a variety of stems:

	ANIMATE
3	piyēsīs
3p	okimāsisak
3'	īwahikana
LOC	asiskīwikocawānāpiskosihk

	INANIMATE
0	ācimowinis
0p	mīciwina
LOC	maskimotihk

STEM SHAPES

Most Cree nouns are inflected like the examples which we have given already. But some nouns are different and need to be discussed separately.

All the examples which we have used so far are stems that end in a single consonant; e.g.,

awāsis-

maskisin-

In these cases, the noun stem is always the same, whether it is singular, plural, obviative or locative.

There are also common types of stems where the shape of the stem varies before the different endings.

Cw-stems

If you look at the singular and plural endings of the word for 'dog',

atim

'a dog'

atimwak

'dogs'

you see that there is a -w- before the plural ending -ak. This -w- drops in the singular but shows up when the other inflectional endings are added.

When a stem ending in a consonant followed by -w- takes the locative suffix -ihk, the final -w- of the stem and the initial -i- of the endings merge to -o-; for example:

pahkēkin

'a tanned hide'

pahkēkinwa

'tanned hides'

pahkēkinohk

'on the tanned hide'

mistik

'a tree'

mistikwak

'trees'

mistikohk

'on a tree'

There are many text examples of these Cw-stems:

	ANIMATE
3	kinēpik
3p	wāposwak
3'	paskwāwimostoswa
LOC	---

	INANIMATE
0	āhkosīwikamik
0p	pahkēkinwa
LOC	kipahotowikamikohk

Vw- and Vy-stems

Noun stems which end in one of the semi-vowels (w or y) preceded by a vowel show no complications in the singular, plural, or obviative; for example, with the stems kisēyiniw- NA 'old man, elder' or akwāminakasiy- NA 'thorn bush':

kisēyiniw

kisēyiniwak

kisēyiniwa

akwāminakasiy

akwāminakasiyak

akwāminakasiya

But in the locative there is a vowel adjustment at the morpheme boundary which occurs between the stem and the ending. Instead of simply adding the ending -ihk, the final semivowel of the stem and the initial -i- of the ending -ihk drop, and the preceding vowel is lengthened. For example,

ōtēnaw

'a town'

ōtēnāhk

'in town'

where the stem-final -aw- and the initial -i- of the ending -ihk result in -ā-:

[ōtēnaw+ihk]

ōtēnāhk.

The same rule applies with -Vy+i-, e.g.,

[niskotākay+ihk]

niskotākāhk

'on my coat'

[sīpiy+ihk]

sīpīhk

'in the river'

[mīcimāpoy+ihk]

mīcimāpōhk

'in the soup'.

When the vowel that precedes the semivowel is long, it simply stays,

e.g.,

[sakāw+ihk]

sakāhk

'in the bush'.

Text examples:

	ANIMATE -Vw-	-Vy-
3	kih̄c-ōkimāw	---
3p	pih̄wak	ahtayak
3'	sōniyāwa	---
LOC	---	---

	INANIMATE -Vw-	-Vy-
0	ōtēnaw	nipiy
0p	---	maskihkiya
LOC	---	sīpīhk

Single-syllable stems

There are a few nouns which have a singular ending in -a or -i. Those with a singular ending in -a are animate nouns such as kōna 'snow' or mōswa 'moose', and those with an -i are inanimate nouns such as mihti 'firewood' or wāti 'hole'.

The paradigm of 'firewood' shows that the stem is miht- and the endings are -i, -a and -ihk:

	INANIMATE
0	<u>miht</u> +i
0p	<u>miht</u> +a
LOC	<u>miht</u> +ihk

With animate nouns like kōna, the singular and the obviative sound exactly the same:

	ANIMATE
3	<u>kōna</u>
3p	--- ⁷
3'	<u>kōna</u>
LOC	<u>kōni</u> hk

The singular endings -a and -i only occur with stems like kōn- and miht- which consist of a single syllable.

Some of these single-syllable stems actually end in -Cw-, e.g.,

⁷ kōna is a collective noun and has no plural.

	ANIMATE
3	<u>mōswa</u>
3p	<u>mōswak</u>
3'	<u>mōswa</u>
LOC	---

In the case of inanimate single-syllable stems in -Cw-, the stem-final -w- and the ending -i merge to -o-:

mihko

'blood'

This is the same merging rule as that used with all other -Cw- noun stems, e.g.,

pahkēkinohk

mistikohk

and now also

mihkohk

'in the blood'.

Single-syllable stems are sometimes expanded into COMPOUND STEMS, e.g.,

wāti

'hole, den'

mahīhkani-wāti

'wolf-den'

As this example shows, such compound nouns, if inanimate, keep the singular ending -i; that is, they still behave like single-syllable stems. Another example of compounds with a single-syllable stem are those built on the stem ay-, for example, the animate noun kēhtē-ay- 'old person, elder':

	ANIMATE
3	<u>kēhtē-aya</u>
3p	<u>kēhtē-ayak</u>
3'	<u>kēhtē-aya</u>
LOC	---

Just as with kōna, there is no sound difference between the singular kēhtē-aya and the obviative kēhtē-aya.

Text examples:

	ANIMATE
3	kōna
3p	kēhtē-ayak
3'	mōswa
LOC	---

	INANIMATE
O	mahīhkani-wāti
Op	mihta
LOC	---

The single-syllable stems are the least common type of noun stems, but several stems of this type, like those occurring in the texts, are very common.

ADDRESS FORMS

There is a special form of the noun which is used when addressing someone directly, e.g.,

nēkā!

'mother!'

This form is mainly used with kinship terms.

In the singular, the address forms are quite irregular, e.g.,

nikāwi

'my mother'

nēkā!

'mother!'

nimosōm

'my grandfather'

nimosō!

'grandfather!'

nimis

'my older sister'

nimisē!

'older sister!'

The plural forms, on the other hand, add the ending -itik, e.g.,

nimosōmitik!

'grandfathers!'

nimisitik!

'older sisters!'

The text examples illustrate both the singular and plural address forms of

nitikwatim

'my nephew'

and

nōsisim

'my grandchild':

	ANIMATE
sg	<u>nitihkwā!</u>
pl	<u>nōsisimitik!</u>

POSSESSION

All the kinship terms used as examples of address forms start with an n-, and in the English translations the possessive pronoun 'my' is either explicit or understood. The noun form

nimis

'my older sister',

for example, consists of a personal prefix ni- and the stem -mis- 'older sister'.

The stem -mis- always takes a prefix; you cannot say -mis- by itself. Such stems are called DEPENDENT STEMS.

All the other noun stems that we have discussed in this chapter are INDEPENDENT STEMS. They need not take a personal prefix, but most of them may, e.g.,

asikan

'a sock, a stocking'

nitasikan

'my sock, my stocking'

Dependent nouns

Most dependent nouns are kinship terms and words for body parts or pieces of clothing, e.g.,

nōhkom NA

'my grandmother'

nistikwān NI

'my head'

nitās NA

'my pants'

As these examples show, dependent stems can be either animate or inanimate, and we use the abbreviations NDA and NDI.

The person categories which function as possessors are the same as the persons which are used in verb inflection, e.g.,

nimōhkomān NI

'my knife'

ninipān VAI

'I sleep'

They are also marked by almost the same prefixes and suffixes:

1	<u>ni-</u>	
2	<u>ki-</u>	
1p	<u>ni-</u>	<u>-inān-</u>
21p	<u>ki-</u>	<u>-inaw-</u>
2p	<u>ki-</u>	<u>-iwāw-</u>
3	<u>o-</u>	
3p	<u>o-</u>	<u>-iwāw-</u>
3'	<u>o-</u>	<u>-iyiw-</u>

For example:

	NDA
1	n <u>im</u> is
2	k <u>im</u> is
1p	n <u>im</u> is <u>inān</u>
21p	k <u>im</u> is <u>inaw</u>
2p	k <u>im</u> is <u>wāw</u>
3	o <u>mi</u> sa
3p	o <u>mi</u> si <u>wāw</u> a
3'	o <u>mi</u> si <u>yi</u> wa

The numbers at the left are shorthand for the person categories. In the English translations, he stands for both 'he' and 'she'.

	CATEGORY	STANDARD TRANSLATION
1	first singular	'I'
2	second singular	'you (sg)'
1p	first plural (exclusive)	'we (excl)'
21p	first-and-second plural (inclusive)	'we (incl)'
2p	second plural	'you (pl)'
3	third singular	'he'
3p	third plural	'they'
3'	third obviative	'he/they (obv)'

The forms for the third person possessor end in -a. This -a ending marks the noun as obviative. In the phrase,

ana iskwēw kī-wāpamēw omisa.

'That woman saw her older sister/sisters.'⁸

ana iskwēw 'that woman' is the central figure; she is "the possessor" or "in focus" and the 'older sister/sisters' is the other third person which is "the possessed" or "out of focus" -- that is, obviative.

With a third person possessor, the noun itself is always obviative. When the possessor is a first or second person, the noun itself can be singular, plural or obviative:

nikī-wāpamāw nimis.

'I saw my older sister.'

nikī-wāpamāwak nimisak.

'I saw my older sisters.'

ana iskwēw kī-wāpamēw nimisa.

'That woman saw my elder sister/sisters.'

This last example has two third persons, 'that woman' and 'my elder sister/sisters', and the obviative noun is marked by the ending -a: nimisa.

⁸ The obviative form has no number distinction.

Paradigm table:

	NDA singular	plural	obviative
1	<u>nimis</u>	<u>nimisak</u>	<u>nimisa</u>
2	<u>kimis</u>	<u>kimisak</u>	<u>kimisa</u>
1p	<u>nimisinān</u>	<u>nimisinānak</u>	<u>nimisināna</u>
21p	<u>kimisinaw</u>	<u>kimisinawak</u>	<u>kimisinawa</u>
2p	<u>kimisiwāw</u>	<u>kimisiwāwak</u>	<u>kimisiwāwak</u>
3			<u>omisa</u>
3p			<u>omisiwāwa</u>
3'			<u>omisiyiwa</u>

Text examples:

	NDA singular	plural	obviative
1	nōsisim	---	---
2	---	---	---
1p	---	nitōtēminānak	---
21p	---	kōsisiminawak	kitawāsimisinawa
2p	---	---	---
3			omisa
3p			otēmiwāwa
3'			---

With dependent noun stems in -Cw-, the stem-final -w- and the initial -i- of the suffixes combine to make -o-; for example,

niskīsikwa

'my eyes'

-skīsikw- NDI

'eye'

[niskīsikw+ināna]

niskīsikonāna

'our (excl) eyes'.

Similarly, stems in -Vw- or -Vy- have the same rule as with the locative -ihk, e.g.,

niskotākay NDI

'my coat'

[kiskotākay+inawa]

kiskotākānawa

'our (incl) coats'.

Dependent noun stems which are inanimate have exactly the same inflections as independent nouns: no ending in the singular (except with single-syllable stems such as -īk-: nīki 'my home'), and -a in the plural. Inanimate dependent nouns do not mark the obviative.

	NDI singular	plural	locative
1	<u>nistikwān</u>	<u>nistikwāna</u>	<u>nistikwānihk</u>
2	<u>kistikwān</u>	<u>kistikwāna</u>	<u>kistikwānihk</u>
1p	<u>nistikwāninān</u>	<u>nistikwānināna</u>	<u>nistikwānināhk</u>
21p	<u>kistikwāninaw</u>	<u>kistikwāninawa</u>	<u>kistikwānināhk</u>
2p	<u>kistikwāniwāw</u>	<u>kistikwāniwāwa</u>	<u>kistikwāniwāhk</u>
3	<u>ostikwān</u>	<u>ostikwāna</u>	<u>ostikwānihk</u>
3p	<u>ostikwāniwāw</u>	<u>ostikwāniwāwa</u>	<u>ostikwāniwāhk</u>
3'	<u>ostikwāniyiw</u>	<u>ostikwāniyiwa</u>	<u>ostikwāniyihk</u>

Note that in several of the locative forms,⁹ the final -Vw- sequence of the person suffixes for plural persons combines with the -i- of the locative suffix; for example,

[kistikwāniwāw+ihk]
kistikwāniwāhk.

⁹ The exception is the 1p-form nistikwānināhk which is not built on the 1p-suffix -inān- followed by the locative suffix -ihk; instead, it simply takes over the regular -ināhk sequence of the 21p-form.

Text examples:

	NDI singular	plural	locative
1	nistikwān	---	nīkihk
2	---	---	---
1p	---	---	---
21p	---	---	---
2p	---	---	---
3	---	ocōskwanisa	---
3p	wīkiwāw	oskotākāwāwa	---
3'	---	---	wīkiyihk

Some of the dependent nouns take a prefix mi- when there is no specific possessor, e.g.,

nitās NDA

'my pants'

otāsa

'his/her pants'

mitās

'pants, a pair of pants'

This form may also be plural or obviative, e.g.,

nīsw-āya mitāsak

'two pairs of pants'

ana iskwēw kī-wāpamēw ē-mihkosiyit mitāsa.

'That woman saw a pair of red pants.'

The mi- prefix is also used with inanimate dependent nouns, e.g.,

niskotākay NDI

'my coat'

oskotākay

'his coat'

miskotākay

'a coat'

Finally, dependent stems that begin in a vowel take a shortened version of the personal prefixes, e.g.,

nimis NDA

'my elder sister'

naniway NDI

'my cheek'

nōsisim NDA

'my grandchild'

When the stem begins in o-, the o- is lengthened after the personal prefix, e.g.,

nōhkom NDA
'my grandmother'

ohkoma
'his grandmother'

But you have to know the third person possessor form to be sure, because some -ō-'s are always long, e.g.,

nōsisim NDA
'my grandchild'

ōsisima
'his grandchild'

For dependent stems that begin in a vowel other than -o-, the third person prefix takes the shape -w-, e.g.,

naniway NDI
'my cheek'

waniway
'his cheek'

niki
'my home'

wīki

'his home'

In short, dependent noun stems are somewhat irregular.

Independent nouns

The possession paradigm of independent noun stems, on the other hand, is completely regular.

Even the shape of the personal prefixes can be predicted:

ni- / ___C

nit- / ___V

for example:

nimōhkomān NI

'my knife'

nitāsikan NA

'my sock, my stocking'

omōhkomān

'his knife'

otasikana

'his sock/socks'

When the personal prefixes are used with an independent stem beginning in -o-, the stem initial -o- is lengthened, e.g.,

ospwākan NDA

'pipe'

nitōspwākan

'my pipe'

Paradigm tables:

	NA singular	plural	obviative
1	<u>nitasikan</u>	<u>nitasikanak</u>	<u>nitasikanana</u>
2	<u>kitasikan</u>	<u>kitasikanak</u>	<u>kitasikanana</u>
1p	<u>nitasikaninān</u>	<u>nitasikaninānak</u>	<u>nitasikanināna</u>
21p	<u>kitasikaninaw</u>	<u>kitasikaninawak</u>	<u>kitasikaninawa</u>
2p	<u>kitasikaniwāw</u>	<u>kitasikaniwāwak</u>	<u>kitasikaniwāwa</u>
3			<u>otasikana</u>
3p			<u>otasikaniwāwa</u>
3'			<u>otasikaniyiwa</u>

	NI singular	plural
1	<u>nimōhkomān</u>	<u>nimōhkomāna</u>
2	<u>kimōhkomān</u>	<u>kimōhkomāna</u>
1p	<u>nimōhkomāninān</u>	<u>nimōhkomānināna</u>
21p	<u>kimōhkomāninaw</u>	<u>kimōhkomāninawa</u>
2p	<u>kimōhkomāniwāw</u>	<u>kimōhkomāniwāwa</u>
3	<u>omōhkomān</u>	<u>omōhkomāna</u>
3p	<u>omōhkomāniwāw</u>	<u>omōhkomāniwāwa</u>
3'	<u>omōhkomāniyiw</u>	<u>omōhkomāniyiwa</u>

Possessed animate nouns present only one complication: some nouns (but not all) have a special, EXTENDED stem when they are used with the personal prefixes and suffixes.

The extended stem is formed with a suffix -im-, e.g.,

sīsīp NA

'duck'

-sīsīpim-

nisīsīpim

'my duck'

wiyās NI

'meat'

-wiyāsim-

niwiyāsim

'my meat'

With stems ending in -Cw-, the final -w- of the stem and the initial -i- of the suffix -im- combine to -o-, e.g.,

wāpos NA

'a rabbit'

wāposwak

'rabbits'

niwāposom

'my rabbit'

Similarly, stems in -Vw- or -Vy- have the same rule as with the locative suffix -ihk, e.g.,

okimāw NA

'chief, leader'

[okimāw+im]

nitōkimām

'my boss'

As this example shows, the extended stem in -im- often has a more specialized meaning.

Text examples:

	NA singular	plural	obviative
1	nitōkimām	---	---
2	---	---	---
1p	---	---	---
21p	---	kikēhtē-ayiminawak	---
2p	---	---	---
3			otōskinīkiskwēma
3p			otōkimāmiwāwa
3'			---

	NI singular	plural	locative
1	nimōhkomān	nimaskisina	nitasiwacikanihk
2	---	kicayānisisa	---
1p	---	nip̄kiskwēwininān	---
21p	---	kipimācihowininaw	---
2p	---	---	---
3	onēhiyāwiwin	---	om̄icisowinihk
3p	onēhiyāwiwiniwāw	---	---
3'	---	---	---

VERB INFLECTION

Similar to the possessed nouns, the verb has prefixes for the first and second person:

ni-

ki-

Where the noun has the prefix

o-

for the third person possessor, the verbs which we will discuss here have no such prefix. In this chapter, a ZERO, \emptyset , is sometimes written to emphasize the absence of a third person prefix:

ninipān 'I sleep'

kinipān 'you sleep'

\emptyset nipāw 'he sleeps'

Remember again the possessed nouns,

nimaskisin 'my shoe'

nitasikan 'my sock, my stocking'

where ni- alternates with nit-:

ni- ~ nit-;

the same thing happens with verbs:

ninipān 'I sleep'

nipāw 'he sleeps'

nitastān 'I put (it)'

astāw 'he puts (it)'

The resemblance continues; ni- and nit- turn up under the same conditions as in nouns:

ni- / ___C

and

nit- / ___V

In other words, ni- is used with stems beginning in a consonant, like nipā- VAI 'sleep', and nit- is used with those beginning in a vowel, like astā- VAI 'put (it)'. .

