

# Look! Directive Interjections across the Algonquian Language Family

Robert E. Lewis Jr.

University of Winnipeg

This paper investigates the directive interjections meaning ‘Look!’ in the Algonquian language family. The goal of this paper is to answer whether interjections are genetically linked, geographically linked, or neither. Using data from textual sources of eleven Algonquian languages: two Eastern, six from Central, and three from Plains (Goddard, 1994), I argue that the directive interjections are genetically linked in Eastern and Central languages, but not in the Plains languages. Additionally, I argue that the Central languages underwent additional interjection borrowings among themselves.

**Directives:** Most of the Central languages have at least [na] or [ma]. The forms in Eastern Algonquian have at least [p] and [a]. The forms in Plains Algonquian do not have strong similarities. See Table 1. Moreover, Maliseet, Meskwaki, Cree, and Arapaho each have more than one interjection, which are sensitive to age of addressee, oral or visual directive, and speaker emotion.

**Table 1.** Directives

	Eastern		Central						Plains		
	Maliseet	Lenape	Innu	Ojibwe	Pot.	Men.	Meskwaki	Cree	Arapaho	Cheyenne	Blackfoot
Look!	akí. ipá.	pēna	mâ	ina	ne	naah	chíchê nahi	î, îh îh, î mah	heii, nónii yeh,	átahe/ ótahe	asaa,

**Genetic or Contact:** Directive interjections are genetically linked across Eastern and Central languages, but additionally directive interjections are geographically linked in the Central languages. First, I reconstruct Proto Algonquian *\*ipanahi* for the directive interjections in the Eastern and Central languages. The forms in the Plains languages have a different providence, having undergone language change or contact. Note that the forms *î*, *îh*, and *heii* in Arapaho and Cree may be genetically related given the languages form a subfamily (Goddard, 1994). Second, the Central languages are geographically linked via language contact among themselves. Potawatomi today uses the directive *ne* ‘Look!’ (Forest County Potawatomi Community, 2014); however, Potawatomi speakers used *pini* ‘behold, lo’ (Lykins, 1844) before borrowing from Ojibwe.

## References

- Adams, R. C. (1997). *Legends of the Delaware Indians and Picture Writing* (D. Nichols, Ed.). Syracuse University Press.
- Ameke, F. (1992). Interjections: The universal yet neglected part of speech. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 18(2–3). [https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166\(92\)90048-G](https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166(92)90048-G)
- Chief Dull Knife College. (2017). *Cheyenne Dictionary*.  
<Http://Cdkc.Edu/Cheyennedictionary/Index.Html>.
- Cowell, A., Moss Sr., A., & C’Hair, W. J. (2014). *Arapaho Stories Songs and Prayers: A Bilingual Anthology*. University of Oklahoma.
- Delaware Tribe of Indians. (2021). *Lenape Talking Dictionary*. <Https://Www.Talk-Lenape.Org>.
- Forest County Potawatomi Community. (2014). *Ézhe-bmadzimgek gdebodwéwadmi-zheshmomenan: Potawatomi Dictionary*. Forest County Potawatomi Community.
- Goddard, I. (1994). The West-to-East Cline in Algonquian Dialectology. In William Cowan (Ed.), *Actes Du Vingt-Cinquième Congrès Des Algonquinistes*. Carleton University.
- Goddard, I., & Thomason, L. (2014). *A Meskwaki-English and English-Mewkwaki Dictionary: Based on Early Twentieth-Century Writings by Native Speakers*. Mundart Press.
- Joseph, B. D. (1997). Methodological Issues in the History of the Balkan Lexicon: The Case of Greek vré / ré and Relatives. In V. Friedman, M. Belyavski-Frank, M. Pisaro, & D. Testen (Eds.), *Balkanistica* (Vol. 10, pp. 255–277).
- LeSourd, P. S. (Ed.). (2007). *Tales from Maliseet Country: The Maliseet Texts of Karl V. Teeter*. University of Nebraska Press.
- Lykins, J. (1844). The Gospel according to Matthew and the Acts of the Apostles: translated into the Putawatomie language by Johnston Lykins, Welcher.003.032. In *Laura Buszard-Welcher Papers on the Potawatomi language*. Survey of California and Other Indian Languages, University of California, Berkeley,.
- Oxford, W. (2007). *Towards a Grammar of Innu-Aimun Particles*.
- Rhodes, R. (1992). Language shift in Algonquian. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 93(1). <https://doi.org/10.1515/ijsl.1992.93.87>
- Rhodes, R. (2020). Language Shift in the Subarctic and Central Plains. In *The Language of Hunter-Gatherers*. Cambridge University Press.  
<https://doi.org/10.1017/9781139026208.021>
- Rhodes, R. (2008). Algonquian Trade Languages Revisited. In K. S. Hele & J. R. Valentine (Eds.), *Papers of the Fortieth Algonquian Conference*. SUNY University Press.
- Thomason, S. (2000). Linguistic areas and language history. In D. Gilbers, J. Nerbonne, & J. Schaecken (Eds.), *Languages in Contact* (pp. 311–327). Rodopi.
- Wolvengrey, A. (Ed.). (2007). *Wawiyatācimowinisa: funny little stories*. Canadian Plains Research Center.
- Wolvengrey, A. (2013). iyaw! Whoever Talks about (Cree) Interjections. In *Presented at the 45th Algonquian Conference*.