

# Connecting to Collect: Strengths in Indigenous Language Collections in Canadian Libraries and a Collaborative Path Forward

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# What we'll cover

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Purpose of our study

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Methods (and the limitations of those methods)

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Findings – Indigenous language collections at Canadian Universities

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An invitation for further discussion

# Evolving role of Indigenous language collections at Canadian university libraries

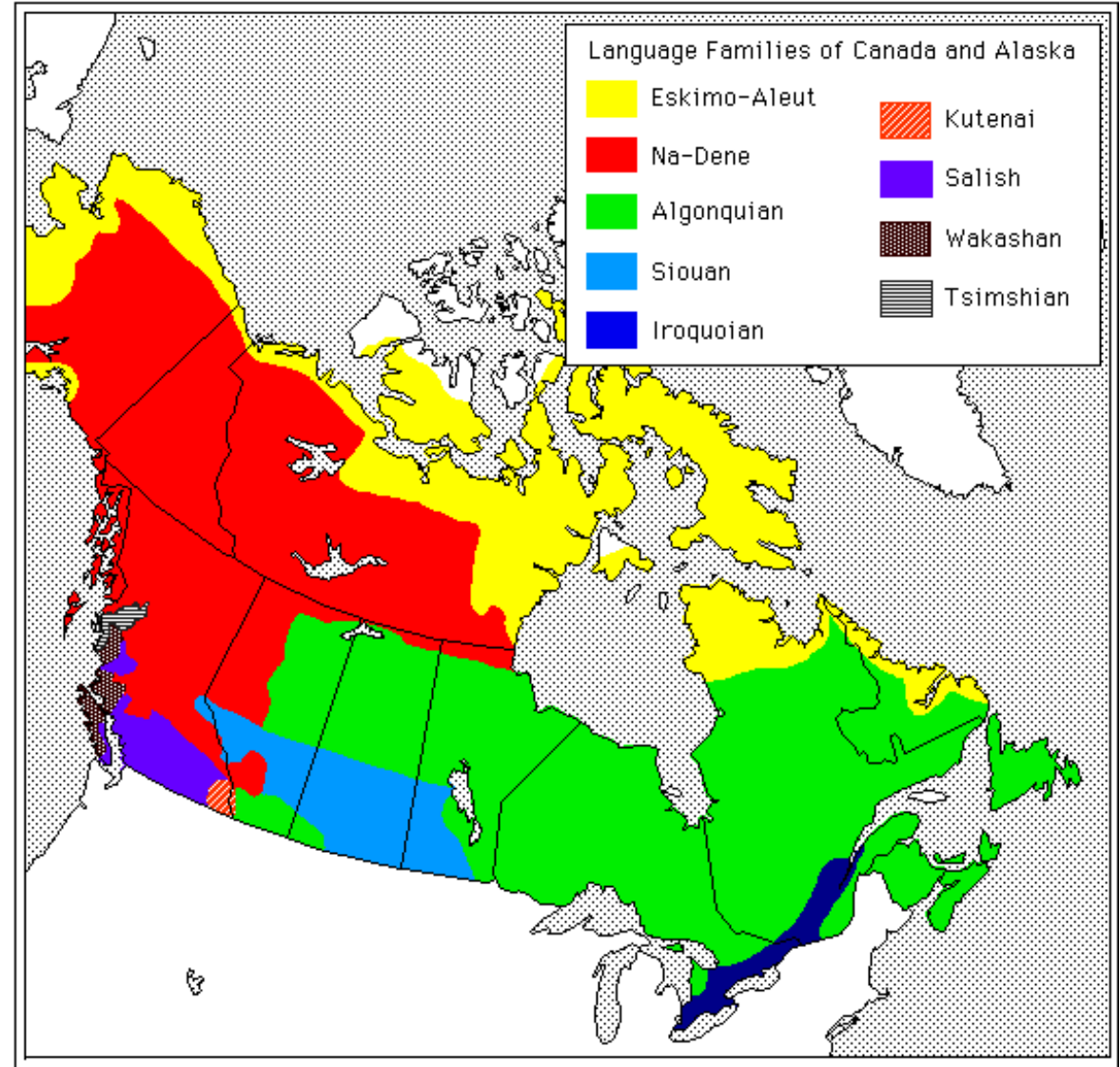
"The loss of such languages signifies the loss of traditional knowledge and cultural diversity. Teaching children in their languages and traditional ways maintains community culture."

