

A SOCIOLINGUISTIC SURVEY OF LANGUAGE  
BEHAVIOURS AND ATTITUDES IN NAIN, NUNATSIAVUT

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A SOCIOLINGUISTIC SURVEY OF LANGUAGE BEHAVIOURS AND ATTITUDES  
IN NAIN, NUNATSIAVUT

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

The goal of this thesis is to provide a snapshot of the linguistic situation within the community of Nain, Nunatsiavut. Community members have been aware for some time that a language shift has been occurring. Nevertheless, it is important to document current language behaviours – proficiency, acquisition and use – and attitudes towards the language.

To gather this information, a questionnaire was administered to a stratified judgment sample of 50 residents to gauge their proficiency in speaking, understanding, reading and writing Inuttitut; how they acquired the language; and in what contexts and with what frequency they use it. Further to this, respondents were asked their opinions on a range of language issues, including knowing both Inuttitut and English. These questions sought to uncover some of the attitudes, beliefs and values that residents have towards Inuttitut. The results show that Inuttitut is important to the residents of the community and they want to see increased visibility throughout the school and the community. But the fact remains, the existence of Inuttitut is threatened in this community, evident in the decreasing levels of proficiency among younger generations and a diminished use of the language in all contexts.

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# Chapter One: Introduction

The Inuit in Nunatsiavut have recognized for many years that their language is under threat. In response to this situation, a number of programs and projects have been initiated and instituted since the 1970s. The number of speakers of Inuttitut, however, has continued to decline. This thesis is a description of the linguistic situation in one community within Nunatsiavut: Nain is the most northerly community with the largest population and largest number of Inuttitut speakers. The thesis discusses aspects of the linguistic situation such as residents' proficiency in Inuttitut, how they acquired the language, and in what contexts and how frequently they use the language. There is also a discussion of Nain residents' attitudes toward the language. This introductory chapter provides the context for the study; the second chapter outlines the methodology used to gather information on the linguistic situation. The results are presented in the third chapter, which is followed by a discussion of the results in fourth chapter.

This chapter provides the context for the current sociolinguistic research. §1.1 discusses the social and academic context of minority languages on a national and global level. §1.2 provides some background information on the Labrador Inuit and their language, and §1.3 consists of a discussion of relevant research focusing on neighbouring regions.

## **1.1 The social and academic context of minority languages**

There are approximately six thousand languages that exist in the world today. "Each and every [one of these languages] embodies the unique cultural wisdom of a people"

(UNESCO 2003: 1). It is recognized that all languages contribute not only to linguistic diversity but are also interconnected with biological and cultural diversity and that these are manifestations of the diversity of life (Maffi 2005). Thus the loss of any language is not only a loss for a particular group of people, but also for all humanity (UNESCO 2003).

Within Canada, there are approximately fifty Aboriginal languages belonging to eleven language families. Of these fifty, only three have “large enough populations to be considered truly secure from the threat of extinction in the long-run” (Norris 1998: 8). Inuktitut is one of those three. However, as will be shown in §1.3.1.2, Inuktitut is already showing signs of decline among youth in one of the regions in Canada where Inuktitut is supposed to be strongest. This fact highlights the need for all groups to be aware of the threats that languages face and that no Aboriginal language is “truly secure from the threat of extinction”.

Raising awareness of language vitality, and its promotion, revitalization and maintenance are issues that both the speech community and academic researchers can work towards. Though improvements can be made, collaboration among researchers and community is, in fact, increasing across all disciplines, so that communities and outside researchers have an equal relationship in a process that works positively for both parties.

## **1.2 The Labrador Inuit**

The Labrador Inuit are an Aboriginal group on the northeastern coast of Canada. In 2005, the Labrador Inuit finalized their land claims agreement with the federal and provincial governments, formally creating the territory of Nunatsiavut (see map, Appendix B).



Within the land claims area are five Inuit communities: Nain, Hopedale, Makkovik, Postville and Rigolet. There is also a significant Inuit population in the Upper Lake Melville area in the towns of Happy Valley-Goose Bay and North West River.

### **1.2.1 A brief history of the Labrador Inuit**

The Labrador Inuit can trace their presence in Labrador back to the fourteenth century: “shortly after 1300 AD, Thule culture, whose roots [have been] earlier traced to the western Arctic ca 1000 AD, spread into Labrador from eastern Baffin Island” (Brice-Bennett 1977: 31). Though the Inuit traded up and down the Labrador coast, and as far south as Port-aux-Choix, on the island of Newfoundland, they have traditionally occupied the northern coast of Labrador.

The Labrador Inuit also have a history of contact with Europeans that extends much further back than any other Inuit group in Canada.<sup>1</sup> The interaction between the Inuit and the Moravian missionaries is well-known and well-documented (see, for example, Rollmann 2002, and references cited therein). “The northern coast of Labrador was first explored by Moravians in 1752” (Rollmann 2002: 150). This contact had a detrimental effect on many aspects of traditional Inuit culture: “[from 1850 to present], most traditional aspects of Inuit culture were replaced or greatly modified by western economy.” (Brice-Bennett 1977: 34) Many would argue that contact with the Moravian missionaries negatively impacted the language itself. However, “universal education in Inuktitut was provided [by the Moravian missionaries] in Labrador from the 1780s,

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of Settler history and issues, see Brice-Bennett, C. 1977. *Our Footprints Are Everywhere. Inuit Land Use and Occupancy in Labrador*. Nain: Labrador Inuit Association.

resulting in a high rate of Inuktitut literacy in the nineteenth century” (Rollmann 2002: 154). This will be further discussed in §1.2.1.1.

It can be argued that the imposition of the Provincial education system in Inuit communities was the greatest factor in the decline of Inuktitut. When Newfoundland joined Confederation in 1949, the province took control of the education system, taking over from the Moravians in Inuit communities. The language of instruction became English rather than Inuktitut and it is from this point in time that the Inuktitut language began its steady decline.

#### **1.2.1.1 History of literacy among Labrador Inuit**

The history of written literacy among the Inuit in Labrador dates back more than two centuries. The Moravian missionaries, who established permanent missions among the Inuit of Greenland as early as 1721, in 1771 began setting up stations along the coast of Labrador where they taught the fundamentals of Christianity, as well as how to read and write the Labrador dialect using a Moravian orthography (Petrone 1988: xii). However, almost all early reading material published in Inuktitut was religious in nature (Petrone 1988: xii).

The variety of materials printed in Inuktitut has increased, especially in the past thirty years, to include educational materials, government documents and other language resources. Dictionaries are one of these resources and a number of them have been published in Labrador. In 1976, Rose Pamack (formerly Jeddore) put together a Labrador dictionary (Jeddore 1976) along with a group of Labrador Inuktitut speakers who were committed to this project. Though the resulting product was an excellent source of



information, the orthography that was used was never accepted by the community which resulted in a dictionary that was “not comprehensible to most Labrador speakers and is out of print” (Andersen & Johns 2004: 19). About 10 years later, work began on another dictionary compiled by August Andersen and William Kalleo, and edited by Rita Andersen. This dictionary was written using the Labrador Inuit Standardized Writing System that was adopted in 1980 (discussed below). A number of online language resources have been developed in recent years as well.<sup>2</sup>

Though the Moravians had long established a writing system for Labrador Inuttitut, “the written word [was] not spelled the way Inuit speak [and] when they wrote, they wrote in their own way” (Andersen, Kalleo & Watts 2007: 8). For this reason, the Inuit called for a standardized spelling or writing system. It was also recognized that there was a need for consistent spelling when teaching children in school, for written communication such as newspapers, and for translating documents. To this end, an Elders’ conference was organized in 1980 and after much discussion among the delegation, a writing system was agreed upon and instituted in the school and work place.

### **1.2.2 The context of Labrador Inuttitut in the greater language family**

Though there are many sub-dialects within Labrador Inuttitut (stemming from geographic areas, e.g. Hebron, Nain and Hopedale), Labrador Inuttitut is a dialect within the larger Inuktitut family. Inuktitut is a member of the Eskimo Aleut language family, which is comprised of two branches, Eskimo and Aleut, both believed to have developed from a remote common linguistic ancestor, Proto-Eskimo-Aleut (Woodbury 1984). The

<sup>2</sup> For further information, see Andersen & Johns (2004).



Aleut branch consists of a single language, Aleut, originally spoken on the Aleutian Islands. The Eskimo branch is made up of two linguistic subgroups, Yup'ik and Inuit (including Iñupiaq).

Inuktitut is subsumed under the Inuit subgroup. Speakers of Inuit varieties inhabit an immense geographic expanse extending from as far west as Northern Alaska, where Iñupiaq varieties are spoken, to Greenland, where Greenlandic Inuit varieties are spoken. The Inuit subgroup is characterized as a continuum of closely related dialects because mutual intelligibility between contiguous dialects is high. However, some widely separated dialects are mutually unintelligible. The two major subgroupings of Inuit varieties in Canada are Western Canadian Inuktitun and Eastern Canadian Inuktitut. Dorais (1990, 1996) makes three general groupings of the Eastern Canadian Inuktitut varieties: Keewatin, Baffin and Quebec-Labrador. The Keewatin dialects are Kivalliq and Aivilik. The Baffin dialects, North and South Baffin, are spoken on Baffin Island. The Quebec-Labrador dialects are spoken in Arctic Quebec and Labrador. The Arctic Quebec dialect is also known as the Nunavik dialect, after the Inuktitut name for the region, translated as 'big land'."

### **1.2.3 Research on Labrador Inuktitut**

There has been a considerable amount of research on Labrador Inuktitut, both grammatical (e.g. Smith 1977; Dorais 1988; Johns 1993, 1995, 1996 and 2007) and sociolinguistic (Mazurkewich 1991; Mazurkewich and Johns 2001; Andersen and Johns 2004). The two pieces of research that are examined below are sociolinguistic in nature to ground the current research.

### 1.2.3.1 Nain's First Language Program

The first piece of research on Labrador Inuttitut is an examination by Mazurkewich (1991) of the First Language Program<sup>3</sup> in Nain, Labrador. The purpose of this research "was to investigate the acquisition of the lexicon and grammatical structures in both Inuttitut and English of the children in the Program in order to assess their progress in the two languages." (Mazurkewich 1991: 62) Mazurkewich selected two children, whose main language at home was Inuttitut, from each of grades Kindergarten to three in the First Language Program for a total of eight students. The data were elicited through two tasks: first, a naming task involved asking students the names of common items and objects familiar in the northern environment; and second, a story-retelling task involved showing students a series of illustrated stories and asking them to say what was happening. The testing was carried out in English and then in Inuttitut a few days later. Five data samplings were taken over a two-year period from 1989 to 1991.

The results showed that children predominantly used English as the medium of communication. Kindergarten children spoke English to both the English- and Inuttitut-speaking interviewers, though they had little difficulty in understanding the Inuttitut spoken to them during the Inuttitut interview. While their comprehension appeared good, their production of Inuttitut utterances during either the naming or story-retelling tasks was minimal.

<sup>3</sup> The First Language Program is a school-based program in which Inuttitut is the main language of instruction. It is run alongside the English stream from Kindergarten to Grade 3. The introduction of this program resulted from a discussion of the language's endangerment at an education conference in 1977. Though Inuttitut is the main language of instruction, the degree to which it is used in each grade varies. In Kindergarten, Inuttitut is used 80% of the time, while English instruction takes places 20% of the time; in Grade 1, Inuttitut is used 70% of the time, while English 30%; in Grade 2, Inuttitut is used 60% of the time, and English 40%. Grade 3 shows the transition to English as the main medium of instruction, though Inuttitut continues to be taught as a subject.



The children in Grades 1 and 2 showed a similar reluctance to speak Inuttitut; their responses in the story-retelling task were limited to single word replies or short phrases. Their responses to the naming task, however, were much improved to the Kindergarten children: Grade 1 children responded approximately 30-40% of the time in Inuttitut in the naming task; Grade 2 children named nearly all the required items in Inuttitut. However, obtaining spontaneous speech that would demonstrate their spoken competency proved unsuccessful using the elicitation method. Mazurkewich (1991: 64) provides a number of factors that could explain some of the linguistic behaviour: i) children may have been intimidated by the Inuit interviewers, ii) children were observed to speak English to a great extent in their Inuttitut classes, iii) children generally spoke English in the school halls, and in the playground during recess, and iv) Inuit teachers and teaching assistants exhibited a tendency to switch from Inuttitut to English in the classes, especially in Kindergarten, but this seemed to be less the case in Grades 1 and 2. These factors do not, however, account for the extreme reluctance of the children to speak Inuttitut. Mazurkewich believes that "the insistence of the Kindergarten children on speaking English almost exclusively seems to be due to their view of the school as a domain for English which is the dominant language of the community, and they may be less inhibited in reflecting the language shift they have noted". (Mazurkewich 1991: 65)

#### **1.2.3.2 Labrador Inuit Language Survey**

The second piece of research on Labrador Inuttitut is a language survey that was



conducted by the Torngâsok Cultural Centre<sup>4</sup> in 2000. The goal of the survey was to get a sense of the status of the language, that is, the number of speakers, the demographics of those that speak, and people's attitudes and beliefs about Inuttitut. The questionnaires were distributed in each of the five north coast communities as well as Upper Lake Melville. The response rates varied by community, but there were a total of 2224 questionnaires returned.

The survey was conducted, for the most part, by the LIA Fieldworkers<sup>5</sup> in each community. There was no formal training provided for anyone involved in the development or delivery of the survey. However, a teleconference was held to brief the fieldworkers on the purpose of the language survey and the questionnaire itself before the distribution of the questionnaires began.

Data were entered into a database for analysis after a short period of basic training for the database program, *NUD\*IST*. However, data analysis included retrieving simple frequencies and no in-depth analysis whereby variables were correlated was conducted. For example, the results showed that 16.6% of respondents said that Inuttitut was their first language. However, the ages and gender of those respondents were unable to be determined. It would have been possible to take the raw data from the questionnaires and re-enter them into another database in order to conduct a more detailed analysis of this survey, but everything, including the completed questionnaires and original database

<sup>4</sup> At this time the Torngâsok Cultural Centre was the cultural affiliate of the Labrador Inuit Association. It currently falls within the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism of the Nunatsiavut Government. The Nunatsiavut Government transitioned from the Labrador Inuit Association on December 1, 2005 when the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement came into effect.