Sometimes the verb does not take ni(t)- and ki(t)- at all, as in the following example:

ninipān 'I sleep'

ē-nipāyān 'I am sleeping'.

There are, in fact, two whole sets of verb-forms: those which take ni(t)-, ki(t)- and \emptyset (zero), and those which use ē instead. There are several other morphemes like ē which are used instead of the

personal prefixes ni(t)-, ki(t)-, and \emptyset (zero); the most common ones are kā and ka, e.g.,

ē-nipāyān 'I am sleeping'

kā-nipāyān 'when I am sleeping'

ka-nipāyān 'for me to sleep'

This last form is awkward to translate unless it occurs in context, e.g.,

namōya nikaskihtān ka-nipāyān.

'I can't sleep.'

This is just one example of the many difficulties which PREVERBS present in translation.

Verb forms with personal prefixes, like ninipān, are called INDEPENDENT; and those with preverbs, like ē-nipāyān, are called CONJUNCT. These are useful labels for talking about different sets of verb forms or MODES. All verbs come in these two categories, and you can always go from one to the other and back again:

ninipān --> ē-nipāyān,

ninipān <-- ē-nipāyān.

Along with the independent mode and the conjunct mode we get a third, the IMPERATIVE MODE:

nipā

'sleep!'

nipāhkan

'sleep later!'

pimihā

'fly!'

pimihāhkan

'fly later!'

Verb forms which belong to the imperative mode are commands. As you can see from the above examples, one of them says 'do it now' and the other, with the suffix -hkan, commands you to 'do it later': "Fly now -- pay later." These two sub-modes of the imperative are called IMMEDIATE (abbreviated IMM) and DELAYED (DEL).

Now that we have touched on the three modes, we will look at all the various forms that can be built on a single verb stem; this is what we call a PARADIGM.

VAI VERBS

We start with stems like nipā- VAI 'sleep' which have -ā- as their last sound or STEM FINAL. (The abbreviation VAI will be explained at the end of this section.)

ā-stems

The following chart gives an independent and a conjunct form each for the stems nipā- 'sleep' and waniskā- 'get up':

'sleep'	<u>nipāw</u>	<u>ē-nipāyān</u>
'get up'	<u>waniskāw</u>	<u>ē-waniskāyān</u>

he ___-s I am ___-ing

Now let's look at the layers around the stem and mark them off; the plus-sign marks the morpheme-boundary that is between the stem and the suffix -- in English as in Cree:

'sleep'	<u>nipā</u> +w	ē- <u>nipā</u> +yān
'get up'	<u>waniskā</u> +w	ē- <u>waniskā</u> +yān

he ___+s I am ___+ing

So far we have only dealt with the first and third person singular; we will now look at the full paradigm (as used by the writer).

The underlined part of the word is the STEM. The layers that are added to the stem are called AFFIXES; those which come before the stem are called PREFIXES, and those which come after the stem are called SUFFIXES.

	INDEPENDENT
1	n <u>inipā</u> n
2	k <u>inipā</u> n
1p	n <u>inipā</u> nān
21p	k <u>inipā</u> nānaw
2p	k <u>inipā</u> nāwāw
3	<u>nipā</u> w
3p	<u>nipā</u> wak
3'	<u>nipā</u> yiwa

The numbers at the left are shorthand for the person categories. In the English translations, he stands for both 'he' and 'she'.

	CATEGORY	STANDARD TRANSLATION
1	first singular	'I'
2	second singular	'you (sg)'
1p	first plural (exclusive)	'we (excl)'
21p	first-and-second plural (inclusive)	'we (incl)'
2p	second plural	'you (pl)'
3	third singular	'he'
3p	third plural	'they'
3'	third obviative	'he/they (obv)'

Note that in the paradigm above there is a natural division between 3 and non-3. The non-3 forms all have prefixes and the 3 forms do not. The same division also appears in the suffixes: the non-3 forms all start with an -n-, and the 3 forms do not.

The conjunct paradigm which follows has no person prefix; instead, it has the preverb ē which is typical of the conjunct. But the suffixes are also clearly different from those of the independent paradigm.

CONJUNCT	
1	ē- <u>nipāyān</u>
2	ē- <u>nipāyan</u>
1p	ē- <u>nipāyāhk</u>
21p	ē- <u>nipāyahk</u>
2p	ē- <u>nipāyēk</u>
3	ē- <u>nipāt</u>
3p	ē- <u>nipācik</u>
3'	ē- <u>nipāyit</u>

Imperative forms are only for second persons -- you never give commands to yourself! But note that the first-and-second plural (inclusive) counts as a second person. Note also that the (immediate) imperative of the second person, nipā 'sleep!', is exactly the same as the stem.

	IMPERATIVE IMM	DEL
2	<u>nipā</u>	<u>nipāhkan</u>
21p	<u>nipātān</u>	<u>nipāhkahk</u>
2p	<u>nipāk</u>	<u>nipāhkēk</u>

We will now survey the real verb forms found in the texts and record them in tables. Since there are only ten brief texts, we will, of course, not find examples for all possible forms of the paradigms. For some of the persons there are many examples but we will only list one.

	INDEPENDENT	CONJUNCT
1	nikaskihtān	ē-isko-kaskihtāyān
2	---	---
1p	---	ē-wāniskāyāhk
21p	kikaskihtānānaw	---
2p	---	---
3	āpacihtāw	ē-kī-ayāt
3p	ayāwak	ē-ayācik
3'	---	ē-ayāyit

There were no examples of the imperative for the ā-stems in the texts.

The reason why the ā-stems were presented first is that there are no special complications in their paradigm. But when you look at a number of ā-stem verbs, they are not all the same.

At first glance, the shape of the stems

waniskā-

and

astā-

seems identical, and you'll never know any different by looking at the paradigm tables. But if you see them in context, there is a major difference: waniskā- never takes an object and astā- does; for example,

ēkwa kīkisēpā, kā-waniskācik, ...

'And in the morning, when they arose, ...' (3-5)

..., iyikohk ē-astāt maskihkiy nanātohk, ...

'..., he puts in so many chemicals of all kinds, ...'

(4-7).

In this last sentence, the verb form ē-astāt 'he puts (it) in' has the noun maskihkiy as object. Although astā- takes an object it behaves exactly like waniskā- 'get up' when it comes to affixes: they fit into the same paradigm. There are other verbs in the texts which are like astā-, and students must be aware of them.

ē/ā-stems

The following chart gives an independent and a conjunct form each of two ē/ā-stems:

'walk'	<u>pimohtēw</u>	<u>ē-pimohtēyān</u>
'arrive'	<u>takohtēw</u>	<u>ē-takohtēyān</u>

he ___-s I am ___-ing

Just as with the ā-stems, we isolate the stem and use a plus-sign to mark off the suffixes:

'walk'	<u>pimohtē</u> +w	<u>ē-pimohtē</u> +yān
'arrive'	<u>takohtē</u> +w	<u>ē-takohtē</u> +yān

he ___+s I am ___+ing

The next step is to look at the full paradigm of the stem pimohtē- (as used by the writer):

INDEPENDENT	
1	n <u>ipimohtān</u>
2	kip <u>imohtān</u>
1p	n <u>ipimohtānān</u>
21p	kip <u>imohtānānaw</u>
2p	kip <u>imohtānāwāw</u>
3	<u>pimohtēw</u>
3p	<u>pimohtēwak</u>
3'	<u>pimohtēyiwa</u>

When we take a good look at the full paradigm we realize that there is a discrepancy in the stem: the first person form has an -ā- before the suffix,

nipimohtān

but the third person form has an -ē- in exactly the same spot,

pimohtēw.

These verbs have two stem alternants, in -ē- and in -ā-.

This situation reminds me of the rabbit who wears a brown coat in the summer and a white coat in the winter. These two variants of the ē/ā-stem are exactly like the two coats of the rabbit: the stem wears the vowel -ā- for the non-3 persons, and the -ē- for third persons.

The two variants of our example stem are

pimohtā-

and

pimohtē-,

and there is again a natural division between 3 and non-3: all non-3 forms have the stem variant

pimohtā-,

and all third-person forms have the stem variant

pimohtē-.

But which of these two variants is the basic stem? What is the "real" colour of the bush-rabbit -- white or brown?

Before we can tackle this question, we have to go back and examine the method for isolating the stem in the first place. The method consists of two steps:

first, you look at the first person form in the independent mode and take off the prefix ni- and the suffix -n;

second, you take off the -w in the third person form of the independent mode.

In the usual case, the two pieces that are left over will be the same:

ninipān

nipāw

nipā- 'to sleep'

niwaniskān

waniskāw

waniskā- 'to get up'

But, as we have seen above, they are not always the same; with forms like

nipimohtān

pimohtēw

the two left-over pieces are

pimohtā-

pimohtē-

Which of the two is basic?

We choose the ē-alternant because, if we know the third person, we can always predict the first. From

pimohtēw

we can predict

nipimohtān

and from

nipāw

we can predict

ninipān.

But the other way around, we could never tell.

After dealing with the \bar{e}/\bar{a} complication, we can now go back and look at the conjunct and imperative paradigms.

The conjunct of the \bar{e}/\bar{a} -stems has the \bar{e} -variant for all persons:

CONJUNCT	
1	ē- <u>pimohtēyān</u>
2	ē- <u>pimohtēyan</u>
1p	ē- <u>pimohtēyāhk</u>
21p	ē- <u>pimohtēyahk</u>
2p	ē- <u>pimohtēyēk</u>
3	ē- <u>pimohtēt</u>
3p	ē- <u>pimohtēcik</u>
3'	ē- <u>pimohtēyit</u>

The imperative also has only the ē-variant:

	IMPERATIVE IMM	DEL
2	<u>pimohtē</u>	<u>pimohtēhkan</u>
21p	<u>pimohtētān</u>	<u>pimohtēhkahk</u>
2p	<u>pimohtēk</u>	<u>pimohtēhkēk</u>

The fact that neither the conjunct nor the imperative have any forms with the ā-variant is an additional reason for taking the ē-variant of the stem as basic.

The following tables show the actual examples which appear in the texts:

	INDEPENDENT	CONJUNCT
1	niminihkwān	ē-wī-itwēyān
2	---	---
1p	nititwānān	ē-atoskēyāhk
21p	ka-nitawāpahkānānaw	---
2p	---	---
3	itwēw	ē-tāpwēt
3p	---	ē-nawaswēcik
3'	---	ē-pimohtēyit

	IMPERATIVE IMM	DEL
2	nācimihtē	---
21p	---	---
2p	itwēk	---

As you can see from the blanks, some forms have no examples at all. Others have many examples but we have shown only one. There are no further complications. The ē/ā issue has already been discussed.

ī-stems

The third group to be discussed is ī-stems:

'flee'

tapasīw

ē-tapasīyān

'climb off'

nihtakosīw

ē-nihtakosīyān

he ___-s

I am ___-ing

Once again, we mark off the affixes:

'flee'

tapasī+w

ē-tapasī+yān

'climb off'

nihtakosī+w

ē-nihtakosī+yān

he ___+s

I am ___+ing

Following are the full paradigms (as used by the writer):

	INDEPENDENT	CONJUNCT
1	<u>nitapasīn</u>	ē- <u>tapasīyān</u>
2	<u>kitapasīn</u>	ē- <u>tapasīyan</u>
1p	<u>nitapasīnān</u>	ē- <u>tapasīyāhk</u>
21p	<u>kitapasīnānaw</u>	ē- <u>tapasīyahk</u>
2p	<u>kitapasīnāwāw</u>	ē- <u>tapasīyēk</u>
3	<u>tapasīw</u>	ē- <u>tapasīt</u>
3p	<u>tapasīwak</u>	ē- <u>tapasīcik</u>
3'	<u>tapasīyiwa</u>	ē- <u>tapasīyit</u>

	IMPERATIVE IMM	DEL
2	<u>tapasī</u>	<u>tapasīhkan</u>
21p	<u>tapasītān</u>	<u>tapasīhkahk</u>
2p	<u>tapasīk</u>	<u>tapasīhkēk</u>

Now we will look at actual examples from the texts; the texts contain no i-stem examples of the imperative forms.

	INDEPENDENT	CONJUNCT
1	ninīhtakosīn	---
2	---	---
1p	---	---
21p	---	---
2p	---	---
3	---	---
3p	---	ē-maskawisīcik
3'	---	---

The i-stems present only one minor complication: in forms like

tapasīyiwa

where the stem-final long -ī- is followed by -y-, it is difficult to distinguish vowel length. In all other stem forms, the -ī- is clearly long, e.g.,

nitapasīn.

We write stems like tapasī- with a long -ī- (even before a -y-!) to keep the spelling of the stem uniform.

ō-stems

Our fourth group is the ō-stems; for example:

'get up'	<u>pasikō</u> +w	<u>ē-pasikō</u> +yān
----------	------------------	----------------------

he ___+s I am ___+ing

The full paradigm (as used by the writer):

	INDEPENDENT	CONJUNCT
1	n <u>pasikō</u> n	<u>ē-pasikō</u> yān
2	ki <u>pasikō</u> n	<u>ē-pasikō</u> yan
1p	n <u>pasikō</u> nān	<u>ē-pasikō</u> yāhk
21p	ki <u>pasikō</u> nānaw	<u>ē-pasikō</u> yahk
2p	ki <u>pasikō</u> nāwāw	<u>ē-pasikō</u> yēk
3	<u>pasikō</u> w	<u>ē-pasikō</u> t
3p	<u>pasikō</u> wak	<u>ē-pasikō</u> cik
3'	<u>pasikō</u> yiwa	<u>ē-pasikō</u> yit

	IMPERATIVE IMM	DEL
2	<u>pasikō</u>	<u>pasikōhkan</u>
21p	<u>pasikōtān</u>	<u>pasikōhkahk</u>
2p	<u>pasikōk</u>	<u>pasikōhkēk</u>

ō- stems are not very common; there is only one example in the texts:

	INDEPENDENT	CONJUNCT
1	---	---
2	---	---
1p	---	---
21p	---	---
2p	---	---
3	---	---
3p	---	<u>ē-pasikōcik</u>
3'	---	---

The ō-stems present one minor complication which is parallel to that of the ī-stems. Just as it is difficult to distinguish -i- and -ī- before -y-, so it is difficult to tell vowel length when -o- or -ō- is followed by -w-. But we write

pasikōw

because the stem clearly ends in a long -ō- in all other forms, e.g.,

nipasikōn,

and in this way the spelling of the stem is kept uniform.

i-stems

The fifth group is the i-stems:

'drive home'	<u>kīwēpayiw</u>	<u>ē-kīwēpayiyān</u>
'sit'	<u>apiw</u>	<u>ē-apiyān</u>

he ___-s

I am ___-ing

With the inflectional suffixes marked off:

'drive home'	<u>kīwēpayi</u> +w	ē- <u>kīwēpayi</u> +yān
'sit'	<u>api</u> +w	ē- <u>api</u> +yān

he ___-s

I am ___-ing

The full paradigm (as used by the writer) of the stem api-, with the nit- variant of the personal prefixes:

	INDEPENDENT	CONJUNCT
1	nit <u>api</u> n	ē- <u>api</u> yān
2	kit <u>api</u> n	ē- <u>api</u> yan
1p	nit <u>api</u> nān	ē- <u>api</u> yāhk
21p	kit <u>api</u> nānaw	ē- <u>api</u> yahk
2p	kit <u>api</u> nāwāw	ē- <u>api</u> yēk
3	<u>api</u> w	ē- <u>api</u> t
3p	<u>api</u> wak	ē- <u>api</u> cik
3'	<u>api</u> yiwa	ē- <u>api</u> yit

	IMPERATIVE IMM	DEL
2	<u>api</u>	<u>apī</u> hkan
21p	<u>apitān</u>	<u>apī</u> hkahk
2p	<u>apik</u>	<u>apī</u> hkēk

Note that the stem-final vowel -i- is lengthened to -ī- before the suffixes of the delayed imperative.

Actual examples in the texts:

	INDEPENDENT	CONJUNCT
1	nikawacipayin	ē-ma-mācosiyān
2	---	---
1p	nikīwēpayinān	ē-wīkiyāhk
21p	---	ē-mīciyahk
2p	---	---
3	mihcētiw	ē-kī-isi-pimātisit
3p	apiwak	ē-kī-mihcēticik
3'	---	ē-tāwatiyit

	IMPERATIVE IMM	DEL
2	---	ay-itāpīhkan
21p	ati-paskēpayitāk	---
2p	---	---

The form

ati-paskēpayitāk

has an ending -tāk even though all the paradigm tables give -tān for the 21p imperative. This is one example where the dialect used in the texts differs slightly from that used by the writer. For the 21p imperative form, either -tān or -tāk is heard.

There is only one complication with the i-stems. When the ending begins with a -w-, speakers usually start rounding their lips ahead of time, and the final -i- of the stems comes out as [o]; for example,

apiw

is often pronounced

[apow].

