Michif – English Transcript:

Rita Ducharme and Norman Fleury talk about the different languages spoken by Michif/Metis

Literal translation: (Rita = blue, Norman = green)

Akooshchi aykwaa	kiiyanaan aykwaa	noo mischaytinaan lii Michif	ayiwak	aen piikishkwayaahk.
And so	as for us	not many Michifs	any longer	are speaking

Akooshchi	ooma	kiiyanaan	chi…chi kakway paashpiihtayaahk	nutr laang.
Thus	this here	you and I	we're trying to save it	our language.

Ooshchi	gaa kii miyeuyhtayn	gii miyeuyhtamaan	oota paynakishkataan.	In July, Batoche Days.
Therefore	I was happy with it	I was happy with it	to meet you here.	In July, Batoche Days.

[xxx] ayawow	li Michif chi piikishkwayaan.	Gashkihtaan	kwaayesh chi piikishkwayaan	ni waanihkaan	aashkow.
[xxx] I had one	For me to speak Michif.	I am able to do it	Speaking properly	I forget	Sometimes.

Sa praan	kakway…	kiishta	kishkishin	maaka.
It’s necessary to	try to…	You too	you remember	however.

Oh, gishkishin, yeah.
Oh, I remember, yeah.

Kakway mishkoopitamun.	Kaa apaachihtayen	nawuch ka kishkishin	nawuch.	Nawuch miyoopayin	aykwaa.
Try to discover it.	As you use it	You will remember more	More.	It will be better	then.

Aen nakatwayhtamaan.	Gishkishin, but,	maaka,	apishiish [xxx]	aashkow, sa praan.
I’ve been thinking about it.	I remember, but,	but,	A little bit [xxx]	sometimes, it’s necessary

[xxx] aashkow ita kaa…	Batoche kaa paytoohtayaahk,	oota Back to Batoche.	Mischayt nakishkawuk,	toot sort di, lii Michif
[xxx] sometimes where…	When we come to Batoche,	here, Back to Batoche.	I meet many of them,	all sorts of, Michifs/Métis

leu laang paahkaan aen piikishkwaychik.	Aatiht li Fraansay piikishkwaywuk.	Aatiht li Krii piikishkwaywuk.
They speak their different languages	Some of them speak French.	Some of them speak Cree.

Li “vray” Krii.
The “real” Cree.

Li vray Krii.	Aatiht li Sooteu piikishkwayuk.	Aykwanikik	kishchi kaa payitoohtaychik.
The “real” Cree.	Some of them speak Saulteaux.	Those ones	really come out (to Batoche).

Anikik Dene kaa piikishkwayt;	'moo nishtoohtawow aykwanikik	aykwa…namoo mischayt kaa nakishkawat	aen Syoo oota.	Awiyuk…ahpootikway ayawuk oota
They speak Dene;	I don’t understand those ones	And…you don’t meet many of them	A Sioux (Dakota) here.	Someone…perhaps they are here

maaka	namoohkaach	ka payhtawaawuk	aen piikishkwaychik.
But	never	you hear them	they are speaking.

Maaka li Krii ki…	shaymaak nishtoohtaawawuk	aen piikishkwaychik.	Daan li Noor	ooshchi kaa paytoohtaychik,
But the Cree…	Right away I understand them	as they speak.	In the North	Where they come from,

wiiyawow	pahkaan piikishkwaywuk.	Koom li Dene piikishkwaywuk,	aykwaa li Krii,	maaka kiiyanaan
They/them	they speak differently.	Like they speak Dene,	And Cree,	But us

alaantoor oota	lii Michif li Fraansay piikishkwaywuk,	maaka namoo li 'vray' Fraansay	wiishtawow	kaa piikishkwaychik.
Around here	the Michifs, they speak French,	But not the ‘real’ French	They too	what they speak.

Tapishkoot Kiikiwaahkinaan	Naytay, ni paapaa-ipan	li Fraansay kii piikishkwayw	lii Booshii	li Fraansay kii piikishkwaywuk.
Like at our place	There, my deceased father	he spoke French	The Bouchies	They spoke French

Maaka nawuch	kaahkiyow	aan Michif kii piikishkwaywuk.
But moreso	Everyone	They spoke in Michif.

Daan li Kwayn, kiiyawow, boy!	kinwaensh	kiiyawow	kii kanawayhtaynawow	votr laang-iwow	ishpiishchi ahpoo St. Lazare.
At The Corner, you folks, boy!	for a long time	you all	you all kept it	your language	even more than St. Lazare.