<sup>5</sup> The Fieldworkers were employees of the Labrador Inuit Association who acted as liaisons between the organization and the community. Under the Nunatsiavut Government, they are now called Community Liaison Officers.

information, was lost in a fire that destroyed the building complex that housed the Torngâsok Cultural Centre in 2005.

The language survey shows a fairly low percentage of speakers within the Inuit communities as illustrated in Table 1 below. Nain and Hopedale continue to have the highest percentage of Inuttitut speakers<sup>6</sup>; in 1977 Brice-Bennett noted that “[Nain and Hopedale were] the two largest Inuttitut-speaking communities of the five present-day settlements on the northern coast, having absorbed the majority of the populations of two [relocated] villages, Nutak and Hebron, which formerly existed north of Nain.” (Brice-Bennett 1977: 97)

**Table 1. Respondents whose first language is Inuttitut**

	Male	Female	Total	Percentage (%)	Community Population <sup>7</sup>
Nain	106	108	214	24.7	1159
Hopedale	42	37	79	21.8	559
Makkovik	14	15	29	8.7	384
Postville	1	2	3	1.5	215
Rigolet	7	5	12	4.7	317
Total	170	167	337	16.6	2634

Unfortunately the data entry did not allow for a further breakdown into age categories. However, it is common knowledge that the majority of Inuttitut speakers are above the age of 35. As Tuglavina (2005) points out, “teenagers are speaking in English amongst themselves, [...] young mothers and fathers are also speaking English between themselves and their children, [...] and] small children are conversing in English.”

<sup>6</sup> Percentages are based on the overall number of respondents, not on the community population.

<sup>7</sup> Community populations are based on Statistics Canada 2001 Census. Though these statistics are for the year following the language survey, the population numbers are meant to provide the reader with an idea of the community populations, and do not affect the percentages provided.



These statements are further supported by the 2000 language survey. Participants were asked how often they spoke Inuttitut in various domains such as in the home, in the workplace, at school and socially. The results are shown as percentages of the total number of respondents for all communities in Table 2.

**Table 2. Frequency of Inuttitut use in various domains**

	Home	Workplace	School	Socially
Always	4.5	3	2	4
Usually	5	4	4	6
Sometimes	35	17	30	31
Never	42.5	35	30	45
Not Applicable <sup>8</sup>	12	40	33	14

A true mark of the health of a language is if it is spoken in the home. The results show that less than 10% of people always or usually speak Inuttitut at home and 42.5% of people never speak Inuttitut at home. Furthermore, 82% of respondents stated that their parents never spoke Inuttitut to them at home. These facts do not bode well for the future of the language. A shift in the predominant language from Inuttitut to English has occurred. This is evidenced by the fact that 42% and 35% of respondents' mothers and fathers respectively spoke Inuttitut while only 15% of respondents stated Inuttitut as their first language. However, there is still a chance to reverse the language shift that has occurred.

### **1.3 Relationship to existing research**

Research on the language attitudes and use of Aboriginal communities has been taking

<sup>8</sup> The response 'Not Applicable' was provided as an option to participants who felt that the question did not apply in their current situation. The reasons for choosing this option for 'home' or 'socially' were not identified, though are self-evident for both workplace and school.



place for more than twenty years (Taylor and Wright 1989; Oudin and Drapeau 1991; Saskatchewan Indigenous Languages Committee 1991; Sachdev 1998). In order to contextualize the study, this section will provide a review of relevant research from neighbouring regions, two of which focus on similar dialects of Inuktitut, while the third belongs to a different language family but is situated within the same province. First, §1.3.1 looks at two surveys conducted in Nunavik. The first of these studies examined both language attitudes and use of Inuktitut in one Nunavik community; the second study followed from the first by examining the future role of the language. The second region, discussed in §1.3.2, is that of Baffin Island in Nunavut. Research was conducted in three of the communities on Baffin Island, which looked at the language attitudes and use among Inuit youth. The third study examines language attitudes and use of Innu-aimûn in Sheshatshiu, Labrador.

### **1.3.1 The Inuit of Nunavik**

Nunavik, or Arctic Quebec, is adjacent to Labrador and because of this geographical proximity, the dialects in these two Inuit regions are very similar. In fact, Dorais (1990, 1996) puts Quebec and Labrador dialects together in his groupings of Eastern Canadian Inuktitut varieties. However, despite their adjacency and dialect similarity, the language situations in the two regions are vastly different. Studies show (Robitaille and Choinière (1984)), as will the current research, that English has now become the dominant language among the Inuit of Labrador. However, it is argued that, in Canada, Inuktitut appears strongest in Nunavik: “among the Inuit of northern Quebec the Inuktitut language is intact and vibrant both in its verbal and written form.” (Taylor

and Wright, 1989: 93)

I will review two sociolinguistic surveys that were conducted in Nunavik. The first study sought to examine language use and attitudes in a multilingual Nunavik community. The motivation for conducting the research was to gain insight into the relationship between language and culture and issues such as economic development, political organization, technology and education policy. Researchers sent questionnaires to all residents over the age of 14 in the community and a total of 364 were returned. The results show that "ability in the Inuttitut language remains high in the Inuit population and among the Inuit, Inuttitut is the language of choice in the home and to a lesser extent in the community." (Taylor and Wright, 1989: 105) However, the results of the survey also show that there appears to be "some concern in the community about the potential threats to the Inuit language and culture". (Taylor and Wright, 1989: 115).

The second piece of research focuses on the future role of the heritage language, or Inuttitut, in Nunavik. Researchers interviewed 34 women who were either parents or assumed the role of primary child rearer. The study had three objectives: to examine the respondents' fluency and use of the three languages in the community; to gauge the children's fluency and use of the three languages; and to obtain respondents' perceptions of children's fluency at adulthood. The latter was the major focus of the research. The results show that respondents "expect their children to be extremely fluent in both Inuttitut and English and to develop moderate fluency in French". (Taylor et al. 1993: 203) However, the experience of other Aboriginal and circumpolar groups shows that increased use of the dominant language comes at a significant cost to the heritage language. This suggests that respondents' expectations of their children's fluency in



Inuttitut is idealistic. “Already, younger caregivers report increased use of English with a corresponding decrease in the use of Inuttitut.” (Taylor et al. 1993: 204)

### **1.3.2 The Inuit Youth of Three Communities in Nunavut**

A study examining the language behaviours and attitudes of Inuit youth in Nunavut provides insight into the linguistic situation of a target population in three communities in the Baffin region. Though Inuktitut in this region is generally considered strong, some question the long-term viability of the language. Tulloch (2004) conducted this research between 1999 and 2001 to “examine the role of Inuit youth in determining the future of Inuktitut” (Tulloch 2004: 285). The key research objectives were to find out (1) how well these Inuit youth spoke Inuktitut; (2) how frequently they spoke Inuktitut; (3) why Inuktitut is important to them; and (4) what they want for its future.

Tulloch used two primary methods for gathering information: semi-directed interviews and a closed questionnaire. Interviews were conducted with 37 youth in three communities: Iqaluit (17), Pangnirtung (10) and Mittimatalik, also known as Pond Inlet (10). These youth ranged in age from 18 year to 25 years and had a variety of backgrounds. Some were working, some were still in school; some had both Inuit parents, some had one Inuit parent and one non-Inuit parent; some were parents themselves. The closed questionnaires were completed by 130 youth. The results from both methods of research were used to summarize each of the key research objectives.

Overall, Inuit youth responded that they spoke Inuttitut, with 81% estimating that they have “good” or “excellent” oral competency in the language. However, many youth are concerned about losing their language, especially in Iqaluit, where English is more



pervasive. Furthermore, many youth state that they do not speak Inuktitut as well as they would like attributing this, in part, to using English more frequently. This is a concerning trend as it shows “a group of Inuit who as children spoke only Inuktitut and now, as young adults, feel that they are getting worse at speaking Inuktitut rather than better” (Tulloch 2004: 288).

To further gauge the strength of the language, Tulloch asked the youth how frequently they spoke Inuktitut. She found that Inuit youth use both Inuktitut and English in most situations, and “even where one might expect them to use Inuktitut, such as with their Inuit siblings, or friends, or even children, both languages are used, almost equally” (Tulloch 2004: 289). In investigating these patterns of language use, Tulloch sought to identify the motivations for using a particular language. Though the reasons for choosing a particular language were varied, Tulloch was able to identify several motivations: (1) sometimes there is no choice, e.g. when speaking to monolingual elders or Qallunaat; (2) the desire to accommodate others involved in the conversation; (3) keeping their conversation private around others who do not speak Inuktitut or English; (4) a means of expressing identity by showing they belong; (5) one language is more suitable in a particular setting, ie. feels easier or has the right word; (6) it is the language that they are used to speaking with a certain person or group of people; (7) linguistic insecurity, or feeling shy or uncomfortable with their level of competency in English or Inuktitut; (8) some are motivated to speak either Inuktitut or English to learn to speak better or to help others learn.

Understanding why Inuktitut is important to Inuit youth also provides some insight into why they use Inuktitut when they do. Inuit youth value Inuktitut for both

symbolic and practical reasons. Inuit youth view Inuktitut as part of Inuit tradition and as a link to their culture. It is also strongly associated with identity. "Above all, Inuktitut is the mother tongue, and treasured for that reason" (Tulloch 2004: 293). However, youth emphasized the practical reasons when talking about the importance of Inuktitut, mainly in helping to obtain jobs and integrating with the community, or being able to communicate with all generations.

Inuit youth are also looking to the future and want to ensure that Inuktitut remains "strong in their communities and in their personal lives" (Tulloch 2004: 296). First and foremost, they expressed a personal commitment and responsibility for the maintenance of their language. "The language behaviour of young parents, in particular, is important because they are teaching children how to speak and their behaviour provides the role model for those children" (Tulloch 2004: 290). However, youth also identified a need for support, both parental reinforcement and institutional. The type of institutional support identified included offering higher quality language courses and governmental initiatives.

It is clear that Inuit youth in Nunavut value their ancestral language. Though 81% of Inuit youth report speaking Inuktitut very well, many say that they use English as much as they use Inuktitut. Though they express a personal commitment to ensuring the language remains strong, it is evident that "Inuit in bilingual communities need to find a way to balance its use with the pervasive use of English" (Tulloch 2004: 296). It is important to remember that even in communities where an Aboriginal language is perceived as strong, there is always the ever-present threat of a dominant language and both personal and institutional commitment will be necessary to maintain the Aboriginal language.



### 1.3.3 The Sheshatshiu Innu

Innu-aimûn is the only other Aboriginal language spoken in Labrador. It is spoken predominantly in two Innu communities, Natuashish and Sheshatshiu, and is much more widely used within their communities than Inuttitut. A survey to examine language attitudes and use was conducted in Sheshatshiu in 2004 and 2005 (Thorburn 2006). Though much linguistic research has been carried out in this community, this was the first time that a formal in-depth analysis of the residents' opinions on their community's languages was conducted.

The survey focused on three broad areas: self-evaluation of linguistic competence, language attitudes and language use.

“The majority of participants evaluated their own linguistic abilities positively in both Innu-aimûn and English, although younger community members were more comfortable speaking English than Innu-aimûn. Older participants, on the other hand, evaluated their linguistic abilities in Innu-aimûn quite highly and their abilities in English quite poorly. The population also observed that the Innu-aimûn spoken by elders was generally highly regarded while teenagers' use of Innu-aimûn was viewed more negatively” (Thorburn 2006: 175)

The results showed that age was a significant variable, as is the case in many other studies on language attitudes and use in Aboriginal communities. With respect to language attitudes, both Innu-aimûn and English were regarded as equally important, though likely for different reasons: Innu-aimûn for its ties with culture and identity and English for communication with the outside world. Even though English is becoming more prevalent in the community, Innu in Sheshatshiu still “strongly believed in the future of Innu-aimun not only in their families but in Sheshatshiu and in the Innu Nation as a whole” (Thorburn 2006: 176).



### **1.3.4 Summary of Relationship to Existing Research**

The results of the surveys in each of these three regions show that people are very competent in their language with mixed degrees of competency in the dominant language. Younger generations, however, are becoming more competent in the dominant language (English on Baffin Island and in Sheshatshiu; English and French in Nunavik). The majority of people in all three regions still strongly believe that their heritage language will last into the future.

### **1.4 Summary**

The survival of minority languages throughout the world is in question. Here in Canada, a number of factors pose a threat to the continued vitality of Aboriginal languages. The vitality of these languages is varied across different languages and across different regions. §1.3 shows three regions where the current linguistic situation remains strong, yet is under pressure or threat from the dominant language. Even though these regions surround Nunatsiavut to the south, northwest and north, the vitality of Inuttitut in Nunatsiavut is not nearly as strong, most notably in the fact that exceedingly few children are acquiring Inuttitut as a first language.

# Chapter Two: Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodology used in the development and administration of the Inuttitut sociolinguistic survey conducted in Nain. §2.1 discusses the instrument used in the survey and why a questionnaire was chosen to gather information. The design of the questionnaire is explained in §2.2 with further discussion around the two primary influences of the questionnaire design, namely the National Maori Language Survey and Thorburn's Sociolinguistic Survey of Innu-aimûn. §2.3 provides information on how the questionnaire was administered and the sample population, and §2.4 discusses improvements that can be made for future surveys. §2.5 discusses the four demographic variables assessed in the study and provides an overall view on how the data gathered through the survey were analysed. A summary of the methodology is provided in §2.6.