The -w- of the suffix may even have a lengthening effect on the [o], e.g.,

[apōw].

Although you may hear [apow] or [apōw], we still write apiw because the rest of the paradigm shows the stem-final -i-, and it is important to keep the spelling of the stem uniform.

In writing, it is easy to check the stem-final vowel in the first person, e.g.,

nitapin,

before one writes the third person form

apiw

and other i-stems. And in reading, all you have to remember is that third person independent verb forms like

apiw

apiwak

may come out as

[apow]

[apowak]

in normal speech.

o-stems

Our sixth vowel-final stem is the o-stem; for example:

'tell a story'

ācimowē-ācimoyān

'sing'

nikamowē-nikamoyān

he ___-s

I am ___-ing

With the inflectional suffixes marked off:

'tell a story'

ācimo+wē-ācimo+yān

'sing'

nikamo+wē-nikamo+yān

he ___+s

I am ___+ing

The full paradigms (as used by the writer), with the nit- variant of the personal prefixes:

	INDEPENDENT	CONJUNCT
1	nit <u>ācimon</u>	ē- <u>ācimoyān</u>
2	kit <u>ācimon</u>	ē- <u>ācimoyan</u>
1p	nit <u>ācimonān</u>	ē- <u>ācimoyāhk</u>
21p	kit <u>ācimonānaw</u>	ē- <u>ācimoyahk</u>
2p	kit <u>ācimonāwāw</u>	ē- <u>ācimoyēk</u>
3	<u>ācimow</u>	ē- <u>ācimot</u>
3p	<u>ācimowak</u>	ē- <u>ācimocik</u>
3'	<u>ācimoyiwa</u>	ē- <u>ācimoyit</u>

	IMPERATIVE IMM	DEL
2	<u>ācimo</u>	<u>ācimōhkan</u>
21p	<u>ācimotān</u>	<u>ācimōhkahk</u>
2p	<u>ācimok</u>	<u>ācimōhkēk</u>

Note that the stem-final vowel -o- is lengthened to -ō- before the suffixes of the delayed imperative.

Actual examples that appear in the texts:

	INDEPENDENT	CONJUNCT
1	nimiyosīhon	ē-ācimoyān
2	---	ē-kitimahoyan
1p	nitācimonān	---
21p	kika-pihciponānaw	---
2p	---	---
3	wīkihtow	ē-isi-wāhkohtot
3p	ācimowak	ē-isihocik
3'	---	k-ēsi-māyi-tōtātoyit

Again, we have no imperative example in the texts.

The stem-vowel of the o-stems is short; this is obvious when you look at the first person independent form, e.g.,

nitācimon.

But before a -w-, this -o- may be lengthened, and we hear

[ācimōw]

-- even though we write

ācimow

in order to keep the spelling uniform.

The rounding and lengthening effects of -w- create a practical problem: the third person independent forms of three different stem-types may come out sounding exactly the same. We hear

[apōw]

[ācimōw]

[pasikōw]

for

apiw

ācimow

pasikōw.

Only when we check the first person form

nitapin

nitācimon

nipasikōn

can we be sure what the stem is and how to write it.

n-stems

This is our seventh and final group: n-stems. We will find some complications with this stem-type.

As before, we begin with forms for the third person independent and for the first person conjunct:

'lie down'	<u>pimis</u> in	<u>ē-pimis</u> iniyān
'have slivers'	<u>pīkoc</u> in	<u>ē-pīkoc</u> iniyān

he ___-s I am ___-ing

Now, we mark off the affixes:

'lie down'	<u>pimis</u> in	<u>ē-pimis</u> ini+yān
'have slivers'	<u>pīkoc</u> in	<u>ē-pīkoc</u> ini+yān

he ___+s I am ___+ing

In all our previous examples, the stems that show up in these two forms are always the same, e.g.,

'sleep'	<u>nipā</u> +w	<u>ē-nipā</u> +yān
---------	----------------	--------------------

he ___+s I am ___+ing

The n-stems differ from this pattern in two points. First, the third person singular form pimisin does not end in a -w-. Second, there is only a single stem

nipā-

but there are two variants for the n-stems:

pimisin-

pimisini-.

The pimisini- variant is used in all the first and second person forms, both independent and conjunct. These forms, in fact, look exactly like i-stem forms; they have the same endings, and they are added to a stem that ends in -i-.

The full paradigm (as used by the writer):

	INDEPENDENT	CONJUNCT
1	nipimisinin	ē-pimisiniyān
2	kipimisinin	ē-pimisiniyan
1p	nipimisininān	ē-pimisiniyāhk
21p	kipimisininānaw	ē-pimisiniyahk
2p	kipimisinināwāw	ē-pimisiniyēk
3	pimisin	ē-pimisihk
3p	pimisinwak	ē-pimisihkik
3'	pimisiniyiwa	ē-pimisiniyit

The imperative forms also use the variant pimisini-; note that the -i- is lengthened to -ī- before the suffixes of the delayed imperative:

	IMPERATIVE IMM	DEL
2	<u>pimisini</u>	<u>pimisinīhkan</u>
21p	<u>pimisinitān</u>	<u>pimisinīhkahk</u>
2p	<u>pimisinik</u>	<u>pimisinīhkēk</u>

The only forms that do not use the pimisini- variant are the third person singular and plural forms. Even the obviative has the pimisini- variant.

The distribution of the two variants resembles that of the ē/ā-stems; but it is far less neat.

The main difference between n-stems and vowel-stems lies in the forms for the third person singular and plural, both independent and conjunct.

In the independent, the third person singular form does not end in a -w-,

pimisin,

but there is a -w- in the third person plural form,

pimisinwak.

The -w- after the -n- shows up when it is followed by a vowel (as in -ak) but it disappears at the end of the word. This is exactly the same pattern that we have already seen in Cw-nouns, e.g.,

atim

'dog, horse'

atimwak

'dogs, horses'.

In the conjunct, the n-stems have a different ending:

ē-nipāt

ē-nipācik

ē-pimisihk

ē-pimisihkik

Instead of the third person endings -t and -cik that occur with vowel-stems, the n-stems have -k and -kik. But there is still another complication on top of that: before the -k- of the ending, the stem-final -n- is replaced by -h-:

n --> h / _____ k

ē-pimisin+k --> ē-pimisihk

The same replacement rule also shows up in the conjunct forms of VII n-stems, e.g.,

wāpan

'it is dawn'

ē-wāpahk

'when it is dawn'

These will be discussed in detail in the next section.

The actual examples as they appear in the texts:

	INDEPENDENT	CONJUNCT
1	nipīkocinin	ē-cahkāpiciniyān
2	---	---
1p	---	---
21p	---	---
2p	---	---
3	---	ē-sāsakitisihk
3p	---	ē-sōhkēkocihkik
3'	---	---

There are no imperative examples in the texts.

The n-stems stand by themselves. In the other six groups that we have discussed, we found that the third person singular form minus the suffix -w is the same as the imperative for the second person singular, e.g.,

pimipahtā!

pimohtē!

tapasī!

pasikō!

api!

ācimo!

In all these paradigms, this is the stem. For the n-stems, on the other hand, this pattern does not hold; the third person singular and plural forms have the variant pimisin- and all other forms have the variant pimisini-.

The n-stems stand out among the VAI verbs. Even compared to the ē/ā-stems, they seem quite irregular.

Some Cree speakers, in fact, are regularizing all these complications. For them, there is only one form of the stem,

pimisini-

which is used in all forms of the paradigm. They say

pimisiniw

'he lies down'

pimisiniwak

'they lie down'

ē-pimisinit

'he is lying down'

ē-pimisinicik

'they are lying down'

For them, the n-stems are no problem any more; they have become regular i-stems.

Without a detailed study we cannot tell if these innovative speakers will one day win out. But I have heard these forms from young speakers even in the heart of Plains Cree country.

Stem shapes

We have now worked our way through seven sets of verbs:

ā

ē/ā

ī

ō

ion

Four have long stem-vowels, two have short stem-vowels, and one stem-type ends in n (alternating with ni). The stem shapes of these verbs are different, but the paradigmatic affixes are the same for all the vowel stems (and they are only slightly different for the n-stems).

Intransitive verbs

All of these verbs have something else in common: in each inflected form, the affixes mark only one person category. For example, the third person, 'he', in

pimohtēw

'he walks';

the second person singular in

kipimohtān

'you (sg) walk';

and even the prefix-suffix combination

ki- -nāwāw

for the second person plural,

kipimohtānāwāw

'you (pl) walk'.

In all these verb forms, the affixes mark the person who does the walking, that is, the SUBJECT.

Verbs that express only the subject are traditionally called INTRANSITIVE.

The verbs we have been discussing express only a subject. Since all these verbs are used with animate nouns, they have often been called "Animate Intransitive". In this study we use the more neutral expression VAI.

VII VERBS

Similar to the VAI stems, these verbs have no object; they are intransitive. The difference is that with these verbs, the subject is an inanimate subject. Therefore, this verb type is traditionally referred to as "Inanimate Intransitive" or, in a more neutral expression, VII.

Let's look at two sentences from the texts:

..., ēwako awa kisēyiniw ē-ācimot, ...

'This old man told a story, ...' (10-3)

..., wiya kākikē ē-kāsisik nimōhkomān, ...

'..., for my knife was always sharp, ...' (10-5).

In the first sentence, the subject is an animate noun, kisēyiniw 'old man, elder', and the verb ē-ācimot consists of the VAI stem ācimo- and the third person conjunct suffix -t. In the second sentence, the subject is an inanimate noun, nimōhkomān 'my knife', and ē-kāsisik is a VII verb.

In the VII verb paradigm there are no first and second persons, and there is no imperative. Just as the animate third person category is abbreviated as 3, we use 0 to represent the various inanimate third person categories:

	CATEGORY	STANDARD TRANSLATION
0	third singular	'it'
0p	third plural	'they'
0'	third obviative singular	'it (obv)'
0'p	third obviative plural	'they (obv)'

As an example of a VII verb that can have a noun as a subject, let us look at the stem wāpiskā- 'be white':

	INDEPENDENT	CONJUNCT
0	<u>wāpiskāw</u>	<u>ē-wāpiskāk</u>
0p	<u>wāpiskāwa</u>	<u>ē-wāpiskāki</u>
0'	<u>wāpiskāyiw</u>	<u>ē-wāpiskāyik</u>
0'p	<u>wāpiskāyiwa</u>	<u>ē-wāpiskāyiki</u>

In the section on nouns we already mentioned the fact that in Plains Cree inanimate nouns do not have an obviative ending,¹⁰ e.g.,

nitastotin

'my cap'

otastotin

'his cap'.

But when you use such nouns with a VII verb, the obviative appears in the verb form, e.g.,

ē-wāpiskāk nitastotin.

'My cap is white(0).'

ē-wāpiskāyik otastotin.

'His cap is white(0).'

Many of the VII verbs do not occur with a noun as subject, e.g.,

kīsikāw

'it is day'

kimiwan

'it is raining'

¹⁰ While an animate noun with a third person possessor would have the obviative ending -a, e.g.,

otasikana
'his sock/socks'.

wāpan

'it is dawn'.

Verbs that cannot take a noun are called IMPERSONAL verbs.

Although these verb forms can stand alone as sentences, they may sound awkward in isolation. If we add particles such as

kīsikāw āsay.

'It is day already.'

tipiskāw ēkwa.

'It is night now.',

they become regular, everyday sentences.

Impersonal verbs normally do not have plural forms; with the stem kīsikā- 'be day', for example:

	INDEPENDENT	CONJUNCT
0	<u>kīsikāw</u>	<u>ē-kīsikāk</u>
0p		
0'	<u>kīsikāyiw</u>	<u>ē-kīsikāyik</u>
0'p		

The obviative form of impersonal verbs is used when it occurs together with another third person verb form, e.g.,

āsay ē-kīsikāyik, kā-takohtēt.

'It was already morning when he arrived.'

Just like VAI stems, VII stems end in a vowel or n. There are no examples of ī-, ō- or o- stems in the texts; we will discuss the stem shapes in the following order:

a-

e-

i-

n

The inflection of the vowel stems is quite regular; we will simply present the full paradigms (as used by the writer), with the text examples following each paradigm.

ā-stemsStem ayā- 'be there':

	INDEPENDENT	CONJUNCT
0	<u>ayāw</u>	ē- <u>ayāk</u>
0p	<u>ayāwa</u>	ē- <u>ayāki</u>
0'	<u>ayāyiw</u>	ē- <u>ayāyik</u>
0'p	<u>ayāyiwa</u>	ē- <u>ayāyiki</u>

Text examples:

	INDEPENDENT	CONJUNCT
0	kīsikāw	ē-ayāk
0p	---	---
0'	---	---
0'p	---	---

ē-stems

Stem wāpāstē- 'be faded (colour)':

	INDEPENDENT	CONJUNCT
0	<u>wāpāstēw</u>	ē- <u>wāpāstēk</u>
0p	<u>wāpāstēwa</u>	ē- <u>wāpāstēki</u>
0'	<u>wāpāstēyiw</u>	ē- <u>wāpāstēyik</u>
0'p	<u>wāpāstēyiwa</u>	ē- <u>wāpāstēyiki</u>

Text examples:

	INDEPENDENT	CONJUNCT
0	isiyīhkātēw	ē-wāsaskotēk
0p	---	ē-wāsaskotēki
0'	---	ē-asiwatēyik
0'p	---	ē-cimatēyiki

i-stems

Stem kīskipayi- 'break':

	INDEPENDENT	CONJUNCT
0	<u>kīskipayiw</u>	ē- <u>kīskipayik</u>
0p	<u>kīskipayiwa</u>	ē- <u>kīskipayiki</u>
0'	<u>kīskipayiyiw</u>	ē- <u>kīskipayiyik</u>
0'p	<u>kīskipayiyiwa</u>	ē- <u>kīskipayiyiki</u>

Text examples:

	INDEPENDENT	CONJUNCT
0	---	kē-nīkānīwik
0p	---	---
0'	---	---
0'p	---	---

As the tables show, all the VII vowel-stem forms simply consist of the stem and the ending; there are no morpheme-boundary complications.

n-stems

We begin with stems in -an:

'be dawn'	<u>wāpan</u>	<u>ē-wāpahk</u>
'be clean'	<u>kanātan</u>	<u>ē-kanātahk</u>

it is ___ it is being ___

With the affixes marked off:

'be dawn'	<u>wāpan</u>	<u>ē-wāpah+k</u>
'be clean'	<u>kanātan</u>	<u>ē-kanātah+k</u>

it is ___ it is being ___

These forms follow a pattern which we have already seen with VAI n-stems. The independent form has no -w- suffix, and in the conjunct form, the stem-final -n- is replaced by -h- before the -k- of the ending:

n --> h / ___ k

ē-wāpan+k --> ē-wāpah+k

There are no plural forms for the impersonal verb wāpan, so we use another stem in -an to illustrate the full paradigm (as used by the writer):

	INDEPENDENT	CONJUNCT
0	<u>kanātan</u>	<u>ē-kanātahk</u>
0p	<u>kanātanwa</u>	<u>ē-kanātahki</u>
0'	<u>kanātaniyiw</u>	<u>ē-kanātaniyik</u>
0'p	<u>kanātaniyiwa</u>	<u>ē-kanātaniyiki</u>

Text examples:

	INDEPENDENT	CONJUNCT
0	ispīhtēyihtākwan	ē-āsiciwahk
0p	---	---
0'	nipōmakaniyiw	ē-itēyihtākwaniyik
0'p	---	---

In the independent the plural form shows the -w- which is missing in the singular:

kanātan

'it is clean'

kanātanwa

'they are clean'.

Note that this pattern is the same as that of Cw-noun stems, e.g.,

pahkēkin

'tanned hide'

pahkēkinwa

'tanned hides'

The obviative forms seem to have a stem variant kanātani-.

-in-stems

The conjunct forms of VII stems in -an follow the same rules as those of VAI n-stems:

ē-wāpah+k

ē-pimisih+k.

But VII stems in -in and -on have an additional complication.

Some -in stems work exactly like the -an stems, e.g.,

nīpin

ē-nīpihk

'be summer'

ohpikin

ē-ohpikihk

'grow'

ihkin

ē-ihkihk

'happen'.

But most -in stems drop the stem-final -n- (before it can get replaced by -h-); the suffix -k- is added to a truncated variant of the stem:

kāsisin

ē-kāsisik

'be sharp'

cimāsin

ē-cimāsik

'be short'

otākosin

ē-otākosik

'be evening'

pīkohtin

ē-pīkohtik

'break (in falling)'.

Stems with the simple -k in the conjunct seem to be in the majority, so students have to memorize those VII -in stems that have the conjunct in -hk.

The full paradigm (as used by the writer):

	INDEPENDENT	CONJUNCT
0	<u>kāsisin</u>	<u>ē-kāsisik</u>
0p	<u>kāsisinwa</u>	<u>ē-kāsisiki</u>
0'	<u>kāsisiniyw</u>	<u>ē-kāsisiniyik</u>
0'p	<u>kāsisiniyiwa</u>	<u>ē-kāsisiniyiki</u>

Text examples:

	INDEPENDENT	CONJUNCT
0	pīkopayin	ē-kī-miywāsik
0p	miywāsinwa	ē-pimipayiki
0'	kī-miywāsiniyw	ē-kī-miywāsiniyik
0'p	---	ē-miywāsiniyiki

-on-stems

Just as in the case of -in-stems, there are two sets of stems in -on. For some -on stems, the replacement rule

$$\underline{n} \quad \text{-->} \quad \underline{h} \quad / \quad \underline{\quad} \quad \underline{k}$$

applies, e.g.,

pipon

ē-pipohk

'be winter'

ihtakon

ē-ih~~t~~akohk

'exist'.

