

NIC, extending to personal slights, is described; but there were also cases in which territorial ministers were insulted by NIC Commissioners, and such instances are generally not mentioned. The book does record that the chief commissioner of the NIC wrote to Minister Irwin, describing the GNWT as a “so-called government” and referring to Minister Todd “who loathes NIC because we will not do his bidding” (p. 67).

This particular letter was sparked by the GNWT’s refusal in 1997 to nominate two commissioners for appointment to the NIC. It should be noted that the appointment of commissioners to the NIC was dealt with in Section 55 of the Nunavut Act, which required that three commissioners be appointed from a list of candidates to be supplied by the premier of the Northwest Territories. The Nunavut Act did not authorize the DIAND minister to recommend such appointments except from the premier’s list, and this point seems to have been lost in the discussion of the matter.

The book emphasizes, in many places, the GNWT’s focus on financial issues in relation to the establishment of Nunavut. Certainly this led to some antagonism between GNWT and federal officials and, in the political swirl, probably furthered the distance between the GNWT and other players. Hicks and White correctly note that the 1995 Martin budget reduced the federal financial transfer to the territorial government (p. 118). However, their use of terms like “pay the tab” and “pony up” to characterize the GNWT’s expectation that the federal government should cover certain costs is demeaning. Description of the extent of federal cutbacks (approximately \$55 million a year through the 1995 budget) would have provided a better context for the reader. Federal cutbacks and federal-territorial financial disputes in relation to social housing, devolution, and health care were also part of the context in which federal financial responsibility under the Nunavut Political Accord was discussed.

Have the expectations arising from the establishment of a new territory and the decentralization process been met? Given that the Government of Nunavut has displayed some serious problems in administrative performance since 1999, to what extent is the attempt at extensive decentralization responsible for these?

Notably among the reports that have critiqued the administrative performance of the Nunavut government since 1999 are *Qanukkanniq? The GN Report Card* (NSC, 2009) and various reports of the auditor general. The more relevant of these are discussed, and the authors do not accept, as a general conclusion, that decentralization is responsible for the many administrative problems that the Nunavut government has faced. In their view, problems that might be attributed to decentralization in fact reflect a broader capacity problem. In a general sense, this conclusion is probably correct, and the broader capacity problem itself can be attributed to a number of causes, among them the difficulties inherent in establishing a new government and federal failure to follow through on the Inuit employment undertakings in the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement

(NLCA). Article 23 of the NLCA provides for measures intended to achieve representative Inuit employment within the Government of Nunavut and in federal departments within the territory. Meeting the objective of Article 23 will be critical for decentralization to meet its goal of providing significant Inuit employment benefits in the decentralized communities.

The authors’ conclusion is that “Ultimately, the success of this effort will be measured in large part by both how efficient and appropriate a government the GN evolves into and by how much the decentralized communities themselves feel about the economic and social impacts” (p. 327). Another way of expressing this would be to say that the success of the effort depends on how effective the Nunavut government is in overcoming its capacity problems and, as part of this process, in training and recruiting local Inuit to fill the decentralized positions.

REFERENCE

NSC (North Sky Consulting Group). 2009. *Qanukkanniq? The GN report card: Analysis & recommendations*. Iqaluit: NSC.

Alastair Campbell
PO Box 1191, Station B,
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5R2, Canada
ACampbell@tunngavik.com

UTKUIKŠALINGMIUT UQAUHIITIGUT UQAUHLIURUT. DICTIONARY OF UTKUIKŠALINGMIUT INUKTITUT POSTBASE SUFFIXES. By JEAN L. BRIGGS, ALANA JOHNS and CONOR COOK. Iqaluit: Nunavut Arctic College, 2015. ISBN 978-1-897568-32-3. xi + 725 p. In English and Inuktitut. Softbound. Cdn\$64.95.

Utkuhikšalingmiut is a Canadian Arctic dialect spoken by three Inuit groups who used to inhabit the lower reaches of the Back River, in the southeastern part of the Kitikmeot region of Nunavut. Its speakers now live in the communities of Taloyoak, Gjoa Haven, and Baker Lake. Together with Nattilingmiut and Arviligřuarmit, Utkuhikšalingmiut belongs to a larger dialectal group that is characterized by, among other traits, the phonemic distinctions that it makes between /j/ and /ř/ and between /h/ and /š/ (see below). These shared traits explain why general descriptions of the Inuit language (e.g., Dorais, 2010:34) often consider this group as forming only one dialect, Natsilingmiutut (or Nattilingmiutut), subdivided into three subdialects, one of which is Utkuhikšalingmiut.

