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INUUGATTA

IQALUIT, NUNAVUT | FEB. 24-26, 2015



Summary of Presentations and Recommendations

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The statements and comments reflected in this report are shared to provide a summary of discussions during the Inuugatta Language Conference. The views and opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the position of the Government of Nunavut or its partners and are provided for reference only.

INTRODUCTION



As Nunavut's Minister of Languages, George Kuksuk welcomes participants of the Inuugatta Language Conference.

The Inuugatta Language Conference was jointly hosted by the Language Commissioner and the Minister of Languages, in collaboration with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and the Inuit Uqausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtiit, from February 24-26, 2015 in Iqaluit. Over 70 participants came from around Nunavut, and other areas of the circumpolar world and Canada to attend the conference.

Enacted in 2008, Nunavut's *Official Languages Act* and *Inuit Language Protection Act* protect, promote and affirm the importance of Inuktitut for the future of Inuit society. The Inuugatta Language Conference served as an impassioned forum to reflect on aspects of language protection while providing insight into implementation challenges and innovative grassroots initiatives.

While Inuktitut is considered one of the strongest Indigenous languages in Canada, its usage continues to be under pressure which may threaten its long term viability. Through effective collaboration, understanding and dedicated

teaching and learning, Inuit will ensure Inuktitut not only survives, but thrives in modern society.

Participants shared their personal stories of language loss and their struggle to regain pride in their identity as Inuit. Many tears were shed as participants, youth, adults and Elders discussed their passion for language and cultural revitalization. The heartwarming accounts by individuals, families and community groups on how they were reclaiming Inuktitut within the family, community, region and territory, set the stage for an inspired discussion on how to strengthen Inuktitut throughout our Territory, while connecting with fellow Inuit from across all circumpolar Inuit regions.

Presenters discussed the status, history and importance of Inuktitut today, and its role in promoting the social and cultural well-being of Inuit. Participants discussed the revitalization of indigenous and minority languages, and considered steps that may be needed to further enhance and strengthen the linkage between language, culture and identity.



Sandra Inuitiq, Nunavut's Language Commissioner addresses the delegation".



Jerry Puglik and Julia Ogina sharing a dance, with members of the Qitirmiut Drummers singing and drumming

This report provides an overview of the presentations, emergent themes and recommendations. Outcomes and recommendations will guide the government and its partners in planning the next steps to further revitalize and strengthen the use of Inuktitut as a means to sustain and showcase Inuit identity and culture.

NAKINNGAAQPITA?

Where did we come from? On the first day of the Inuugatta Language Conference, sessions reflected on the history of our language and culture and how events have shaped the use of our language. We also heard on the importance of keeping Inuit culture alive through language.

“My hope is that the future generations can speak with confidence to the older generation with support rather than fear”

Jamie Takkiruuq, Gjoa Haven



COLONIZATION & LANGUAGE

The history of colonization continues to have deep intergenerational impacts on language and culture. Panelists spoke passionately about the need to ensure that future generations are equipped with the resources, tools and familial/community support to foster language learning and revitalization.

Natan Obed, Director of Social and Cultural Development at Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, focused his discussion on the effects of language elimination during colonization and the ensuing disparities that remain today. Historically, language was targeted as a means of assimilation as it created an unnatural divide amongst families, essentially causing a long term break down in familial relationships. This has ultimately led to language erosion in Inuit society. As a result of colonialism, often Inuit are of the mindset that Inuktitut is not as important as English/French.

Language was targeted during residential schools because it relates to power and creates an unnatural divide among families.

Natan Obed



Emali Kolola and Daniel Kolola with their mother, Oleena Nowyook, sharing Inuktitut music as a family, with delegates to the conference.



Natan Obed, speaking about the need for Inuktitut to be given priority.

Colonialism, in effect, has pitted Inuit against Inuit in that often, parents see a better future for their children in English rather than Inuktitut. This is compounded by an inequity in Inuktitut funding across Nunavut which is exemplified in the funding disparity of English/French versus Inuktitut within the education system. This is an example of the continued colonialism that exists today. In order to overcome historical trauma, Inuktitut must be given priority for our way forward.

Becky Kilabuk discussed her personal journey of language loss and the difficulty she faced in overcoming this loss. As the Youth Programs Coordinator at Qikiqtani Inuit Association, she stressed the seriousness of language loss and identity struggles. Youth who suffer from language inability often face feelings of inadequacy that affects them in all facets of their lives. According to Kilabuk, this is a direct result of colonialism. While the younger generation did not endure the hardships of their parents, the intergenerational impact is felt by youth and is exemplified

by the number of social issues present today. In an effort to revitalize and re-engage youth in using Inuktitut, language specific media related tools should be developed (i.e. books, applications, videos etc.) for educational and learning opportunities that are fun for children and youth.

Language loss is serious in that it affects life- for young people, it touches the core of our identity and who we are.

Becky Kilabuk

Miriam Aglukkaq and Gamailee Kilukishak, both members of the *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit Katimajit* described an Inuit society whereby the Inuktitut language was used as a form of cooperation and survival. Inuit thrived in harsh conditions because of language and what was taught through traditional Inuit knowledge. Both stress the need for cooperation amongst the generations to ensure that our language continue to thrive. Intergenerational transfer of knowledge can and should still occur through traditional activities. Language, in essence, cannot be separated from culture and identity.



“We must encourage people and not let people feel shy or shame in trying to learn.”

Miriam Aglukkaq

LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION

Inuit from the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Nunavik, Nunatsiavut and Greenland have all taken steps to revitalize culture and language and prepared detailed action plans. As language is all encompassing, any decisions related to the future of language revitalization or programming must include strong community support.

*Now is the time to take action.
The most important thing to
remember as Inuit is we are
all together, youth, Elders, all
ages... we are not alone.*

Bartholemy Nirlungayuq



Jamie Takkiruaq and Jerry Puglik perform an Inuinnaqtun drumdance with the Qitirmiut Drummers

Qitirmiut Language Revitalization Framework

Panelists from Qitirmiut included Julia Ogina, Bartholemy Nirlungayuq, Doris Angohaitok, Sarah Jancke and Jamie Takkiruaq. Under the leadership of Julia Ogina from the Kitikmeot Inuit Association, they presented an inspiring grassroots approach to language revitalization in a region that has suffered significant language loss. They highlighted some of their projects to revitalize and protect Inuinnaqtun and Nattilingmiutut dialects.