But most -on stems drop the stem-final -n- before the -k- of the conjunct:

mispon

ē-mis~~p~~ok

'snow'

pimamon

ē-pimamok

'run along'.

The full paradigm (as used by the writer):

	INDEPENDENT	CONJUNCT
0	pimamon	ē-pimamok
0p	pimamonwa	ē-pimamoki
0'	pimamonyiw	ē-pimamonyik
0'p	pimamonyiwa	ē-pimamonyiki

Text examples:

	INDEPENDENT	CONJUNCT
0	ka-pimamon	ē-iskwāpēkamok
0p	---	---
0'	---	---
0'p	---	---

Paired stems

VAI and VII stems often come in pairs, e.g.,

wāpiskisi- VAIwāpiskā- VII

'be white'

pēhtākosi- VAIpēhtākwan- VII

'be heard'

māyātisi- VAImāyātan- VII

'be ugly'

ihtako- VAIihtakon- VII

'exist'.

In many cases, the VAI and VII stems look exactly the same,
e.g.,

ayā- VAI

ayā- VII

'be there'.

One can even come up with completely ambiguous sentences such as

ēkota ayāw.

'he is there (e.g., my boss)'

'it is there (e.g., a wolf-den)'

because the independent third person suffix is -w for both the VAI and the VII paradigms; only the context will tell who or what is the subject.

But with most inflectional forms, there is no ambiguity. The following two examples are from the texts:

..., nitōkimām itē ē-ayāt ēkota, ...

'..., there where my boss was, ...' (8-14)

..., konita ēkota mahīhkani-wāti ē-ayāk, ...

'..., there happened to be a wolf-den there, ...'

(8-9).

Both verbs are third person conjunct forms but

ē-ayāt

has the VAI suffix -t, and

ē-ayāk

has the VII suffix -k.

VTI VERBS

Just as there are two sets of intransitive verbs in Cree (VAI and VII), there are also two sets of transitive verbs. TRANSITIVE verbs take an object, e.g.,

niwāpahtēn āsay.

'I see it already'

niwāpahtēn kimasinahikan.

'I see your book.'

They may take both a subject and an object noun phrase, e.g.,

nimis kī-wāpahtam kimasinahikan.

'My older sister saw your book.'

All these sentences are quite different from such intransitive examples as

nitakosinin āsay.

'I just arrived.'

kosikwan kimasinahikan.

'Your book is heavy.',

which have no object.

Transitive verbs

There are two types of transitive verbs. With an inanimate object, the verb stem is

wāpaht- VTI

'see it';

with an animate object, the stem is

wāpam- VTA

'see him'.

The endings are also different:

niwāpahtēn

'I see it/them'

niwāpamāw

'I see him'

niwāpamāwak

'I see them'.

Transitive verbs with an animate object are called VTA, and transitive verbs with an inanimate object are called VTI.

The VTI paradigm is much simpler than the VTA paradigm. For example, the VTI paradigm has only one set of forms whether the object is singular or plural, e.g.,

niwāpahtēn kimasinahikan.

'I see your book.'

niwāpahtēn kimasinahikana.

'I see your books.'

The VTA paradigm has two distinct forms for singular and plural objects:

niwāpamāw kimis.

'I see your older sister.'

niwāpamāwak kimsak.

I see your older sisters.'

Another reason why the VTA paradigm is more complex is that people can get back at you, e.g.,

kitahkwamitin

'I bite you'

kitahkwamin

'you bite me'.

VTA verbs always involve two parties.

The VTI paradigm

All VTI stems follow the same inflectional pattern, and there are no complications at the boundary between the stem and the suffix.

Let us begin with two forms each of two stems:

'find it'	<u>nimiskēn</u>	<u>ē-miskahk</u>
'break it'	<u>nipīkonēn</u>	<u>ē-pīkonahk</u>

I ___ it he is ___-ing it

The forms on the left side have the prefix ni- and the suffix -ēn in common, and those on the right share the conjunct preverb ē and the suffix -ahk. If we look at the line instead, we see that the forms on the top line have the stem misk- in common, and those on the bottom line the stem pīkon-. We can now mark the morpheme boundaries:

'find it'	ni+ <u>misk</u> +ēn	ē- <u>misk</u> +ahk
'break it'	ni+ <u>pīkon</u> +ēn	ē- <u>pīkon</u> +ahk

I ___ it he is ___+ing it

The following is the full paradigm (as used by the writer):

	INDEPENDENT	CONJUNCT
1	nimiskēn	ē-miskamān
2	kimiskēn	ē-miskaman
1p	nimiskēnān	ē-miskamāhk
21p	kimiskēnānaw	ē-miskamahk
2p	kimiskēnāwāw	ē-miskamēk
3	miskam	ē-miskahk
3p	miskamwak	ē-miskahkik
3'	miskamiyiwa	ē-miskamiyit

Although the stem itself never changes, we can see that the suffixes fall into two sets: those of the first and second person of the independent order start in -ēn-, and all other forms have suffixes starting with -am-.

If we ignore the -ēn- and -am- parts of the VTI endings, they are really quite similar to the endings of the VAI paradigm. They even have similar problems: first, the fact that a -w- appears in the plural ending

-amwak

but not in the corresponding singular ending

-am;

and second, the replacement of the nasal -m- by -h- before the -k- of the third person conjunct singular and plural.

The imperative endings of the VTI paradigm are less regular than those of the VAI paradigm:

	IMPERATIVE IMM	DEL
2	<u>miska</u>	<u>miskamōhkan</u>
21p	<u>miskētān</u>	<u>miskamōhkahk</u>
2p	<u>miskamok</u>	<u>miskamōhkēk</u>

There is nothing wrong with the imperative forms of misk- as far as their make-up is concerned. But they are awkward semantically -- you never know in advance if you are going to find something. The normal word that we would use in Cree is niton- 'look for it':

	IMPERATIVE IMM	DEL
2	<u>nitona</u>	<u>nitonamōhkan</u>
21p	<u>nitonētān</u>	<u>nitonamōhkahk</u>
2p	<u>nitonamok</u>	<u>nitonamōhkēk</u>

Now for the real examples as used in the texts:

	INDEPENDENT	CONJUNCT
1	nikī-kostēn	ē-isi-pēhtamān
2	kiwāpahtēn	---
1p	nipēhtēnān	ē-nitawēyih tamāhk
21p	kikiskēyih tēnānaw	ē-kī-tipēyih tamahk
2p	---	ka-wāpahtamēk
3	kiskēyih tam	ē-kī-kwāpahahk
3p	nitawēyih tamwak	ē-kī-pē-wīhtahkik
3'	---	kā-pistinamiyit

	IMPERATIVE IMM	DEL
2	otina	postiskamōhkan
21p	---	---
2p	---	---

Stem shapes

All VTI stems take exactly the same endings as misk-. The stems of VTI verbs end in a consonant or consonant cluster:

<u>h</u> :	<u>kwāpah-</u>	'dip it out'
<u>n</u> :	<u>pīkon-</u>	'break it'
<u>s</u> :	<u>kīskis-</u>	'cut it'
<u>t</u> :	<u>tahkopit-</u>	'tie it'
<u>ht</u> :	<u>kiskēyiht-</u>	'know it'
<u>st</u> :	<u>kost-</u>	'be scared of it'
<u>hk</u> :	<u>pōnihk-</u>	'leave it alone'
<u>sk</u> :	<u>postisk-</u>	'put it on'

Paired stems

We saw in our discussion of VAI and VII stems that intransitive verbs often come in pairs, e.g.,

wāpiskisi- VAI

wāpiskā- VII

'be white'.

With intransitive verbs, it is the gender of the subject which selects the verb stem, e.g.,

ē-wāpiskisit ana sēhkēpayīs.

'That car is white.'

ē-wāpiskāk anima sīpēkiskāwasākay.

'That sweater is white.'

Transitive stems are paired according to the gender of the object, e.g.,

nitakahkēyimāw nisēhkēpayīm.

'I like my car.'

nitakahkēyihtēn nisīpēkiskāwasākās.

'I like my sweater.'

Some VTA stems have exactly the same shape as their VTI counterparts, e.g.,

wēpin- VTA

'throw him away'

wēpin- VTI

'throw it away'

otin- VTA

'take him'

otin- VTI

'take it'.

Only the affixes and the noun phrases show which is VTA and which is VTI:

otin ana nāpēsis.

'Take that little boy!'

otina anima mēcawākanis.

'Take that toy!'

niwī-wēpināw nisēhkēpayīm.

'I am going to dump my car.'

niwī-wēpinēn nisīpēkiskāwasākās.

'I am going to throw my sweater out.'

Some of the stems differ slightly:

wāpam- VTA

'see him'

wāpaht- VTI

'see it'

nipēhtawāw awāsis.

'I hear a child.'

nipēhtēn ē-matwēwēk.

'I hear a shot.'

There are many VTA stems in this group which do not have a matching VTI stem but instead are paired with a VAI stem in -htā-, e.g.,

āpaciḥ- VTA

'use him'

āpacihtā- VAI (transitive)

'use (it)'

These are VAI stems that take an object, e.g.,

āpaciḥ ana masinahikanāhcikos.

'Use that pencil!'

āpacihtā anima pakamākanis.

'Use that hammer!'

nimōsihāw ōcēs.

'I feel a fly [on me].'

nimōsihtān ē-kimiwahk.

'I feel the rain.'

The VTA stem may also be matched by a transitive VAI stem which is not built on -htā-, e.g.,

ayāw- VTA

'have him'

ayā- VAI (transitive)

'have (it)'

nitayāwāw masinahikanāhcikos.

'I have a pencil.'

nitayān masinahikan.

'I have a book.'

In some cases, the two transitive stems meaning the same thing are entirely different; the best example is one where a VTA stem does not have a matching VTI stem at all but where a VAI stem with an object is used instead:

mow- VTA

'eat him'

mīci- VAI (transitive)

'eat (it)'

niwī-mowāw kinosēw.

'I am going to eat fish'

niwī-mīcin wiyās.

'I am going to eat meat.'

These two stems are not at all similar in form; but they are clearly parallel in meaning.

VTA VERBS

Verbs with an animate object have two noun phrases with which they must agree: subject and object; therefore, they have the greatest number of different inflectional forms.

For the same reason, these verbs need to show which of the two noun phrases is the subject and which is the object. This is a grammatical category which shows up only in the VTA paradigm; it is usually called DIRECTION.

Direction

The two examples which follow differ only in direction; the parties to the action are the same in both:

nipamihānān

'we look after him'

nipamihikonān

'he looks after us'.

These two words differ only in the direction marker; the first is DIRECT and shows the direct marker -ā-; the second is INVERSE and shows the inverse marker -iko-.

The table which follows summarizes the direction markers for the MIXED-THIRD set of forms; these are all the forms where the third person is either the subject or the object (or both).

VTA MIXED-THIRD SET		INVERSE		
DIRECT	CONJ	INDEP	CONJ	
INDEP				
	-3/-3p	-3/-3p	3-/3p-	
1-	-ā-	*	-ik(w)-	*
				-1
2-	-ā-	*	-ik(w)-	*
				-2
1p-	-ā-	-ā-	-iko-	-iko-
				-1p
21p-	-ā-	-ā-	-iko-	-iko-
				-21p
2p-	-ā-	-ā-	-iko-	-iko-
				-2p
	-3'	-3'	3'-	3'-
3-	-ē-	-ā-	-ik(w)-	-iko-
				-3
3p-	-ē-	-ā-	-ik(w)-	-iko-
				-3p
3'-	-ē-	-ā-	-iko-	-iko-
				-3'

This table has two problem areas. First, there are several forms where the morpheme -ikw- occurs at the end of a word and therefore loses its -w-, e.g.,

nipamihik

'he looks after me'.

The -w- shows up when it is followed by a vowel, e.g.,

nipamihikwak

'they look after me'.

This is the rule which also applies to noun stems in -Cw-, e.g.,

mistik

'a tree'

mistikwak

'trees'.

Second, there are forms where the direction marker cannot be clearly isolated from the rest of the ending; these forms are indicated with an asterisk (*).

The next table displays the direction markers for those forms where both subject and object are first or second persons; this set of VTA forms is called the YOU-AND-ME set.

VTA YOU-AND-ME SET					
	DIRECT INDEP	CONJ	INVERSE INDEP	CONJ	
	-1/-1p	-1/1p	1/1p-	1/1p-	
2-	-i-	-i-	-iti-	-it-	-2
2/2p-	-i-	-i-	-iti-	-it-	-2/2p
2p-	-i-	-i-	-iti-	-it-	-2p

The main problem with these direction markers will come up when we discuss stems ending in a semivowel (w or y) or in -t-.

Simple stems

VTA stems which end in -m-, -n-, or -h- fit into the same paradigm; they have no major complications.¹¹ The paradigm table is based on the stem pamih- 'look after him' (as used by the writer):

VTA INDEPENDENT (MIXED-THIRD SET)					
DIRECT		INVERSE			
	-3	-3p		3-	3p-
1-	nipamihāw	-ak		nipamihik	-(w)ak -1
2-	kipamihāw	-ak		kipamihik	-(w)ak -2
1p-	nipamihānān	-ak		nipamihikonān	-ak -1p
21p-	kipamihānaw	-ak		kipamihikonaw	-ak -21p
2p-	kipamihāwāw	-ak		kipamihikowāw	-ak -2p
	-3'			3'-	
3-	pamihēw			pamihik	-3
3p-	pamihēwak			pamihikwak	-3p
3'-	pamihēyiwa			pamihikoyiwa	-3'

¹¹ In order to keep this section as simple as possible, we leave out those forms where one party is a first or second person and the other is an obviative, e.g.,

nikosis ē-pamihimāyāhk otēma.
'We are looking after my son's horse/horses.'

In this table, the -ak is added in a second column for those forms which combine a non-third person with a third person plural. Note that the final -w- of the direction marker -ikw- appears before this -ak but disappears at the end of the word.

In the paradigm tables for the you-and-me set, only one form is used for the second person singular (2) and plural (2p) when it is combined with the first person plural (1p):¹²

VTA INDEPENDENT (YOU-AND-ME SET)			
DIRECT		INVERSE	
-1	-1p	1-	1p-
2-	kipamihin	kipamihitin	-2
2/2p-	kipamihinān	kipamihitinān	-2/2p
2p-	kipamihināwāw	kipamihitināwāw	-2p

In the conjunct paradigm of the mixed-third set, the direction markers are -ā- for the direct forms and -iko- for the inverse forms -- except in the forms for the first and second person singular where the direction marker cannot be clearly isolated from the ending.

¹² Since these paradigm tables include both direct and inverse, there was not enough space to print the forms side by side: for this reason the 2/2p-1p and the 1p-2/2p forms were printed only once and on a separate line.

VTA CONJUNCT (MIXED-THIRD SET)					
DIRECT			INVERSE		
	-3	-3p	3-	3p-	
1-	<u>ē-pamihak</u>	-ik	<u>ē-pamihit</u>	-(c)ik	-1
2-	<u>ē-pamihat</u>	-(c)ik	<u>ē-pamihisk</u>	-ik	-2
1p-	<u>ē-pamihāyāhk</u>	-ik	<u>ē-pamihikoyāhk</u>	-ik	-1p
21p-	<u>ē-pamihāyahk</u>	-ok	<u>ē-pamihikoyahk</u>	-ok	-21p
2p-	<u>ē-pamihāyēk</u>	-ok	<u>ē-pamihikoyēk</u>	-ok	-2p
	-3'		3'-		
3-	<u>ē-pamihāt</u>		<u>ē-pamihikot</u>		-3
3p-	<u>ē-pamihācīk</u>		<u>ē-pamihikocīk</u>		-3p
3'-	<u>ē-pamihāyit</u>		<u>ē-pamihikoyit</u>		-3'

The forms for the third person plural which are abbreviated in the second column force us to deal with another morpheme-boundary rule. When the morpheme-final -t- in

ē-pamihat

'you are looking after him'

and

ē-pamihit

'he is looking after me'

is followed by the -i- of the plural suffix -ik, the -t- is replaced by -c-, e.g.,

ē-pamihacik

'you are looking after them'

ē-pamihicik

'they are looking after me'.

This replacement is called c-PALATALIZATION, and we have already seen many examples of it, e.g.,

ē-nipāt

'he is sleeping'

ē-nipācik

'they are sleeping'.

In the conjunct forms which combine a non-third person with a third person plural, the plural is marked by either -ik or -ok; the -ok ending indicates that the preceding suffix ends in -w-, e.g.,

[ē-pamihāyēkw+ik]

ē-pamihāyēkok.

The -w- and the -i- merge into -o-. (This is the rule already discussed for the locative of Cw-noun stems.) In the 1p and 21p forms, there seems to be a fair amount of fluctuation between -ik and -ok.

In the you-and-me set of the conjunct also, only one form is used for the second person singular (2) and plural (2p) when it is combined with the first person plural (1p):

VTA CONJUNCT (YOU-AND-ME SET)			
DIRECT		INVERSE	
-1	-1p	1-	1p-
2-	<u>ē-pamihīyan</u>	<u>ē-pamihitān</u>	-2
2/2p-	<u>ē-pamihīyāhk</u>	<u>ē-pamihitāhk</u>	-2/2p
2p-	<u>ē-pamihīyēk</u>	<u>ē-pamihitakok</u>	-2p

All the imperative forms have a second person subject; there are no inverse imperatives:¹³

¹³ Instead, there is a weaker kind of command which uses the independent order with the future preverb ka and appropriate particles, e.g.,

kiyām ka-pamihik.
'Let him look after you.'

mahti ka-kīsikāw.
'Let there be light.'