Kiiyawow	nawuch kii wiikinawow	denn pchit vilaazh aykoota.	Nawuch kiiyawow kii shoohkishinawow	aen piikishkwayayhk votr laang.
You all	moreso you all lived	in a small village there.	You guys were more solid	in speaking your language.

Gishkishin,	kaa wii piikishkwayaahk	kaa doo kiiwookayaahk maana	lii daans.	Yaenk aykwanima gii piikishkwanaan
I remember	if we wanted to speak	we would go visit usually	(at) dances.	Only (at) that we spoke

Aykwanima	kii piikishkwaywuk li Michif.	Namoo pahkaan kii payhtayn.	Sitay raar	awiyuk daan la daans
(at) that	they spoke Michif.	You didn't hear any different.	It was rare	someone at the dance

chi payhtawat	aan Anglay chi piikishkwayt.	Sitay toot aan Michif.	Aashkow	li Fraansay kii payhtawaawuk
to hear someone	for a person to speak English.	It was all in Michif.	Sometimes	you would hear them (speak) French.

Anikik lii Fraansay.	Tapishkoot Louis Pelletier,	oopaapaa oopaapaawa.	Li Vyeu Pelletier.	Li Fraansay kii piikishkwayw
Those French (speakers)	Like Louis Pelletier,	his father's father.	Old Man Pelletier.	He spoke French.

ana li vyeu.	Gishkishin.	Akooshchi Henri Pelletier,	wiiyawow, Louis, aan Fraansay,	Lii Booshii, aan Fraansay. Kii waahkootawuk.
That old man.	I remember.	That's why Henry Pelletier,	them, Louis (Pelletier) (spoke) in French,	The Bouchies, (spoke) in French. They were related.

Oh, akooshchi.
Oh, that's why.

Akooshchi	li Fraansay kaa piikishkwaychik	wiiyawow nawuch.	Kii piikishkwaywuk miina aan Michif,	koom "aan Krii" kaa kii itwayaahk maana.
That's why	They would speak French	them moreso.	They also spoke Michif,	like "in Cree" we used to say.

Maaka nawuch	li Fraansay	wiiyawow kii piikishkwaywuk.	Nipaapaa-ipan wiiya,	li Fraansay kii oohpikihikoowuk. omooshoomiwawa Li Vyeu Vermette.
But moreso	French	they spoke it, them.	My deceased father, him,	They were raised in French. Their grandfather, old man Vermette.

Li Vyeu Alexandre Vermette.	Aykwaa oohkoomiwawa	Angele Laurence kii ishinihkaashoow,	ana la vyay.	St. Joseph kii nihtawakiw.	"Walhalla" aykwaa anoosh.
Old Alexander Vermette.	And his grandmother	her name was Angela Laurence,	that old lady.	She was born in St. Joseph.	(it is) “Walhalla” today.

Aykootay kii wiikiwuk miina,	daan li Montana. Anikik lii Fleury, mischayt.	Maaka aatiht kii wiikiwuk	alaantoor Baie St. Paul, kii ishinihkatayw.	Namoo waahiyow St. Francois-Xavier.
They also lived there,	in Montana. There were lots of Fleurys there.	But some of them lived	around Baie St. Paul, it’s called.	Not far from St. Francois-Xavier.

Namoo waahiyow St. Francois-Xavier.	Aykoota lii Fleury kaa kii wiikichik.
Not far from St. Francois-Xavier.	That’s where the Fleurys lived.

Mmm. Daan la vaalii?
Mmm. In the Valley?

Naytay…St. Eustache.	Nawuch daan li nor apishiish.	St. Eustache aykoota Baie St. Paul.	aykoota kii wiikiwuk. St. Francois-Xavier.	Ayish, kii mischaytwuk
Over there…St. Eustache.	A bit more north	St. Eustache there, Baie St. Paul	they lived there. St. Francois-Xavier.	Because, there were a lot of them

ana	lii Michif kayaash.	Sitay	yaenk enn baand di Michif	anida,	li moond wiiyawow,	koom kii piishkwaywuk li Fraansay
That one	the Michifs a long time ago.	It was	just a bunch of Michifs	there,	those people,	like they spoke French

pi aan Michif kii piikishkwaywuk.	Namoo oohkaat	awiyuk	aan Aanglay gii paypayhtawow.
and they spoke Michif.	Never	someone	you heard a person speaking English.

Namoo kashkihtawuk…
They couldn't do it…

Namoo kii kashkihtawuk.
They were unable to.