Their approach includes cultivating a positive attitude towards learning Inuktitut and encouraging communities to initiate local language initiatives. It is important to educate youth on past historic injustices and provide a forum for envisioning what the future looks like for individual Inuit. While recognizing that organizations are important to help with language revitalization, if a shift in language revitalization is to occur, it must start amongst families first followed by parallel efforts at the educational and community levels.

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Qitirmiut presenters

As an Elder, Bartholemy Nirlungayuq spoke of the work in the region to retain culture and language, by encouraging youth and Elders to come together, and talk about any problems they may face. As Inuit, we are all in this journey together -be it the youth, Elders, or families. Doris Angohaitok provided an analogy of working together via the 'ulu'. Like the ulu handle and blade, government agencies and families must work together to ensure that we pass on language to the next generation. Residential school has had an impact on language loss. In order to reclaim what was lost, joint efforts begin with parents helping children at home, followed by government and community supports.

There must be a vision of what the future looks like for Inuit- everybody has a different vision that they see for the future.

Sarah Jancke

Sarah Jancke, Program Coordinator with Kitikmeot Inuit Association spoke passionately about her personal journey to keep culture and language alive. She credits her lineage of strong survivors that are part of this generation's cultural foundation. Jancke strives to educate youth on the past history of colonialism and provide forums for the visioning of the future for young Inuit. In her role, Jancke

teaches cultural values through her work and drumming. She considers it her duty to share amongst the youth that which she is taught by the Elders. While there are significant challenges with language implementation, youth are required and need to act as advocates in shaping their future society.

Jamie Takkiruiq hopes that the younger generation will provide a perspective otherwise unheard of by organizations and agencies responsible for language revitalization. His hopes are for a future bilingual Inuit society. In order to make it possible, Takkiruiq suggests that people need to share ideas and more importantly, need to accept each other's ideas. Language learners need to be able to learn without fear of judgment, as sharing and the acceptance of varying opinions can make a difference for youth. His hope is that the future generations can speak with confidence to older generations without the fear of humiliation.

Nunakput Language Revitalization Activities

Lillian Elias is an Inuvialuit interpreter, translator and linguist with a passion and love for languages. In residential school, her mother told her to learn English but to never forget her own language because it is who she is and it is a part of her identity. She is honoured to see children learning the language as it makes them proud of their identity. In her role, she provides Inuvialuit specific resource materials to promote language revitalization targeted at young learners. Elias feels that it is a challenge, given that children are over exposed to the dominant language of English.

Her teaching method involves showing young people visuals and sounds in addition to bringing in Elders into

"My mother told me to learn English but to never forget your own language because it is who you are."

Lillian Elias



the classroom. Her belief is that educational tools must be combined with traditional land activities to foster true learning. Language lessons on the land in conjunction with sharing knowledge via traditional skills are key to language learning.

The mandate of the Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre, established in 1988, includes the preservation and revitalization of Inuvialuktun language and creating/developing teaching resources for schools. The centre provides second language curriculum used by teachers, oral history recordings and a community language program for the 6 communities in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region.

Nunatsiavut Language Revitalization Strategy

Jodi Lane from the Nunatsiavut Government provided an overview of their Language Revitalization Strategy. In Nunatsiavut, Inuktut is on the verge of extinction. In 2007, the Torngasok Culture Centre committed to preserve and promote Inuit culture and revitalize Inuktut language and develop a language program to teach Inuktut to adults. This resulted in the Labrador Inuktut Training Program (LITP). The program teaches adults by using useful sentences

instead of teaching grammar. Teaching focuses on conversational Inuktut. The focus is on adults so they can converse with children who are learning Inuktut in school. The ultimate goal of the program is to teach words, phrases and sentences that can be put to immediate use.

This is a 2 year program in 6 week modules. It is delivered as full day classes with morning instruction and community based learning in the afternoon. This is combined with land based modules (i.e. fishing, hunting etc.) within a 35 module curriculum. The intent is for an initial delivery in one community with the end goal to deliver in every community until it is no longer required in Nunatsiavut.

The Nunatsiavut Government anticipates beginning delivery in September 2015 in partnership with Memorial University. This initiative arose as a result of a recommendation within Memorial University's Aboriginal Task Force that recommended an education program for Inuit. As a result, the Inuit Bachelor of Education (IBED) was created and a full Bachelor of Education program was devised with an Inuit specific cultural content that focuses on individuals who want to return to Nunatsiavut to teach. Within the IBED is the LTIP program that will enable future IBED graduates to be able to teach in Inuktut.



Joelle Sanguya, dressed in sealskin, provided a humorous presentation about clothing required for hunting in the Arctic.

Inuktut is a treasure that Canada must protect, and elevate to the same level of protection and value as other languages (French/English). Canada must take an equal role in protecting and revitalizing Inuktut.

Zebedee Nungak



Zebedee Nungak, left, with others playing music, while Lasaloosie Ishulutak of Pangnirtung dances.

Iilirijavut: The State of Inuttut in Nunavik

Zebedee Nungak presented that the Avataq Cultural Institute embarked on a three and a half year journey of consultations with Inuit stakeholders to examine the status and health of Inuktut in Nunavik. The project report entitled ‘*Inuktituurniup Saturtaugasuarninga*’ articulates early warning signs of Inuktut’s demise that should serve as notice to governments that extraordinary actions will be required to revitalize Inuktut. Staff from Avataq travelled to all communities in Nunavik and conducted a series of workshops for adults then young students. The objectives of the workshops were to: diagnose the status and health of Inuktut by assessing the threats to language, identifying language revitalization priorities, and formulate action plans which could be implemented.