The Natsilingmiutut (sub)dialects are among the very few forms of the Inuit language that, until recently, had not been the object of thorough lexical compilation. The book under review is therefore particularly welcome, as is Miriam Aglukark’s draft Nattilingmiut dictionary (Aglukark,

2010). The senior author, the late Jean Briggs (1929–2016), who was Professor Emerita of anthropology at the Memorial University of Newfoundland, started conducting research among the Chantrey Inlet Utkuhikšalingmiut in 1963. She learned their language and over the years, collected a large amount of lexical data: “In order to help me learn the dialect, I wrote down as many possible of the words I heard around me” (p. v). Later on, when the Utkuhikšalingmiut, now living in Gjoa Haven, felt that their language was threatened, and “expressed strong interest in having a dictionary of their dialect” (p. v.), Briggs conducted 600 hours of interviews on word meanings, which she tape-recorded, transcribed, and translated with the help of monolingual Utkuhikšalingmiut collaborators, between 1997 and 2002.

Thus, the entire database was collected by the senior author. However, when she started to classify and analyze her materials in order to arrange them in dictionary format, Briggs asked Alana Johns, a former colleague at Memorial University of Newfoundland, to help her with her expertise. Dr. Johns, a professor of linguistics at the University of Toronto, is Canada’s best linguist specializing in the Inuit language. From 2000 on, Briggs and Johns were awarded four Social Science and Humanities Research Council grants, with the objective of producing an exhaustive dictionary of Utkuhikšalingmiut suffixes and roots. The book under review—whose entries were drafted by Conor Cook, the third author and Johns’ former student—thus constitutes the outcome of some five decades of anthropological and linguistic research.

Aimed first of all at the Utkuhikšalingmiut speakers and their descendants, many of whom do not speak the language anymore, the dictionary can also be useful to students of Inuktitut and Western Canadian Arctic Inuktitun, as well as to linguists interested in Aboriginal and, more generally, polysynthetic tongues. Data are clearly presented, although readers must pay particular attention to symbols, abbreviations, and orthographic conventions, as is the case with any linguistic compilation.

The book opens with a brief Preface summarizing the history of the project and Acknowledgements, both by Jean Briggs. These are followed by a short Introduction that presents the Utkuhikšalingmiut dialect, its linguistic structure, and the underlying method of the book, explaining that the *Dictionary of Utkuhikšalingmiut Inuktitut Postbase Suffixes* is the first volume of a two-part dictionary, the second of which will deal with Utkuhikšalingmiut roots. The introductory section ends with a few pages on writing and pronunciation and on how to use the dictionary, along with a list of abbreviations.

The principal part of the book (p. 29–670) is the dictionary proper. It lists more than 600 postbase suffixes; that is, elements of the word that occur after its initial root, modifying or adding extra information to this base. Postbase suffixes “have slightly more concrete meanings than [grammatical] endings, but they are much more vague than bases” (p. 7).

All entries in the dictionary are written in both syllabic and Roman characters. Special syllabic symbols, originally devised for Nattilingmiut, are used for transcribing *h*, *ř* (a consonant that sounds like English *r*), and *š* (sounding like *sh* or *shr*), consonants that are unknown in the eastern dialects where syllabics originated. Each entry includes the following elements: the meaning(s) of the postbase suffix, together with its grammatical function (verb or noun) and that of the root (base) to which it is attached; the variant forms the postbase suffix takes depending on the vowel or consonant it follows; several examples (in syllabics and Roman) of words that include the postbase suffix, together with their English translations and breakdown into constituent parts; notes on the use of the postbase suffix; and references to other, related ones. The book ends with three indices (alternative forms, Roman; alternative forms, syllabics; English keywords) and two appendices (grammatical supplement; irregular sound changes).

The *Dictionary of Utkuhikšalingmiut Inuktitut Postbase Suffixes* truly constitutes an exhaustive compendium of knowledge, the first and only of its kind, on Utkuhikšalingmiut postbase suffixes. It will be extremely useful to those interested in learning or translating the language, and also to students of comparative Inuit linguistics. In many instances, the phonology of Utkuhikšalingmiut is similar to that of the Inupiat dialects of Alaska. Together with Nattilingmiut and Arviligfuarmit, and like Alaskan Inupiaq, it preserves the original Proto-Eskimo distinction between phonemes /*j*/ and /*ř*/, and /*h* < *s*/ and /*š*/. No other Canadian Inuit dialect does so. Moreover, its degree of regressive consonant assimilation—whereby the first consonant in a cluster may assimilate to the following one—is minimal, as it is in Inupiaq (cf. Utkuhikšalingmiut *ihiriaqnittuq*, ‘it smells of smoke’ [p. 398]—where *q* in cluster *qn* is preserved as a stop—rather than Inuinnaqtun *ihiriarnittuq* or eastern Inuktitut *isiriarnittuq*). For all these reasons, it is to be hoped that the second volume (on bases) of the Utkuhikšalingmiut Dictionary will appear very soon.

REFERENCES

- Aglukark, M. 2010. *Iguaqšuqti: Nattilingmiutut Kitqikhautit* (Nattilingmiutut Dictionary). Cambridge Bay: Ikajuqtigiit Publishing.
- Dorais, L.-J. 2010. *The language of the Inuit: Syntax, semantics, and society in the Arctic*. Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press.

Louis-Jacques Dorais
 Université Laval
 CIERA, DKN-0450
 1030 avenue des Sciences humaines
 Québec, Québec G1V 0A6, Canada
Louis-Jacques.Dorais@ant.ulaval.ca