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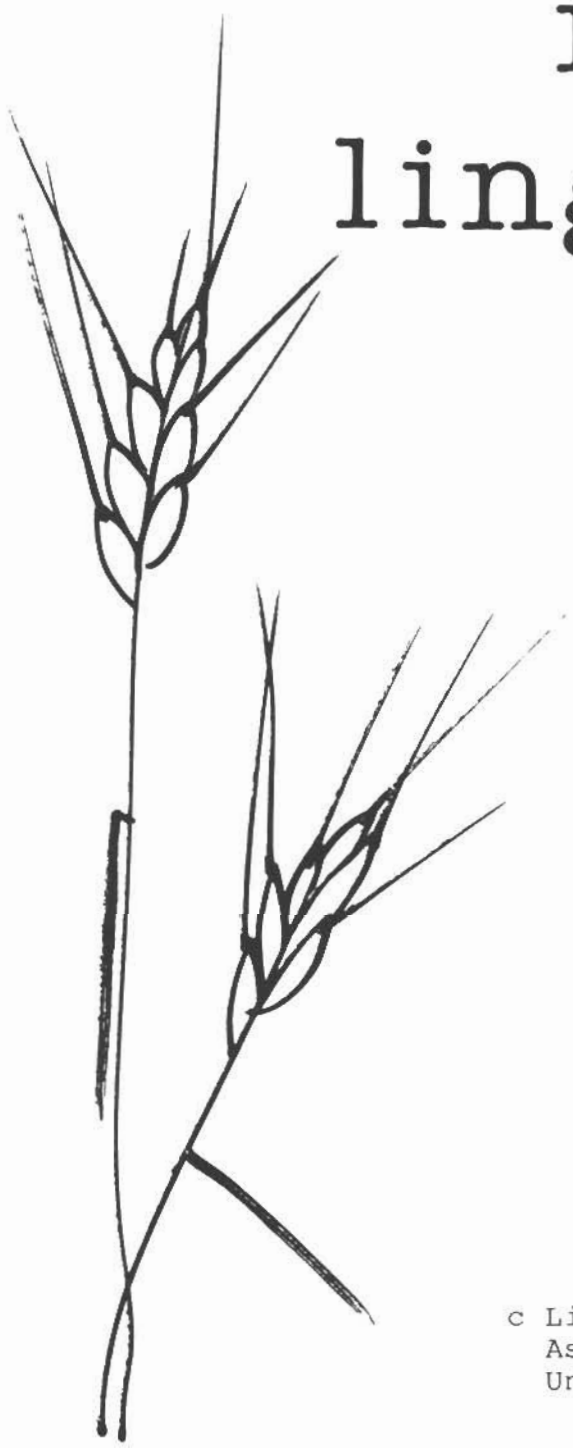

EDITED BY

BETH ABU-ALI
JULIE BRUCH

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Kansas Working Papers in Linguistics

Volume 13, 1988

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A TRANSITIONAL ORTHOGRAPHY FOR NORTHERN CANADIAN NATIVE LANGUAGES

Paul Proulx

Abstract: A phonemic orthography poses serious problems for students from oral cultures, in part due to the very structure of such orthographies and in part due to negative transference from English spelling habits. A syllabic orthography minimizes the structural problems at the level of decoding, but is an obstacle to morpheme recognition and hence grammatical analysis. Early exposure to syllabics, followed by a gradual shift to a phonemic Roman alphabet, may be the most advantageous approach to Native literacy where grammatical analysis is one of its aims.

The central role of a language in defining and expressing social identity makes it the keystone of any programme of cultural preservation, and a prime tool of cultural understanding. It contains information related to a people's prehistory, social organization, art, psychology, and ecological awareness. In addition, it is itself in its structure an expression of a unique manner of organizing sensory data, and thus linking the individual to external reality. In short, it contains within itself nearly all that makes the people who speak it distinct from those of other societies. But while it is the main expression of cultural - and indeed subcultural - identity, language paradoxically has the equally important function of expressing the shared identity of the human race. For languages not only differ from one another, giving each its unique structure, they also share a large number of striking similarities based on the universal properties and tendencies of human language. In these shared features, the languages of the world tell us much about who we are relative to the other animate beings of the planet.

Hence if the function of a Native Studies programme is to provide an understanding of who Native people are, as distinct from other members of the larger society, Native languages are the key. And if it is further desired to make clear the equally important shared identity of human beings of all societies, it again is a vital tool. Little wonder then that the importance of Native languages to Native studies is so widely recognized, and that so much effort has gone into teaching them in this context.