5 recommendations arose from the community consultations and report:

1. Culture and language need revitalization
2. A body is needed that oversees language and language development and the development of vocabulary
3. More culture and language content is needed in our schools and our recreational centres
4. More teachers, translators and resources are needed for the teaching of Inuktut
5. More arts and cultural expression are needed to support language efforts

Nungak recounts how during constitutional discussion with Canada, leaders spoke in Inuktut thereby announcing to Canada that our language is strong and present. The history of Nunavimmiut struggle within the Quebec language rights movements resulted in a continual fight for acknowledgment of Inuit language rights themselves. Indigenous languages are not equally supported within the Canadian constitutional framework. Our governments need to value our languages through equalization of funding.

Paaseqatigiissa - Kalaallisut for Everyone

Pia Lyngé from Naalakkersuisut, the Government of Greenland, presented a draft plan to provide more support to learn and use Kalaallisut, including among Kalaallit for whom it may not be their first language. The proposal arose as a result of a debate in Inatsisartut, the Parliament of Greenland, in 2013, where Members wanted everyone in Greenland to be able to speak Kalaallisut. The program is based on the idea that all school children should be able to become proficient in Kalaallisut and all adults who want to speak it must be given the opportunity to learn it. Kalaallit should be given the possibility to further use their language in all everyday situations within their homeland.

An action plan was devised in 2014 with the goals to:

- Provide statistics of the number of students in Grade 10 who are unable to speak Kalaallisut
- Explore the possibility of introducing language courses for people coming from abroad
- Determine how many and for how long foreigners stay in Greenland
- Provide recommendations on how to increase proficiency in Kalaallisut for Danish and non-Danish speaking population and
- Develop a working group to establish realistic goals, determine costs, while assessing pros/cons of each of the options.

The plan identifies three target groups: students, preschoolers and second language learners. The working group reviewed the proposed initiatives, and made recommendations on relevant funding.



NANIILIQPITA?

Where are we today? On the second day of the Inuugatta Language Conference, sessions reflected on our responsibility as individuals to demand respect for our language rights, but also the need to show respect to ourselves, our culture and our language.

“Strong leadership and partnerships are needed from governments, Inuit organizations, community groups, businesses, families and individuals. It is only with a high level of collaboration that Inuit will overcome future challenges.”

Louis Tapardjuk



Paul Quassa, Paul Okalik, Jeela Palluq-Cloutier and Louis Macombre proudly display copies of “Our language, our leadership”



The Inuit Circumpolar Region

- Alaska Inuit
- Greenland Inuit
- Canadian Inuit

Inuktitut Dialects

- Aivilik
- Inuinnaqtun
- Kivalliq
- Nattilingmiutut
- North Baffin
- Nunavik
- South Baffin

INUKTUURIAQARNIQ IT STARTS WITH US

Panelists discussed the need to ensure language rights are treated as fundamental human rights, to entrench language into all facets of our daily life, and, as individuals, that we must speak and use it with pride, and actively pass it on to our children, at home, where it all starts.

Louis Tapardjuk, Former Minister of Languages

Tapardjuk discussed his personal journey through residential school and language loss which has encouraged him to undertake the lifelong goal of protecting and promoting Inuktitut. Tapardjuk states that as Inuit, our culture and language deserve respect as it is the key to the future for Inuit. With the passing of Elders, Nunavummiut are becoming increasingly concerned about the lack of Inuit knowledge and wisdom that is passed down to the younger generations. Expectations of this intergenerational transmission began to increase when the territory of Nunavut was created. Culture and language was to be a priority with the creation of the territory.

Tapardjuk believes that it is our responsibility to adapt to the different lifestyle currently in place and acknowledge the change while seeking solutions. Inuktitut is essential to creating healthy communities and Inuit need to translate traditional values into a modern context to achieve true self-determination.

Seán Ó Cuirreáin, Former Irish Commissioner

Seán Ó Cuirreáin provided an overview of language survival through intergenerational transmission, language rights and institutional support. There are over 6000 languages spoken around the world, but 90% are endangered. The threat of language extinction is a common and universal problem. Ensuring language survival requires a sufficient number of speakers, ensuring it is used in all facets of daily life, and developing language tools and resources.

A language encapsulates the unique way in which the many generations of people who have lived here before us have related to one another, to the landscape, to the other world.

Seán Ó Cuirreáin

Governments must view language rights as on par with all other fundamental human rights. There is often a hierarchy of rights placing language rights nearing the bottom. Language rights deserve respect because it is the right thing to do, but also because the law or a regulation requires it.

It is not enough for governments or administration to save languages. Individuals must also be accountable for creating the place and space for language survival. Enacting legislation is not an end. It should be seen as just the beginning where respect and required support ensue. There is also a public obligation to be aware of individual language rights. This is especially important for parents who have an obligation for intergenerational transmission. Once the train of intergenerational transmission is broken, individuals lose their inherited language and it can only be learned through education. Respecting our past and heritage means people have an obligation to pass it on by creating the opportunities to speak it with pride.

The majority community also has a responsibility to create a space of tolerance and acceptance for speakers of minority languages. Linguistic diversity is important for human diversity. Universally, education is vital to ensuring respect for all languages, and a key element to language survival.

Naullaq Arnaquq, Department of Culture and Heritage

Naullaq Arnaquq is a Ph.D. Candidate at the University of Prince Edward Island. She provided an overview of colonization and the effects of language on those who were colonized. She presented a timeline from the residential school period outlining policies and programs that were implemented to strip Inuit of Inuktut. Following the residential school period, a revival of Inuktut was seen in the early 1980's. This era was the beginning of the impetus to reclaim cultural and linguistic identity through formalized institutions and programming. As a result, Inuit specific educational programs were designed and developed with a cultural foundation as a starting point.

The creation of Nunavut allowed for more structures for language support. The focus from the Government's perspective is now strengthen language use through increased Inuit employment while delivering culturally relevant programs. The Government must keep the vision of the language acts alive by prioritizing early learning programs, language learning models and training.