VTA IMPERATIVE (MIXED-THIRD SET)		
IMM		
	-3	-3p
2-	<u>pamih</u>	<u>pamihik</u>
21p-	<u>pamihātān</u>	<u>pamihātānik</u>
2p-	<u>pamihihk</u>	<u>pamihihkok</u>
DEL		
2-	<u>pamihāhkan</u>	<u>pamihāhkanik</u>
21p-	<u>pamihāhkahk</u>	<u>pamihāhkahkok</u>
2p-	<u>pamihāhkēk</u>	<u>pamihāhkēkok</u>

In the you-and-me set, there are no imperative forms for an inclusive plural (21p) because you do not command yourself:

VTA IMPERATIVE (YOU-AND-ME SET)		
IMM		
	-1	-1p
2-	<u>pamihin</u>	<u>pamihinān</u>
2p-	<u>pamihik</u>	<u>pamihinān</u>
DEL		
2-	<u>pamihihkan</u>	<u>pamihihkāk</u>
2p-	<u>pamihihkēk</u>	<u>pamihihkāk</u>

The last table gives the forms pamihinān and pamihīhkāhk (2/2p-1p) twice. This means that there is no difference between the second person singular (2) and plural (2p) when they interact with the first person plural (1p).¹⁴

When you look at the two imperative tables, you will also notice that the form pamihik shows up twice, but in different places of the paradigm. This form is ambiguous; it has two meanings as an imperative:

pamihik

'you (sg) look after them!'

'you (pl) look after me!'

In addition, the same form appears in the independent paradigm; it is the inverse form for an obviative acting on a third person (3'-3):

pamihik

'he is looked after by him (obv)'.

Only when this form is used in context can you tell what is meant.

¹⁴ This is the same situation as that which exists in the you-and-me set of the independent and conjunct paradigms. But in the imperative tables there is enough space to print them side by side.

Text examples:¹⁵

Independent

1-3	nikitimahāw
1-3p	niwīci-minihkwēmāwak
1p-3	nipāhpihānān
2p-3	ka-pāhpihāwāw
3-3'	pakitinēw
3-1	nikwatakimik
3-2	kika-nipahik
3p-21p	kimēscihikonawak
3'-3p	pisiskēyimikwak

Conjunct

1-3	ē-kāhcitinak
1-3p	ē-pāhpihakik
1p-3	ē-wī-kāhkwēyimāyāhk
1p-3p	ē-kīwēhtahāyāhkik
3-3'	ē-kī-sīhkimāt
3p-3'	ē-kī-manācihācik
3'-	ē-pē-tahkwamāyit
3-1	ē-kisiwāhit

¹⁵ There are several reasons why the text examples for the VTA paradigm are not printed in tables. With the direct-inverse dimension added to the tables, you just cannot fit four long words on each line; besides, there would be many tables with only one or two examples in each.

Finally, it would be good practice for anyone using this book to draw their own charts for these examples.

3p-1	ē-kitāpamicik
3p-1p	ē-kī-isi-otunikoyāhkkik
3-21	ē-mōhikoyahk
3'-3	ē-misiwanācihikot
3'-3p	ē-nēpēwihikocik
2p-1	ka-wāpamināwāw
1-2	kika-masinahikēhitin

Imperative

2p-3 wāpamihk

Cw-stems

VTA stems that end in a cluster of a consonant (C) plus -w- are quite common. Most of them end in -hw-, e.g.,

pakamahw-

'hit him';

there are also many that end in -sw-, e.g.,

pāskisw-

'shoot him',

but there are no examples of -sw- stems in the texts.

In the discussion of noun stems in -Cw- we saw that the stem-final -w- combines with the suffix-initial -i- to make -o-; for example, with the locative suffix -ihk:

[mistikw+ihk]

mistikohk

'on a tree'.

The same morpheme-boundary rule applies when a VTA stem in -Cw- is followed by a suffix that begins in -i-, e.g.,

[nipakamahw+ik]

nipakamahok

'he hits me'

[ē-pāskisw+iṭ]

ē-pāskisot

'he is shooting me'

[ē-pāskisw+iskik]

ē-pāskisoskik

'they are shooting you'.

The full paradigm (as used by the writer):

VTA INDEPENDENT (MIXED-THIRD SET)					
DIRECT			INVERSE		
	-3	-3p	3-	3p-	
1-	nipakamahwāw	-ak	nipakamahok	-(w)ak	-1
2-	kipakamahwāw	-ak	kipakamahok	-(w)ak	-2
1p-	nipakamahwānān	-ak	nipakamahokonān	-ak	-1p
21p-	kipakamahwānaw	-ak	kipakamahokonaw	-ak	-21p
2p-	kipakamahwāwāw	-ak	kipakamahokowāw	-ak	-2p
	-3'		3'-		
3-	pakamahwēw		pakamahok		-3
3p-	pakamahwēwak		pakamahokwak		-3p
3'-	pakamahwēyiwa		pakamahokoyiwa		-3'

VTA INDEPENDENT (YOU-AND-ME SET)					
DIRECT			INVERSE		
	-1	-1p	1-	1p-	
2-	kipakamahon		kipakamahotin		-2
2/2p-	kipakamahonān		kipakamahotinān		-2/2p
2p-	kipakamahonāwāw		kipakamahotināwāw		-2p

VTA CONJUNCT (MIXED-THIRD SET)					
DIRECT			INVERSE		
	-3	-3p	3-	3p-	
1-	ē-pakamahwak	-ik	ē-pakamahot	-(c)ik	-1
2-	ē-pakamahwat	-(c)ik	ē-pakamahosk	-ik	-2
1p-	ē-pakamahwāyāhk	-ik	ē-pakamahokoyāhk	-ik	-1p
21p-	ē-pakamahwāyahk	-ok	ē-pakamahokoyahk	-ok	-21p
2p-	ē-pakamahwāyēk	-ok	ē-pakamahokoyēk	-ok	-2p
	-3'		3'-		
3-	ē-pakamahwāt		ē-pakamahokot		-3
3p-	ē-pakamahwācīk		ē-pakamahokocīk		-3p
3'-	ē-pakamahwāyit		ē-pakamahokoyit		-3'

VTA CONJUNCT (YOU-AND-ME SET)					
DIRECT			INVERSE		
	-1	-1p	1-	1p-	
2-	ē-pakamahoyan		ē-pakamahotān		-2
2/2p-	ē-pakamahoyāhk		ē-pakamahotāhk		-2/2p
2p-	ē-pakamahoyēk		ē-pakamahotakok		-2p

VTA IMPERATIVE (MIXED-THIRD SET)		
IMM		
	-3	-3p
2-	pakamah	pakamahok
21p-	pakamahwātān	pakamahwātānik
2p-	pakamahohk	pakamahohkok
DEL		
2-	pakamahwāhkan	pakamahwāhkanik
21p-	pakamahwāhkahk	pakamahwāhkahkok
2p-	pakamahwāhkēk	pakamahwāhkēkok

VTA IMPERATIVE (YOU-AND-ME SET)		
IMM		
	-1	-1p
2-	pakamahon	pakamahonān
2p-	pakamahok	pakamahonān
DEL		
2-	pakamahōhkan	pakamahōhkāhk
2p-	pakamahōhkēk	pakamahōhkāhk

Text examples:

Independent

1-3	niwīsakahcahwāw
1-3p	nikiwētisahwāwak
1p-3	nitayēskotisahwānān
3-1	nisipwētisahok

Conjunct

1-3	ē-pakamahwak
1-3p	ē-takotisahwakik
3-1	ē-wīsakahcahot
3-2	ka-wayawī-pakamahosk

Vw-stems

Many VTA stems end in a sequence of a vowel (v) plus -w-;
almost all of these end in -aw-, e.g.,

miskaw-

'find him'.¹⁶

¹⁶ Just like the VTI imperative miska 'find it!', the paradigm of miskaw- also contains a few forms that are semantically awkward; but miskaw- is one of the shortest VTA stems in -aw- and therefore easy to use in a paradigm table.

When nouns in -Vw- have a suffix that starts with an -i-, the final semivowel of the stem and the -i- of the suffix drop, and the preceding vowel is lengthened; for example,

[mēskanaw+ihk]

mēskanāhk

'on the road'.

The same morpheme-boundary rule may apply when a VTA stem in -aw- is followed by a suffix that begins in -i-, e.g.,

[nimiskaw+ik]

nimiskāk

'he finds me'

[ē-miskaw+isk]

ē-miskāsk

'he is finding you'.

But there are also suffixes beginning in -i- which do not take part in this rule, e.g.,

[ē-miskaw+it]

ē-miskawit

'he is finding me'.

In short, the CONTRACTION rule

$$\underline{Vw+i} \quad \text{-->} \quad \bar{V}$$

does not work for all suffixes with initial -i-.

The paradigms have examples of both kinds:

- (1) the contraction of -aw+i- to -ā-; and
- (2) sequences of -aw+i- which are not contracted but simply come out as -awi-.

In the paradigm tables (as used by the writer), those instances of -i- which do not show contraction are underscored:

VTA INDEPENDENT (MIXED-THIRD SET)					
DIRECT			INVERSE		
	-3	-3p	3-	3p-	
1-	nimiskawāw	-ak	nimiskāk	-(w)ak	-1
2-	kimiskawāw	-ak	kimiskāk	-(w)ak	-2
1p-	nimiskawānān	-ak	nimiskākonān	-ak	-1p
21p-	kimiskawānaw	-ak	kimiskākonaw	-ak	-21p
2p-	kimiskawāwāw	-ak	kimiskākowāw	-ak	-2p
	-3'		3'-		
3-	miskawēw		miskāk		-3
3p-	miskawēwak		miskākwak		-3p
3'-	miskawēyiwa		miskākoyiwa		-3'

VTA INDEPENDENT (YOU-AND-ME SET)					
DIRECT			INVERSE		
	-1	-1p	1-	1p-	
2-	kimiskaw <u>i</u> n		kimiskātin		-2
2/2p-	kimiskaw <u>i</u> nān		kimiskātinān		-2/2p
2p-	kimiskaw <u>i</u> nāwāw		kimiskātināwāw		-2p

VTA CONJUNCT (MIXED-THIRD SET)					
DIRECT			INVERSE		
	-3	-3p	3-	3p-	
1-	ē-miskawak	-ik	ē-miskaw <u>i</u> t	-(c)ik	-1
2-	ē-miskawat	-(c)ik	ē-miskāsk	-ik	-2
1p-	ē-miskawāyāhk	-ik	ē-miskākoyāhk	-ik	-1p
21p-	ē-miskawāyahk	-ok	ē-miskākoyahk	-ok	-21p
2p-	ē-miskawāyēk	-ok	ē-miskākoyēk	-ok	-2p
	-3'		3'-		
3-	ē-miskawāt		ē-miskākot		-3
3p-	ē-miskawācik		ē-miskākocik		-3p
3'-	ē-miskawāyit		ē-miskākoyit		-3'

VTA CONJUNCT (YOU-AND-ME SET)					
DIRECT			INVERSE		
	-1	-1p	1-	1p-	
2-	ē-miskaw <u>i</u> yan		ē-miskātān		-2
2/2p-	ē-miskaw <u>i</u> yāhk		ē-miskātāhk		-2/2p
2p-	ē-miskaw <u>i</u> yēk		ē-miskātakok		-2p

VTA IMPERATIVE (MIXED-THIRD SET)		
IMM		
	-3	-3p
2-	miskaw	miskaw <u>i</u> k
21p-	miskawātān	miskawātānik
2p-	miskāhk	miskāhkok
DEL		
2-	miskawāhkan	miskawāhkanik
21p-	miskawāhkahk	miskawāhkahkok
2p-	miskawāhkēk	miskawāhkēkok

VTA IMPERATIVE (YOU-AND-ME SET)		
IMM		
	-1	-1p
2-	miskaw <u>i</u> n	miskaw <u>i</u> nān
2p-	miskaw <u>i</u> k	miskaw <u>i</u> nān
DEL		
2-	miskaw <u>i</u> hkan	miskaw <u>i</u> hkāhk
2p-	miskaw <u>i</u> hkēk	miskaw <u>i</u> hkāhk

The non-contracting -i- occurs in two isolated forms: the 3-1 conjunct form,

ē-miskawit

'he is finding me'

and the 2-3p immediate imperative,

miskawik

'find them!'

All the other instances of non-contracting -i- occur in the direct you-and-me forms:

VTA INDEPENDENT (YOU-AND-ME SET) DIRECT	
	-1 -1p
2-	kimiskaw <u>i</u> n kimiskaw <u>i</u> nān
2p-	kimiskaw <u>i</u> nāwāw kimiskaw <u>i</u> nān

VTA CONJUNCT (YOU-AND-ME SET) DIRECT	
	-1 -1p
2-	ē-miskaw <u>i</u> yan ē-miskaw <u>i</u> yāhk
2p-	ē-miskaw <u>i</u> yēk ē-miskaw <u>i</u> yāhk

VTA IMPERATIVE (YOU-AND-ME SET) IMM	
	-1 -1p
2-	miskaw <u>i</u> n miskaw <u>i</u> nān
2p-	miskaw <u>i</u> k miskaw <u>i</u> nān

VTA IMPERATIVE (YOU-AND-ME SET) DEL	
	-1 -1p
2-	miskaw <u>i</u> hkan miskaw <u>i</u> hkāhk
2p-	miskaw <u>i</u> hkēk miskaw <u>i</u> hkāhk

Note that the non-contracted i- is lengthened before the delayed imperative endings.

We have seen that the miskaw- paradigm has both -ā- and -awī- forms, e.g.,

[kimiskaw+itin]

kimiskātin

'I find you'

[kimiskaw+in]

kimiskawin

'you find me'.

These forms show that there are two types of -i-:

- (1) contracting -i-,
- (2) non-contracting -i-;

they sound (and look) exactly alike but they act in totally opposite ways.

Text examples:

Independent

- | | |
|------|----------------------|
| 1-3 | nitatamiskawāw |
| 1-3p | nikī-pēhtawāwak |
| 2p-3 | kipēhtawāw |
| 3-3' | mākoskawēw |
| 3-1 | nikī-kitahamāk |
| 1-2p | kiwī-ācimostātināwāw |

Conjunct

- | | |
|-------|---------------------------|
| 1-3 | ē-wī-atamiskawak |
| 1-3p | ka-wihtamawakik |
| 1p-3 | ē-nitawi-mawinēhwāyāhk |
| 1p-3p | ē-papā-itohtatamawāyāhkik |
| 3-3' | ē-kī-atamiskawāt |
| 3p-3' | ē-wihtamawācik |
| 3-1 | ē-kī-ācimostawit |
| 3p-2 | ē-pēhtāskik |
| 3-1p | kā-kī-ohciyākoyāhk |

3p-1p	kā-wihtamākoyāhkik
3-21p	ē-pakitinamākoyahk
3'-3	ē-sā-sāmiskākot
3'-3p	ē-ohci-tāwiskākocik
1-2	ē-wī-nakatamātān

Imperative

2-3	isīhkaw
2-1	atoskawin

Vw-stems with long vowels

When the vowel which precedes the final -w- of a VTA stem is already long, it does not get lengthened any further; but the final -w- of the stem and the initial -i- of those suffixes which start in contracting -i- disappear.

In the paradigm of the stem wīcēw- 'go with him' the contracting -i- and the non-contracting -i- show up in exactly the same places as in the miskaw- paradigm. In the paradigm tables (as used by the writer) the non-contracting -i- is underscored:

VTA INDEPENDENT (MIXED-THIRD SET)					
DIRECT			INVERSE		
	-3	-3p	3-	3p-	
1-	niwīcēwāw	-ak	niwīcēk	-(w)ak	-1
2-	kiwīcēwāw	-ak	kiwīcēk	-(w)ak	-2
1p-	niwīcēwānān	-ak	niwīcēkonān	-ak	-1p
21p-	kiwīcēwānaw	-ak	kiwīcēkonaw	-ak	-21p
2p-	kiwīcēwāwāw	-ak	kiwīcēkowāw	-ak	-2p
	-3'		3'-		
3-	wīcēwēw		wīcēk		-3
3p-	wīcēwēwak		wīcēkwak		-3p
3'-	wīcēwēyiwa		wīcēkoyiwa		-3'

VTA INDEPENDENT (YOU-AND-ME SET)					
DIRECT			INVERSE		
	-1	-1p	1-	1p-	
2-	kiwīcēw <u>i</u> n		kiwīcēt <u>i</u> n		-2
2/2p-		kiwīcēw <u>i</u> nān		kiwīcēt <u>i</u> nān	-2/2p
2p-	kiwīcēw <u>i</u> nāwāw		kiwīcēt <u>i</u> nāwāw		-2p

VTA CONJUNCT (MIXED-THIRD SET)					
DIRECT			INVERSE		
	-3	-3p	3-	3p-	
1-	ē-wīcēwak	-ik	ē-wīcēwīt	-(c)ik	-1
2-	ē-wīcēwat	-(c)ik	ē-wīcēsk	-ik	-2
1p-	ē-wīcēwāyāhk	-ik	ē-wīcēkoyāhk	-ik	-1p
21p-	ē-wīcēwāyahk	-ok	ē-wīcēkoyahk	-ok	-21p
2p-	ē-wīcēwāyēk	-ok	ē-wīcēkoyēk	-ok	-2p
	-3'		3'-		
3-	ē-wīcēwāt		ē-wīcēkot		-3
3p-	ē-wīcēwācīk		ē-wīcēkocīk		-3p
3'-	ē-wīcēwāyīt		ē-wīcēkoyīt		-3'

VTA CONJUNCT (YOU-AND-ME SET)					
DIRECT			INVERSE		
	-1	-1p	1-	1p-	
2-	ē-wīcēwīyan		ē-wīcētān		-2
2/2p-		ē-wīcēwīyāhk		ē-wīcētāhk	-2/2p
2p-	ē-wīcēwīyēk		ē-wīcētakok		-2p

VTA IMPERATIVE (MIXED-THIRD SET)		
IMM		
	-3	-3p
2-	wīcēw	wīcēw <u>i</u> k
21p-	wīcēwātān	wīcēwātānik
2p-	wīcēhk	wīcēhkok
DEL		
2-	wīcēwāhkan	wīcēwāhkanik
21p-	wīcēwāhkahk	wīcēwāhkahkok
2p-	wīcēwāhkēk	wīcēwāhkēkok

VTA IMPERATIVE (YOU-AND-ME SET)		
IMM		
	-1	-1p
2-	wīcēw <u>i</u> n	wīcēw <u>i</u> nān
2p-	wīcēw <u>i</u> k	wīcēw <u>i</u> nān
DEL		
2-	wīcēw <u>i</u> hkan	wīcēw <u>i</u> hkāhk
2p-	wīcēw <u>i</u> hkēk	wīcēw <u>i</u> hkāhk

Vw-stems without contraction

A few of the stems that end in a vowel-semivowel sequence never show contraction. The most common examples are stems which consist of a single syllable, such as

mow-

'eat him'

miy-

'give (it) to him'.