Nevertheless, the teaching of Native languages has been beset

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with a variety of serious problems, leading to burnout in both teachers and students. I have discussed some of these elsewhere (Proulx 1986, 1987a, 1987b, Ms1, Ms2), and suggested approaches to dealing with some of them. Here I would like to consider a purely pedagogical question: how best to introduce literacy skills. My own experience is with Algonquian languages, but much of what I have to say probably applies to Inuktitut and Dene as well.

There are 3 main writing traditions in Algonquian, which we may call scientific, folk, and syllabic. There is little to recommend folk orthographies (based on English spelling habits): they obscure analysis, have high rates of phonetic ambiguity, and their use has been more limited than the other two. (But they do have one strong point, which is attractive to beginning students: they do not involve new spelling habits.) The real choice is between the other two: syllabics, which is in accord with cultural tradition, and phonemic Roman, which opens the door to scholarly work.

The Oral Culture Hypothesis.

In the case of young children and others who have not yet learned to read English, there is much to recommend syllabics. They are in widespread use among the Cree, and learning them is in accord with cultural traditions. Hence, their use early in language learning would be in accord with building on the student's strengths, and would help avoid culture conflict. As long as literacy is aimed only at the basic skills of reading and writing at the community level, syllabics seem fully adequate.

There is also compelling evidence to suggest that syllabaries are more easily learned than alphabets by those with no previous literacy experience. First, Burnaby (1985:108-112) quotes Eleanor Gibson to the effect that for small children: 'phonemic invariance can not be extracted from a smaller speech sample than a syllable', and points out that it is well established that children are better able to deal with syllables than phonemes, and that it is confusing for a student if the orthography in use segments oral speech into different units from those she perceives.

If this is because children have oral thought patterns, should it not also be true of adults from oral cultures? The historical success of syllabic writing systems among Amerindians has often been remarked (e.g., Walker 1984:163), and certainly supports this hypothesis. [In this respect, even recently literate adults may retain the thought patterns of oral culture, as Murdoch (1985:132) has pointed out.]

The main difference between oral and literary traditions is that in the former all information must be remembered, and remembered in

full detail. Whatever is forgotten (by everybody) is lost, and impossible to recover. The finest and most valuable oral composition is gone with the last echoes of its delivery, unless it is possible for someone to remember it. If only a fragment is recalled, only a fragment survives. This is a major obstacle to the accumulation of knowledge, and oral cultures respond in three main ways: (a) by storing vital survival information in the minds of nearly every member of the culture, (b) by making as much learning as possible nonverbal, and (c) by building all complex verbal learning around mneumonic devices.

Epithets, motifs, and stereotyped episodes are typical devices used for expanding memory, especially when information is not put in poetic form. When the amount of material involved is great and narrative prose is required, these larger units are resorted to like parts of a prefabricated house which needs only assembly. Hence, the same ones recur as needed in a host of otherwise independent stories.

Because memory is limited, and knowledge constrained by those limits, it is efficient to manipulate material in large chunks such as phrases and paragraphs and leave the lower levels of composition to tradition. It is well known that we can hold about 5 to 9 discrete bits of information in our short term memory at a time (generally 7). Presumably, then, an oral presentation with up to that number of novel ideas can be remembered, and no more. For in an oral culture, there is no road to long term memory (knowledge) but via short term memory.

What is striking to me about the more successful Native writing systems is that they are almost always syllabic. The 13 letter Micmac alphabet is an isolated exception: the Cherokee, Inuit, Fox, Ojibwa, Cree, and some Dene used a syllabary. Moreover, it is not for want of understanding the principle of the alphabet: the Cree syllabary, for example, has symbols for each of the vowels and consonants alone (used respectively at the beginning and end of syllables). Indeed, Cree can be perfectly well written using only these 16 alphabetic characters - yet Crees learn another 44 to represent CV sequences.

It seems truly amazing that a largely oral people, for whom writing is a difficult task, should learn an extra 44 characters when 16 suffice. However, a clue as to why is provided by comparing 4 transcriptions of a common Cree greeting: ᑕᐧᓯ, ta:nsi, 74 61 3A 6E 73 69, 00101110 10000110 01011100 01110110 11001110 10010001. The first is the product of a transitional oral culture, the second of our own chirographic one, the third is the old hexadecimal code of primitive computers, and the last the ASCII version of binary code (used in modern computers). Clearly, as memory capacity increases so does the length of the written word - while the number of characters used decreases.

