

Dialects in Language of the Inuit

Developed by: Martha Peet

The Inuktitut language is still being used in communication between the parents and the children and when talking to other people. Inuktitut language is same right across Nunavut, the differences are in the dialect and there are some words that are different. An example is, the word for 'thank you', in Kivalliq region, the word is 'manna', in the Kitikmeot region, it is 'quyannaqutit', in the Baffin region it is 'quyannamik'. There are also some word spellings that are written in official writing that are incorrect. The example is the community of 'Taloyoak', it's proper pronunciation is 'Talorroarq', some language experts are working on these presently to change them into correct writing. For many Inuit across Nunavut, the only language they knew was Inuktitut, both in writing and speaking. The region of Baffin Island was exposed to the English language earlier than the regions of Kitikmeot and Kivalliq, however, the Baffin people have kept the Inuktitut language very strong by using the language daily. Baffin was exposed earlier due to ships arriving in that area earlier than Kitikmeot and Kivalliq regions. The Baffin Inuktitut language is easiest to learn. The pronunciation of the words are spoken from the front of the tongue, 's' sounds. Kitikmeot and Kivalliq regions are more guttural and harder to master in trying to learn the language. It is so important to speak and use the Inuktitut languages on daily basis. However, it is the work of the local people in the communities that must stress the importance of using the Inuktitut language in their home and in the schools. The Inuit have been told not to use the Inuktitut language in so many places that they became shy and prefer to speak in English. The local education authorities need to work on making this become a reality to speak their language. An example of what I am writing about is that I was in a restaurant, I seen these ladies talking to each other in their language, I thought 'wow, Aboriginal ladies talking in their language'. I was so happy. While quietly observing, I learned they were from the Philippines. We as Aboriginal people can speak in our languages too while in public places. Our languages are unique and nice to hear while spoken. As a write, I too am guilty of not speaking my language when I was younger. My cousin and I used to speak in English when we were younger. I can still hear our parents words 'English is not your language, speak in Inuktitut'. It is hard to unlearn this wrong way of being taught, not to speak our language. We seen the Inuit who spoke English got the good jobs and were popular. This has to be undone somehow.