United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, March 2019

<https://press.un.org/en/2019/hr5431.doc.htm>

# Who is collecting what?

[http://individual.utoronto.ca/hayes/indigenous/indigenous2\\_overview.html](http://individual.utoronto.ca/hayes/indigenous/indigenous2_overview.html)



# Methods

1. Gather list of Indigenous languages spoken in Canada
  - 49 from [StatCan Indigenous languages in Canada report \(2021\)](#)
2. Find MARC codes for languages
  - 23 relevant codes

20 most-spoken Indigenous languages in Canada	# speakers
Cree languages	86,475
Inuktitut	40,320
Ojibway languages	25,440
Oji-Cree	15,210
Innu (Montagnais) and Naskapi languages	11,605
Dene	11,375
Mi'kmaq	9,000
Atikamekw	6,740
Blackfoot	6,585
Slavey-Hare languages	2,215
Tlicho (Dogrib)	2,115
Anicinabemowin (Algonquin)	1,925
Michif	1,845
Dakelh (Carrier)	1,530
Dakota	1,505
Mohawk	1,435
Halkomelem	1,335
Gitxsan (Gitksan)	1,110
Nisga'a	1,080

MARC code	MARC name
alg	Algonquian (Other)
ath	Athapascan (Other)
bla	Siksika
chp	Chipewyan
	Creoles and Pidgins, French-based (Other)
cpf	
cre	Cree
dak	Dakota
den	Slavey
dgr	Dogrib
gwi	Gwich'in
hai	Haida
iku	Inuktitut
ipk	Inupiaq
iro	Iroquoian (Other)
kut	Kootenai
mic	Micmac
moh	Mohawk
nai	North American Indian (Other)
oji	Ojibwa
sal	Salishan languages
tli	Tlingit
tsi	Tsimshian
wak	Wakashan languages

StatCan Indigenous languages report (2021): <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2023029-eng.htm>

Description of nai: [https://www.loc.gov/marc/languages/language\\_name.html#:~:text=North%20American%20Indian%20\(Other\)%20%5Bnai%5D](https://www.loc.gov/marc/languages/language_name.html#:~:text=North%20American%20Indian%20(Other)%20%5Bnai%5D)

# Methods

3. Gather list of CRKN member universities
4. Find OCLC symbols for institutions
5. Create search queries for each language & institution
  - **Institution = Dalhousie**
  - **Language = Cree**
  - **Format = Books**

Library name	OCLC Symbol
Dalhousie University Faculty of Agriculture Macrae Library	CN3GA
Dalhousie University	DAK
Dalhousie University Law School Library	DU0
Dalhousie University Killam Library	DKU
Dalhousie University Sexton Design & Technology Library	DHT
Dalhousie University W. K. Kellogg Health Sciences	KGN

Search query for Cree language books at all Dalhousie libraries:

**li=CN3GA OR li=DAK OR li=DU0 OR li=DKU OR li=DHT  
OR li=KGN la=cree dt=bks**

# Methods






6. Use WorldCat Expert Search to determine holdings for each language at each library


**WorldCat Expert Search** | [U of T Libraries](#) | [Contact us](#)

- Enter search terms in one or more boxes and click on Search.