## 2.1 Justification of the Instrument

The goal of this research is to assess the current language situation in the community of Nain, Labrador by taking a snapshot of a sample of community residents. To do this, a survey was conducted, as “[s]urveys have been around for a long time [and] today [have] become a major approach to the description and analysis of human behaviour used by academic social sciences.” (Jackson 1988: 5)

Furthermore, sociolinguistic surveys themselves have garnered widespread interest since the 1960s. Cooper states that sociolinguistic surveys are a method “to gather information about the social organization of language behaviour and behaviour toward language in specified populations.” (1980: 114) This point will be further

elaborated in §2.2.1.1. Moreover, he asserts that “most sociolinguistic surveys are correlational in nature, [i.e., associations but not causal relationships are established among variables], although inferences of causality can sometimes be drawn from correlational data.” (Cooper 1980: 114)

The survey in this study made use of a questionnaire, “the most popular instrument for eliciting data” according to Agheyisi and Fishman (1970: 144). The questionnaire consisted principally of closed-ended questions, with a few open-ended ones, and was primarily administered in structured interviews, “a format in which the interviewer is supposed to read out the questions exactly as they are written on the page and in the same order every time.” (Thorburn 2006: 22)

The development and piloting of a questionnaire constituted a secondary goal of this research. The Nunatsiavut Government, through its cultural arm, the Torngâsok Cultural Centre, had expressed interest in conducting a second language survey throughout Nunatsiavut and had stated its desire to improve on the first survey that was conducted in 2000, as discussed in Chapter 1 (§1.2.3.2). It is hoped that developing and testing a questionnaire that proves effective will assist the community in reaching this goal.

## **2.2 Questionnaire design**

This questionnaire was developed via a process of adaptation and combination of two existing surveys, the National Maori Language Survey (1995) and Thorburn’s sociolinguistic survey (2006), to guide the content and design. The research question design and questionnaire framework were modeled after the National Maori Language



Survey, while the majority of the actual questions and response scale were taken or adapted from Thorburn's survey.

### **2.2.1 National Maori Language Survey**

The National Maori Language Survey (henceforth, NMLS) is a sociolinguistic survey that was conducted in New Zealand in 1995. The goal of the survey was to gather baseline information about the state of the Maori language in New Zealand; "the Maori language, as with many other indigenous languages world-wide, is under threat of extinction." (NMLS 1995: 3) 1995 marked 'The Year of the Maori Language' in New Zealand and this survey was initiated as part of this celebration. It builds on a number of initiatives that have been underway to safeguard the Maori language by Maori.

Before the Maori undertook a large-scale, nation-wide language survey, they first conducted a pilot survey to test the methodology that was to be used in a major survey. A number of objectives were identified for the pilot survey, some of which included estimating the number of Maori speakers in the Maori population, measuring the extent to which Maori is used, and identifying any regional variations in the numbers of Maori speakers and levels of use. A total of 250 Maori households were randomly selected from four communities and surveyed in 1993. "As a result of the small sample size, the findings of the Pilot Survey were restricted to the particular group surveyed only, and could not be extrapolated to the Maori population." (NMLS 1995: 23) The NMLS built upon the Pilot Survey by improving its methodology and enlarging its scope, making use of Cooper's sociolinguistic framework, which will be discussed in §2.2.1.1. The objectives of the nation-wide survey included obtaining information on three key areas:

characteristics of the Maori population; Maori language behaviours; and underlying attitudinal and implementational behaviours towards the Maori language.

The reality of New Zealand clearly differs from the reality of Canada, in the sense that “the Maori language is unique in that it is the sole indigenous language of one country”. (*NMLS* 1995: 3) Nevertheless, when the time came to implement the national survey, a great deal of time was spent on developing a sample to ensure representation from different regions of the country. It was also determined from the outset that the survey population was limited to Maori aged 16 years and over. All households were enumerated in prescribed geographic areas covering the entire country and approximately 20,000 households were randomly selected for the next step. These households were then screened to determine if there were any adults who had self-identified as Maori. Just over 1900 households were identified as participants and “[of these], 1550 participated in the survey, resulting in a household response rate of 81 percent.” (*NMLS*, 1995: 29)

Based on the purposes and methodology of the *NMLS*, this survey was chosen to frame the survey to be used in Nain.

#### **2.2.1.1 Cooper’s Sociolinguistic Framework**

The *NMLS* (1995) was designed following Cooper’s (1980: 115) five-part framework for sociolinguistic surveys. Cooper based his framework on a dichotomy of sociolinguistic behaviour, proposed by Agheyisi and Fishman (1970), that distinguished language behaviour and behaviour toward language. Language behaviours can be classified into three broad categories, which comprise the first three parts of Cooper’s framework: proficiency; acquisition; and use. The second part of the dichotomy is

behaviour toward language, which can be classified as either attitudinal or implementational. These behaviours form the remaining two parts of Cooper's five-part framework. The following table illustrates this framework.

**Table 3. Cooper's sociolinguistic framework**

	<b>Category</b>
<b>Language Behaviours</b>	Proficiency
	Acquisition
	Use
<b>Behaviour Toward Language</b>	Attitudinal
	Implementational

Proficiency refers to speaking, listening comprehension, reading comprehension, and writing skills; acquisition refers to the way or the sequence in which the language has been learned; and use refers to the domains in which the language is used and the frequency of its use. Attitudinal behaviours refer to attitudes towards, and beliefs and values about, the target language; whereas implementational behaviours refer to the extent to which the attitudinal aspects are supported by behaviours, or actions.

From this framework, ten research questions were developed for the NMLS. These have been adapted for the survey in Nain, Nunatsiavut and are presented in Table 4.



**Table 4. Research questions**

<b>Language Behaviours</b>	
1.	How proficient are residents of Nain at speaking Inuttitut?
2.	How proficient are residents of Nain at comprehending Inuttitut?
3.	How proficient are residents of Nain at reading Inuttitut?
4.	How proficient are residents of Nain at writing Inuttitut?
5.	How was each person's Inuttitut acquired?
6.	In what contexts and with what frequency do residents of Nain speak Inuttitut?
7.	In what contexts and with what frequency do residents of Nain hear Inuttitut?
<b>Behaviour Toward Language</b>	
8.	What are Inuit attitudes towards knowing the Inuttitut language?
9.	What are Inuit attitudes towards being bilingual in Inuttitut and English?
10.	What actions have residents of Nain taken towards implementing the Inuttitut language?

As shown in Table 4, four key research questions relating to language proficiency were investigated: 1) How proficient are residents of Nain at speaking Inuttitut; 2) How proficient are residents of Nain at comprehending Inuttitut; 3) How proficient are residents of Nain at reading Inuttitut; and 4) How proficient are residents of Nain at writing Inuttitut. Proficiency questions (Q1 – Q17) (see Appendix A) were designed to identify respondents' level of language skill, their versatility, and the ease with which they could conduct a conversation in Inuttitut. These questions were based on self-evaluation; there was no form of testing to validate participant responses.<sup>9</sup> However, participants were asked to evaluate the proficiency of different age groups (Q18 – Q28) thus providing a set of data with which to compare self-assessments.

The second part of the framework focuses on acquisition. Language can be acquired in a number of ways. The most important method of language acquisition for

<sup>9</sup> A proficiency test was considered for inclusion in the research. However, it was determined that this level of research was beyond the implementational scope of this study.

healthy languages is through intergenerational language transfer. However, there are other non-traditional methods that may include learning the language at a school or other formalized setting, or from radio or television. Questions 29 through 35 of the questionnaire focus on this aspect of the framework.

Respondents were asked a variety of questions regarding their use of Inuttitut: when, where, with whom and how often they spoke the Inuttitut language. These language behaviours form the third part of the framework and are assessed in Questions 36 through 70 of the questionnaire.

The fourth and fifth parts of the framework form the second half of the language dichotomy: behaviours toward language. Attitudinal behaviours, such as beliefs and values, may not be immediately apparent, but can be uncovered by asking respondents for their opinions on a range of language issues. Two research questions were identified for this part of the framework: i) What are Inuit attitudes towards knowing the Inuttitut language and ii) What are Inuit attitudes towards being bilingual in Inuttitut and English. Implementational behaviour involves the actual implementation of an attitude, belief or value. The extent to which residents in the community of Nain presently act to implement what they believe about the language may provide an indication of what residents are likely to do in the future. A final research question was developed focusing on this part of the framework: What actions have residents of Nain taken towards implementing the Inuttitut language. Questions 71 through 118 in the questionnaire were centred around these behaviours toward language.



### 2.2.2 Thorburn's Sociolinguistic Survey

While the National Maori Language Survey was used to frame this questionnaire and many of its questions used (a total of 42), the majority of questions came from, or are adapted from, Thorburn's sociolinguistic survey (2006). Thorburn conducted this survey in the Innu community of Sheshatshiu, Labrador, to examine language use and attitudes. Thorburn's survey was itself based on two questionnaires that previously had been administered and tested (Oudin and Drapeau 1991; Papen 2002), allowing for improvements in Thorburn's questionnaire. A total of 85 questions were used from the Sheshatshiu survey, some taken directly and some adapted for differences in language and community. The state of Innu-aimûn in Sheshatshiu is much healthier than the state of Inuttitut in Nain. One indicator of language health is intergenerational transmission. The majority of children in Sheshatshiu have Innu-aimûn as their first language, whereas the majority of children in Nain speak English as their first language.

In addition to incorporating questions from Thorburn's questionnaire, the five-point Likert scale used by Thorburn was also adopted for this questionnaire. This scale, which is the most widely used scale in survey research, measures both positive and negative responses to a statement and a five-point scale allows for a neutral response. The following example demonstrates the five-point Likert scale:

**(1) Q91. How important is Inuttitut to you?**

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> very important       | <input type="checkbox"/> important            | <input type="checkbox"/> neither important nor unimportant |
| <input type="checkbox"/> not really important | <input type="checkbox"/> not at all important |  |

The first two provided responses ("very important" and "important") are positive, while the last two responses ("not really important" and "not at all important") fall at the



opposite end of the scale and are negative. The middle response (“neither important nor unimportant”) is neutral.

Finally, the questionnaire was translated into Inuttitut, since it was known that some participants would prefer to conduct the interview in that language.<sup>10</sup>

### **2.3 Administration of the questionnaire**

This questionnaire was administered over a two-week period in May 2009 to 50 individuals in the community of Nain. Participants were community residents over the age of 19, the age of majority in Newfoundland and Labrador. On average interviews took 45 minutes, though much longer when conducted in Inuttitut.

The use of fieldworkers was decided against for a number of reasons. First, because one of the goals of the research was to develop an effective questionnaire and methodology that could be neatly handed to the Torngâsok Cultural Centre, administration of the questionnaires by the researcher provided a more intimate knowledge of what worked and what did not work in terms of both questions and administration, so that improvements could be made for future survey work. Second, the researcher is herself a member of the community. This is advantageous for two reasons: the knowledge of the questionnaire and methodology did not have to be transferred to fieldworkers, and the researcher already had a comfort level with the community and its residents and vice versa.

<sup>10</sup>I would like to thank Rita Andersen for translating the questionnaire, Louisa Kojak for proofreading the translation, and both the Torngâsok Cultural Centre and the Nunatsiavut Government for providing this service.

### **2.3.1 The sample**

In selecting a research sample, the goal was to have representation from a number of subgroups within the population, i.e. age, gender and ability to speak in Inuttitut. Because it was known that the sample would be relatively small, it was determined to use stratified sampling. This type of sampling ensures that subgroups are represented. Equal representation of gender and age groups was desired, or as close to equal as possible; representation of speakers of Inuttitut was necessary though an equal representation was not.<sup>11</sup> However, for the purposes of this research, it was not critical that the representation of each subgroup was proportional to its part of the population. The sample was selected using the judgment of the researcher to ensure that stratification criteria were met.

### **2.4 Discussion of instrument and administration**

While the goal was to have each questionnaire administered by the researcher, this in fact did not materialize. One reason was that participants were given the choice to conduct the questionnaire in Inuttitut. The researcher is not fluent in the language and therefore required the assistance of an interpreter for those participants who wished to complete the questionnaire in Inuttitut. However, the researcher was present while the Inuttitut questionnaires were conducted to answer any questions that arose. The interpreter who conducted the Inuttitut questionnaires was the same person that translated the instrument, so there was already a familiarity with the research.

<sup>11</sup> Because it is known that only about a quarter, and possibly less, of the population of the community speaks Inuttitut, it would be very difficult to have equal representation of speakers while maintaining an equal representation of age groups.

Second, a number of the questionnaires were self-administered, as some participants strongly preferred to take the questionnaire and complete it on their own.

In those cases where the questionnaires were administered by the author, the author sat with the respondent to read through each of the questions and mark the answers on the questionnaire. Many respondents wanted to have a copy of the questionnaire in front of them to follow along with the questions, and this was done.

The following table shows the total numbers and percentages of respondents whose questionnaires were completed with the researcher, in Inuttitut or through self-administration.

**Table 5. Administration of questionnaire**

	Frequency	Percent
Researcher-administered	34	68
Administered through Interpreter	4	8
Self-administered	12	24
Total	50	100

## **2.5 Data analysis**

Statistical analysis of the data was conducted using SPSS Statistics GradPack 17.0.

Statistical analyses involved examining frequencies, crosstabulations of variables (including questions) and Pearson correlations.

The answers to closed-ended questions were generally conflated from five categories to three to produce more meaningful results. The example from §2.2.2 is repeated here to illustrate conflation.

### **(2) Q91. How important is Inuttitut to you?**

- ☐ very important      ☐ important      ☐ neither important nor unimportant  
☐ not really important      ☐ not at all important



The first two provided responses (“very important” and “important”) are positive and were conflated to one category, while the last two responses (“not really important” and “not at all important”) were conflated to form a negative response. The middle response (“neither important nor unimportant”) is neutral and remained its own category. Frequency and crosstabulation analyses were conducted on the conflated responses, whereas Pearson correlation results were performed upon the uncategorized data.

### 2.5.1 Demographic Variables

Four demographic variables were considered in this study: age, gender, level of education and occupation. As stated in §2.1, sociolinguistic surveys serve to gather information about the social organization of the language situation in a community. These demographic variables are useful in describing patterns and associations within the research questions.

#### 2.5.1.1 Age and gender

As previously mentioned, age and gender were two of the three dimensions upon which the stratified judgment sample was based. It was the goal of the study to achieve similar numbers of participants across both age and gender categories. The final sample consisted of 50 community members and their distribution is illustrated in Table 6.

**Table 6. Final sample by age and gender**

Gender	Age Categories						Total
	19-28	29-38	39-48	49-58	59-68	69+	
Female	4	5	8	2	4	4	27
Male	4	3	5	5	5	1	23
Total	8	8	13	7	9	5	50

As can be seen from this table, the representation among age groups is fairly evenly distributed with 16% of participants in each of the 19-28 and 29-38 age categories, 14% in the 49-58 age category and 18% in the 59-68 age category. The 39-48 age category had the highest percentage of respondents at 26%, just over a quarter of the whole sample. The final age category, 69 years of age and older, showed the lowest number of respondents at 10%.