But the two-syllable stem

ayāw-

'have him'

is also an exception to the contraction rule: it never shows contraction, e.g.,

nitayāwik

'he has me'.

The following table gives the paradigm of mow- 'eat him (e.g., a fish)' even though many of these forms are semantically odd. This is strictly a grammatical exercise -- just ignore the cannibalistic overtones!

VTA INDEPENDENT (MIXED-THIRD SET)					
DIRECT			INVERSE		
	-3	-3p	3-	3p-	
1-	nimowāw	-ak	nimowik	-(w)ak	-1
2-	kimowāw	-ak	kimowik	-(w)ak	-2
1p-	nimowānān	-ak	nimowikonān	-ak	-1p
21p-	kimowānaw	-ak	kimowikonaw	-ak	-21p
2p-	kimowāwāw	-ak	kimowikowāw	-ak	-2p
	-3'		3'-		
3-	mowēw		mowik		-3
3p-	mowēwak		mowikwak		-3p
3'-	mowēyiwa		mowikoyiwa		-3'

VTA INDEPENDENT (YOU-AND-ME SET)					
DIRECT			INVERSE		
	-1	-1p	1-	1p-	
2-	kimowin		kimowitin		-2
2/2p-		kimowinān		kimowitinān	-2/2p
2p-	kimowināwāw		kimowitināwāw		-2p

VTA CONJUNCT (MIXED-THIRD SET)					
DIRECT			INVERSE		
	-3	-3p	3-	3p-	
1-	ē-mowak	-ik	ē-mowit	-(c)ik	-1
2-	ē-mowat	-(c)ik	ē-mowisk	-ik	-2
1p-	ē-mowāyāhk	-ik	ē-mowikoyāhk	-ik	-1p
21p-	ē-mowāyahk	-ok	ē-mowikoyahk	-ok	-21p
2p-	ē-mowāyēk	-ok	ē-mowikoyēk	-ok	-2p
	-3'		3'-		
3-	ē-mowāt		ē-mowikot		-3
3p-	ē-mowācik		ē-mowikocik		-3p
3'-	ē-mowāyit		ē-mowikoyit		-3'

VTA CONJUNCT (YOU-AND-ME SET)					
DIRECT			INVERSE		
	-1	-1p	1-	1p-	
2-	ē-mowiyan		ē-mowitān		-2
2/2p-		ē-mowiyāhk		ē-mowitāhk	-2/2p
2p-	ē-mowiyēk		ē-mowitakok		-2p

VTA IMPERATIVE (MIXED-THIRD SET)		
IMM		
	-3	-3p
2-	mow	mowik
21p-	mowātān	mowātānik
2p-	mowihk	mowihkok
DEL		
2-	mowāhkan	mowāhkanik
21p-	mowāhkahk	mowāhkahkok
2p-	mowāhkēk	mowāhkēkok

VTA IMPERATIVE (YOU-AND-ME SET)		
IMM		
	-1	-1p
2-	mowin	mowinān
2p-	mowik	mowinān
DEL		
2-	mowīhkan	mowīhkāhk
2p-	mowīhkēk	mowīhkāhk

t-stems

There is one last class of VTA stems that needs to be discussed: t-stems. VTA t-stems may be short like

it-

'says so to him'

nāt-

'fetch him'

or long like

piminawat-

'cook for him'

pīkiskwāt-

'speak to him'

pakwāt-

'hate him'

wiyahpit-

'harness him'.

All these stems have a common inflectional complication which is unique to t-stems.

Let us begin by looking at the independent paradigm (as used by the writer):

VTA INDEPENDENT (MIXED-THIRD SET)					
DIRECT			INVERSE		
	-3	-3p	3-	3p-	
1-	ninātāw	-ak	ninātik	-(w)ak	-1
2-	kinātāw	-ak	kinātik	-(w)ak	-2
1p-	ninātānān	-ak	ninātikonān	-ak	-1p
21p-	kinātānaw	-ak	kinātikonaw	-ak	-21p
2p-	kinātāwāw	-ak	kinātikowāw	-ak	-2p
	-3'		3'-		
3-	nātēw		nātik		-3
3p-	nātēwak		nātikwak		-3p
3'-	nātēyiwa		nātikoyiwa		-3'

VTA INDEPENDENT (YOU-AND-ME SET)					
DIRECT			INVERSE		
	-1	-1p	1-	1p-	
2-	kinās <u>i</u> n		kinātitin		-2
2/2p-		kinās <u>i</u> nān		kinātitinān	-2/2p
2p-	kinās <u>i</u> nāwāw		kinātitināwāw		-2p

The forms of the mixed-third set are exactly like those of the pamih- paradigm.

What is unique about the t-stems shows up in the you-and-me set: in the direct forms of that set, the final -t- of the stem is replaced by -s-:

kināsin

'you fetch me'.

The corresponding inverse form has the nāt- variant of the stem:

kinātitin

'I fetch you'.

There is no difference in meaning between nāt- and nās-.

With the nās- variant underscored, one can see a definite pattern in the conjunct paradigm:

VTA CONJUNCT (MIXED-THIRD SET)					
DIRECT			INVERSE		
	-3	-3p	3-	3p-	
1-	ē-nātak	-ik	ē-nāsit	-(c)ik	-1
2-	ē-nātat	-(c)ik	ē-nātisk	-ik	-2
1p-	ē-nātāyāhk	-ik	ē-nātikoyāhk	-ik	-1p
21p-	ē-nātāyahk	-ok	ē-nātikoyahk	-ok	-21p
2p-	ē-nātāyēk	-ok	ē-nātikoyēk	-ok	-2p
	-3'		3'-		
3-	ē-nātāt		ē-nātikot		-3
3p-	ē-nātācik		ē-nātikocik		-3p
3'-	ē-nātāyit		ē-nātikoyit		-3'

VTA CONJUNCT (YOU-AND-ME SET)					
DIRECT			INVERSE		
	-1	-1p	1-	1p-	
2-	ē-nāsīyan		ē-nātītān		-2
2/2p-	ē-nāsīyāhk		ē-nātītāhk		-2/2p
2p-	ē-nāsīyēk		ē-nātītakok		-2p

VTA IMPERATIVE (MIXED-THIRD SET)		
IMM		
	-3	-3p
2-	<u>nās</u>	<u>nāsik</u>
21p-	nātātān	nātātānik
2p-	nātihk	nātihkok
DEL		
2-	nātāhkan	nātāhkanik
21p-	nātāhkahk	nātāhkahkok
2p-	nātāhkēk	nātāhkēkok

VTA IMPERATIVE (YOU-AND-ME SET)		
IMM		
	-1	-1p
2-	<u>nāsin</u>	<u>nāsinān</u>
2p-	<u>nāsik</u>	<u>nāsinān</u>
DEL		
2-	<u>nāsīhkan</u>	<u>nāsīhkāhk</u>
2p-	<u>nāsīhkēk</u>	<u>nāsīhkāhk</u>

The nās- variant occurs in three isolated forms: the 3-1 conjunct form

ē-nāsit

'he is fetching me'

and the immediate imperative forms for 2-3 and 2-3p:

nās

'fetch him!'

nāsik

'fetch them!'

All the other instances of nās- occur in the direct you-and-me forms:

VTA INDEPENDENT (YOU-AND-ME SET) DIRECT	
	-1p
2-	kināsinān
2p-	kināsināw

VTA CONJUNCT (YOU-AND-ME SET) DIRECT	
	-1p
2-	ē-nāsiyāhk
2p-	ē-nāsiyēk

	VTA IMPERATIVE (YOU-AND-ME SET) IMM	
	-1	-1p
2-	nāsin	nāsinān
2p-	nāsik	nāsinān

	VTA IMPERATIVE (YOU-AND-ME SET) DEL	
	-1	-1p
2-	nāsīhkan	nāsīhkāhk
2p-	nāsīhkēk	nāsīhkāhk

In other words, the nās- variants show up in exactly the same places as the -awi- variants in the Vw-paradigm.

Since all the nās- variants appear before an -i-, it seems likely that it is this -i- which turns the final -t- of the stem into -s-. We call this replacement s-PALATALIZATION.

If you look back at the paradigms, you will see that there are many other suffixes starting in -i- which do not turn -t- into -s-, for example,

ninātik

'he fetches me'.

And if you now go back to the Vw-stems, you will see that these are exactly the same places in the paradigm where -aw+i- is contracted to -ā-.

The two paradigms together show that there are two types of -i- in Cree which have different effects when they follow a stem-final sound:

- (1) contracting -i- does not palatalize a preceding -t-;
- (2) non-contracting -i- palatalizes a preceding -t- to -s-.

In both paradigms, the two -i-'s sound (and look) exactly the same¹⁷ but they act in totally opposite ways:

¹⁷ In Kickapoo, an Algonquian language that is closely related to Cree, the situation is different. This language (Voorhis 1974:67-68) has forms which correspond to Cree

<u>ki-</u>	<u>-in</u>	2-1
<u>ki-</u>	<u>-itin</u>	1-2;

but in Kickapoo the two endings start with distinct sounds:

<u>ke-</u>	<u>-i</u>	2-1
<u>ke-</u>	<u>-ene</u>	1-2.

This suggests that long ago the palatalizing -i- and the non-palatalizing -i- were also distinct in Cree. But today they sound exactly alike and only their effect on the preceding sounds indicates that they were once different.

	contracting <u>-i-</u>	<u>non-</u> contracting <u>-i-</u>
palatalizing <u>-i-</u>		[<u>kimiskaw+iŋ</u>] <u>kimiskawin</u> [<u>kināt+iŋ</u>] <u>kināsin</u>
<u>non-</u> palatalizing <u>-i-</u>	[<u>kimiskaw+itin</u>] <u>kimiskātin</u> [<u>kināt+itin</u>] <u>kinātitin</u>	

Text examples:

Independent

- 1-3 nititāw
- 1-3p nititāwak
- 3-3' nawaswātēw
- 3p-3' nawaswātēwak
- 3-1 nipakwātik
- 3p-1 niki-pē-nātikwak
- 3-1p nititikonān

Conjunct

1-3	kā-pēyakwahpitak
1-3p	kā-itakik
3p-3'	ē-kī-wiyahpitācik
3'-	ē-pē-minihkwātāyit
3-1	kā-kī-pakwāsīt
3p-1	ē-pīkiskwāsīcik
3p-1p	ē-paminawatikoyāhkik
3p-21p	ē-kī-isīyīhkātikoyahkik
1-2p	ka-kī-pim-āy-ititakok

Single-syllable stems

There is one additional complication with t-stems: the immediate imperative form for 2-3,

nās

'fetch him!'

Why does this form have the s-variant? If we look at all the earlier paradigm tables, there is never any ending for the 2-3 imperative, e.g.,

pamih

'look after him!'

pakamah

'hit him!'

miskaw

'find him!'

But if we look at stems which consist of a single syllable, e.g.,

ah-

'put him there'

nitahāw

'I put him there',

we suddenly hear (and see) an ending -i for the 2-3 imperative:¹⁸

ahi

'put him there!'

This 2-3 imperative ending -i must be a palatalizing -i- because we have forms such as

[nāt+i]nās

'fetch him!'

and even a form with the -i- showing up:

[it+i]isi

'say so to him!'

¹⁸ In this respect, these stems are similar to single-syllable noun stems like nisk- NA 'goose' or miht- NI 'wood'. Single-syllable stems are the only nouns which show the singular endings -a (animate) and -i (inanimate).

Note that the -i usually drops after single-syllable stems with a long vowel,¹⁹ as in

nās

'fetch him!'

mow

'eat him!'

miy

'give it to him!'

st-stems

VTA t-stems all have a vowel before the t -- with only one exception:

kost-

'be afraid of him'.

This stem has a variant kos- before those endings which start with the palatalizing -i-; for example,

kikosin

'you are afraid of me'

kikostitin

'I am afraid of you'.

¹⁹ This shows that the vowels of mow- and miy- are actually long even though we do not mark them as long before -w- and -y-.

The full paradigm (as used by the writer):

VTA INDEPENDENT (MIXED-THIRD SET)		INVERSE		
DIRECT				
	-3	-3p	3-	3p-
1-	nikostāw	-ak	nikostik	-(w)ak -1
2-	kikostāw	-ak	kikostik	-(w)ak -2
1p-	nikostānān	-ak	nikostikonān	-ak -1p
21p-	kikostānaw	-ak	kikostikonaw	-ak -21p
2p-	kikostāwāw	-ak	kikostikowāw	-ak -2p
	-3'		3'-	
3-	kostēw		kostik	-3
3p-	kostēwak		kostikwak	-3p
3'-	kostēyiwa		kostikoyiwa	-3'

VTA INDEPENDENT (YOU-AND-ME SET)		INVERSE		
DIRECT				
	-1	-1p	1-	1p-
2-	<u>kikosin</u>		kikostitin	-2
2/2p-		<u>kikosinān</u>	kikostitinān	-2/2p
2p-	<u>kikosināwāw</u>		kikostitināwāw	-2p

VTA CONJUNCT (MIXED-THIRD SET)					
DIRECT			INVERSE		
	-3	-3p	3-	3p-	
1-	ē-kostak	-ik	ē- <u>kosit</u>	-(c)ik	-1
2-	ē-kostat	-(c)ik	ē-kostisk	-ik	-2
1p-	ē-kostāyāhk	-ik	ē-kostikoyāhk	-ik	-1p
21p-	ē-kostāyahk	-ok	ē-kostikoyahk	-ok	-21p
2p-	ē-kostāyēk	-ok	ē-kostikoyēk	-ok	-2p
	-3'		3'-		
3-	ē-kostāt		ē-kostikot		-3
3p-	ē-kostācik		ē-kostikocik		-3p
3'-	ē-kostāyit		ē-kostikoyit		-3'

VTA CONJUNCT (YOU-AND-ME SET)					
DIRECT			INVERSE		
	-1	-1p	1-	1p-	
2-	ē- <u>kosiyān</u>		ē-kostitān		-2
2/2p-	ē- <u>kosiyāhk</u>		ē-kostitāhk		-2/2p
2p-	ē- <u>kosiyēk</u>		ē-kostitakok		-2p

VTA IMPERATIVE (MIXED-THIRD SET)		
IMM		
	-3	-3p
2-	<u>kosi</u>	<u>kosik</u>
21p-	kostātān	kostātānik
2p-	kostihk	kostihkok
DEL		
2-	kostāhkan	kostāhkanik
21p-	kostāhkahk	kostāhkahkok
2p-	kostāhkēk	kostāhkēkok

VTA IMPERATIVE (YOU-AND-ME SET)		
IMM		
	-1	-1p
2-	<u>kosin</u>	<u>kosinān</u>
2p-	<u>kosik</u>	<u>kosinān</u>
DEL		
2-	<u>kosihkan</u>	<u>kosihkāhk</u>
2p-	<u>kosihkēk</u>	<u>kosihkāhk</u>

Just as with the stems miskaw- 'find him' and mow- 'eat him', many of these forms are semantically awkward. But if you did want to tell someone 'be scared of him', the form you would have to use is kosi.

At first, the VTA paradigms that have contraction or s-palatalization look quite messy. But once you study them in detail and compare the various types, they all turn out to follow the same pattern.

SPECIAL PARADIGMS

In discussing the four basic verb paradigms -- VAI, VII, VTI, VTA -- we looked at a number of complications such as

- the -ē- and -ā- variants of VAI stems like pimohtē-;
- the spelling of VAI i- and ī- stems before -y- and o- and ō- stems before -w-;
- the ways in which VAI and VII n- stems differ from vowel stems;
- the VTA stems in -Cw-;
- and the VTA stems with contraction and s-palatalization.

All of these problems came up in the basic paradigms, and you need to be aware of them almost from the start.

There is another complication which is found with all verb stems that begin in -o-. Instead of the nit- variant of the personal prefixes which occurs with all other vowels, stems beginning in -o- may simply take n-. (This is similar to the pattern found with dependent noun stems.) With either nit- or n-, the initial -o- of the stem is lengthened to -ō-; for example,

osīhtā-

'make (it)'

nitōsīhtān

nōsīhtān

Text examples:

nitōcihcikiskisin
 nōtihtapinahisinin
 nōtinānānak

Summary of special paradigms

The texts also include a number of verb forms which differ somewhat from those of the basic paradigms. But there are only a few examples for each of these SPECIAL paradigms.

