Michif – English Transcript:

Harriet Oakes talks about respect for old people and the Michif language

Literal translation:

aykwaa	**taanishi**	**lii zhenn…**	**Taanishishi?**
And	how	young people…	In what way?

Tool taan	**aen wiihtamowakik**	**ookik**	**lii zhenn**
All the time	I'm telling them	these ones	the young people

Shaakihik	**lii vyeu,**	**lii vyay.**	**Shaakihik.**
Love them	the old men,	the old ladies.	Love them.

Wiichihik	**kiishpin**	**aata**	**aykaa kishkayimachik**
Help them	if	even though	you don't know them

Kiishpin	**naandow**	**aen wii pimoohtaychik**
If	somewhere	they will be walking

Kaymaa…	**aen kimoowuhk,**	**kaymaa kaykway…**
Or else…	it is raining,	or something…

Wiichihik.	**Wiichihik**	**lii koohkoom,**	**lii mooshoom.**
Help them.	Help	the grandmothers,	the grandfathers.

Daan la vil	**aen pimoohtaychik,**	**you know, wiichihik.**
In the city	they are walking,	you know, help them.

Pikoo ishi	**wiichihik.**	**Aykooshishi**	**anima**	**aen wii… ishik…**
Whatever	help them.	In that way	that	that…you tell them.

aen wiihtamaakochik	**toot**	**ookik**	**li moond…**
I'm telling them	all	those ones	the people…

taanishishi	**chi ishi pishkaymachik**	**lii vyeu, lii vyay.**	**Sa praan**	**kiiyawow,**	**lii zhenn,**
In what way	they take care of them	The old men, the old women.	It's necessary	all of you,	the young people

Sa praan	**kiiyawow**	**chi kishinahamawayaahkok**
It's necessary	all of you	for us to teach them.

Taanishishi	**lii vyeu, lii vyay**	**chi ishi pamihikaashoochik.**
In what way	the old men, the old women,	the way for them to be looked after.

Well you know, ooshaam	**kinwaysh**	**niiya**	**biikishkwaan**
Well you know, too much	a long time	I/me	I speak.

Taanimayikoohk	**etikway**	**chi piikishkwayaahk?**
How many	I guess	that we speak?

Sa praan chi…	**kootaaka**	**chi wiihtamowakik**	
It's necessary that…	the others	[that] they tell others.	

Taanishishi	**chi piikishkwaychik.**	**Wiishtawow,**	**wiishkootumawow.**
The way in which	for them to speak.	They too,	It's their turn.

[ni] noohtay payhtayn	**wiishtawow**	**ookik**	**kaa wii piikishkwaychik**
I want to hear	them too	these ones	that will speak.

aan Michif.	**[xxx] daan ma laang,**	**[xxx] gii payhtayn**	**oota**
in Michif.	[xxx] in my language,	[xxx] I heard	here.

[xxx]	**Four years ago, kayshchiina.**	**Gii payhtayn**	**awiyuk**	**aen itwayt:**
[xxx]	Four years ago, definitely,	I heard	someone	s/he is saying:

itwayw	**awiyuk.**	**Ah baen,**	**gii pinikaypayin.**
s/he said it	someone.	Well,	I felt weak.

Kaykaach	**gii pahkishinin**	**aen payhtamaan.**
Almost	I fell down.	as I heard that.

Akootay	**aykwaa**	**gaa shoohkishiyaan,**	**gii itwaan:**
There	and then	when I was strong,	I said:

Namoo wiihkaach.	**Namooya wiihkaach**	**ka waanihtanaan**	**ta laanginaan**
Never.	Never	we will lose it	our language.

ishkoo	**kaa pimitshiyaan,**	**namoo wiihkaach.**
for as long as	that I'm alive,	never.