These age categories were further condensed into three larger age groupings in the same fashion as in Thorburn's study, as is shown in the following table.

**Table 7. Age groupings used for data analysis**

	Frequency	Percent
19-38	16	32
39-58	20	40
59+	14	28
Total	50	100

This was done for two reasons. First, conflation of data makes reporting and analysis of data easier. Second, each of these larger age categories roughly corresponds to a generation and also correlates the age groups to some important points in the history of Labrador Inuit. One of the major differentiating factors between these generations is the type of education they received. The majority of the older participants (59+), born in 1950 or earlier, if they went to school, would have been educated principally in the Inuttitut language through the Moravian Church. Those in the middle age category, born between 1951 and 1970, would primarily have been exposed to (English-only) residential schooling, as the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador took control of the education system in 1949 when it joined Confederation. Some of these participants were also

relocated from their homes north of Nain, e.g. Hebron, OkKak, Nutâk and Tasiujak. The younger participants, born between 1971 and 1990, would also have been educated through the provincial education system, though not in residential schools.

### 2.5.1.2 Education

The third demographic variable considered in this study was level of education. Following Thorburn's (2006) analysis, it was divided into four categories: never in school; primary/elementary school experience, either partially or totally completed; secondary school experience, either partially or totally completed; and post-secondary experience, including both university and training experience, either partially or totally completed.

Pearson correlation tests were used to analyse this variable according to gender and age. There was no correlation between gender and education. However, there was a significant correlation between age and education. These variables are negatively correlated ( $-0.433$ ), and the correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

**Table 8. Educational experience by age group**

	Age Group			Total
	19-38	39-58	59+	
Never in school	0	0	1	1
Primary/Elementary	0	1	4	5
Secondary School	8	11	4	23
Post-secondary School	8	7	4	19
Total	16	19	13	48



Nearly all of the respondents (98%) received some form of formal education, with only one person (69+) having never been in school. 48% of respondents report having up to some secondary school experience, while 40% report having some post-secondary school experience. However, while many respondents indicated that they finished training or began training, this does not mean that they finished high school.<sup>12</sup>

#### **2.5.1.3 Occupation**

Occupation is the fourth demographic variable that was included for consideration in this study. Participants were asked what they worked at and a list of 13 options was available for the interviewer to choose from. These options were categorized into eight groupings, which are similar to those found in Thorburn's survey, for the purposes of data analysis: seasonal worker/manual labour; office worker; homemaker; hunter; businessperson; educator; other; and unemployed. The grouping with the largest percentage of respondents was "office worker" with 52.3%. This could be explained by the fact that the Administrative offices for the Nunatsiavut Government are headquartered in Nain. The distribution of responses for this variable are shown in Table 9.

<sup>12</sup> Some respondents report having completed training, though the highest grade completed in school is Grade 8, for example. It is not uncommon for students to enrol in vocational training without having completed secondary school.

**Table 9. Occupational distribution of respondents**

Occupation	N(umber of respondents)
Seasonal worker/manual labour	5
Office worker	23
Homemaker	1
Businessperson	2
Educator	2
Hunter	2
Other	7
Unemployed	2
Total	44

Pearson correlation tests were used to analyse this variable according to gender, age and level of education. There was no correlation between any of these variables for occupation.

### **2.5.2 Summary of data analysis**

As suggested by Thorburn (2006: 41), “of the four variables, age was expected to be the most significant since it has proven to be salient in other attitudinal surveys, not only within an Aboriginal context but also in other settings.” This was, in fact, shown to be the case in this study as well.

Because chi-square testing should be performed on random samples, it was not used here, as this study was based on a non-random sample.

## **2.6 Summary**

Though the sample was non-random and therefore the results could not be extrapolated to the community as a whole, the data collected through the survey revealed some interesting facts about linguistic features, such as language proficiency, use and attitudes,

in the community of Nain. Furthermore, the questionnaire itself was based on two previously administered surveys that were themselves based on successfully-proven methodologies.

Having achieved the primary goal of gaining insight into the linguistic situation of the community, the secondary goal of piloting a sociolinguistic survey was also successful. A number of insights were gained through the development and administration of the questionnaire so that improvements can be made and passed on to the Labrador Inuit for a potential future larger-scale survey.



## Chapter Three: Results

The framework of this research is based on a model for sociolinguistic surveys developed by Cooper (1980) (as discussed in §2.2.1.1), who applies a dichotomy of sociolinguistic behaviour, proposed by Agheyisi and Fishman (1970). This dichotomy distinguishes between language behaviour and behaviour toward language. The framework that is built on this dichotomy consists of five parts: (1) proficiency, (2) acquisition, and (3) use, which comprise the language behaviours, in addition to (4) attitudinal and (5) implementational language behaviours.

The current chapter presents the results from the survey and is organized following the five-part framework. Language behaviours are discussed in the first three sections. §3.1 describes the proficiency levels of respondents. §3.2 outlines how respondents acquired Inuttitut, while §3.3 presents the data on how Inuttitut is used in the community. The results for attitudinal and implementational behaviours are evaluated in §3.4. The chapter concludes with a summary of findings in §3.5.

### 3.1 Proficiency

The first part of Cooper's five-part framework addresses the matter of proficiency. While "[t]he issue of what exactly constitutes proficiency in a language and how to measure it is currently a controversial one" (Cummins 1980: 175), Cooper defines language proficiency as "what has been learned" (1980: 115). There are four components of proficiency that will be addressed in this study: speaking, listening comprehension, reading comprehension and writing. A research question was designed around each of

these components and the results for each will be discussed in the current section.

### **3.1.1 Speaking**

The level of speaking proficiency in a linguistic community is arguably the most important factor in determining the health of a language. The first research question in this study asked how proficient residents of Nain are at speaking Inuttitut. A total of ten questions (Q1-Q10) were designed to answer this research question, which constituted the first section of the questionnaire, though only the first eight will be discussed in this section. These questions were designed to identify respondents' level of speaking ability and the ease with which they could conduct a conversation in Inuttitut. It was important to ask a range of questions so that a cross-examination of responses could be conducted. Furthermore, "the results may be subject to an element of personal bias and inconsistency as respondents were asked to self-assess their language ability" (*NMLS* 1995: 33).

#### **3.1.1.1 Self-assessments of speaking proficiency**

The first question (Q1) in the survey asked respondents to self-assess their level of ability in spoken Inuttitut. The results show a stark contrast between the high and low<sup>13</sup> levels of proficiency in Inuttitut with 46% of respondents rating their abilities in Inuttitut as high and 42% rating their abilities as low. There were four respondents who gave themselves a mid-level rating of "acceptably" while two respondents said they could not speak any Inuttitut. This distribution is shown in the following table.

<sup>13</sup> When proficiency levels are referred to as high and low, they refer to "well or very well" and "poorly or very poorly", respectively.

**Table 10. Self-evaluations of proficiency in speaking Inuttitut**

	Frequency	Percent
Not at all	2	4
Poorly or very poorly	21	42
Acceptably	4	8
Well or very well	23	46
Total	50	100

Demographic variables are a valuable way to gain insight into the current situation of a language community. As discussed in §2.5.1, the demographic variables considered in this study were age, gender, level of education and occupation.

Age is consistently the most salient variable, and the breakdown of proficiency levels by age categories is illustrated in the following table:

**Table 11. Proficiency in speaking Inuttitut, by age**

Speaking Proficiency in Inuttitut	Age Group							
	19-38		39-58		59+		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Not at all	1	50	1	50	0	0	2	100
Poorly or very poorly	12	57.1	8	38.1	1	4.8	21	100
Acceptably	2	50	2	50	0	0	4	100
Well or very well	1	4.4	9	39.1	13	56.5	23	100

As can be seen, the low and high levels of proficiency are almost a mirror image of each other. Of the 23 respondents who rated their abilities as high, 13 (or 56.5%) are 59 years of age or older and a total of 22 (or 95.6%) are 39 years of age or older. Whereas of the 21 respondents who rated their abilities as low, 12 (or 57.1%) are 38 years of age or younger, and 20 (or 95.2%) are 58 years or younger. The age group with the highest level of ability in spoken Inuttitut are those 59 and older, while those with the



lowest self-reported level of ability are those 38 and younger. The age group with the greatest spread is the middle age group or those between the ages of 39 and 58.

A number of other questions were asked to support the first question regarding speaking ability. Given respondents' self-assessments of speaking Inuttitut, it would be expected that respondents would answer similarly to whether or not they could easily have a conversation in Inuttitut about most everyday things (Q3). This held true as can be seen in the following table.

**Table 12. Frequency with which residents of Nain could easily have a conversation in Inuttitut**

	Frequency	Percent
Difficult or very difficult	19	38.8
So-so	8	16.3
Quite easily or very easily	22	44.9
Total	49	100.0

Of the respondents that answered this question, 44.9% responded that they could easily have a conversation in Inuttitut. This compares to 46% who rated their speaking abilities highly. The difference was slightly larger between those who reported difficulty in holding a conversation in Inuttitut, which was 38.8% and the low rating for speaking abilities which was at 42%. One respondent qualified their response by saying that "it depends on what you're talking about". Therefore, some people may have chosen the neutral response for Q3 even though rating their speaking ability as low.

Another question to gauge people's ability in spoken Inuttitut asked how often they were able to express the same thought in a number of different ways in Inuttitut (Q5). The following table shows that an equal percentage of respondents answered both positively and negatively at 40% each and 20% answered that they could sometimes

express the same thought in a number of different ways in Inuttitut.

**Table 13. Frequency with which residents of Nain can express the same thought in a number of different ways in Inuttitut**

	Frequency	Percent
Rarely or never	20	40
Sometimes	10	20
Most of the time or always	20	40
Total	50	100

As Table 14 indicates, results varied according to age and show a significant correlation between the question and age. A Pearson correlation test shows that the variables are positively correlated (0.726) and the correlation is significant at 0.01 level.

**Table 14. Ability to express the same thought in Inuttitut in a number of different ways, by age**

Ability to express the same thought in a number of different ways in Inuttitut	Age Group							
	19-38		39-58		59+		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Rarely or never	12	60	8	40	0	0	20	100
Sometimes	4	40	4	40	2	0	10	100
Most of the time or always	0	0	8	40	12	60	20	100

Respondents were also asked to judge how often they spoke Inuttitut correctly (Q4). Over half of the respondents, at 52%, said that they spoke Inuttitut correctly most of the time or always. Some people that rated their speaking abilities as low said that while they did not know a lot of the language, what they did know and use, they were confident that they were speaking it correctly. 26% of respondents said that they sometimes spoke Inuttitut correctly, while 22% said that they rarely or never spoke Inuttitut correctly. This distribution is shown in the following table.

**Table 15. Frequency with which residents of Nain say they speak Inuttitut correctly**

	Frequency	Percent
Rarely or never	11	22
Sometimes	13	26
Most of the time or always	26	52
Total	50	100

### 3.1.1.2 Relationship with English

Two questions (Q2 and Q6) asked for self-assessed comparisons of proficiency levels in Inuttitut and English. The first of these questions asked which language the respondent found easier to converse in (Q2)<sup>14</sup>. Though 46% of respondents rated their abilities in spoken Inuttitut as high, only 14.3% of respondents found it easier to converse in Inuttitut, though 22.4% could converse in both Inuttitut and English just as easily. However, the majority of those surveyed said that they found it easier to converse in English at 63.3%. One respondent commented that it “depends on what you're talking about. [If it is] hunting or fishing, [then it is easier to converse in] Inuttitut; [but if it is] politics or economic development [for example, then it is easier to converse in] English. Inuttitut has no scientific language for certain areas.” The following table shows the distribution of these responses.

**Table 16. Language easiest to converse in**

	Frequency	Percent
Inuttitut	7	14.3
English	31	63.3
Both just as easily	11	22.4
Total	49	100.0

<sup>14</sup> This question is problematically ambiguous, because “easy to converse” could mean finding it easier since English is the language most commonly used in stores, etc. That is, *easier* because of situational factors – not because of internal knowledge.



The second of these questions that asked about English was geared to assess respondents' ability in both languages, asking how many recent conversations could have been carried in either English or Inuttitut (Q6). As Table 17 indicates, 44% said that most or all of their recent conversations could have been carried out in either language, whereas 56% said that none or very few could have been carried out in either language.

**Table 17. Number of conversations that can be carried out in either English or Inuttitut**

	Frequency	Percent
None	9	18
Very few	19	38
Most	10	20
All	12	24
Total	50	100

When these results are analyzed against proficiency in Inuttitut, as illustrated in Table 18, it is clear that it is only those with a high level of proficiency can carry out conversations in either language. Those with a low or mid level of proficiency could not have carried out any, or only very few, of their recent conversations in Inuttitut. This indicates a trend of language shift from Inuttitut to English. Only one respondent with a high level of proficiency in Inuttitut said that they could not have carried out any of their recent conversations in either language, suggesting a monolingual Inuttitut speaker.

**Table 18. Number of conversations that can be carried out in either English or Inuttitut, by proficiency in Inuttitut**

Number of conversations carried out in either language	Proficiency in Inuttitut									
	Not at all		Poorly or very poorly		Acceptably		Well or very well		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
None	2	22.2	6	66.7	0	0	1	11.1	9	100
Very few	0	0	15	78.9	4	21.1	0	0	19	100
Most	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	100	10	100
All	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	100	12	100

### 3.1.1.3 Comfort and satisfaction with spoken Inuttitut

It is important to understand proficiency levels in spoken Inuttitut to begin to be able to quantify the language situation. However, it is equally important to understand people's comfort level with the language to see how likely they are to use the language (Q8). Nearly two-thirds of respondents said that they were comfortable speaking Inuttitut, while just over a third reported not being comfortable speaking Inuttitut, as indicated in Table 19.

**Table 19. Do residents of Nain feel comfortable speaking in Inuttitut?**

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	28	62.2
No	17	37.8
Total	45	100.0

Many respondents qualified their responses during the interview. The following are some of the comments that were made: "comfortable using known words but depends on with whom"; "depends on who's around"; "not doing language justice, if [I was] proficient then [I] would speak it"; "depends - only if I know the words"; "because can't

hardly speak it properly”.