The following list identifies the forms that occur in the texts:²⁰

Subjunctive:

itunikētawāi

Iterative (and initial change):

wā-mīcisoyahki

wā-asamacik

tiyēhtapiyān

²⁰ For further discussion of these special paradigms see Plains Cree: a grammatical study (Wolfart 1973):

subjunctive and iterative (p.46)
 initial change (pp.82-83)
 preterit (p.45)
 relational (p.60)
 diminutive (p.61)

Preterit:

nipimācihohtān

Relational:

ka-āhtohtēwiht

kik-ētācihowiht

kik-ēsi-pimipiciwiht

kā-wī-ātotamwak

kā-kīsasiwātamoht

Diminutive:

nimā-minihkwēsinān

ka-mīcimihkahcikēsīt

nicā-cahkacayēnāsiw

These forms deserve the same careful treatment as the basic paradigms but it would take a whole book by itself to present full tables and to analyze the use of these special paradigms in detail.

The indefinite actor paradigm

We will only sketch one special paradigm which is very common both in the texts and in everyday speech. The INDEFINITE actor paradigm consists of forms which do not have a specific actor. For example,

ē-wī-nīmihitohk

'there was going to be dancing' (9-2)

..., iyikohk ē-tahkēyihitamihk; ...

'..., people find it so chilly; ...' (4-13)

... ēkosi kī-itācimāw awa.

'... people said this about him.' (8-11)

VAI and VTI stems have only one indefinite actor form each in the independent and conjunct:

VAI

Independent:

nipāniwiw

pimohtāniwiw

tapasīnāniwiw

pasikōnāniwiw

apināniwiw

ācimonāniwiw

pimisinināniwiw

Conjunct:

ē-nipāhk

ē-pimohtēhk

ē-tapasīhk

ē-pasikōhk

ē-apihk

ē-ācimohk

ē-pimisinihk

Note that the independent ending has two variants. It is

-niwiw

with stems that already end in -ā- (the ā- and ē/ā- stems); and it is

-nāniwiw

for all other vowel stems and for the n-stems (which use the -ni- variant of the stem).

VTI

Independent:

miskikātēw

Conjunct:

ē-miskamihk

Text examples:

āh-ācimonāniwiw

ē-atoskēhk

ē-wayawīhk

ē-wayawīkāpawihk

kā-nīsosimohk

t-āti-tōtamihk

The indefinite actor forms of the VTA paradigm (as used by the writer) make up a whole table:

	VTA INDEFINITE ACTOR INDEPENDENT	CONJUNCT
-1	nipamihikawin	ē-pamihikawiyān
-2	kipamihikawin	ē-pamihikawiyān
-1p	nipamihikawinān	ē-pamihikawiyāhk
-21p	kipamihikawinaw	ē-pamihikawiyahk
-2p	kipamihikawināwāw	ē-pamihikawiyēk
-3	pamihāw	ē-pamihihit
-3p	pamihāwak	ē-pamihihcik
-3'	pamihimāwa	ē-pamihimiht

This paradigm has two sets of endings. Those for the first and second person are similar to the inverse in meaning, and they all include a morpheme -ikawi-. Those for the third person include -āw- in the independent and -iht- in the conjunct.

In the text examples which follow, the initial -i- of -iht merges with the final -w- of Cw-stems and contracts with the final vowel-semivowel sequence of Vw-stems:

Independent:

nimasinahikēhikawin

nipē-ohci-nātītisahokawin

nikēhtinikawinān

kī-itācimāw

Conjunct:

k-ētikawīyan

ē-mōsihikawiyāhk

kā-kī-wihtamākawiyāhk

k-ētiht

kā-kiyokāht

kā-kī-mowihcik

SYNTACTIC PARTICLES: A FIRST LOOK

Particles are words that do not have any inflectional affixes. There are hundreds of particles and they have many different functions.

PARTICLES

Some particles can be added freely to any phrase, e.g.,

ninēstosin.

'I am tired.'

mitoni ninēstosin.

'I am very tired.'

papāmpahtāwak ōki awāsisak.

'These children are running around.'

misiwē papāmpahtāwak ōki awāsisak.

'These children are running around all over the place.'

mīcisotān!

'Let's eat!'

mīcisotān sēmāk!

'Let's eat right now!'

mahti mīcisotān!

'Let's eat!'

With mahti, the imperative form is a weaker and more polite command -- but the structure of the sentence remains the same.

Question particles

Other particles occur only in sentences of a certain type; in tān- questions, the particle tānitē 'where', for example, is normally used at the beginning of the sentence:

tānitē ē-wīkit kimis.

'Where does your older sister live?'

In yes-or-no questions, the main clause contains the question particle cī, e.g.,

kikiskēyihtēn cī ...

'Do you know ...?'

In such a sentence, the question, 'Where does she live?', normally uses a different question particle which does not contain the morpheme tān-:

kikiskēyihtēn cī itē ē-wīkit nimis.

'Do you know where my older sister lives?'

The question particle itē does not even have to stand at the beginning of the subordinate clause, e.g.,

kikiskēyihtēn cī nimis itē ē-wīkit.

The question particle cī, on the other hand, has a fixed spot: it always comes directly after the word about which the question is being asked; for example,

ayāw cī ōma masinahikan kimis.

'Does your older sister have this book?'

kimis cī ayāw ōma masinahikan.

'Does your older sister have this book?'

ōma cī ayāw masinahikan kimis.

'Does your older sister have this book?'²¹

In other words, the particle cī is always the second word in the question clause.

²¹ If the whole phrase 'this book' is to be emphasized, it is moved to the beginning of the sentence (or extraposed) as a whole, and the focussed phrase is set off by a slight break in the intonation, e.g.,

ōma masinahikan, ayāw cī kimis.

'This book, does your older sister have it?'

Particles as predications

Some particles by themselves serve as the main clause to which the rest of the sentence is subordinated.

The particle piko, for example, has more than one meaning and syntactic function. When it means 'only' it normally follows the part of the noun phrase (noun, pronoun, or particle) which it modifies:

nitawāsimisak piko niwāpamāwak.

'I see only my children [and not the others].'

niya piko nitawāsimisak niwāpamāwak.

'I see only my children [and not yours].'

nīso piko nitawāsimisak niwāpamāwak.

'I see only two of my children.'

ōki piko nitawāsimisak niwāpamāwak.

'I see only these of my children.'

masinahikana piko niwāpahtēn.

'I see only books [nothing else].'

nīso piko masinahikana niwāpahtēn.

'I see only two books [no more].'

But when piko is used with the future preverb ka and a conjunct order verb, the main clause consists only of piko, which then means 'it is necessary'; for example,

piko ka-kīwēyān.

'I have to go home.'

piko sēmāk ka-kīwēyān.

'I have to go home right away.'

Many particles clearly have an important function in the make-up of Cree sentences. This is an area which most linguists have totally neglected.

ōma NOUN PHRASES AS SUBJECT OR OBJECT

Syntax is a vast field, and the syntactic roles of particles are often especially difficult to pin down. This section, therefore, is only a first attempt at analyzing one such particle.

Every grammar or textbook mentions the demonstrative pronoun ōma, but ōma has other uses as well. Since the various syntactic functions are not always clearly distinct, we begin with the unambiguous uses of ōma.

The demonstrative pronoun ōma often occurs with a noun, e.g.,

ōma mōhkomān

'this knife'.

Together, the demonstrative pronoun and the noun constitute a NOUN PHRASE.

A noun-phrase which includes the demonstrative pronoun ōma is more definite than one consisting only of a noun, e.g.,

mōhkomān

'a knife'

ōma mōhkomān

'this knife, the knife'.

This difference is similar to that between the simple noun form,

mōhkomān

'a knife'

and the possessed form,

nimōhkomān

'my knife'.

But the ōma can also be used with the possessed form, e.g.,

ōma nimōhkomān

'this knife of mine'.

The demonstrative pronoun and the noun it modifies show agreement in number: if the noun is plural, e.g.,

mōhkomāna

'knives'

the demonstrative pronoun is also plural (ōhi instead of ōma), e.g.,

ōhi mōhkomāna

'these knives, the knives'.

ōma in object noun phrases

The most common use of ōma is in object noun phrases, e.g.,

..., nimiskēn ōma mōhkomān, ...

'..., I found the knife, ...' (10-5);

most of the text examples have the noun phrase following the verb. The verb form may be either independent (as in the last example) or conjunct, e.g.,

..., kā-otinamān ōma minihkwēwin, ...

'..., when I took this drink, ...' (10-10).

Many of the sentences of this type begin with an adverbial phrase, e.g.,

misiwē nimōsihtān ōma mihko, ...

'I felt the blood all over, ...' (10-5)

..., namōya wīhkāt nisāmahtēn ōma minihkwēwin, ...

'..., I have never tasted any drink, ...' (10-11).

All the above examples show the demonstrative pronoun preceding the noun it modifies; but it may also follow, e.g.,

wā, nimāh-mākwahtēn maskihkiy ōma, ...

'Well, I kept chewing this medicine, ...' (10-7).

When ōma follows the noun, it seems to be slightly less emphatic than the noun. For even greater emphasis on the noun, the entire noun phrase (with ōma either before or after the noun) may be fronted:

amiskwayānēscocinis ōma nīkīkiskēn, ...

'I was wearing this beaver-pelt hat, ...' (8-4)

ēwako ōma amiskwayānēscocinis nīcīcāskāsīhk
nitastān, ...

'This beaver-pelt hat I put over my crotch, ...' (8-8).

This last sentence has the pronoun phrase ēwako ōma instead of the simple pronoun ōma; ēwako ōma refers to "old" information -- things that were mentioned earlier.

The noun phrase which functions as the object of a verb does not always have to consist of both a demonstrative pronoun and a noun. It may be a noun by itself, e.g.,

..., ninātēn mihta, ...

'..., I fetched wood (plural), ...' (8-5)

or it may consist only of the demonstrative pronoun, e.g.,

ēkosi ēkwa nitahkopitēn ōma, ...

'And so I bandaged this [my eye], ...' (10-6).

Just as with full noun phrases, the reduced noun phrase which consists only of a demonstrative pronoun can come before or after the verb, e.g.,

wā, nitayān ōma ...

'Well, I have this ...' (8-14)

..., ōma māna ē-wāh-wāpahkēcik ...

'..., this they used to watch ...' (10-1).

In some cases, the demonstrative (or reduced noun phrase) is fronted and a full noun phrase occurs after the verb, as an afterthought:

māka ōma kiwāpahtēn ōma niskīsik, ...

'But you see this, this eye of mine, ...' (10-3).

Finally, the pronoun phrase ēwako ōma may be used instead of the simple pronoun ōma. With a noun (which in this example is plural and therefore also shows the plural in the pronoun phrase ēkoni ōhi):

ēkwa ēkoni ōhi nicayānisisa nipitikwahpitēn, ...

'And these my clothes I tied in a bundle, ...' (8-9);

without a noun:

... mitoni ē-kanawēyihkik ēwako ōma, ...

'... they very much had responsibility for this, ...'

(3-4);

with the pronoun phrase reversed:

wā, nimāh-minihkwēsīnān ōma ēwako, ...

'Well, we were having a few drinks of this, ...' (8-14).

In either order, the pronoun phrase with ēwako refers to previously mentioned nouns.

ōma in indirect object noun phrases

Noun phrases with ōma and noun phrases consisting only of ōma also occur as the indirect object. In the following sentences (which are not from the texts), the person who gets the book is the direct object, and the book is the indirect object:

ka-miyitin ōma masinahikan.

'I will give you this book.'

ōma masinahikan ka-miyitin.

'This book I will give you.'

With the demonstrative pronoun as indirect object:

..., ka-wīhtamawakik ōma ...

'... for me to tell them this ...' (10-1).

ōma in subject noun phrases

Noun phrases with ōma also occur as the subject of intransitive (VII) verbs. The verb form may be either independent, as in

..., kwayakopayin ōma niskīsik, ...

'..., this eye of mine fell out, ...' (10-5),

or conjunct, as in

... ē-kī-kanātahk ōma kīsikāw.

'... the day was clean.' (4-1).

Sentences with ōma in the subject noun phrase often begin with an adverbial phrase, e.g.,

kayās iyikohk ē-kī-kanātahk ōma askiy.

'Long ago this land used to be so clean.' (2-3)

..., mitoni ākwāc ōta naniwāhk ōta, itwēw,

ē-iskwāpēkamok ōma niskīsik, ...

'..., my eye was hanging way down my cheek,
he said, ...' (10-5).

The subject noun phrase with ōma may also precede the verb, e.g.,

..., iyikohk minihkwēwin ōma ē-pimohtēmakahk

ē-misiwanācihikoyahk; ...

'... there is so much of this drinking going on, it is
destroying us; ...' (2-8).

As this example shows, an inanimate noun phrase with ōma may also serve as the subject of a transitive (in this case, VTA) verb.

The texts contain no clear examples of ōma alone functioning as subject, but such examples are lacking only by accident; they are common enough, e.g.,

miywāsin ōma.

'This is good.'

ka-wīsakatahokon ōma.

'This will hurt you.'

EQUATIONAL SENTENCES WITH ōma

Sentences do not always have to include a verb. In sentences where you point to something and define it, the demonstrative pronoun follows the noun, and there is no verb. For example,

mōhkomān ōma.

'This is a knife.'

nimōhkomān ōma.

'This is my knife.'

In these two examples, ōma does the pointing, and people often reinforce that pointing by a gesture of the lips, the whole head, or both. Such sentences are especially common with personal names or with kin terms, e.g.,

cān awa.

'This is John.'

nimis awa.

'This is my older sister.'

None of these sentences contains a verb that corresponds to the English verb to be. But in all of them, the second noun phrase is a demonstrative pronoun.

We use the term EQUATIONAL for sentences that equate two noun phrases, e.g.,

..., konit-ācimowinis ōma, ...

'..., this is just a little story, ...' (5-1).

But not every type of equational sentence has a demonstrative pronoun as the second noun phrase. In the following sentence, for example, the second constituent is the full noun phrase ācimowin ōma:

..., ēkotē anima ohci ācimowin ōma, ...

'..., this story is from over there, ...' (5-4).

It makes no difference for the sentence as a whole whether the demonstrative pronoun in the second constituent follows or precedes the noun; for example,

ēkotē anima ohci ōma ācimowin.

'This story is from over there.'

When ōma precedes ācimowin, it is more emphatic.

Identifying the place

The first constituent of an equational sentence very often begins with ēkota 'there' or ēkotē '(further) over there', e.g.,

ēkota ōma pēhonānihk, ...

'It was there, at Carlton, ...' (9-1).

In this sentence, the first constituent is ēkota, and the second is ōma; the locative noun pēhonānihk 'at Carlton' is an optional extension of the first constituent, ēkota. One could also say that the first constituent of this last example,

ēkota ... pēhonānihk,

is DISCONTINUOUS.

ēkota or ēkotē are common in several types of equational sentences, e.g.,

..., ēkota ōma k-ātoskēyāhk, ...

'..., it was there where we worked, ...' (9-2)

ēkotē ōma k-ōhtohtēyāhk, ...

'It was over there where we came from, ...' (5-4).

In these two sentences, the first constituent is extended by a relative clause with the preverb k(ā), as in k-ātoskēyāhk, which may also come directly after the ēkota, e.g.,

ēkota k-ātoskēyāhk ōma.

'It was there where we worked.'

Identifying the time

Just like a place, a specific time is often expressed in an equational sentence with such time words as ēkwa 'now, then' or ēkospī 'at that time'. For example,

wā, ēkwa ōma ē-otākosik, ...

'Well, it was now that it was evening, ...' (8-12)

-- ēkwa ōma mitoni ē-takahkwēwēhtitāt

ōhi ocōskwanisa, ...

' -- it was then that he really kept time beautifully with his elbows, ...' (9-5)

..., ēkospī ōma ohci kēyāpic, ...

'..., it was from that time until now, ...' (10-11).

In this last example, the time phrase

ēkospī ... ohci

is discontinuous but a re-ordered sentence

ēkospī ohci ōma kēyāpic

would mean the same thing.

Identifying "old" information

The first constituent of an equational sentence may also be ēwako, the pronoun which refers back to old information; for example,

ēwako ōma.

'It is this.' (10-4)

Note that ēwako and ēkota are built on a common root ēwak- / ēk- which means 'that old information'.

ēwako as the first constituent may also be extended by a relative clause, e.g.,

..., ēwako ōma k-ō-tāpakwēwēpinak awa
nitāyimisīwatim, ...'

'..., it was this [rawhide bridle] with which I lassoed
this wild horse of mine, ...' (8-11).

But the extension clause may also have an ē-verb, e.g.,

..., ēwako ōma kāwi ē-nōhtē-kīwētotahtik ...

'..., it is this that they want to go back to ...' (10-1).

Identifying the manner

Finally, the fourth type of ēk- constituent begins in ēkosi 'in this [previously mentioned] manner', for example,

ēkosi ōma ē-ispayik, ...

'It is in this way that it is happening, ...' (4-11).

The same syntactic structure is also found with the corresponding verb form in the independent order, e.g.,

ēkosi ōma wī-ispayin, ...

'It is in this way that it is going to happen, ...' (4-9).

The difference between the independent verb form

wī-ispayin

'it is going to happen'

and the conjunct verb form

ē-wī-ispayik

'as it is going to be happening'

is the only difference between the above two sentences, and it seems to have no influence on the syntactic structure.

Questions

Question words like tānisi 'how' very often occur in sentences like

tānisi ōma isinākwān.

'What does it look like?'

tānisi ōma ē-isinākwahk.