Pikwaan-awiyuk	**ga kishinahamawow**	**taanishishi**	**chi piikishkwayt**
whosoever	I will teach him/her	the way in which	for him/her to speak

ta laanginaan.	**ishpiishchi...**	**It's humorous, ta laanginaan.**
Our language.	more than...	It's humorous, our language.

We laugh aen piikishkwayaahk	**mishtahi**	**ki paahpinaan.**
We laugh while we speak	very much	we laugh.

Aan aanglay	**piikishkwayen,**	**noo taapway,**	**ki paahpin, y'know?**
In English	[when] you are speaking	it's not true	you laugh, y'know?

But aan Michif, it's humorous.	**Aykooshi**	**aen itayhtamaan**	**maana**	**ooma.**
But in Michif, it's humorous.	In that way	as I'm thinking	usually	this.

Aykooshi aykwaa.	**Taanayhki maaka**	**"good spot" kaa ishiyen?**
And that's that.	But why	you say to me "good spot"?

Taanayhki	**ooma**	**kaa itwayt**	**"When at a good spot"? (aen paahpihchik)**
Why	this	that s/he is saying it?	“When at a good spot?” (they are laughing)

Dynamic Translation:

And how do young people…? I tell these young people all the time: love them. Love the old men and women. Love them. Help them, even if you don’t know them. If they’re walking somewhere, or if it’s raining, or something, help them. Help the grandmothers and grandfathers. [If] they’re walking around town, you know, help them. Whatever it might be, help them. That’s what you tell them…I tell all of them how to look after old people. You guys, you young people, we have to teach you how to take care of the old people.

Well, you know, I’ve been talking too long, I wonder how many others are to speak? The others [here] need to tell them [the young people] how to speak. Them too, it’s their turn. I want to hear these people that want to speak too. In Michif, [xxx] in my language, [xxx] I heard here. [xxx] Four years ago it was, I heard someone say: “Our language is critically endangered.” Someone said that. Well, I got weak in the knees, I almost fell over upon hearing that. Then when I regained my strength, I said: “Never. We’ll never lose our language. For as long as I live, never. I will teach anyone to speak our language.

More than…it’s humorous, our language. We laugh when speaking it. We laugh a lot. When you speak English, you don’t really laugh, y’know? But Michif is humorous. That’s what I usually think about it.

So, there you have it. We’ll be back soon…when at a good spot. Why are you saying to me “a good spot”? Why is he saying that, “when at a good spot”? (Everyone laughs).

Grammar & vocabulary notes:

- There are two words in Michif that can be loosely translated as "s/he looks after someone" or "s/he takes care of someone": **pamihayw** and **pishkayimayw** – the former also has a sense of guiding, steering, tending to, or serving someone, (it is also used to mean 's/he steers a vehicle') whereas the latter has the sense of being careful with someone or being watchful of someone so as to avoid any harm coming to them. Either way, both can be used to talk about things like looking after old people or taking care of children, for example. As with all verbs, the endings will change depending on who is looking after whom.

- **Aykaa** makes a phrase negative, but it is used in the special "conjunct mode"[1] which occurs in certain contexts like when a question word is present (e.g., **taanishi, taanayhki, kaykwy,** etc.), if there is more than one verb in a sentence, or with special expressions like **sa praan** ('need to/have to/must') or **si li taan chi** ('it's time to…'). In the video, La Vyay Harriet says **wiichihik kiishpin aata aykaa kishkayimachik** ('help them even if you don't know them').

- **Kaymaa** comes from Cree and means "or; or else" – some speakers use this word, while others may prefer the term **oobaendoon**, but they are essentially used in the same way.

- In sentences where there two or more verbs and the second verb is preceded by **aen**, this can indicate a couple of things:

1. That the first action is a result of the second action (e.g., **kaykaat gii pahkishinin aen payhtamaan** 'I almost fell over as a result of hearing that.")
2. That the two actions occur more or less simultaneously (e.g., **we laugh aen piikishkwayaahk** 'We laugh as we're speaking')

[1] The "normal" negation word is **namooya**