However, people’s responses are connected to their proficiency levels as it is likely that the lower the level of proficiency, the less comfort one would have in speaking the language. This is supported by the data in the following table.

**Table 20. Comfort in speaking Inuttitut, by proficiency in Inuttitut**

Comfort in speaking Inuttitut	Proficiency in Inuttitut									
	Not at all		Poorly or very poorly		Acceptably		Well or very well		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	0	0	6	21.4	1	3.6	21	75	28	100
No	2	11.8	12	70.5	2	11.8	1	5.9	17	100

As can be seen, the majority of respondents in each of the low and mid categories for proficiency reported not being comfortable speaking in Inuttitut, whereas only 1 out of 22 respondents who reported a high level of proficiency said they were not comfortable speaking Inuttitut.

People were also asked about their level of satisfaction with their ability in spoken Inuttitut (Q7). This question was not asked to most elders though. The majority of respondents were fairly unsatisfied or very unsatisfied with their level of ability in spoken Inuttitut as shown in Table 21.

**Table 21. Are residents of Nain satisfied with their ability in spoken Inuttitut?**

	Frequency	Percent
Satisfied	13	32.5
More or less	4	10.0
Unsatisfied	23	57.5
Total	40	100.0

Results varied according to proficiency levels. A Pearson correlation test



confirmed that these variables are positively correlated at 0.926 and it is significant at the 0.01 level. Therefore, people's level of satisfaction with their ability in spoken Inuttitut is correlated to their level of ability as illustrated in Table 22.

**Table 22. Satisfaction in speaking Inuttitut, by proficiency in Inuttitut**

Satisfaction in speaking Inuttitut	Proficiency in Inuttitut									
	Not at all		Poorly or very poorly		Acceptably		Well or very well		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Satisfied	0	0	0	0	1	7.7	12	92.3	13	100
More or less	0	0	1	25	2	50	1	25	4	100
Unsatisfied	2	8.7	20	87	1	4.3	0	0	23	100

These responses also reflect respondents' values regarding Inuttitut. If people did not value Inuttitut, they would be indifferent as to their level of ability in the language.

#### **3.1.1.4 Summary**

Overall, there is a clear trend that proficiency in spoken Inuttitut is correlated with age. Of the 50 respondents, 23 reported a high level of proficiency in speaking Inuttitut, whereas 21 respondents said that their proficiency is low. A staggering majority of high level proficiency speakers, at 96%, are 39 years of age or older and 57% of high level proficiency speakers are 59 years of age or older. For those whose self-assessed proficiency is low, 57% are 38 years or younger and 95% are 58 years of age or younger. These percentages stay relatively the same for easily having a conversation in Inuttitut and being able to express the same thought in a number of different ways in Inuttitut. When asked about speaking Inuttitut correctly, just a little more than half of the respondents said that they speak correctly most or all of the time, which roughly matches

the number who report a high level of speaking proficiency. When asked whether recent conversations could have been carried out just as well in either language, a little less than half said that most or all of their conversations could have been carried out in either language, whereas a little more than half said none or very few.

Nearly two-thirds of the respondents said that they found it easier to converse in English, 14.3% said Inuttitut and 22.4% said they said they could converse in both languages just as easily.

Respondents were also asked to evaluate their level of comfort and satisfaction with respect to Inuttitut. 37.8% of respondents said that they were not comfortable with speaking Inuttitut and 57.5% said that they were not satisfied with their proficiency.

### **3.1.2 Comprehension**

Comprehension is another component of proficiency and, while not as prominent in determining the health of a language, plays an important role in ascertaining a language's current situation. The second research question in this study asked how proficient residents of Nain are at comprehending Inuttitut and one question (Q11) was posed to answer this research question.

#### **3.1.2.1 Self-assessments of comprehension proficiency**

The results show that more than half of those surveyed, at 56%, reported that they understand Inuttitut well or very well. This compares with 46% who said that they could speak Inuttitut well or very well. 8% of respondents said they understand Inuttitut acceptably, while 36% said they understand Inuttitut poorly or very poorly. These results

are shown in Table 23.

**Table 23. Self-evaluations of proficiency in understanding (spoken) Inuttitut**

	Frequency	Percent
Poorly or very poorly	18	36
Acceptably	4	8
Well or very well	28	56
Total	50	100

As stated above, there are more people who understand Inuttitut well or very well than there are people that speak Inuttitut well or very well. Three respondents who ranked their speaking abilities as poor or very poor said that they understand Inuttitut well or very well, and two who assessed their speaking abilities as acceptable also said that they understand the language well or very well. This fact is not surprising, and will be discussed in §4.1.

**Table 24. Comprehension proficiency, by proficiency in spoken Inuttitut**

Comprehension Proficiency	Proficiency in spoken Inuttitut									
	Not at all		Poorly or very poorly		Acceptably		Well or very well		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Poorly or very poorly	2	11.1	14	77.8	2	11.1	0	0	18	100
Acceptably	0	0	4	100	0	0	0	0	4	100
Well or very well	0	0	3	10.7	2	7.1	23	82.2	28	100

### 3.1.3 Reading

As discussed in §1.2.1.1, there is a history of literacy among the Inuit of Labrador that dates back to the 1700s. This situation of literacy is unlike that of many other



Aboriginal groups across the country. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to ask how proficient residents of Nain are at reading Inuttitut. In addition to framing this third research question as a direct question, there were two other questions asked relating to the use of reading skills that will be addressed in this section.

### 3.1.3.1 Self-assessments of reading

42% of respondents said they could read Inuttitut well or very well (Q13). The remaining responses were fairly evenly distributed between acceptably at 22%, poorly or very poorly at 18% and not at all at 18%. These results are shown in Table 25.

**Table 25. Self-evaluations of reading Inuttitut**

	Frequency	Percent
Not at all	9	18
Poorly or very poorly	9	18
Acceptably	11	22
Well or very well	21	42
Total	50	100

It would be expected that those with a low level of speaking ability would also have a low level of reading ability and those with a high level of reading ability would also have a high level of speaking ability. It is not necessarily the case that those with a high level of speaking ability would also have a high level of reading ability. Even though Inuit in Labrador have historically had a high level of literacy in Inuttitut, it is not necessarily the case that every participant would be literate. These assumptions, for the most part, are borne out in the results as shown in Table 26.

**Table 26. Reading ability, by proficiency in spoken Inuttitut**

Reading Ability	Proficiency in spoken Inuttitut									
	Not at all		Poorly or very poorly		Acceptably		Well or very well		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Not at all	2	22.2	5	55.6	1	11.1	1	11.1	9	100
Poorly or very poorly	0	0	8	88.9	0	0	1	11.1	9	100
Acceptably	0	0	7	63.6	2	18.2	2	18.2	11	100
Well or very well	0	0	1	4.8	1	4.8	19	90.4	21	100

13 of the 21 people that assessed their speaking ability as poor or very poor reported that they could not read Inuttitut or could do so only poorly or very poorly. The second assumption is also borne out. 19 of the 21 people that reported a high level of reading ability also reported a high level of speaking ability. However, it does hold true that the vast majority of those with a high level of speaking ability also have a high level of reading ability.

### 3.1.3.2 Comparison with English

When asked if they understood books, stories or articles better in English or Inuttitut (Q15), only three respondents said they understood them better in Inuttitut. However, 46% of respondents said they understood these written materials equally in both languages. The same percentage, 46%, said they understood books, etc. better in English. These results are shown in Table 27.

**Table 27. Language with which reading material is better understood**

	Frequency	Percent
Inuttitut	3	8.1
English	17	45.9
Both the same	17	45.9
Total	37	100.0

Though there is a high percentage of people who can understand books, articles and stories in Inuttitut, relatively few of them spend any time reading in Inuttitut (Q16). Only 40% of respondents reported spending any time reading in Inuttitut, and only 13.5% reported reading more than 3 hours of Inuttitut in the previous week.

**Table 28. Amount of time spent reading in Inuttitut in the past week (in hours)**

	Frequency	Percent
0	22	59.5
1-2	10	27.0
3-5	1	2.7
5-10	2	5.4
More than 10	2	5.4
Total	37	100.0

The frequency with which people read in Inuttitut was crosstabulated with their reading ability, the results of which are shown in the table below. Only those who said they read Inuttitut well or very well spend three or more hours reading in the language. The surprising figure is that 9 of the 21 respondents who said they read Inuttitut well or very well reported spending no time reading in Inuttitut. This may be reflective of the type of reading materials that are available in Inuttitut.



**Table 29. Time spent reading, by reading ability in Inuttitut**

Time spent reading	Reading Ability							
	Poorly or very poorly		Acceptably		Well or very well		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
0	4	18	9	41	9	41	22	100
1-2	2	20	1	10	7	70	10	100
3-5	0	0	0	0	1	100	1	100
5-10	0	0	0	0	2	100	2	100
More than 10	0	0	0	0	2	100	2	100

### 3.1.3.3 Summary

Overall, 21 of the 50 respondents rated their reading ability in Inuttitut as high. 11 respondents said they had an acceptable reading level, while 18 respondents said they read Inuttitut poorly or very poorly, or not at all. When asked which language they could better understand reading materials in, 20 respondents said Inuttitut, or both languages just as easily. However, the percentages of respondents that spend time reading Inuttitut is much lower. Only 5 respondents spend 3 hours or more a week reading anything in Inuttitut, while 22 respondents do not read anything in Inuttitut.

### 3.1.4 Writing

The fourth and final component of proficiency that is addressed in this study is that of writing. This also formed the fourth research question: How proficient are residents of Nain at writing Inuttitut? In addition to the direct question, respondents were also asked to compare ease of writing in Inuttitut and English.

### 3.1.4.1 Self-assessments

While 42% of respondents reported a high level of reading ability, a slightly smaller percentage reported a high level of writing ability at 36%. 18% of respondents reported being able to write acceptably; 22% reported writing poorly or very poorly; and 24% reported not being able to write in Inuttitut at all. These results are shown in Table 30.

**Table 30. Self-evaluations of writing Inuttitut**

	Frequency	Percent
Not at all	12	24
Poorly or very poorly	11	22
Acceptably	9	18
Well or very well	18	36
Total	50	100

The same assumptions are present for writing as for reading with respect to level of speaking ability. Again, these assumptions are that those with a low level of speaking ability would also have a low level of writing ability and those with a high level of writing ability would also have a high level of speaking ability. Furthermore, it is not necessarily the case that those with a high level of speaking ability would also have a high level of writing ability.<sup>15</sup> The first two assumptions generally hold true. 15 of the 21 respondents who report a low level of speaking ability also report that they write Inuttitut poorly, very poorly or not at all. However, there were 6 respondents who reported a low level of speaking ability while also reporting an acceptable or high level of writing ability. This might be explained by the fact that they interpreted the question as an

<sup>15</sup> Further to the discussion in §3.1.3.1, oral fluency does not imply literacy in a language. This could be a result of lack of schooling as leaving school at an early age was not uncommon for many elders.

understanding of the Labrador Inuit Standardized Writing System. 16 of the 18 respondents who report writing Inuttitut well or very well also reported speaking Inuttitut very well. The third assumption was that those who speak Inuttitut very well may not necessarily have a high level of writing ability. However, the results in fact show that 16 of the 23 (or 70% of) respondents who report speaking Inuttitut well or very well also write Inuttitut well or very well. Again, this can be explained by the high literacy rates developed among Labrador Inuit. These results are illustrated in Table 31.

**Table 31. Writing ability, by proficiency in spoken Inuttitut**

Writing Ability	Proficiency in spoken Inuttitut									
	Not at all		Poorly or very poorly		Acceptably		Well or very well		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Not at all	2	16.7	7	58.3	1	8.3	2	16.7	12	100
Poorly or very poorly	0	0	8	72.7	1	9.1	2	18.2	11	100
Acceptably	0	0	5	55.6	1	11.1	3	33.3	9	100
Well or very well	0	0	1	5.6	1	5.6	16	88.8	18	100

When respondents' writing ability was crosstabulated with their reading ability, there was a clear trend. A Pearson correlation test was conducted; there was a significant correlation between reading and writing ability. These variables are positively correlated (0.842), and the correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.



**Table 32. Writing ability, by reading ability in Inuttitut**

Writing Ability	Reading ability									
	Not at all		Poorly or very poorly		Acceptably		Well or very well		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Not at all	9	75	2	16.7	0	0	1	8.3	12	100
Poorly or very poorly	0	0	6	54.6	4	36.3	1	9.1	11	100
Acceptably	0	0	1	11.1	6	66.7	2	22.2	9	100
Well or very well	0	0	0	0	1	5.6	17	94.4	18	100

### 3.1.4.2 Comparison with English

When asked which language they found easier to write in (Q17), the majority of respondents said English was the language which they found easiest to write in. While only 8.6% said they found Inuttitut easiest to write in, 31.4% said they could write with the same ease in both English and Inuttitut. These results are shown in Table 33.

**Table 33. Language in which writing is easier**

	Frequency	Percent
Inuttitut	3	8.6
English	21	60.0
Both the same	11	31.4
Total	35	100.0

### 3.1.4.3 Summary

Overall, 36% of respondents said that they could write in Inuttitut well or very well. This number is slightly lower than those who said they could read Inuttitut well or very well. However, there was a strong correlation between reading and writing ability; a Pearson

correlation test showed a positive correlation of 0.842 which was significant at the 0.01 level. This means that those with a high level of reading ability will very likely have a high level of writing ability and vice versa. It was also clear that the majority of respondents found it easier to write in English rather than in Inuttitut.

### **3.1.5 Evaluation of Older and Younger Generations**

In addition to asking respondents to assess their own proficiency skills, they were also asked to evaluate the proficiency levels of both younger and older generations within the community (Q18-Q27). These perceptions of proficiency both among and across generations can be compared against the self-assessments. These comparisons provide insight into whether there is a realistic or unrealistic view of the current language situation.

#### **3.1.5.1 Evaluation of Speaking Proficiency in Older and Younger Generations**

Due to age of consent, no questionnaires were completed with anyone under 19 years of age. However, it was important to get some sense of the proficiency levels of those under 19 years (Q18). The overwhelming majority of respondents, at 86%, said that young people speak Inuttitut poorly or very poorly. Only one respondent said that young people speak Inuttitut well and 12% of respondents said that this age group speaks Inuttitut acceptably. These results are shown in Table 34.