Tida Ravn, Greenlandic Journalist

Tida Ravn recounted her personal journey on reclaiming Kalaallisut following her own revelation that she had lost her language. Many fellow Kalaallit who only spoke Danish, thought that Kalaallisut had no future. Through songs, she began encouraging friends to speak Kalaallisut with her. Adult learning often mimics children's learning through



“We need to have our circumpolar community brought together. The global strength of Inuktut needs to improve and we can share it with the world.”

Tida Ravn

songs. Adults need to encourage rather than scold youth who are not considered “good” in Kalaallisut. As learners, nobody should be ashamed, people must be able to ask questions and approach fluent speakers for help. Fluent speakers should never turn down those who want to ask, as learning has no age limitations.

Dialectical differences transcend borders. Our language will have a future because of our identity. Ravn asserts that we cannot wholly depend on leaders but rather people must instruct them on ideas to move forward. As circumpolar Inuit, we all have a role in embracing, promoting and strengthening language throughout the circumpolar world. Inuit must do so because it is an obligation to our children and future generations. We need to unify and strengthen our circumpolar identity to show the global strength of Inuktitut.

Angirrattinni - It Starts At Home

Panelists spoke passionately about the inter-generational language transmission. Ragili Piungituq discussed traditional family roles in Inuit society and how language transmission is learnt through observation at home. Mother and daughter, Elisapee Aningmiuq and Miali Coley, also provided insight into how intergenerational language transmission starts at home and affects cultural identity. This was followed by a touching presentation from Bernice and Justin Clarke on the challenges with passing on language in an English dominant society.

Panelists expressed that encouraging Inuktitut, in any form and capacity, brings a sense of pride to one’s cultural identity both within the home and in the community at large. Language within the household represents, for Inuit families, reclamation of what was lost during colonization. It represents not only the passing on of language but more broadly it affirms Inuit culture and identity.

A common theme throughout the presentations was the need for acceptance, tolerance and support for all peoples wishing to learn or relearn Inuktitut. It is clear that Inuit are at a critical juncture in language retention and promotion and there needs to be greater targeted efforts toward language initiatives, particularly amongst youth and children. Most importantly, any language initiatives should always be taught in a cooperative and judgment free manner.



Ragili Piungituq addressed the conference and shared her views regarding the importance of language.

Ragili Piungituq, from the Ilisaqsivik Society of Clyde River, discussed the role of families and the use of Inuktitut. She believes both are intrinsically linked and are very personal decisions that are at the core of a family unit. Today, many families struggle with living in a wage economy which impacts how Inuit transfer Inuktitut to children. She recounted her personal story of having been taught everything she knows by her mother which includes: how to be a sewer, hunter, home keeper and wife. Her father helped her mother bring her into the world with nothing; the family continued on with their travels the next day and still, she is here today, as survivor in this world.

Elisapee Aningmiuq recounted how in Iqaluit, change occurred when the schools opened and children started speaking English. Speaking Inuktitut was then punished, often with violence. This has left long standing pains and struggles for an entire generation of Inuit. She discussed how she realized she felt so lost and unable to give her culture to her children. She did however, give them her language as she wanted to show those teachers who punished her for speaking Inuktitut that she was able to succeed with her own language. She now feels the most urgent issue is teaching children in Inuktitut, at daycare, schools, and at higher levels. Inuit cannot move forward in society without making Inuktitut a priority today.



Miali Coley and her mother, Elisapee Davidee: Language transmission starts at home

Miali Coley recounted how she was spoken to in Inuktitut since her earliest years. English was not permitted in the home due to her mother's pain and anger towards English. Although it was not conducive to learn in an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, it is how she learned. She is now a teacher, teaching a wide range of subjects but understands the need to be firm about the use of Inuktitut and insisting on language in the school system. She believes Inuit need more Inuktitut at home and in the community out of love

I underwent a shift from English to Inuktitut that enabled me to speak Inuktitut to my daughter. My proudest moment was when my panik was speaking Inuktitut in her dreams.

Bernice Clarke

and encouragement. The idea of “*inuuniqsaq*” being more Inuk or not being Inuk-enough needs to dissipate in order to cultivate pride in the diversity of Inuit and the various dialects.

Bernice Clarke discussed how she was ridiculed for having a different dialect while living in another community. As a result, she often feels embarrassed today by her language abilities and regrets not passing on more of her language to her children. Added to the dominance of English in our society, this situation has created a barrier to learning Inuktitut within her family. However, with her youngest daughter, with the support of her husband, she is now engaged in a mental shift to think and speak more Inuktitut with her daughter. This has created a strong sense of personal pride. It was also pointed out that support from partners in exogamous families is also important. Originally from Newfoundland, Justin has provided unwavering support of his wife to teach their daughter Inuktitut, and ensuring her cultural identity within their family. He has further committed himself to learn and speak Inuktitut.



CULTURAL WORKSHOPS

QILAUJJARNIQ - Drumdancing

Drumdancing has served as a vehicle for embracing language whilst bringing youth, families and Elders together. During this workshop, Julia Ogina and the Qitirmiut Drummers, as well as David Serkoak from Kivalliq and Varna Nielsen from Greenland performed and discussed the importance of *qilaujjarniq*, dance drumming, to strengthen Inuit identity, culture and language.

Qilaujjarniq transcends generations. It is also used as a method of healing. *Qilaujjarniq* has helped many generations get through difficult times. This is especially prevalent amongst youth today experiencing cultural identity loss. People are able to gather to pass on the knowledge of language through drumming, dancing and singing. *Qilaujjarniq* has served for many as a conduit for language learning, particularly in the Qitirmiut region. It has created a safe place to proudly express Inuit identity and Inuit culture among youth and adults.

We need to create safe places and safe attitudes for the transmission of music and dance, songs for the expression of our identity. Music is that safe place where we find happiness in rhythm.

Julia Ogina

Traditional activities such as drum dancing bring elders and youth together to learn and share.





Kugluktuk Elder Alice Ayalik takes her turn with the drum.