'What does it look like now?'

which appear to have the same structure as equational sentences with ēkosi.

As the following example shows, the ōma is optional:

..., ēkonik ōki ē-wiyasiwātahkik
tānisi ōma kik-ēsi-pimipiciwiht
mīna tānisi kik-ētācihowiht, ...

'..., they decided how it is
 that one should move camp
 and how one should live, ...' (3-4).

The extension may simply be a personal pronoun like wīstawāw
 'they too', e.g.,

..., tānisi ōma wīstawāw, ...

'..., how it is with them, too, ...' (10-1).

But it may also be a full conjunct clause, for example with the
 question word tānēhki 'why':

..., tānēhki ōma kā-kī-miyikowisiyahk ...

'..., why it is that we were given [this] ...' (2-8).

Simple adverbs

Besides words like ēkota or tānēhki, equational sentences with
ōma may also have simple adverbs as the first constituent, e.g.,

..., napatē ōma namōya niwāpin, ...

'..., it is on one side that I am blind, ...' (10-3)

..., kēyāpic ōma ka-wāpamināwāw ...

'..., the time will come that you will see me ...' (6-7)

... kotak ōma ohpimē ē-ayācik ...

'... it was another [camp], they were off to the side...'
(9-2).

Personal pronouns

Finally, equational sentences are often built on a personal pronoun, e.g.,

..., ēkwa nīstanān ōma mitoni

ninihtā-nīmihitonān, ...

'..., and it was us, too, we were really good
dancers, ...' (9-2)

kiyānaw ōma ē-kī-tipēyihtamahk, ...

'It was us who owned it, ...' (2-7)

ōma kiyānaw 'paqans' nanātohk

ē-kī-isiihkātikoyahkik, ...

'Us it was that they called 'pagans' and all kinds
of names, ...' (10-17).

With the two constituents reversed, as in this last example, there is even greater emphasis.

FACTIVE ōma

The two major uses of ōma which we have discussed are non-verbal; in all our examples up to now, ōma has either modified a noun, e.g.,

ōma mōhkomān

'this knife';

or it has itself served as a noun phrase in an equational sentence, e.g.,

mōhkomān ōma.

'This is a knife.'

But there are also many sentences where ōma directly follows a verb without being either the subject or the object.

This use of ōma is most clearly seen in sentences where there is no inanimate subject or object at all, e.g.,

ē-nōhtē-kiwēyān ōma.

'I want to go home.'

In this sentence, the ōma highlights the action of the verb in about the same way as the demonstrative pronoun when it makes the noun more definite. We call this use of ōma FACTIVE.

Simple sentences with factive ōma

Factive ōma seems to be most common with conjunct verb phrases,
e.g.,

ē-wī-mīcisoyān ōma.

'I am going to eat.'

A conjunct verb phrase without ōma, e.g.,

ē-wī-mīcisoyān,

is not normally used as a sentence by itself; it would always occur
with another constituent, e.g.,

ē-wī-mīcisoyān pitamā.

'I am going to eat first.'

But factive ōma is also used with independent verb phrases,
e.g.,

ninēstosin ōma.

'I am tired.'

This sentence seems to indicate some connection to the preceding
discourse; this is what makes it different from the simple
declarative sentence,

ninēstosin.

'I am tired.'

In all these examples ōma is a constituent by itself; the verb phrase is the first constituent, and ōma the second. These sentences therefore have the same structure as the equational sentences which consist of a noun phrase and ōma. The last sentence, for example, could be translated literally as,

'It is = I am tired.'

'It is that I am tired.'

Many of the text examples of factive ōma occur as part of a larger sentence, e.g.,

... kā-nīsosimohk ōma, ...

'... it was Red River jigging, ...' (9-4)

ēkota ēkwa ē-apiyān ōma, ...

'It was there that I was sitting now, ...' (10-7)

ēkosi isi piyis ē-nāhnāskonak ōma, ...

'It was in this way that I finally pulled him in, ...'

(8-11).

In the next two examples, the sentence with factive ōma follows an earlier equational sentence:

ēkota anima, itwēw,

ē-cahkāpiciniyān ōma, itwēw, ...

'That was there, he said, I punctured my eye,

he said, ...' (10-4)

ēwako ōma, itwēw, ...

ē-nitawi-nāciwanihikanēyān ōma, itwēw.

'It was this, he said, ..., it was that I was going to
check my traps, he said.' (10-4)

The following examples illustrate factive ōma with independent verb phrases:

..., itwēw, nipāskāpin ōma, itwēw.

'..., he said, I had my eye gouged out, he said.' (10-3)

..., itwēw, namōya wihkāt nipē-āhkosin ōma, itwēw.

'..., he said, I have never been sick, he said.' (10-3)

Factive ōma and the verb phrase with which it occurs may be reversed for extra emphasis on 'the fact that':²²

..., ōma kā-wī-kīwēyān, ...

'..., for sure, when I am going to go home, ...' (6-6).

²² This sentence is only superficially similar to clauses where the demonstrative ōma occurs as the head of a relative, e.g.,

ōma kā-pētāyān
'the one that I brought'

or as both the head of a relative and as the object of a transitive verb, e.g.,

kiwāpahtēn cī ōma kā-pētāyān.
'Did you see the one I brought?'

The sentences given until now avoided all inanimate subjects or objects; but there are also many examples of VII verb phrases where the ōma is unmistakably factive; for example,

...; wāhwā, ē-wāsaskotēk ōma, itwēw.

'...; wow, it was that there was light, he said.' (7-3)

... kīkisēpā k-āti-sākāstēk ōma ...

'... in the morning when day begins to break ...' (3-5)

With VTI verb phrases, the factive ōma shows up most clearly when another noun phrase occurs as the object of the verb; in this example, the pronoun phrase ēkoni ōhi 'these things' is the object of ē-kī-wihtahkik 'they had predicted it/them':

..., ē-kī-wihtahkik ōma

kayās kisēyiniwak ēkoni ōhi, ...

'..., it is that the old people of long ago
had predicted these things, ...' (4-12).

In the example which follows, the sequence ēkoni ōhi sounds and looks exactly the same as in the preceding sentence; but it is, in fact, an equational clause with the constituents ēkoni and ōhi:

ēkwa ēkoni ōhi kahkiyaw ōhi

kā-pim-ātotahk ōma, ...

'And these were the ones, all of these, which
he has been telling about, ...' (4-1).

Complex sentences with factive ōma

A special use of factive ōma is when it connects two clauses,
e.g.,

ninēstosin, ē-nōhtē-kīwēyān ōma.

'I am tired and I want to go home.'

Although ōma does not mean 'and' in any other type of sentence, we use 'and' in the English translation of this sentence to show the connection between the two clauses.

The two clauses which constitute this sentence are separated by a break in intonation; this break often comes out as a pause, and we use the comma to indicate it in writing.

The same two verb phrases and the break between them could also be said without the ōma. In that case, however, they are two completely separate clauses; we indicate this with a semicolon:

ninēstosin; ē-nōhtē-kīwēyān.

'I'm tired; I want to go home.'

It is the ōma, therefore, which turns the two clauses into a connected sentence.

In the following example from the texts, the break between the two clauses is emphasized by the inserted itwēw 'he said':

wāhwā, nikawacipayin, itwēw,

mitoni ē-nōkosiyān ōma, itwēw.

'Wow, I got a chill, he said, and by gosh I was
born, he said.' (7-3)

The next sentence has two instances of ōma in this role:

"..." nititāwak ōki awāsisak,

ē-pāhpihakik ōma,

ē-ācimoyān ōma.

"..." I told these children,
and I was joking with them
and I was telling them a story.' (6-1)

Both ōma-clauses seem to be connected to the main clause.

The ōma-clause may also come first, e.g.,

wā, māka mīna ē-kī-misi-kīskwēpēt ōma

ē-kīwēt ēkwa, ...

'Well, he had once again been on a binge
and now he was coming home, ...' (5-5).

The texts contain many other examples of ōma, and it is
sometimes very difficult to discover the syntactic structure of a live
sentence.

OTHER USES OF ōma

With verbs like

nikiskēyihtēn

'I know it'

that which you know can either be expressed by a noun phrase, e.g.,

nikiskēyihtēn ōma.

'I know this.'

or by a whole sentence, e.g.,

nikiskēyihtēn ōma ē-wī-kīwēyan.

'I know that you are going to go home.'

Such sentences are called COMPLEMENT sentences, and the ōma which introduces subordinate sentences of this type is called a COMPLEMENTIZER.

The sentences which follow are typical examples of ōma as a complementizer:

ka-kī-kiskēyihahkik ōma ē-nēhiyāwicik, ...

'They should know that they are Cree, ...' (1-2)

...; ēkwa ē-pēhtahk ōma ēkota ē-ayāyān, ...

'...; and when he heard that I was there, ...' (8-13).

The complementizer ōma belongs to the main clause; it cannot be moved into the subordinate clause. If we want to emphasize it, on the other hand, we can move it to the beginning of the main clause, e.g.,

ōma ka-kī-kiskēyihṭahkik, ē-nēhiyāwicik.

'This they should know, that they are Cree.'

Note that in this sentence the main clause and the subordinate clause are separated by a strong intonation break.

There are, of course, many gaps in this brief survey. ōma has other uses in addition to those we have studied. For example, there may well be other types of sentences with ōma as a complementizer, and we have barely mentioned the role which ōma plays as the head of relative clauses. But a detailed analysis of ōma in all its uses would fill a whole book.

TEACHING WITH TEXTS

The most important type of training that a language teacher needs is to understand how his or her language works. This is the reason why this presentation of Cree grammar has concentrated on the structure of the language. This is a complicated topic by itself, and the discussion of classroom methods would have introduced yet another dimension.

Teachers who want to follow the inquiry method will find many areas in this text-based approach where students can discover a structural point for themselves. For example, a pair of paradigm tables can be compared with the use of transparent overlays. Another obvious technique would be to use the actual text examples which follow each paradigm as the basis of paradigm drills; with person, number and mode, each verb form taken from the texts can be expanded into dozens of drills and conversations -- and if you worry about running out, simply add another preverb!

CREE GRAMMAR

The inflectional paradigms cover only a small part of Cree structure. We have already seen that there are special paradigms which add a whole new dimension to the basic paradigms that we have worked through.

Syntax

Other areas of Cree grammar have barely been mentioned. One is the structure of Cree sentences. The chapter on the syntactic function of particles is only a first attempt to look at this issue, and ōma is only one of the many syntactic particles. Most other areas of Cree syntax have never been touched at all.

Semantics

The meaning of stems, inflected words, and phrases is often very difficult to define in another language. The noun stem

maskihkiy- NI,

for example, is usually translated as 'medicine' but the English word

medicine

and the Cree word

maskihkiy

have only part of their meanings in common. There are many meanings of maskihkiy which are not covered by the word medicine.

Even within Cree, the stem

maskihkiy- NI

can have very different meanings. In the following sentence, for example,

..., nimāh-mākwahtēn maskihkiy ōma, ...

'..., I kept chewing this medicine, ...' (10-7),

maskihkiy refers to a substance used for healing. But it may also mean practically the opposite; in

... iyikohk ē-astāt maskihkiy

nanātohk kistikānihk ē-āpacihtāt.

'... he puts in so many chemicals of all kinds and uses them on the fields.' (4-7)

it refers to fertilizers and poisonous substances.

Sometimes two related meanings are found in what looks like the same word:

kistikān

'a kernel of grain'

'a field'.

But in fact there are two distinct stems:

kistikān- NA

'grain'

kistikān- NI

'field'.

The difference is obvious when you add a demonstrative pronoun:

awa kistikān

'this grain'

ōma kistikān

'this field'.

This example has two further complications. First, you can use the plural of kistikān- NI 'field', e.g.,

kistikāna

'fields'

but there is no plural form for kistikān- NA 'grain' which is a collective noun; it only has a singular form.

Second, the diminutive stem,

kiscikānis- NI,

is ambiguous; in some contexts, it may mean 'a small field' but normally it has the more specialized meaning,

'a garden'.

A similar situation is found with possessed noun stems; when

oskin̄ikiw-

'young man'

is used as the base of a possessive stem,

-oskin̄ikīm-,

a form like

nitōskin̄ikīm

literally means 'my young man'. When it is used in context, it can mean 'my son' but it usually has the specialized meaning,

'my hired man'.

If you want to indicate that there is a close relationship between the possessor and the possessed, you can form a diminutive from the possessed stem:

nicōskin̄ikīmis

'my own hired man'.

This kind of diminutive is also used with inanimate nouns, e.g.,

astotin- NI

'hat'

nitastotin

'my hat'

nicascocinis

'my favourite hat'.

In other words, the diminutive can also be used for terms of endearment.

These are just a few of the semantic patterns that one can find in a set of texts.

Derivation

The last few examples were presented to show differences in meaning; but they also illustrate another very important area of Cree grammar. They show how one stem can be derived from another. This is an area of Cree grammar that is particularly productive.

There are many different types of derivation. Almost any Cree stem can be used as the base of a diminutive; for example:

ispatināw- NI

'hill'

ispacinās- NI

'small hill'

ispatinā- VII

'be a hill'

ispacināsin- VII

'be a small hill'

mistahi IPC

'lots'

miscahīs IPC

'quite a bit'.

Another very common type of derivation is reduplication, e.g.,

mācosi- VAI

'cry a little'

ma-mācosi- VAI

'be crying a little'

ācimo- VAI

'tell a story'

āh-ācimo- VAI

'tell stories'.

The reduplication patterns of Cree are complex, and their meanings can vary a great deal; for a more detailed discussion of this topic see 'Productive reduplication in Plains Cree' (Ahenakew & Wolfart 1983).

In diminutive formation and reduplication, stems keep their stem class; an inanimate noun, for example, stays an inanimate noun. But there are other patterns of derivation which derive nouns from verbs, intransitive verbs from transitive ones, and so on.

Almost any VAI stem can be used as the base of an inanimate noun; all that needs to be done is to add the suffix -win-:

pīkiskwē- VAI

'speak'

pīkiskwēwin- NI

'speech; word'

āhkosi- VAI

'be sick'

āhkosiwin- NI

'sickness'

ācimo- VAI

'tell a story'

ācimowin- NI

'story'.

The meaning of these nouns is often the same as the meaning of the verbs from which they are derived, or at least closely related.

In other kinds of derivation, the meaning may change quite a bit. When you derive intransitive verbs from transitive stems with the suffix -ikē-, for example, the derived stems usually have a more general meaning:

niton- VTI

'look for it'

nitonikē- VAI

'look around'

nakipit- VTI

'stop it'

nakipicikē- VAI

'come to a stop'

ohciyaw- VTA

'win (with something) from him'

ohciyākē- VAI

'win (with something)'.

But sometimes the meaning may also be more specialized:

kisipēkin- VTI

'wash it'

kisipēkinikē- VAI

'wash clothes'

otin- VTI

'take it'

otinikē- VAI

'make a purchase'.

Derivational patterns use one stem or class of stems to form another. But languages also borrow individual words from other languages. The texts, for example, include such proper names as

kānāta NI

'Canada'

pinkow NA

'Bingo'

and also ordinary noun stems such as

savāz- NA

'savage'

which is a loan word from French.

Loan words are usually borrowed one at a time. Many derivational patterns, on the other hand, can be applied to any number of stems; they are an excellent topic for class discussions.

TEXT-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING

It is clear that this introduction to text-based language teaching deals only with a small part of Cree grammar.

Although it is not presented as a set of lesson plans, it is meant as a step-by-step introduction. This is the reason why it moves quite slowly at the beginning, and why the more complicated problems are left for the later part of each section.

Since this book is designed to be used together with wāskahikaniwiyiniw-ācimowina (Ahenakew 1984), a special effort has been made to deal with all the inflectional patterns that are found in these texts. It is not possible, of course, to discuss each word in full detail; but every inflectional form is at least mentioned.

Full paradigms are given for each noun and verb type. This has several advantages over the tables of prefixes and suffixes which are

often found in linguistic works. When you write out the full paradigm, any complications or problems jump right at you. It is also easier to compare full words from one paradigm to another instead of looking at stems and affixes which need to be put together with morpheme-boundary rules. The most important advantage is that these full paradigms do not contain hypothetical morphemes -- they consist of real words.

All the examples in this book are real Cree. Most of them come from running texts; they are labelled by story and paragraph, and you can easily refer back to the full context. In some cases, however, it was easier to use made-up examples to introduce a particular point of grammar. Except for those which have the text label, all the words and sentences in this book represent the speech of the author.

CREE EDUCATION

The main goal of this book is language teaching, and our discussion has concentrated on the linguistic structure of Cree. But the texts from which most of our examples come are not just bits and pieces of sentences; they have a larger text structure as well. In several of them, for example, the main story is enclosed in a much shorter story that serves as a frame; such texts use itwēw 'he said' over and over again to remind the listener of that frame.

Most texts belong to a particular kind of story, and they are easy to recognize if you are familiar with Cree literature. There are

also clear differences of style: a funny little story, for example, uses less elevated Cree than a text that carries the advice of the elders.

Stories are an important part of the Cree way of life, and each story in turn illustrates various aspects of Cree culture. Some stories offer an explicit view of the old times: the elders singing and announcing their decisions as they walk around the camp-circle; or the importance of contests -- this short collection of texts has one story about a dancing contest and another about a contest in story-telling!

In other stories, the Cree way of life is reflected less directly but it is interwoven in all texts. There is always concern for the children, respect for the elders, and laughter shared with those who can laugh about their own misfortunes.

nīswayak kitisi-kiskinahamākonānaw ōhi ācimowina,
k-ēsi-nēhiyawēyahk ēkwa k-ēsi-nēhiyāwiyahk.

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