**Table 34. Evaluation of young people's proficiency in Inuttitut**

	Frequency	Percent
Well or very well	1	2
Acceptably	6	12
Poorly or very poorly	43	86
Total	50	100

Respondents were also asked to evaluate other age groups. This allows for a comparison of self-assessments from a particular group and perceptions of proficiency from other age groups. There was a range of opinions when asked about speaking proficiency of younger adults, aged 19 to 35 years (Q19). The majority of respondents believe that younger adults speak Inuttitut poorly or very poorly; nearly 27% said that younger adults speak Inuttitut acceptably; while only 16% believe that younger adults speak well or very well. The range in answers might be explained by a comment made by the respondent who chose not to answer this question. This respondent felt that choosing just one of the predefined responses did not fit with said respondent's opinion of speaking proficiency in this age group. This person said that those around 35 years of age could speak well, but those around 19 of years of age did not speak as well. The results are shown in Table 35.

**Table 35. Evaluation of younger adults' proficiency in Inuttitut**

	Frequency	Percent
Well or very well	8	16.3
Acceptably	13	26.5
Poorly or very poorly	28	57.2
Total	49	100

It is interesting to note that in the self-assessments, 80% of those in the 19-35 category reported that they spoke Inuttitut poorly or very poorly, while 57% of overall



respondents said that this age group speaks Inuttitut poorly or very poorly. The difference between these percentages highlights that there is a discrepancy between the perception and the reality of the current language situation.

It is also interesting to see a breakdown of the opinions within each age group.

These are shown in Table 36.

**Table 36. Evaluation of younger adults' proficiency in Inuttitut, by age**

Evaluation of younger adults' proficiency	Age Group							
	19-38		39-58		59+		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Poorly or very poorly	8	28.6	10	35.7	10	35.7	28	100
Acceptably	5	38.5	5	38.5	3	23	13	100
Well or very well	3	37.5	5	62.5	0	0	8	100

As can be seen, no respondent aged 59 and older said that younger adults could speak Inuttitut well or very well. It is interesting to note that more respondents in the 39-58 category evaluated the proficiency of younger adults more favourably than the age group for which the evaluation questioned.

Respondents were also asked to evaluate the speaking proficiency of older adults, aged 36 to 59 years of age (Q20). The overwhelming majority, at 83.7%, said that older adults speak Inuttitut well or very well. About 12.2% of respondents said that older adults speak acceptably, while just 4.1% said that they speak Inuttitut poorly or very poorly. These results are shown in the following table.

**Table 37. Evaluation of older adults' proficiency in Inuttitut**

	Frequency	Percent
Well or very well	41	83.7
Acceptably	6	12.2
Poorly or very poorly	2	4.1
Total	49	100

As there was a comment made regarding variation of proficiency levels at each end of the age range for young adults, there were similar comments made regarding those in the 36 to 59 age range. The respondent who did not answer this question said that 'some speak very well, some don't speak well at all'. Four other comments were along the same lines, stating that proficiency increased as age increased.

While the overwhelming majority of respondents evaluated older adults, aged 36-59 years, with a high level of speaking proficiency, the self-assessments of this age group were not so clear-cut.<sup>16</sup> Only 9 out of the 21 respondents, or 43%, in this age category reported speaking Inuttitut well or very well. Nearly an equal number, 8 out of 21 (or 38%), reported a low level of proficiency stating they speak Inuttitut poorly or very poorly.

In fact, the only respondents who evaluated older adults as speaking Inuttitut poorly or very poorly came from that very age group.

**Table 38. Evaluation of older adults' proficiency in Inuttitut, by age**

Evaluation of older adults' proficiency	Age Group							
	19-38		39-58		59+		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Poorly or very poorly	0	0	2	100	0	0	2	100
Acceptably	2	33.3	1	16.7	3	50	6	100
Well or very well	14	34.1	17	41.5	10	24.4	41	100

When asked to evaluate the proficiency of children beginning school (Q21), the majority of respondents, at 89%, said that children of this age speak Inuttitut poorly or

<sup>16</sup> The age category in this Q20, ages 36-59 years, does not correspond exactly to the age grouping of the survey analysis, ages 39-58. However, for the purposes of comparison, the self-assessments reported here are for the exact age group (36-59 years).

very poorly. 8% of respondents said that children beginning school speak Inuttitut acceptably, while only 2% said they speak Inuttitut well. Two of the three respondents that chose not to answer this question said that they did not know, or that it depends on different families. These results can be seen in Table 39.

**Table 39. Evaluation of speaking proficiency in Inuttitut of children who are beginning school**

	Frequency	Percent
Well or very well	1	2.1
Acceptably	4	8.5
Poorly or very poorly	42	89.4
Total	47	100.0

When asked about comprehension of Inuttitut by the same group of children (Q22), respondents felt that more children understood Inuttitut acceptably than could speak it: 22% said that children beginning school understood Inuttitut acceptably, whereas just 8.5% said that they could speak it acceptably. However, three-quarters of those surveyed said that children of this age understood Inuttitut poorly or very poorly. These results are shown in Table 40.

**Table 40. Evaluation of comprehension proficiency in Inuttitut of children who are beginning school**

	Frequency	Percent
Well or very well	1	2.0
Acceptably	11	22.5
Poorly or very poorly	37	75.5
Total	49	100.0

Again, the person that did not answer this question said “depends on varied families”.



### 3.1.5.2 Evaluation of Comprehension between Generations

Given the disparity in proficiency levels between generations, several questions were asked to gauge what people's perceptions were of comprehension between different generations. Respondents were asked how well they thought young people understood elders when they talked (Q23). The vast majority, at 88%, responded that young people understand elders with either some, or great difficulty; 10% said that young people understand elders more or less; while just one respondent said that young people understand elders well or very well. One respondent said that it "depends on who they are", referring to the young person. Again, this reflects that there are some people in this generation that have a higher level of proficiency in Inuttitut than most. Table 41 shows these results.

**Table 41. How well do you think young people understand elders when they talk?<sup>17</sup>**

	Frequency	Percent
Well or very well	1	2
More or less	5	10
With difficulty	44	88
Total	50	100

A similar question posed to the respondents asked how well they thought young people understood elders when the elders talked amongst themselves (Q24). The difference in questions presupposes that the level of language used when elders talk among themselves is more complex than when speaking to young people. However, the results are exactly the same as for the previous question.

<sup>17</sup> The implication is that the language the elders would be speaking is Inuttitut, but this may not have been clear to all participants.

**Table 42. How well do you think young people understand elders when elders talk amongst themselves?**

	Frequency	Percent
Well or very well	1	2
More or less	5	10
With difficulty	44	88
Total	50	100

The scenario was reversed and respondents were asked how often they thought elders had difficulty in understanding the Inuttitut spoken by younger people (Q25). Six people chose not to answer this question. One person explained this by stating that “they didn’t think that young people spoke Inuttitut anymore”. The responses for this question were more widely distributed with 36% of respondents stating that elders rarely or never have difficulty; 39% stating that elders sometimes have difficulty; and 25% stating that elders often or very often have difficulty in understanding the Inuttitut spoken by younger people. The distribution of these results is shown in Table 43.

**Table 43. How often do older people have difficulty understanding the Inuttitut spoken by younger people?**

	Frequency	Percent
Rarely or never	16	36.4
Sometimes	17	38.6
Often or very often	11	25.0
Total	44	100

Respondents were also asked their opinion on whether they thought that young people made an effort to speak Inuttitut well when speaking to an elder (Q27). Just over half the respondents said that yes, young people often, or very often, do make a special effort. 38% said that they sometimes do, while 6% that they rarely or never make a special

effort. Three people chose not to answer this question and one of those said that “only those who speak Inuttitut fluently will speak Inuttitut to Elders; those who are not confident will speak through an interpreter”.

**Table 44. When people speak to an elder, do you think they make a special effort to speak Inuttitut well?**

	Frequency	Percent
Rarely or never	3	6.4
Sometimes	18	38.3
Often or very often	26	55.3
Total	47	100

Respondents were also asked their opinion regarding the comprehension of Inuttitut by children (Q26). The question asked how often it is necessary, when speaking to children, to name certain things in English rather than in Inuttitut in order to be sure they will understand. 64% of respondents said that it is necessary to name things in English often or very often; 28% said sometimes; while 8% said rarely or never. Three people chose not to answer this question and one of those said that “you can’t even speak to the majority of children in Inuttitut”.

**Table 45. When speaking with children, how often is it necessary to name certain things in English rather than in Inuttitut in order to be sure they will understand?**

	Frequency	Percent
Rarely or never	4	8.5
Sometimes	13	27.7
Often or very often	30	63.8
Total	47	100

### 3.1.5.3 Summary

Again, the purpose of having respondents evaluate the speaking and comprehension proficiencies of different generations was to provide some insight into the



perceptions of the current language situation. In some cases, the generations on which the questions were based were not represented in the survey sample, so respondents' perceptions are the only glimpse we have into the language situation with those groups, i.e., children and teenagers. For children beginning school, nearly 90% of respondents state that the speaking proficiency level of this group is low, that they speak Inuttitut poorly or very poorly. A smaller percentage of respondents believe that the level of comprehension of this group is low. Stated another way, more people believe that children beginning school understand Inuttitut better than they can speak it. Similarly, 86% of respondents believed that young people, or those less than 19 years old, speak Inuttitut poorly or very poorly.

Respondents were also asked to evaluate the proficiency levels of both younger and older adults. These evaluations can be compared to the self-assessments to reveal whether or not perceptions match up with the self-assessments. In the case of younger adults, aged 19-35, 57% of the overall respondents evaluated this age group as speaking Inuttitut poorly or very poorly, while 80% of the respondents in this age category reported that they spoke Inuttitut poorly or very poorly. Clearly, there is a discrepancy between the two assessments. The evaluation of older adults' (aged 36-59) speaking proficiency is much higher with 83.7% of respondents believing this age group speaks Inuttitut well or very well. However, the self-assessments reveal that only 42.9% of the age group reporting having a high speaking proficiency.

Comprehension proficiency levels between generations were also evaluated. The vast majority of respondents, at 88%, believe that young people have difficulty understanding elders, whether the elders' conversation is between themselves or is

directed to the young person. When asked to evaluate the reversal of this situation, or elders understanding the Inuttitut spoken by young people, the response was mixed, even though the majority of respondents felt that young people make a special effort to speak Inuttitut well when talking to elders. 36.4% of respondents said that elders rarely or never have difficulty understanding young people's Inuttitut; 38.6% said they sometimes do; and 25% said that elders often or very often have difficulty in understanding young people. Some people chose not to answer this question stating that, in fact, young people do not speak Inuttitut anymore. When asked whether it was necessary to name things in English when speaking Inuttitut to children, the majority said that this was often the case. However, 63.8% reported that things had to be named in English often or very often when speaking to children was a lower percentage than those who felt that young people had difficulty understanding the Inuttitut spoken by elders, which was 88% of respondents. Perhaps this reflects the level or complexity of the language spoken to each age group.

### **3.1.6 Summary of Reported Proficiency**

Self-assessments of the four components of proficiency – speaking, listening comprehension, reading comprehension and writing – provide a valuable insight into the linguistic situation of a community. Though self-assessments are very subjective and will not provide as objective or accurate a picture as proficiency testing would, the information that it provides is still valuable.

It is clear from both the self-assessments and evaluations from other generations that age is the most salient factor in an analysis of proficiency. Pearson correlation tests have shown that there is a positive correlation between proficiency and age, where

proficiency increases as age increases. Respondents also recognize this trend, though their evaluations of proficiency were more generous than the self-assessments in each age group.

### **3.2 Acquisition**

Acquisition of a language is the second part of Cooper's five-part framework. There are many avenues through which one can acquire or learn a language, though the most natural and effective method of learning a language is through intergenerational transmission. Determining how each person's Inuttitut was acquired formed the fifth research question.

#### **3.2.1 Childhood environment**

Respondents were asked whether they spent their childhood in a home where adults spoke to each other mainly in Inuttitut and spoke to them mainly in Inuttitut. When asked if they spent their childhood in a home where adults spoke to each other mainly in Inuttitut (Q29), 62% of respondents said yes, while 38% said no. These results are shown in Table 46.

**Table 46. Did you spend your childhood (up to the age of 15) in a home where adults spoke to each other mainly in Inuttitut?**

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	31	62
No	19	38
Total	50	100

When these statistics are compared to speaking proficiency in Inuttitut, a trend is



apparent. Of those respondents that spent their childhood in a home where adults spoke to each other mainly in Inuttitut, 68% reported a high level of proficiency in Inuttitut. On the other hand, of the 19 respondents that spent their childhood in a home where adults did not speak to each other mainly in Inuttitut, 13 (or 68%) reported a low level of proficiency in Inuttitut. A Pearson correlation test confirms this relationship at 0.606 and is significant at the 0.01 level. These results are illustrated in Table 47.

**Table 47. Did you spend your childhood (up to the age of 15) in a home where adults spoke to each other mainly in Inuttitut?, by proficiency in Inuttitut**

Childhood in home where adults spoke to each other mainly in Inuttitut	Proficiency in Inuttitut									
	Not at all		Poorly or very poorly		Acceptably		Well or very well		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	0	0	8	25.8	2	6.5	21	67.7	31	100
No	2	10.5	13	68.5	2	10.5	2	10.5	19	100

The other question that was asked of respondents was whether an adult spoke to them mainly in Inuttitut during their childhood (Q30). The majority of respondents answered this question affirmatively, though a slightly smaller percentage than the previous question. 56% said yes; 44% said no.

**Table 48. Up to the age of 15 years, did you ever live with an adult who spoke to you mainly in Inuttitut?**

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	28	56
No	22	44
Total	50	100

These data were also compared against reported proficiency levels and, again, a trend was apparent. Of those respondents that lived with an adult who spoke to them

mainly in Inuttitut, 75% said they could speak Inuttitut well or very well. Whereas, those that lived with an adult who did not speak to them mainly in Inuttitut, 73% said they spoke Inuttitut poorly or very poorly. The correlation was significant (0.687) at the 0.01 level.

