

Dia dhaoibh, a chairde!

I applaud your wonderful site! It's a great resource not just to those interested in the Lenape language, but also to folks like myself working with related languages like Penobscot and Passamaquoddy-Maliseet.

I've been focusing in particular for the last few years on how to present the working structures of these languages in a maximally accessible way--i.e. neither overloaded in technical terminology (the "linguist-ese" that often becomes a second language that would-be learners have to acquire just to get to the language they really want to learn) nor in sheer detail of information.

So the grammar section you have provided is particularly impressive, in that it strips the full richness of Algonquian verbal morphology in particular down to the brass tacks. I know how much work it takes to do that, since you really have to understand a system in order to know what details about it to present to a beginner, and what can be omitted. In particular, alerting the learner to the fact that Independent Indicative and regular nominal morphology are nigh-on identical is a great way to help students out. Interestingly, I always pursued this from the other direction, i.e. just teaching possessor and peripheral ending morphology for nouns, and then with that mastered, layering that over the distinctively Independent Indicative verbal morphology. But the way you do it works better when your purpose is not actually to take the learners through every chunk of the morphology anyway.

In this light, beyond my congratulations, I have one suggestion that might enhance the simplicity of what you present.

Namely, you can gain a lot of presentational and mnemonic simplicity if you pick up on and point out the fact that the complex of morphology of the Independent Indicative, namely:

PronPrefix-[VERB.Theme\_Sign-NEG]-PWN-PronSuffix-PeripheralEnding

can be reduced to two overlaid sets:

- (a) PronPrefix-...-PronSuffix
- (b) ...-PWN-...-PeripheralEnding

where set (a) is of course identical to pronominal possessors, and tracks one grammatical argument; and set (b) establishes the the clause as Independent Indicative or Subordinative (PWN= those distinctive endings), and always matches the other indexed argument of the clause both with -p, -w, or -n(e) and corresponding peripheral ending.

Learning any Independent Order form comes down just to learning about two mutually overlaying elements. Thereafter, it's just details, much of which can be mastered previously and separately, thus reducing the learning load at any given point in the process.

That is, assuming that set (a) is mastered with nominals--and peripheral endings are easily learned there, too, as simple nominal plural/obviative/absentative morphology, then all that's left are the PWN elements. Thereafter, just some work with the negative concord morpheme, and the TA theme signs, and how the choice of argument for expression by set (a) is made.

Knowing my audience here, I've expressed this in condensed Algonquianist terminology, but it should be simple enough to unpack it in more lay-accessible terms than this.

Hope this helps! Till later, keep up the good work, and keep well.

Sla/n,

bhur gcar  
Conor McDonough Quinn