Comment hardly seems necessary. Just as the units manipulated in oral compositions are higher level ones than is the case in literary

works, so too oral culture favors the manipulation of higher level phonological units. It is a whole learning strategy involved here, a habitual mode of thought, a traditional way of knowing: evidently only higher level units are handled by short term memory - lower level ones are stored as units in long term memory.[1]

If members of oral cultures are especially disinclined to low level structural analysis, as their literary conventions suggest, syllabics should pose less of a problem for them than alphabetic writing: the syllable is a higher level unit than the phoneme.

Finally, the usefulness of syllabics is supported by the statistics on illiteracy among the Japanese versus the Americans: less than one percent of the former (who use syllabic writing) but about 20 percent of the latter cannot read.

The situation is different for the mature university student, already literate in English. Most of the pedagogical and reference materials are written in scientific orthographies, as are several fine collections of texts. Moreover, phonemic orthographies are the easiest to use when analysing structure. Typically, Cree stems end in consonants, and suffixes begin in a vowel. Thus, most morpheme boundaries divide a CV sequence, which would be written with one syllabic character. This obscuring of morpheme boundaries is especially unfortunate since an orthography that clearly reveals the morphological features of a language is thought to be more efficient for experienced readers (see Burnaby 1985:111). For the university student, with whom we would like to explore its structure and its cultural implications, and read longer texts at the higher speeds that permit better comprehension, mastery of an alphabetic transcription is a great advantage.

Unfortunately, the orthographic conventions which ultimately simplify reading and analysis are initially very confusing to those lacking in linguistic sophistication --- largely because they conflict with English spelling habits. Discussion of the principles of articulatory phonetics and transcription is helpful (see appendix A), but leaves some major problems.

The Transitional Orthography Hypothesis.

In the remainder of this paper I will propose the hypothesis that the main advantages of each of these types of transcription can be incorporated into a transitional orthography for use by Native students in university --- whether or not they have previous knowledge of syllabics --- and that this transitional orthography will then facilitate the gradual acquisition of Roman orthography.

It has been my consistent observation in the course of teaching scientific Roman orthographies to native speakers of Cree and Ojibwa that the most confusing task for them is learning to write the vowels, since their use in phonemic Roman orthography is very different from their various inconsistent uses in English orthography - and hence the learning transfered from the one situation to the other is inappropriate (i.e., there is negative transference). There are serious problems with some of the consonants in some of the orthographies, but these are minor in comparison.

At the same time, there is much justification to the contention that, as a whole, there is positive transference from writing English to writing the Native languages in Roman orthography: the letters are the same, and, in the case of the consonants, so are many of their sounds. One does not have to begin from scratch, as in Syllabics. The problem area is principally the vowels.

If one were to grade the difficulty of writing consonants and vowels in the Roman and Syllabic characters in say Ojibwa, for example, I think one would easily conclude that for the bilingual: (a) the Roman consonants are generally easiest (with positive transference), (b) the 4 Syllabary characters for initial vowels the next (with no transference), (c) the remaining Syllabic characters as a group a bit harder because of their large number, and (d) the Roman vowels hardest (due to persistent negative transference).

This suggests an intriguing idea: suppose, in order to achieve the quick mastery of a structurally transparent orthography, one were to use Roman consonants and the Syllabic vowels. Of course, one could not stop at that point: no resource material exists in such a mixed orthography - and it is not in use anywhere. Either the Roman vowels, or the rest of the Syllabary, would have to be taught - but they could be introduced step by step, at the most pedagogically desirable rate. No general confusion. Meanwhile, courses in Algonquian structure would not be hampered with persistent orthography problems. One could get on with examining the structure of words and sentences.

It may be objected that this means additional graphemes to be learned by students who are often overwhelmed by those they presently are required to learn. To this I answer that it is the cognitive obstacle to learning a particular sound-grapheme correspondence which is the problem, not the number of these correspondences. One need think only of the extra 44 characters the Cree learn for the syllabic transcription of their language (as explained above) to illustrate this point. And the main cognitive obstacle to learning sound-grapheme correspondences is negative transference from the use of vowels in English orthography. (Other obstacles, such as the low acoustic salience of vowel length and some other phonemic contrasts, cannot be resolved by any orthographic convention and are best overcome by the use of minimal pairs.)