Ahpoo kii nishtoohtamwuk, kooshtamwuk chi piikishkwaychik
Even (though) they understood it, they were scared to speak it.

Ahpoo anida	kaa kii paynihtawikiyen,	kiishta kii kishkayhtayn	awaana taanishiishi piikishkwayt,	taanishi chi kitootat.
even there	where you were born,	you also knew	who spoke in which way,	the way for you to address them.

Ahpoo daan la risaarv,	anida, Gambler Reserve,	sitay yaenk aan Michif wiishtawow	kii piikishkwaywuk.	Namooya li Sooteu kii piikishkwaywuk.
Even on the reserve,	there, Gambler Reserve,	it was all in Michif (for) them also	they spoke.	They didn't speak Saulteaux.

Aatiht kii piikishkwaywuk; Jimmy...
Some of them spoke (it); Jimmy...

Jimmy Tanner, taad baen wiiya.
Jimmy Tanner, probably him.

Kii piikishkwayw omaamaawa.	Ayish Camperville kii ohtohtaywuk,	anikik lii vyay.	[xxx] lii Michif...Aan Michif kii piikishkwaywuk	pi miina li Sooteu.
His mother spoke (it).	Because they came from Camperville,	those old ladies.	[xxx] the Michifs...they spoke Michif	and also Saulteaux.

Ayish Pine Creek anida.	Aykootay kaa kii ooshchiichik	wiishtawow.	Kii nihtawikiwuk	alaantoor	li moond li Sooteu kaa piikishkwaychik.
Because Pine Creek is there.	There where they came from	them too.	They were born	around	people who speak Saulteaux.

Duck Bay, ana.	lii deu kii piikishkwaywuk,	li Michif aatiht kii piikishkwaywuk.	Napoleon lii deu,	Marie DeGagne...
Duck Bay, that one.	They spoke both,	they spoke some Michif.	Napoleon both,	Marie DeGagne...

Opaapaawa.
Her father.

Marie soon frayr.
Marie's brother.

Soon frayr?
Her brother?

Aykoota	wiiya	li Sooteu pi li Michif kii piikishkwayw,	pi li Fraansay.	Sa vyay, sitay,
There	him	he spoke Saulteaux and Michif,	and French.	His wife, it was,

nawuch aan Sooteu	kii piikishkwayw	ana la vyay.	Kii nishtoohtamwuk li Michif.
moreso in Saulteaux	she spoke	that old lady.	They understood Michif.

Taanday	kii wiikichik	maaka	wiiyawow?
Where	they lived	anyhow	them?

Norman & Rita: Duck Bay.

Yeah, Duck Bay kii wiikiwuk	**mischayt aykootay.**	**St. Madeleine kaa kii pichichik**	**aykootay.**	**Aykootay kii itoohtaywuk**
Yeah, they lived in Duck Bay	a lot (of them) there.	They moved to St. Madeleine	there.	there they went

aatiht Camperville	**aykwaa Duck Bay aatiht kii itoohtaywuk.**	**Akooshchi**	**aantoor deu Duck Bay pi Camperville,**	**li risaarv Pine Creek li Sooteu aykoota.**
some (to) Camperville	and some went to Duck Bay.	That's why	between Duck Bay and Camperville,	The Saulteaux Pine Creek Reserve is there.

Maaka Kaahkiyow	**kii wiikitoowuk**	**wiishtawow**	**daan li risaarv.**	**waahkootowuk naandow ishi.**
But all of them	they married each other	them too	on the reserve,	they were related in some way.

Dynamic Translation:

NF: So then, there aren't a lot of Michifs still speaking (our language). That's why this (recording session), we're trying to save our language.

RD: Yes, so I was happy to come and meet you here. In July, Batoche Days. I had a [xxx] to speak Michif. I can speak well; sometimes I forget things.

NF: You have to…you also remember it (your language).

RD: Oh I remember it, yes.

NF: Try to discover it. When you use it (your language), you remember more and more. And then it gets better.

RD: I'm thinking about that. I remember, but, a little bit [xxx] sometimes, it's necessary.

NF: [xxx] Sometimes where…when we come to Batoche, here, Back to Batoche, you meet all kinds of Métis speaking their different languages. Some speak French, some speak Cree

RD: The "real" Cree.