QUNNGIARNIQ - Performing Arts

This workshop discussed separate forums and mediums by which communities are protecting and promoting culture through various art forms including: films, performing arts and cultural spaces.

in the early 1970s filled with political lyrics that stirred the spirit and pride of their fellow Greenlanders. Their songs were a rallying cry against two and a half centuries of Danish colonization and remain a source of pride for Greenlanders today. The documentary explores the power of language and song in shaping the destiny of the Greenlandic nation.

*When Sumé began to play,
I was shocked! They were
singing in Greenlandic!*

Tida Ravn

*We all have a role to play
in strengthening Inuktitut
regardless of proficiency
levels.*

Alethea Arnaquq-Baril

Inuk Silis Høegh is the Director of the documentary: Sumé: The Sound of a Revolution. This rock band had a remarkable impact on the formation of contemporary Greenlandic identity. As the first band to record in Kalaallisut, the Greenlandic language, the group recorded three albums

Alethea Arnaquq-Baril is the Director of the short film *Aviliaq*. Set in a 1950's Inuit community, *Aviliaq* tells the story of two Inuit lesbians struggling to stay together in a new world run by outsiders. Most actors were from Iqaluit, but like many youth who grew up here, several had limited language skills. This did not prevent them acting all in Inuktitut. In fact, we all have a role to play in strengthening Inuktitut regardless of proficiency levels.

Becky Kilabuk presented that *katajjaq* or throat singing can be used as a means to relate to language. Words that are not heard in daily conversations are often times in songs. *Katajjaq* provides a point of contact with Elders in a different space and context. While the youth may not necessarily have all the throat singing skills, they do have the power to bring people together who are interested in learning. Elders who throat sing have been so generous to share and pass down knowledge for future generations. What resonated amongst the group was that no one can take away throat singing away from Inuit, it is entrenched in Inuit history and cultural identity.



Becky Kilabuk and Sarah Jancke, two of the conference's participants and presenters, throatsing.

INUIT PIQQUSINGIT - Traditional Inuit Culture

This workshop discussed strengthening Inuit culture through traditional based programs and activities. Elisapee Aningmiuq of Tukisigiarvik provided an overview of their programs and services. They provide community wellness and counselling services and provide specific language and cultural skills. These skills are complex activities which are highly detailed with technical vocabulary. As such, teaching these skills conveys language but is also done through a learning environment which further builds the language skills of those being taught.

Inuit share and learn through storytelling. We do not keep our experiences to ourselves. This is a very important tool to teach language and culture.

Solomon Awa

Gamailee Kilukishak, member of the Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit Katimajiit and Solomon Awa, a hunter, discussed how traditional words and language are transmitted through stories and lived experiences. They highlighted the importance of storytelling as a way to share and transmit language and culture. Inuit share and learn through storytelling and do not keep experiences to themselves. It is a very important tool to teach language and culture. There was also a strong focus on the need to revitalize Inuit law as it is intertwined with Inuit language and culture in all facets of life including: child rearing, conflict resolution, relationships etc.

UQAUSITTINNIK ILINNIAQTAUJUNNAQTUT - Language Learning Opportunities

Virginia Lloyd of Tumikuluit Saipaaqivik, presented an overview of Tumikuluit Saipaaqivik, Iqaluit's only all Inuktitut daycare. The lack of early childhood Inuktitut learning environments in the capital prompted parents to work together to change this situation. Today, Tumikuluit has resulted in a cohort of students that are proficient in Inuktitut and grounded in Inuit culture. However, this program exists solely due to the persistence and dedication of parents. There is a lack of corresponding financial and institutional support which poses a constant barrier to their operations and impedes program development. The discussion surrounding the need for more daycares and head-start programs that are fully Inuktitut based includes the need for more public pressure and lobbying for Inuktitut.

NAMUNNGAUVITA?

Where Are We Going? Standardization can help move a language forward. This is a priority both within and outside of Nunavut. On the last day of the Inuugatta Language Conference, sessions looked at the work being done to establish a common writing system, the needs for Inuktitut standards in education and for creating materials.



INUKTUT TITIRASIQ

OUR WRITING SYSTEM

John Amagoalik, Inuit Leader

John Amagoalik recounted his early childhood and discussed the effects of when Inuit children were taken to residential schools and forbidden to speak Inuktut. Amidst all these negative occurrences throughout the residential school period, Inuit leaders began to emerge to begin the land claims process to correct the inequalities faced by Inuit. He is proud of the accomplishments of Inuit now having the ability to make Inuit specific legislation to protect language rights along with the creation of a Languages Commissioner. He feels that Inuit must not hesitate regarding language rights as Inuit are recognized as a distinct society as part of the foundation of Canada. Inuktut must be heard and seen regardless of whether English remains dominant within society.

Different dialects should be retained and kept because of their uniqueness. This uniqueness is what identifies Inuit as a culture. Policy makers should let go of the syllabic writing system especially for the sake of Inuit children. We should move to a roman orthography system as it is more adaptable to modern use and media. Language should always be used wherever we can. Before the land claims process Inuit cooperated and supported each other as they were after things that they deemed unreachable. Today, there still exists the need to continue that support from different regions as there is still more work to do to achieve the dreams of many Inuit.

Policy makers should let go of the syllabic writing system especially for the sake of Inuit children. We should move to a roman orthography system as it is more adaptable for modern use and media.

Language should always be used wherever we can.

John Amagoalik



Participants look on and listen as Gamailee Kilukishak speaks about the importance of culture in the revitalization of Inuktitut

Jeela Palluq-Cloutier, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

As recommended by the National Committee on Inuit Education, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami established the Atausiq Inuktitut Titirasiq Task Group with the mandate to explore the introduction of a unified (standardized) writing system for Inuit in Canada. Key to a new era in bilingual education is the ability to produce, publish and distribute common materials in Inuktitut. A unified writing system would facilitate the increased sharing of teaching and learning resources among all regions.

This work involves conducting intensive community consultations across the Inuit regions, and meeting with community groups interested in standardizing the writing system. Palluq-Cloutier provided an overview of the consultations that occurred so far, including some of the issues that must be considered for the introduction of a unified writing system.