The Vowel Order Hypothesis.

The above hypothesis is of course testable, but it seems highly persuasive even prior to such testing. Assuming that it is correct, the real problem becomes assuring a smooth transition to fully Roman orthography (if that is the goal). To this end, the rate and order in which the Roman vowels are best introduced must be determined. I have nothing to say about the rate, which is a practical matter which may vary from class to class.

The order in which vowels are introduced is also a matter for future experimentation. Nevertheless, past examinations can tell us which vowel contrasts present the greatest difficulty. Thus, on a quiz I gave students at Lakehead university on the Roman vowels, the two open vowels a e were most often confused with each other (19 cases); next, the two front vowels i e (with 15 cases); and finally, the two back vowels a o (8 times). Errors in the perception of length (or rather the conscious perception of length) were also common - but this is a separate matter related to salience, rather than to negative transference from English orthography.

Two approaches to the vowel contrasts are possible: one can begin with the points of greatest difficulty, or leave them till last. The latter solution will probably help build selfconfidence in the early part of the course, but may leave the difficult points unmastered by many students. I have therefore chosen to begin with the difficult points, allowing students all the time they need to develop the required skills.

I have therefore produced 4 variants of my literacy materials: (a) one with Syllabic vowels, (b) one in which Roman a and e are introduced and contrasted, (c) one with Roman i and e, and (d) one with all Roman vowels [see appendix B]. They are intended to be used in that sequence.

In the first stage, the points to be learned are the structure of the phonological system (including vowel length and problematic consonant clusters). Roman consonants are used as needed. Completion of this stage gives the students a structural spelling which can then be used for grammatical analysis.

In the second stage, Roman a e are substituted mechanically for their Syllabic counterparts. The students are to work through the same exersizes they did previously, substituting these two vowels appropriately. For further practice, they can write these two vowels in the examples in the Syllabic version of the booklet (using the a/e version as an answer key). In the third stage, the same is done with

Roman i e. [The order of stages 2 and 3 can be reversed where administratively convenient.]

In the last stage, all 4 Roman vowels are used. Here, the Roman version of the booklet can be viewed as merely the answer key for students transliterating the original Syllabic version. (The linguist with no previous knowledge of syllabics can do these excersizes in the reverse order to familiarize herself with the 4 syllabic vowels.)

The booklet is a short one, concentrating on points of difficulty, and it is important that students have additional practice at each stage. This can be done by transcribing and retranscribing at each stage the words used for morphological analysis. In addition to the practice this provides a way of using the skills acquired in phonology classes in a different context, underlining the unity of grammatical analysis.

Once the fourth stage has been reached, it is also time to begin using texts and dictionaries - thus linking grammatical analysis with language learning and literature. Widening the context further, one can introduce the histories of the languages in question - a move which relies heavily on phonological and grammatical analysis. Language history in turn tells of migrations, changes in social structure, economy, and the like.

Most of this is beyond the scope of an introductory course on the structure of Algonquian. Nevertheless, it is important not to lose sight of it - and to share that vision with one's students. Orthographic conventions are only worth learning if they lead to something beyond themselves.

NOTES

1. To the extent that computers replace long term memory, taking on such functions as storing lower level linguistic units, they of course permit the human mind to go on working with higher level units where appropriate. For example, there are a number of programs that store often used words, phrases, or even paragraphs as units for insertion into texts with a single keystroke. In addition, it is always easy to pull one or more paragraphs from one file and to insert them into another as units. That word processors are so constructed as

to make such insertions easy suggests that there are great advantages to allowing the mind to work chiefly with higher level linguistic units. Moreover, sophisticated spelling checkers are further freeing humans from close attention to low level units. In these respects, a computer culture may come to more closely resemble an oral than a literate one.

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APPENDIX A: INSTRUCTIONS ON ARTICULATORY PHONETICS AND PHONEMICS FOR ALGONQUIAN

Sitting in a quiet and somewhat private place, experiment for a few moments with making sounds with your voice. Notice that as long as your mouth is open and air is comming up from your lungs, some sound is being produced. The quality of that sound depends mainly on the position of the tongue and lips, and on how wide you open your jaw. You can make quite a variety of sounds, some of which are used in your own language - some of which are not. Try it, and notice how each movement of the tongue, lips, or jaw changes the sound.