NF: The real Cree. Some of them speak Saulteaux. And they come in large numbers. Some speak Dene, (though) I don't know any Dene speakers. And also, there's not a lot, but I've met a Dakota speaker here. And, perhaps there's Dakota speakers who come to Batoche, but I've never heard people having a conversation. But Cree, right away you hear them speaking. Those who come from the North speak it differently. Like, the Dene they speak, and the Cree. But us, around here the Michifs speak French, but it's not the "real" French tha they speak. Like around where we lived, there, my dad spoke French, the Boushie spoke French. But more people spoke Michif. At the Corner, you folks, boy! You guys kept your language for a long time, moreso than St. Lazare. You were living in more of a small village there. You were stronger in speaking (Michif). I remember, when we wanted to speak, we used to go visiting at dances. That's all we spoke there, they spoke Michif. You didn't heard anything different. It was rare to hear someone speaking English at the dance. It was all in Michif. Sometimes you'd hear them speaking French. Those French speakers like Louis Pelletier, his paternal grandfather, Old Man Pelletier. He spoke French, that old guy. I

remember. That's why Henry Pelletier, all of them, Louis, in French, the Boushies, in French. They were related.

RD: Oh, that's why.

NF: That's why they spoke more French, those guys. They spoke Michif too, like "in Cree" as we used to say. But they spoke more French. My deceased father, his grandfather, Old Man Vermette, Alexander Vermette, they raised me. And his grandmother Angela Laurence was her name, that old lady. She was born in St. Joseph, (called) "Walhalla" today, in North Dakota. It's called "Pembina" there. They lived there and in Montana. They were Fleurys, lots of them. But some lived around Baie St. Paul, as it's called, not far from St. Francois-Xavier. That's where the Fleurys lived.

RD: In the valley?

NF: There…St. Eustache. It's a bit further north. St. Eustache there, Baie St. Paul. They lived there. St. Francois-Xavier. There were lots of Michifs there a long time ago. It was just a bunch of Michifs there, who spoke French and Michif. You never heard anyone speak English.

RD: They weren't able to.

NF: They weren't able to.

RD: Even though they understood it, they were afraid to speak it.

NF: Even where you were born, you also knew who spoke which languages and how to address a person. Even on the reserve there, Gambler Reserve, Michif was all that they spoke there. They didn't speak Saulteaux. Well, some did. Jimmy…

RD: Jimmy Tanner likely.

NF: His mother spoke (Saulteaux). Because they came from Camperville, those old people. [xxx] The Michifs…they spoke Michif and Saulteaux. Because Pine Creek (reserve) is there. That's where they originated from; they were born around Saulteaux-speaking people. Duck Bay, they spoke both, they spoke some Michif. Napoleon spoke both, Marie DeGagne,

RD: Her dad.

NF: Marie's brother.

RD: her brother?

NF: He spoke both Michif and Saulteaux there, and French too. His wife, she spoke more Saulteaux, she did. She understood Michif.

RD: Where did those folks live, anyway?

ND: Duck Bay.

RD: Duck Bay.

NF: Yeah, a lot of them lived in Duck Bay. Some of them there moved to St. Madeleine. They went there, some went to Camperville, and some to Duck Bay. Because the Saulteaux Pine Creek reserve is between Duck Bay and Camperville. But they also lived on the reserve. They were all related somehow.

Useful vocabulary:

Akooshchi – so; therefore; that's why (e.g., **akooshchi ni noohtay kishkayhtayn la laang di Michif** 'that's why I want to learn the Michif language')

Kashkihtow – s/he can do it; s/he is capable doing of something (e.g., **gashkihtaan** 'I can do it; I am able to do it' or **namoo kashkihtawuk** 'they cannot do it; they are incapable of doing it')

Kishkishiw – s/he remembers (e.g., **gishkishin**, 'I remember' or **ki kishkishin chiin**? 'Do you remember?')

Niishta – me too; I as well

Kiishta – you too; you as well

Wiishta – him/her too; s/he as well

Wiishtawow – them too; they as well

(for all personal pronouns, simply replace the **-y-** with **-sht-** to add the meaning "as well")

NOTE: in Michif, as in Cree, there are a few different ways of saying "there." Which form you use depends on how close the object in question is to you, or whether you are talking about the past or the present. The forms are:

Aykoota – there (the object is very nearby)

Aykootay – over there (the object is further away)

Naytay – way over there (the object is quite far away but still visible)

Anida (used to talk about a location that is not within sight, as in **Pine Creek anida** 'Pine Creek (is) there'

As you can see from reading the transcript, even the forms like **aykootay** and **naytay** can be used to talk about abstract locations, so this is more of a guideline than a grammatical rule.