In 2011, there were 59,440 Inuit living in four different regions across *Inuit Nunangat*, including those living in southern urban areas. Despite being a relatively small population, Palluq-Cloutier counted no less than 6 different writings systems in use by Inuit across Canada, and this is without counting older and non-standardized systems. After providing an overview of the phonetics of the different dialects, she discussed the implications of a unified writing system for each region, and what compromises would need to be made in Canada.

The underlying principle of a unified writing system is that it should not change how dialects are used in their spoken forms. Instead, a unified writing system should help improve the teaching and learning of the written form of Inuktitut, with the primary focus given to younger generations.

Standardization requires more consultation as it is a very emotional issue and Inuit have a history of being told what to do. Today, it cannot be like this with our language.

Elisapee Davidee

Anguti Johnston, National Inuit Youth Council

Johnston discussed his experience as a child that learned several different dialects as a result of living in various communities. He advocates having a standardized writing

system of Inuktitut for the younger generation. While many of the youth today speak Inuktitut, they are not as proficient and need the most assistance with respect to writing. A standardized writing system for all circumpolar Inuit would serve as a means to strengthen the language.

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Anguti Johnston

A key factor that needs to be addressed is why young Inuit are not using Inuktitut as much today. Johnston feels that the younger generation is not speaking in Inuktitut together amongst their peer groups as it is easier to speak to each other in English. Elders say that even though nobody is coming to them for support, they are waiting for the opportunity to teach the young generation, while youth admit that they are too shy to approach Elders. Youth are becoming increasingly conscious of making mistakes especially if they are made fun of. When the older generation laughs at young people, they will quit and give up. The mindset has to change from belittling speakers to encouraging language learners.

As a young person I don't have the vocabulary, so I can't distinguish the writing system. We need to find a way to standardize and to properly recognize the sounds and knowledge to make it easier for us young people to learn.

Sarah Jancke

Nute Arnauyumayuq, Inuit Uqausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtiit

Inuit Uqausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtiit was established under the *Inuit Language Protection Act*, with a mandate to develop and make decisions about Inuit Language use, development and standardization. The Act gives the Taiguusiliuqtiit the authority to direct the government departments and public agencies to use standardized terminology. Among their duties, Taiguusiliuqtiit is responsible to:

- Develop and promote standard terminology, usage & orthography
- Develop language competency levels and testing
- Assist businesses and others with correct usage
- Undertake or supervise research about Inuktitut
- Document and promote traditional terminology and dialects
- Share/Collaborate with organizations in Nunavut and abroad

“Allow the youth to speak as they are and encourage them to embrace this. Let them speak.”

Nuka Møller



Carl C. Olsen, Oqaasileriffik, Greenland

Carl C. Olsen provided an overview of the Greenlandic process to standardize the writing system. It took about 50 years in Greenland to change to a standard system. In Greenland, parliament made a recommendation to pass a law to use the new system as the new official writing system. The new writing system took place after Greenlandic Home Rule was achieved in 1979 and it was decided that Kalaallisut was to be an official language of Greenland.

Greenland also faced the problem that young people were leaving Greenland to study and not returning from Denmark. In an effort to combat the ‘brain drain’ problem, educational facilities were established in Greenland that provided vocational and academic training so youth would not have to leave home to pursue education. Greenland sought solutions to their own problems and looked at all possible ways of promoting language.

As Inuit and policy makers, we must become aware that there is a language shift happening. This ‘erosion’ in language is occurring rapidly and we must be prepared to recognize these changes. Language implementation policies in Greenland became a top political priority, which can be attributed in part to the cultural nationalism and self-determination movement since Home Rule. Olsen is in support of standardization of writing systems which will allow for dialogue across generations.

ILINNIARNIQ

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Paul Quassa, Minister of Education

Minister Paul Quassa discussed the Nunavut Department of Education programs that promote learning from early childhood through Grade 12. The Department's work is now focused on:

- Adapting standardized curriculum and providing the teaching resources required;
- Developing a Nunavut wide literacy framework;
- Strengthening early childhood services; and
- Developing initiatives that will encourage family and community engagement in the education of our children

The Department is also working on a Nunavut wide assessment to guide and improve student learning by assessing the overall effectiveness of the education system. In addition, bilingual education is also at the forefront of their mandate to produce bilingual graduates as required by the *Education Act*. To achieve this goal, there is the need for more bilingual educators to provide instruction in Inuktitut. Language initiatives must be supported by parents and community members to ensure student success. Therefore, the Department's goal is to ensure that literacy and learning begins at home. This will hopefully reduce absenteeism and improve graduation rates.

Language learning must be supported by parents and community members to ensure student success.

*Paul Quassa,
Minister of Education*

John MacDonald, Department of Education

John MacDonald provided an overview of the Department of Education's Balanced Literacy Framework. This framework is a comprehensive approach to literacy development. It involves guided reading, guided writing and word study. Improved student literacy rates lead to greater learning success and increased graduation rates. To support guided reading, the Department has purchased high quality, Inuktitut language, leveled reading materials for all schools in Nunavut. Leveled books support student progression through increasingly difficult text. It is important to select level of text student is reading and writing to match



it with their literacy level and build upon it. One of the program goals is to ensure a comfort level for students and then challenge them more. This helps students grow and progress to the next level by moving through different activities and skills as they become more independent.

As literacy levels improve, the student takes the more central role, with the teacher providing assistance and coaching when needed. The Department is now working to produce the first three levels of guided reading books in Inuktitut. Teachers will receive in-depth training on literacy acquisition giving them the skills to deliver this very effective literacy program. Assessment tools will be provided to teachers who will use them to see how students are progressing on an ongoing basis.

Louise Flaherty, Silatusarvik (Nunavut Arctic College)

Louise Flaherty provided an overview of post-secondary language training opportunities at Silatusarvik. The college provides culturally relevant programs to advance language while ensuring that graduates will value their education and be proud to take their place in Nunavut and beyond that. The vision of Silatusarvik is to produce bilingual professional graduates.