Now try this. With your tongue forward and low in the mouth (just back of the teeth), and your lips spread as in a smile, open your jaw wide and produce a sound. This is the sound your doctor asks you to make before looking down your throat. This sound will be written ◁ in this booklet, and is common in the Algonquian languages.

Slowly raise your tongue and jaw, closing your mouth, and notice how the sound changes. When your mouth is almost fully closed you have another of the common sounds of Algonquian, which we write **A**. Half way between the two is a sound we write **∀**.

Once again open your mouth wide, but with the tongue pulled back away from the teeth, and the lips rounded as for kissing. The sound you produce is just a variety of ◁ (as far as most Algonquian languages are concerned) - but this is Micmac **ô**. As you close your mouth and pucker your lips more and more into the kissing position, you finally come to **u**. Half way between, was ▷. A few Algonquian languages have both **u** and ▷, but most have only an intermediate sound usually written ▷.

Now, what you have just been experimenting with is the science of articulatory phonetics, or how speech sounds are produced. It is important to be aware of how to produce the sounds of a language you are learning or teaching, and to learn to write each one correctly in its proper sequence.

The sounds you have been experimenting with are the main vowel sounds of Algonquian. Notice we have not said anything about the exact phonetic details, which may vary considerably from language to language, and even from person to person. What <u>is</u> important is that in most Algonquian languages these 4 sounds are kept distint from each other, and can thus be used for distinguishing words. Such distinctive sounds are called <u>phonemes</u>.

It is very important not to try writing Algonquian phonemes using English vowels the way they are 'usually' pronounced - an innocent looking shortcut which leads to hopeless confusion.

Another important point to notice is that, phonetically speaking, we cannot really count the possible vowel sounds. As you slowly closed your mouth from ᐊ to ᐱ and from ᐊ to **u**, the sound varied gradually.

Each language recognizes some of these variation as significant, but not others. Quechua, an Indian language of South America, recognizes only the 3 end points ᐊ ᐱ **u**. Most Algonquian languages recognize one or two of the midpoints as well. English recognizes even more. This choice of a language to recognize certain sound variations and not others is called the phonemics of that language.

Because each language is phonemically unique, comparisons of the sounds of two languages are never completely accurate. However, we can say roughly that the ᐊ in each Algonquian language is a bit like the ᐊ in each of the others, and even like the first vowels in the English words 'car' and 'father'. Similarly, the Algonquian ᐯs are quite similar to each other, and to the first vowels in the English words 'bat', 'bet', and 'bay'.

This last point is a good illustration of how languages differ phonemically: English 'bet' and 'bat' are different words with different sounds as far as English is concerned - but these two sounds are considered the same in all Algonquian languages.

Another way in which sounds vary is depending on where they come: at the end of a word, in the middle, next to some other sound, etc. But these are small variations.

Vowels not only vary as to the way they are articulated with the tongue, lips and jaw - they vary in length as well. Consider the English words 'bat' and 'bad'. As far as English is concerned, they have the same vowel and different consonants. But in some of the Algonquian languages (especially in some dialects) the 2 consonants would be heard as 'the same', while the two vowels would be heard as differing in length. Listen to them carefully: which sounds longer?

[This may be a good time to point out that old English and middle English had true long and short vowels like Algonquian. Because of this historical fact, some English texts refer to the modern English versions of these vowels as 'long' and 'short'. But this is a misleading usage: these vowels simply have different points of articulation in modern English.]

Because the difference in length among vowels is not great, and short vowels tend to lengthen when we slow down our speech, it is hard for the student to really become aware of the difference. One way is to listen to the rhythm of words: the longer vowels tend to be stressed more. Another is by listening to minimal pairs:

Micmac:

◁bA 'bow' --- ◁̇bA 'net'

gV̈s◁l◁tl 'she loves him' --- gV̈s◁̇l◁tl 'she hurts him'

V̈bAt 'she sits' --- V̈̇bAt 'woman'

nV̈b◁h 'it's sleeping' --- nV̈̇b◁h 'I killed him'

V̈smAb 'she fed me' --- V̈smȦb 'you (sg.) fed me'

nV̈m▷lôh 'she sees you (pl.)' --- nV̈m▷lôôh 'they see you (pl.)'

n▷gw◁̇tôh 'she softens it' --- n▷̇gw◁tôh 'she burns it'

Western Ojibwa:

◁gAm 'count him' --- ◁̇gAm 'snowshoe'

d◁g▷shAn◁n 'if you (sg.) arrive' --- d◁g▷shAn◁̇n 'if I arrive'

w◁̇b◁m◁d 'if you see him' --- w◁b◁m◁̇d 'if she sees him'

Moose Cree:

s◁k◁hAk◁n 'nail' --- s◁̇k◁hAk◁n 'lake'

nApAy 'water' --- nȦpAy 'leaf'

◁skAhk 'kettle, pail' --- ◁skȦhk 'on the earth'

kAsAs▷w 'she is too hot' --- kȦsAs▷w 'she is cooked'

Plains Cree:

◁s◁m 'feed him' --- ◁s◁̇m 'snowshoe'

Notice that the long vowels of Micmac are much longer than those of Cree or Ojibwa - in fact, the <u>short</u> vowels of Micmac resemble the <u>long</u> ones in these languages. The point is, regardless of the actual length, there are pairs of vowels in each language with one longer than the other. It is the <u>difference</u> between the two which distinguishes words, and is therefore phonemic.

Notice too that there are several ways of marking a long vowel:

it may be written double, followed by a colon [:], and a macron or one of the accent marks may be placed over it. All these transcriptions have been used in most of the languages, and should be considered equivalent.

The scientific tradition for writing consonants in the Algonquian languages is pretty much in keeping with the orthographic practises of English, made more consistent. For example, c is used as in 'chat', never as in 'cat' - and g as in 'go', never as in 'wage'.

Here we are only concerned with the writing traditions of the Algonquian languages in a general way: the details of the orthographies of each language must be found elsewhere.

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE OF WESTERN OJIBWA

With Syllabic Vowels.

The alphabet: ᐊ, ᐁ, b, ch, d, ᐯ, g, h, ', ᐋ, ᐃ, j, k, m, n, ᐅ, ᐄ, p, s, sh, t, w, y, z, zh. These may be presented in the form of a table:

	lb	dn	al	ve	gt	front	back
voiceless stops	p	t	ch	k	'	ᐃ, ᐋ	ᐄ, ᐅ
voiced stops	b	d	j	g		ᐯ	
-voi. fricatives		s	sh		h	ᐁ, ᐊ	
+voi. fricatives		z	zh				
nasals	m	n					
semivowels	w		y				

Short Vowels. Ojibwa has 3 short vowels: ᐋ ᐊ ᐅ. Here they are at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of a word:

ᐋ	ᐋshkᐅdᐯ	ᐋnᐋnᐋ	nᐊmᐊdᐊbᐋ
ᐊ	ᐊbwᐋ	ᐊnᐊng	mᐃkᐊnᐊ
ᐅ	ᐅdᐁbᐁn	zhᐁbᐅnᐋgᐊn	mᐋndᐋdᐅ

Translation:

fire	man	she sits down
paddle	star	road
car	needle	she is big

Write the following words in Ojibwa, one group at a time, using the correct vowels. Then check the answer key and practise till you get them all right.

a. (1) water, (2) man, (3) my arm, (4) tree, (5) cow, (6) three.

b. (1) net, (2) she knocks rice, (3) it's foggy, (4) bear, (5) it's difficult.

c. (1) stone, (2) it's night, (3) beaver, (4) shoe, moccasin.

d. (1) her foot, (2) potato, (3) she plays, (4) dog, (5) she sings, (6) she's dead.

a. (1) n_ b_ , (2) _ n_ n_ , (3) n_ n_ k, (4) m_ t_ g,

(5) b_ zh_ k_ , (6) n_ sw_ .

b. (1) _ s_ b, (2) b_ w_ '_ m, (3) _ w_ n, (4) m_ kw_ ,

(5) z_ n_ g_ d.

c. (1) _ s_ n, (2) d_ b_ k_ d, (3) _ m_ k, (4) m_ k_ z_ n.

d. (1) _ z_ d, (2) _ p_ n, (3) _ d_ m_ n_ , (4) _ n_ m_ sh,

(5) n_ g_ m_ / n_ g_ m_ , (6) n_ b_ .

Answer Key

a. (1) nÁbÁ, (2) ÁnÁnÁ, (3) nÁnÁk, (4) mÁtÁg, (5) bÁzhÁkÁ,

(6) nÁswÁ.

b. (1) ◁s◁b, (2) b◁w◁'◁m, (3) ◁w◁n, (4) m◁kw◁, (5) z◁n◁g◁d.

c. (1) ◁sȧn, (2) dȧbȧk◁d, (3) ◁mȧk, (4) m◁kȧzȧn.

d. (1) ▷zȧd, (2) ▷pȧn, (3) ▷d◁mȧn▷, (4) ◁nȧm▷sh,
(5) n◁g◁m▷/ nȧg◁m▷, (6) nȧb▷.