**Table 49. Up to the age of 15 years, did you ever live with an adult who spoke to you mainly in Inuttitut?, by proficiency in Inuttitut**

Childhood in home where adults spoke to you mainly in Inuttitut	Proficiency in Inuttitut									
	Not at all		Poorly or very poorly		Acceptably		Well or very well		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	0	0	5	17.9	2	7.1	21	75	28	100
No	2	9.1	16	72.7	2	9.1	2	9.1	22	100

The data were also crosstabulated with whether the respondent's mother spoke Inuttitut. 86% of respondents said that their mother spoke Inuttitut. Of those respondents, 56% reported that an adult spoke to them mainly in Inuttitut.

**Table 50. Up to the age of 15 years, did you ever live with an adult who spoke to you mainly in Inuttitut?, by mother's proficiency in Inuttitut**

Lived with an adult who spoke to them mainly in Inuttitut	Does your mother speak Inuttitut?					
	Yes		No		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	28	100	0	0	28	100
No	15	68.2	7	31.8	22	100

82% of respondents said that their father spoke Inuttitut. Of those respondents, 68% (28 out of 41) said that they lived with an adult who spoke to them mainly in Inuttitut.

**Table 51. Up to the age of 15 years, did you ever live with an adult who spoke to you mainly in Inuttitut?, by father's proficiency in Inuttitut**

Lived with an adult who spoke to them mainly in Inuttitut	Does your father speak Inuttitut?							
	Yes		No		I don't know		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	28	28	0	0	0	0	28	100
No	13	59.1	8	36.4	1	4.5	22	100

### 3.2.2 Summary

It is clear that there is a correlation between spending one's childhood years in an environment where adults either speak to each other mainly in Inuttitut or speak to the child in Inuttitut and acquisition of the language. However, while it possible to examine patterns of language acquisition and proficiency, these data do not allow us to identify causal relationships between language exposure in the home and proficiency.

### 3.3 Language Use

Language use, the final of the language behaviours in Cooper's framework, is another key determinant in the linguistic situation of a community. This section will discuss the various domains in which residents of Nain use the language as well as with whom they speak Inuttitut. A sixth research question was designed around this component: In what contexts and with what frequency do residents of Nain speak Inuttitut?



### 3.3.1 Language use in daily life

Respondents were asked which language, as a rule, they use in daily life (Q36). The majority of respondents reported using English most or all of the time. Only 12% of respondents said they used Inuttitut most or all of the time, while 26% said they sometimes use Inuttitut and sometimes English. These results are shown in Table 52.

**Table 52. As a rule, in daily life, which language do you use?**

	Frequency	Percent
Mostly/always English	31	62
Sometimes Inuttitut/English	13	26
Mostly/always Inuttitut	6	12
Total	50	100

These statistics are further broken down into age categories as shown in Table 53. The language used by the youngest age category, the 19-38 year olds, is predominantly English with 94% speaking it most or all of the time. Only one of the 16 respondents in this age category used Inuttitut sometimes. None spoke Inuttitut most or all of the time. Furthermore, 70% of the middle age category, 39-58 years, also use English predominantly. 30% use both Inuttitut and English sometimes, and none use Inuttitut most or all of the time. Only those over 59 years use Inuttitut most or all of the time and only 43% of those surveyed in that age group do so. The same percentage of those 59 years and older sometimes use Inuttitut and sometimes English, while 14% use English most or all of the time.

**Table 53. Language of daily use, by age**

Language of daily use	Age Group							
	19-38		39-58		59+		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Mostly/always English	15	48.4	14	45.2	2	6.4	31	100
Sometimes Inuttitut/English	1	7.8	6	46.1	6	46.1	13	100
Mostly/always Inuttitut	0	0	0	0	6	100	6	100

When the language of use is analyzed according to proficiency levels, further interesting information is revealed. It is not surprising that those who speak Inuttitut very poorly, poorly or acceptably use English most or all of the time. However, it is interesting to see the language used by those with a high level of Inuttitut proficiency. Only a quarter of those who speak Inuttitut well or very well use Inuttitut most or all of the time; about half sometimes use Inuttitut, sometimes English; while about a quarter use English most or all of the time. These results are shown in Table 54.

**Table 54. Language of daily use, by proficiency in spoken Inuttitut**

Language of daily use	Proficiency in spoken Inuttitut									
	Not at all		Poorly or very poorly		Acceptably		Well or very well		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Mostly/always English	2	6.5	21	67.7	3	9.7	5	16.1	31	100
Sometimes Inuttitut/English	0	0	0	0	1	7.7	12	92.3	13	100
Mostly/always Inuttitut	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	100	6	100

### 3.3.2 Language use in various domains

It is important to see if residents of Nain use Inuttitut specifically in certain domains. The following three questions (Q40-Q42) were asked of only those who reported speaking Inuttitut. While only 12% reported using Inuttitut most or all of the time, 26% of respondents reported speaking Inuttitut at home often or very often (Q41). 34% reported sometimes speaking Inuttitut at home, while 40% reported rarely or never speaking Inuttitut at home, as shown in Table 55.

**Table 55. How often, on average, do you speak Inuttitut at home?**

	Frequency	Percent
Rarely or never	15	39.5
Sometimes	13	34.2
Often or very often	10	26.3
Total	38	100.0

The percentage of respondents who report having whole conversations in Inuttitut at home (Q40) often or very often is slightly more than those who reported speaking Inuttitut at home often or very often. However, the greatest percentage of respondents, at 39.5%, say they rarely or never have whole conversations in Inuttitut in their homes.

**Table 56. How often do you have whole conversations (including phone calls) in Inuttitut in your homes?**

	Frequency	Percent
Rarely or never	15	39.5
Sometimes	11	28.9
Often or very often	12	31.6
Total	38	100.0

When this question is analyzed against proficiency levels in Inuttitut, it is most interesting to note the frequency with which those with a high level of proficiency have whole conversations in their homes. As can be seen in the following table, just a little



more than half of those who say they speak Inuttitut well or very well report having whole conversations in Inuttitut at home often or very often. 43% say they have whole conversations in Inuttitut sometimes at home.

**Table 57. How often do you have whole conversations (including phone calls) in Inuttitut in your homes? , by proficiency in spoken Inuttitut**

How often do you have whole conversations (including phone calls) in Inuttitut in your homes?	Proficiency in spoken Inuttitut									
	Not at all		Poorly or very poorly		Acceptably		Well or very well		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Rarely or never	1	6.7	10	66.6	3	20	1	6.7	15	100
Sometimes	0	0	1	9.1	0	0	10	90.9	11	100
Often or very often	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	100	12	100

Asking whether people speak Inuttitut more to people they live with or people who visit (Q42) gives a sense of whether they are able to speak Inuttitut at home.<sup>18</sup> Only 8% of respondents said they speak Inuttitut more to people they live with, while 42% of respondents said they speak Inuttitut more to people who visit. 30% of respondents said they speak Inuttitut equally to people they live with and those who visit. These results are shown in Table 58.

**Table 58. Do you speak Inuttitut more to people you live with or people who visit?**

	Frequency	Percent
People who I live with	3	7.9
Visitors	16	42.1
Both equally	11	28.9
Not applicable	8	21.1
Total	38	100.0

<sup>18</sup> This question was asked only of those who identified being able to speak in Inuttitut. However, some people who reported a low level of proficiency still answered this question, and some who completed the questionnaire on their own answered this question.

Respondents were also asked how often they used Inuttitut in homes other than their own (Q45). 40% of those surveyed said that they rarely or never use Inuttitut in other homes; 38% said they sometimes do; while 22% said they use Inuttitut in other homes often or very often. This distribution is shown in Table 59.

**Table 59. How often do you use Inuttitut in homes other than your own?**

	Frequency	Percent
Rarely or never	20	40
Sometimes	19	38
Often or very often	11	22
Total	50	100

This distribution was crosstabulated with proficiency in spoken Inuttitut and is illustrated in Table 60. Of those with a high proficiency in Inuttitut, 47.8% said they use Inuttitut in other homes often or very often, while 43.5% of high proficiency speakers use Inuttitut in other homes sometimes. Seven people with low proficiency reported using Inuttitut sometimes in homes other than their own, commenting that oftentimes they have no choice.

**Table 60. How often do you use Inuttitut in homes other than your own?, by proficiency in spoken Inuttitut**

How often do you use Inuttitut in homes other than your own?	Proficiency in spoken Inuttitut									
	Not at all		Poorly or very poorly		Acceptably		Well or very well		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Rarely or never	2	10	14	70	2	10	2	10	20	100
Sometimes	0	0	7	36.9	2	10.5	10	52.6	19	100
Often or very often	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	100	11	100

The survey also looked at what language people used in domains other than the

home, i.e. at work or school, and socially. Again, the predominant language used in all domains is English. Respondents were asked which language they used with people at work or at school. 57% of respondents said that they used English most or all of the time when speaking to people at work.<sup>19</sup> 41% of respondents said they sometimes used English, sometimes Inuttitut in speaking to people at work, and just 2% said they used Inuttitut most or all of the time. These results are shown in Table 61.

**Table 61. With people at work (or school) which language do you use?**

	Frequency	Percent
Mostly/always English	24	57.1
Sometimes Inuttitut/English	17	40.5
Mostly/always Inuttitut	1	2.4
Total	42	100.0

Although the percentage of people speaking Inuttitut most or all of the time is higher in social domains than in the work environment, the majority of respondents still report using English most or all of the time in a social environment. The breakdown of these results is shown in Table 62.

**Table 62. Which language do you speak with friends when you participate in sports and social activities in your community?**

	Frequency	Percent
Mostly/always English	31	62
Sometimes Inuttitut/English	10	20
Mostly/always Inuttitut	9	18
Total	50	100

The following table shows again that the age group that uses Inuttitut most or all of the time is predominantly the 59+ category.

<sup>19</sup> Because all of the respondents were above the age of 19, it is assumed that the vast majority of respondents are referring to work when answering this question.



**Table 63. Language used in sports and social activities, by age**

Language used in sports and social activities	Age Group							
	19-38		39-58		59+		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Mostly/always English	16	51.6	13	41.9	2	6.5	31	100
Sometimes Inuttitut/English	0	0	4	40	6	60	10	100
Mostly/always Inuttitut	0	0	3	33.3	6	67.7	9	100

What is interesting in the results as shown in Table 64 is that those that have a high level of proficiency in Inuttitut do not necessarily use Inuttitut most or all of the time when participating in social activities in the community. Only 39% of those that have a high level of proficiency use Inuttitut most or all of the time; 35% use English sometimes and Inuttitut sometimes; 26% use English most or all of the time. These results speak to the pervasiveness of English throughout the community.

**Table 64. Language used in sports and social activities, by proficiency in spoken Inuttitut**

Language used in sports and social activities	Proficiency in spoken Inuttitut									
	Not at all		Poorly or very poorly		Acceptably		Well or very well		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Mostly/always English	2	6.5	19	61.3	4	12.9	6	19.3	31	100
Sometimes Inuttitut/English	0	0	2	20	0	0	8	80	10	100
Mostly/always Inuttitut	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	100	9	100

Respondents were also asked about which language they use in another social setting. The majority of respondents, at 52%, use mostly or always English. 40% of

respondents sometimes use English, sometimes Inuttitut; while 8% use mostly or always Inuttitut. These results are illustrated below in Table 65.

**Table 65. At get-togethers with friends, which language do you use with each other?**

	Frequency	Percent
Mostly/always English	26	52
Sometimes Inuttitut/English	20	40
Mostly/always Inuttitut	4	8
Total	50	100

### 3.3.3 Language use with certain groups of people

The survey also sought to gather information on the groups of people with which respondents use Inuttitut, namely elders, children and peers.

Again, the predominant language used to speak to all age groups is English.

When speaking to elders, 52% of respondents use mostly or always English, 20% sometimes use English, sometimes Inuttitut, while 28% use Inuttitut most or all of the time. These results are shown in Table 66.

**Table 66. As a rule, which language do you use to speak to elders?**

	Frequency	Percent
Mostly/always English	26	52
Sometimes Inuttitut/English	10	20
Mostly/always Inuttitut	14	28
Total	50	100

As shown in Table 67, 75% of respondents use English most or all of the time when speaking to children. Only 4% of respondents use Inuttitut most or all of the time when speaking to children.

**Table 67. At home, which language do you use to speak to children?**

	Frequency	Percent
Mostly/always English	36	75.0
Sometimes Inuttitut/English	10	20.8
Mostly/always Inuttitut	2	4.2
Total	48	100.0

When asked which language they used to speak to people their own age at home, the majority of respondents, at 56%, reported using English most or all of the time. 22% of respondents reported using Inuttitut most or all of the time, while the same percentage reported using English sometimes and Inuttitut sometimes. These results are shown in Table 68.

**Table 68. At home, which language do you use to speak to people your own age?**

	Frequency	Percent
Mostly/always English	28	56
Sometimes Inuttitut/English	11	22
Mostly/always Inuttitut	11	22
Total	50	100

These results were analyzed against age categories as shown in Table 69. Of those that speak mostly or always Inuttitut to people their own age at home, 8 of the 11 respondents are aged 59 or older. The other 3 are between the ages of 39 and 58. All respondents in the 19-38 age group speak English to people their own age most or all of the time.



**Table 69. Language used when speaking to peers, by age**

Language used when speaking to peers	Age Group							
	19-38		39-58		59+		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Mostly/always English	16	57.1	9	32.1	3	10.8	28	100
Sometimes Inuttitut/English	0	0	8	72.7	3	27.3	11	100
Mostly/always Inuttitut	0	0	3	27.3	8	72.7	11	100

### 3.3.4 Language Selection

People were also asked questions to gauge their preferred language of response. First, they were asked what language they use when someone speaks to them in English (Q55). The majority of respondents, at 61%, said they use mostly English or always English; while the remainder of the respondents said they sometimes use English, sometimes Inuttitut. No one answered that they mostly or always use Inuttitut. These results are shown in Table 70.

**Table 70. If someone speaks to you in English, do you answer in English or Inuttitut?**

	Frequency	Percent
Mostly/always English	30	61.2
Sometimes Inuttitut/English	19	38.8
Total	49	100.0

However, there is a wider distribution of responses when asked what language people use when they are spoken to in Inuttitut (Q56). 40% said they mostly or always use Inuttitut; 42% said they sometimes use Inuttitut, sometimes English; and 18% said they mostly or always use English. These results are shown in Table 71.