Since the passing of the *Official Language Act and the Inuit Language Protection Act*, Silatusarvik is taking a new approach to language learning and programs. Flaherty conducted a survey among students about whether or not the language is important in their learning environment. While some students felt Silatusarvik was providing enough courses for them to become fluent in Inuktitut, some felt they were not getting enough courses (42% said it was enough, 11% said not enough). All respondents said they would take courses in Inuktitut at Silatusarvik and that Inuktitut literacy was not progressing fast enough.

More training and materials in Inuktitut are required to implement Silatusarvik's language training initiatives. The college has recently retained 5 more Inuktitut language teachers and has a plan to develop an Inuit Language and Culture Centre of Excellence.

Sheila Kolola, Sivumuaqatigiit, Government of Nunavut

Sheila Kolola provided an overview of language training initiatives for government employees. The Government of Nunavut is committed to strengthening the teaching and learning of Inuktitut in the public service as required under the *Official Languages Act and the Inuit Language Protection Act*. Language training programs have been offered continuously since 2005 and is coordinated by the GN training division. Courses include:

- Inuktitut as a First Language which provides professional courses for first language speakers in Inuktitut or Inuinnaqtun
- Inuktitut as a Second Language for beginner, intermediate, advanced and conversational Inuktitut or Inuinnaqtun
- Inuktitut revitalization for Inuit who have a foundation in Inuktitut or Inuinnaqtun but may be more comfortable in English/French

The Inuktitut Language Program is being continually developed to better meet the needs of employees, and to address the shortage of Inuktitut instructors in smaller communities, improve and update curriculum, offer expanded programming and ensure a focus on second-language training in addition to first language learners.

UQAUSITTINNIK SAQQITIRINIQ CREATING MATERIALS IN OUR LANGUAGE

We need to encourage more Inuit writing about Nunavut. This will support the intergenerational transmission of knowledge through literature, while promoting literacy throughout our Territory.

Neil Christopher

Neil Christopher, Inhabit Media

Inhabit Media was established as a result of the need for an Inuktitut publishing company. Nunavut needed an independent publishing service to promote Inuktitut resources. Inhabit Media is currently the only independent publishing company established in the Territory and has published over 180 books in Inuktitut. Since 2006, Inhabit Media has been working to encourage Inuit to write and publish stories containing traditional knowledge, including fictional stories. Their goal is to provide opportunities for Inuit voices to be heard and read in literature. By working with Elders, hunters and community members, Inhabit Media ensures the stories, environmental knowledge and legends of Inuit are preserved in writing.

In order to contribute to Inuktitut in Nunavut, Inhabit Media provides all books in Inuktitut or Inuinnaqtun at cost. Online versions of books are also provided free to anyone who wishes to utilize the resource for their own personal use or for teachers in the classroom setting.



Debbie Brisebois, Inuit Broadcasting Corporation

IBC has been producing television programming in Inuktitut by Inuit, for Inuit and about Inuit for over 30 years. Programming has been recognized as one of the most successful communication models for developing nations along with recognition for its contribution to the Inuit language. IBC is currently planning to use the collaborative Isuma.tv web platform to develop a new video product from their Inuit film and video archive. The plan is to research, create and document digital video segments from *Takuginai* and link them to the Nunavut school curriculum. This initiative will result in additional language resources for children and families alike.

IBC programs help familiarize viewers from across the territory with the various oral dialects of Inuktitut. Standardizing the writing system will have little to no immediate impact on the diversity of oral Inuktitut that exists.

Debbie Brisebois

Due to a lack of additional resources, IBC has been unable to respond to its audience's most consistent request, more original Inuit language programming. In particular, the IBC audience has expressed a strong desire for more children's programming. With respect to standardization, IBC programs help familiarize viewers with the various oral dialects of Inuktitut. This is due to the fact that IBC gathers

oral content from a number of communities and shares its results through TV, online and webcasts. Should there be a standardized writing system, it will have little to no immediate impact on the diversity of oral Inuktut that exists. When a standardized system is implemented, Nunavummiut will still retain access to oral video material of the past.

Alethea Arnaquq-Baril, TV Nunavut

TV Nunavut is currently working on securing an all Inuktut television channel for Nunavut. Right now, Inuktut on TV is dependent on APTN and whether or not they choose to broadcast Inuktut television programs. Over the last decade, the amount of Inuktut television programming is becoming more infrequent. As a group of filmmakers and producers, they decided to take on this initiative to ensure that Inuktut programming is broadcasted for all to enjoy. TV Nunavut conducted a study where Inuit in Nunavut confirm they want and need more television programming in their language.

TV Nunavut 's mission statement, is: to inform, to educate, entertain, and engage Nunavummiut to promote and preserve Inuit languages and to reflect Inuit identity and culture. The goal of TV Nunavut will be to broadcast programs produced all over Nunavut and provide an outlet for content providers, from animators, to producers to storytellers. It will also serve as an outlet for Nunavut cultural industries, from visual artists, carvers, designers to musicians.



Technology has an important role to play in the protection and revitalization of Inuktut.

With respect to standardization, Arnaquq-Baril supports the use of Roman Orthography because it can be used readily on different media platforms and programs. With the fast pace of technological changes, it is becoming increasingly more challenging to create content fast enough in syllabics to meet the growing demand to use Inuktut. Although Arnaquq-Baril personally supports and prefers the use of syllabics, she suggests that in order to promote language use amongst the younger generation, there is a need to take what young people are already using (technology wise) and allow them to use their language even if it means in roman orthography.



“In order to promote language use amongst the younger generation, there is a need to take what young people are already using (technology wise) and allow them to use their language even if it means in roman orthography.”

Alethea Arnaquq-Baril



CONCLUSION

The conference concluded with a renewed assertion of the importance of Inuktitut and its role in sustaining Inuit socio-cultural well-being. Participants affirmed their commitment and passion to reclaim and preserve Inuktitut which has sustained Inuit identity throughout the course of time.

Outcomes and recommendations will guide the government and its partners in planning the next steps to further revitalize and strengthen the use of Inuktitut as a means to sustain and showcase Inuit identity and culture.