With Mixed Vowels.

The alphabet: a, aa, b, ch, d, e, g, h, ', ȧ, ȧ̇, j, k, m, n, ▷, ▷̇, p, s, sh, t, w, y, z, zh. These may be presented in the form of a table:

	lb	dn	al	ve	gt	front	back
voiceless stops	p	t	ch	k	'	ȧ̇, ȧ	▷̇, ▷
voiced stops	b	d	j	g		e	
-voi. fricatives		s	sh		h		aa, a
+voi. fricatives		z	zh				
nasals	m	n					
semivowels	w		y				

Short Vowels. Ojibwa has 3 short vowels: ȧ a ▷. Here they are at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of a word:

ȧ	ȧshk▷de	ȧnȧnȧ	namadabȧ
a	abwȧ	anang	ṁȧkana
▷	▷daabaan	zhaab▷nȧgan	mȧndȧd▷

Translation:

fire	man	she sits down
paddle	star	road
car	needle	she is big

Write the following words in Ojibwa, one group at a time, using the correct vowels. Then check the answer key and practise till you

get them all right.

a. (1) water, (2) man, (3) my arm, (4) tree, (5) cow, (6) three.

b. (1) net, (2) she knocks rice, (3) it's foggy, (4) bear, (5) it's difficult.

c. (1) stone, (2) it's night, (3) beaver, (4) shoe, moccasin.

d. (1) her foot, (2) potato, (3) she plays, (4) dog, (5) she sings, (6) she's dead.

a. (1) n_ b_ , (2) _ n_ n_ , (3) n_ n_ k, (4) m_ t_ g,

(5) b_ zh_ k_ , (6) n_ sw_ .

b. (1) _ s_ b, (2) b_ w_ '_ m, (3) _ w_ n, (4) m_ kw_ , (5) z_ n_ g_ d.

c. (1) _ s_ n, (2) d_ b_ k_ d, (3) _ m_ k, (4) m_ k_ z_ n.

d. (1) _ z_ d, (2) _ p_ n, (3) _ d_ m_ n_ , (4) _ n_ m_ sh,

(5) n_ g_ m_ / n_ g_ m_ , (6) n_ b_ .

Answer Key

a. (1) nÁbÁ, (2) ÁnÁnÁ, (3) nÁnÁk, (4) mÁtÁg, (5) bÁzhÁkÁ,

(6) nÁswÁ.

b. (1) asab, (2) bawa'am, (3) awan, (4) makwa, (5) zanagad.

c. (1) asÁn, (2) dÁbÁkad, (3) amÁk, (4) makÁzÁn.

d. (1) ▷zÁd, (2) ▷pÁn, (3) ▷damÁn▷, (4) anÁm▷sh,

(5) nagam▷/ nÁgam▷, (6) nÁb▷.

With Roman Vowels.

The alphabet: A, AA, B, CH, D, E, G, H, ', I, II, J, K, M, N, O, OO, P, S, SH, T, W, Y, Z, ZH. These may be presented in the form of a table:

	lb	dn	al	ve	gt	front	back
voiceless stops	p	t	ch	k	'	ii, i	oo, o
voiced stops	b	d	j	g		e	
-voi. fricatives		s	sh		h	aa, a	
+voi. fricatives		z	zh				
nasals	m	n					
semivowels	w		y				

Short Vowels. Ojibwa has 3 short vowels: i a o. Here they are at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of a word:

i	**i**shkode	in**i**ni	namadab**i**
a	**a**bwi	an**a**ng	miikan**a**
o	**o**daabaan	zhaab**o**nigan	mindid**o**

translation:

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d. (1) her foot, (2) potato, (3) she plays, (4) dog, (5) she sings,

(6) she's dead.

Answer Key

a. (1) nibi, (2) inini, (3) ninik, (4) mitig, (5) bizhiki, (6) niswi.

b. (1) asab, (2) bawa'am, (3) awan, (4) makwa, (5) zanagad.

c. (1) asin, (2) dibikad, (3) amik, (4) makizin.

d. (1) ozid, (2) opin, (3) odamino, (4) animosh, (5) nagamo/ nigamo, (6) nibo.