[Home](#) | [Databases](#) | **Searching** | [Staff View](#) | [My Account](#) | [Options](#) | [Comments](#) | [Exit](#) | [Hide tips](#)

[Basic Search](#) | [Advanced Search](#) | **Expert Search** | [Previous Searches](#) |  ▼




 Index |  Subjects |  News |  Help | Current database: **WorldCat** 

**Search in database:**   (Updated: 2024-03-05)  
OCLC catalog of books and other materials in libraries worldwide

**Search for:**

**Indexed in:**   

**Limit to:**

Year	<input type="text"/>	(format: YYYY-YYYY)
Language	<input type="text" value="No Limit"/>	 <a href="#">Show all languages ...</a>
Number of Libraries	<input type="text" value="All"/>	 





# Findings: total books by language

- 12417 total books at all universities
- Most material in Cree languages, Inuktitut, and Ojibway languages
- 4<sup>th</sup> most materials in “North American Indian (Other)” category

Language	# books
Cree languages	2397
Inuktitut	1636
Ojibway languages	1543
North American Indian (Other)	1326
Mohawk	1194
Mi'kmaq	919
Anicinabemowin (Algonquin)	837
Athapascan (Other)	482
Tsimshian	294
Salish languages	267
Slavey-Hare languages	238
Iroquoian (Other)	225
Creoles, Pidgins, French-based (other)	196
Dakota	191
Siksika	165
Chipewyan	130
Wakashan languages	98
Tlicho (Dogrib)	84
Gwich'in	78
Inupiaq	61
Haida	46
Tlingit	6
Ktunaxa (Kutenai)	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>12417</b>



# Findings: language diversity by institution

# universities that have 15+ languages represented:

**24**

University with the most language representation:

**Simon Fraser (22)**

Languages collected by the most universities:

**Inuktitut (56)**

**Cree languages (53)**

**Ojibway languages (51)**

Languages collected by the fewest universities:

**Ktunaxa (Kutenai) (4)**

**Tlingit (3)**

# Findings: top collectors by language

## Largest single language collections

- Cree languages at U of A (207)
- Mi'kmaq at Dalhousie (150)
- Inuktitut at MUN (146)
- Ojibway languages at Lakehead University (135)

Language	Institution with most material	# materials
Anicinabemowin (Algonquin)	Université du Québec	107
Athapascan (Other)	University of Victoria	69
Chipewyan	University of Alberta	12
Cree languages	University of Alberta	207
Creoles, Pidgins, French-based (other)	University of Toronto ALL	35
Dakota	Brandon University	42
Gwich'in	University of Victoria	15
Haida	University of British Columbia	7
Inuktitut	Memorial University of Newfoundland	146
Inupiaq	Université Laval	27
Iroquoian (Other)	Brock University	65
Ktunaxa (Kutenai)	Lakehead, SFU, VIU, UofNB (tie)	1
Mi'kmaq	Dalhousie University	150
Mohawk	Queen's University	90
North American Indian (Other)	University of Victoria	80
Ojibway languages	Lakehead University	135
Salish languages	University of British Columbia	38
Siksika	University of Alberta	19
Slavey-Hare languages	University of Regina	66
Tlicho (Dogrib)	UofM, UBC, MSVU (tie)	6
Tlingit	University of British Columbia	4
Tsimshian	Memorial University of Newfoundland	21
Wakashan languages	University of Victoria	16

# Other interesting findings

- Language hotspots
  - Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN)
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> largest collection overall
    - Largest collections in Inuktitut & Tsimshian
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> largest collection in Anicinabemowin (Algonquin)
  - University of Regina only significant Slavey collection
  - U of A has one of the largest Inuktitut collections
- Languages with the least materials overall:
  - Ktunaxa (Kutenai) (4)
  - Tlingit (6)
  - Haida (46)

## An invitation to further discussion – what is our ideal state?

- A National Library for Indigenous Language Coalition, with commitments nationally for who will collect comprehensively in each language;
- Funding support for the creation of materials, especially in the case of endangered languages;
- Funding support to digitize existing materials;
- The creation of a digital repository of materials by language speakers to enhance access to existing materials;
- A forum for information sharing in special collections so libraries aren't competing for materials that are best housed at a particular library.

# An invitation to further discussion – where should we start?

<b>Library</b>	<b>Language(s)</b>
Memorial University of Newfoundland	Innu language and its dialects
University of Toronto	Anishinaabemowin, Mohawk