The recommendations cover five main areas, including:

1. Language planning and design, at the local and regional levels, including at the circumpolar level as Inuit transcend several jurisdictional borders.
2. Supporting intergenerational transmission of language, with a strong focus on parents and children at home, while creating a positive attitude within society toward language learning, dialectal diversity and language skills.
3. Supporting the development of more culturally and linguistically relevant resources and materials in Inuktitut, for children, youth and adults, that will support learning and use.
4. Enhancing support for language learning at all stages of life, from early childhood to school students and adults. Provide enhance language training to all language professionals, including government employees.
5. Supporting for more media and performing arts in Inuktitut, as a means to teach, share and instill pride in our language, culture and identity.

While language authorities are working to standardize Inuktitut in its written form, the diversity of the spoken

dialects can and should be promoted through various venues and strategies, including at home, in the community, and at the regional level, using media, oral history and arts.

It is recognized that the standardization of the writing system is important. This stems from the goal of ensuring language is passed onto younger generations in a format that is easier to learn and use, while contributing to the very survival of Inuktitut itself. This must be a balancing act to ensure Inuktitut expand in modern society where English too often dominates, while protecting and promoting the rich regional diversity of Inuktitut within Nunavut and elsewhere in the circumpolar world.

At the end of the last day, participants further identified a list of concrete steps they can do to empower themselves to revitalize, enhance and strengthen the use of Inuktitut as individuals, at home, and in their communities and regions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Language Planning and Design

1. Produce research on language vitality, including language proficiency of various age groups (e.g. statistics);
2. Develop local and regional language plans that are realistic and viable to support the learning and use of language in home regions and communities.
3. Develop a circumpolar plan that includes all Inuktitut speaking regions to share best practices for Inuktitut protection, revitalization and promotion.

Intergenerational Initiatives

4. Support intergenerational language initiatives, be it in formal or informal learning settings.
5. Encourage and develop public awareness and learning opportunities that foster acceptance of dialectical diversity and tolerance of different language skill levels, while creating a sense of pride amongst all learners and re-learners.
6. Create forums to develop a mutual respect of language use and language rights amongst minority and majority language users.

Language Resources and Materials

7. Develop language resources to be used in the home and school that are family centric, such as interactive media that can be shared by all family members.
8. Develop adult learning materials for adults wishing to learn or re-learn Inuktitut in a variety of learning environments.
9. Establish and use common written language standards to improve literacy outcomes among school students and youth across Nunavut, at all levels.

Learning Opportunities

10. Enhance supports to establish and maintain Inuktitut early childhood education facilities and learning programs across Nunavut.
11. Provide a cooperative forum for engaging non speakers/non Inuit into learning environments to support language learning opportunities.
12. Enhance language training for teachers, interpreters and translators, and among all postsecondary students.
13. Provide advanced language training for government employees, particularly as first language, including language revitalization and immersion programs.

Media and Performing Arts

14. Enhance supports for performing arts (both traditional and modern forms) to strengthen the use of language, culture and identity.
15. Invest in infrastructures to create a place where artists and others can gather, share, teach, create and enjoy arts and performances as a means of transmitting language and culture.



Feedback from Participants on Language Empowerment

UVANGA Me	ANGIRATTINNI At home	NUNATTINNI In the community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak • Teach • Encourage • Be open • Provide/take professional development programs for speakers • Try not to mix English and Inuktitut • Avoid slang • Find/provide a safe place to practice speaking • Work on being more proficient • Learn dialectology • Work on healing from trauma and feel confident to take back my language • Learn as much as I can • Don't discriminate against different dialects • Hold government accountable • Utilize the Language Commissioners office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak • Teach • Express and be open • Don't acknowledge when people speak English at home (children-to force Inuktitut) • Promote Inuktitut speaking at home • Talk in Inuktitut at other people's homes • Speak Inuktitut even if kids don't understand at first • Reconciliation-we all play a role • Be a language leader • Build a language base • Role modelling • Speak Inuktitut only • Spend more time at home in the language setting • Make it a priority • Enjoy and celebrate the dialects • Limit TV time • Limit time on iPad etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We all play a role • Professional development for Inuktitut • Using the community radio to increase Inuktitut content and to practice • Language committees • Interrelation • Gaps between generations: hesitation to speak/knowledge, grammar adaptation • Peer programming • Programs/classes for -Youth/young adults, Young parents • Build a language base/foundation in the community of the vocabulary/dialect-dictionaries and community reference books • Community resource centres • Encourage Inuktitut speakers-and encourage the trying-don't mock • Appreciate and celebrate different dialects especially with people from different regions living in other areas • Make Inuktitut as a priority and first language used among Inuit • Heal and strengthen/take back • Teach our children • Protect and preserve our ancestors language-terms etc • Use Inuit ways generally-counselling, justice, conflict resolution, etc

REGIONALLY	GOVERNMENT	INUIT ORGANIZATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All play a role • Identify the document the dialect and unique terms in your region • Develop Inuktitut speakers association • Bridge language gaps-connect and bond speakers • Heal from language loss and trauma, so more can learn teach and encourage our language • Require more Inuktitut use- • Don't mock or be critical of dialects • Resource and reference material • Encourage those who have a lower knowledge level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publications • More support for publications and more comprehensive material • Correct the governments use- government needs to be more meticulous in ensuring their Inuktitut material is right and proper • Need to fund more of the community and grass roots initiatives • Change the government's attitude towards unilingual Inuit and to Inuktitut- cultural change within the public service is needed • Government has to be the leaders in this-they need to support and advocate for Inuktitut • Facilitate and encourage language use and training among staff • Use Inuktitut more in government • Curricula training • Orientations for staff • HR training • Focus funding on those that want and need to learn • Be more strict with hiring • Respect and implement Inuit laws • Make Inuktitut a priority and Inuit Law a priority (IQ) • Set clear and reachable priorities • Commit and support these • Make it weekly, monthly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play a huge roles in revitalization and reconciliation, healing and strengthening Inuit language/culture • They need to put life into and hold the government accountable to implement the Language legislation • Produce more in Inuktitut-and make sure its high quality • Can play a role in developing material