**Table 71. If someone speaks to you in Inuttitut, do you answer in Inuttitut or English?**

	Frequency	Percent
Mostly/always English	9	18
Sometimes Inuttitut/English	21	42
Mostly/always Inuttitut	20	40
Total	50	100

When these responses are crosstabulated with how well people speak Inuttitut, there is a clear trend. A Pearson correlation test was performed and the results show a strong relationship between these two variables. There was a significant correlation between the language used in response to being spoken to in Inuttitut and their level of ability in Inuttitut. These variables are positively correlated (0.792), and the correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

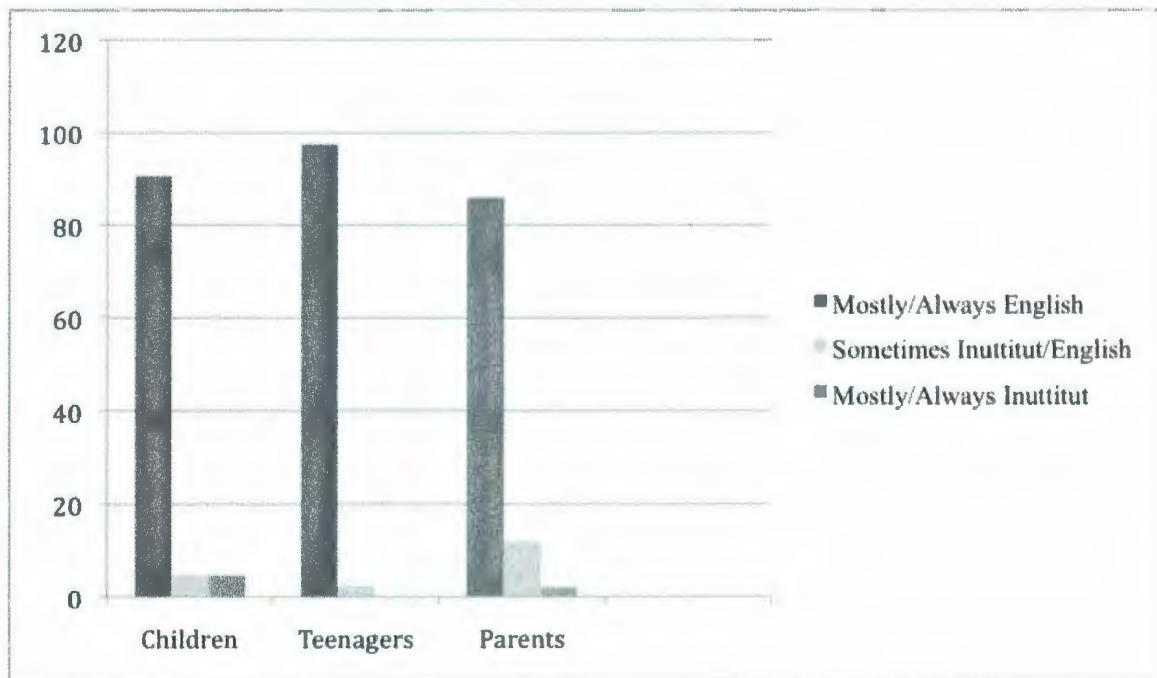
The distribution of responses can be seen in Table 72.

**Table 72. If someone speaks to you in Inuttitut, do you answer in Inuttitut or English?, by proficiency in spoken Inuttitut**

If someone speaks to you in Inuttitut, do you answer in Inuttitut or English?	Proficiency in spoken Inuttitut									
	Not at all		Poorly or very poorly		Acceptably		Well or very well		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Mostly/always English	2	22.2	7	77.8	0	0	0	0	9	100
Sometimes Inuttitut/English	0	0	12	57.1	3	14.3	6	28.6	21	100
Mostly/always Inuttitut	0	0	2	10	1	5	17	85	20	100

Respondents were also asked to evaluate the language use of specific groups of people, namely children, teenagers and young parents. Respondents were asked which language children used when playing at their house; which language teenagers used when

they are together at their house; and which language young parents spoke to their children. The results are overwhelmingly clear for all groups and that is that English is the language of predominant use by all three groups of people. The results can be seen in Figure 1.



**Figure 1: Evaluations of Language Use by Certain Groups**

When asked which language they used in daily life, in certain domains and with different groups of people, the majority of respondents stated using mostly or always English in all situations. 62% of respondents said they used English most or all of the time in their daily lives, while only 12% said they used Inuttitut most or all of the time.

Respondents were asked which language they used in various domains, i.e., at work or school, during sports or social activities and at get-togethers with friends. The majority of respondents said they always or mostly used English in these domains. The



domain in which the greatest number of people, at 18%, used Inuttitut most or all of the time was during sports or social activities.

The results were similar for language use with different groups of people; English was the dominant language of use with elders, children and peers. However, the difference between the number of respondents using Inuttitut with children and with elders was quite large: 28% of respondents said they used Inuttitut most or all of the time with elders, while just 4.2% of respondents said they used Inuttitut most or all of the time with children.

Questions were also asked to determine which language respondents used when being spoken to in either language. When spoken to in English, 61.2% of respondents replied using English most or all of the time, while 38.8% reported using English sometimes or Inuttitut sometimes. However, when spoken to in Inuttitut, 40% of respondents said they used Inuttitut most or all of the time, 42% said sometimes Inuttitut, sometimes English, and 18% said they replied using English most or all of the time.

Respondents were also asked to evaluate the language use of various groups of people, namely children, teenagers and young parents. The overwhelming majority of respondents believed that all three groups used English most or all of the time.

### **3.3.5 Code-switching<sup>20</sup>**

Code-switching is using both languages together when one is speaking. The language situation in Nain is one where the dominant language has shifted from Inuttitut

<sup>20</sup> Though the linguistic term, code-switching, is used in the thesis, the more colloquial term, language mixing, was used in the questionnaire and when communicating with participants.

to English. It would be expected that code-switching is common among the residents of this community.

Table 73 shows the results of how often people code-switch Inuttitut and English. Half the respondents reported code-switching both languages often or very often. 22% of the respondents reported code-switching sometimes, while 28% said they rarely or never code-switch in both languages.

**Table 73. Frequency with which residents of Nain code-switch Inuttitut and English**

	Frequency	Percent
Rarely or Never	14	28
Sometimes	11	22
Often or Very Often	25	50
Total	50	100

When these statistics are analyzed against age categories, it can be seen that the middle age category, 39-58 year olds, code-switch Inuttitut and English most often. This age group makes up 56% of those who say they code-switch Inuttitut often or very often. In fact, 70% of the 39-58 year olds say they code-switch Inuttitut often or very often, and only 10% of this age group report that they rarely or never code-switch both languages.

**Table 74. Frequency with which residents of Nain code-switch Inuttitut and English, by age**

Frequency of Code-switching	Age Group							
	19-38		39-58		59+		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Rarely or never	7	50	2	14	5	36	14	100
Sometimes	3	27	4	36	4	36	11	100
Often or very often	6	24	14	56	5	20	25	100

The frequency with which people code-switch Inuttitut and English was also

compared against their proficiency levels in Inuttitut. As illustrated in Table 75 below, the percentage of respondents that code-switch Inuttitut and English often or very often is fairly evenly split between those with both high and low proficiency levels: 48% of those who code-switch often or very often have a high proficiency in Inuttitut, and 40% of those who code-switch often or very often have a low proficiency in Inuttitut. This cross-analysis might give a sense as to which language is the dominant one when code-switching. For example, those that do not speak Inuttitut well, but who report a high level of language code-switching would have English as the dominant language and incorporate Inuttitut words or phrases. However, the reverse is not necessarily true. The majority of respondents who speak Inuttitut well also have a high level of proficiency in English, so the dominant language for those with a high level of proficiency in Inuttitut, and who report a high level of language code-switching, could be either Inuttitut or English.

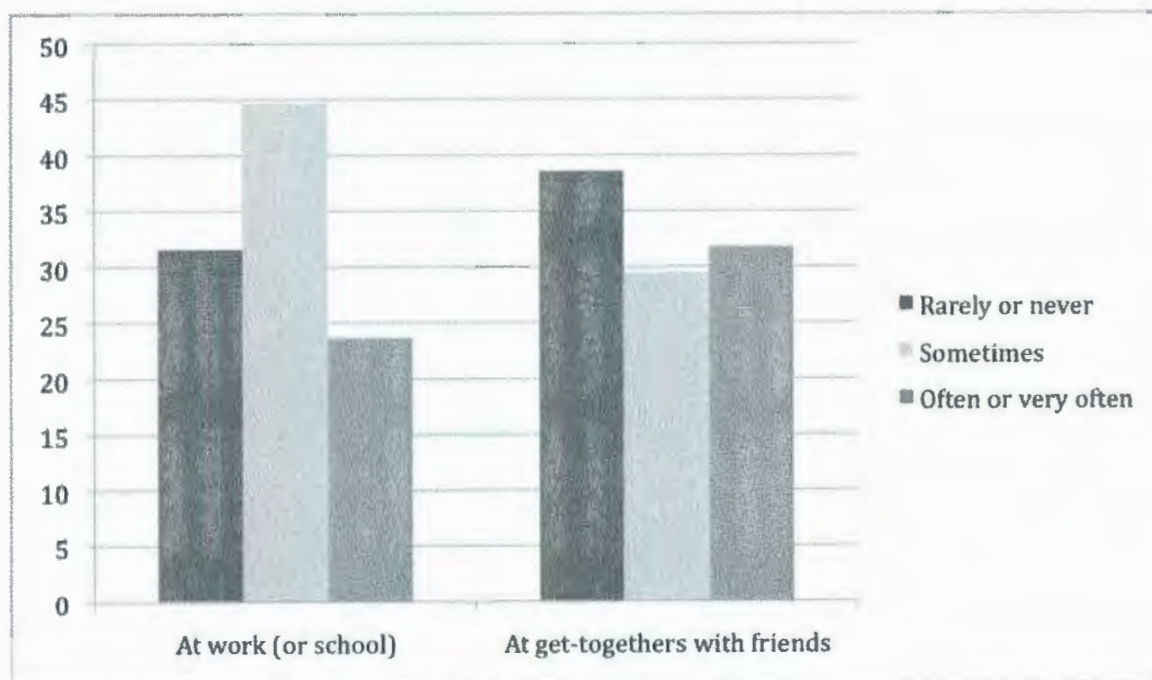
**Table 75. Frequency with which residents of Nain code-switch Inuttitut and English, by proficiency in Inuttitut**

Frequency of Code-switching	Speaking Proficiency in Inuttitut									
	Not at all		Poorly or very poorly		Acceptably		Well or very well		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Rarely or never	1	7.1	7	50	1	7.1	5	35.8	14	100
Sometimes	1	9.1	4	36.4	0	0	6	54.5	11	100
Often or very often	0	0	10	40	3	12	12	48	25	100

As was done in the examination of language use, respondents were asked how often they code-switched languages in certain domains and with certain groups of people. When asked about code-switching in certain environments, the responses were fairly



evenly split among the different frequencies with which people code-switch Inuttitut and English, as shown below in Figure 2.

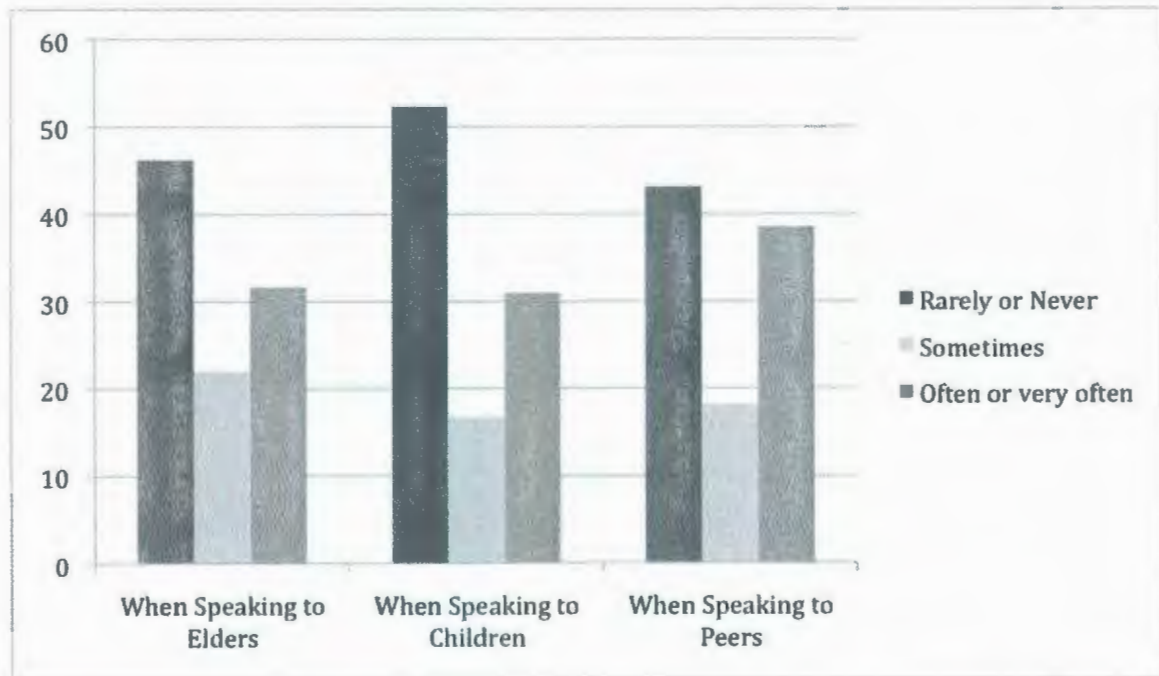


**Figure 2. Frequency with which residents code-switch Inuttitut and English in two domains.**

As shown, 31.6% of respondents rarely or never code-switch both languages in the work or school environment (Q66); 44.7% said they sometimes do; while 23.7% said they code-switch Inuttitut and English often or very often at work or school. A greater percentage of respondents (38.6%) report rarely or never code-switching at get-togethers with friends (Q67); 29.5% said they sometimes code-switch languages in this environment; while 31.8% say they code-switch often or very often.

Respondents were also asked how often they code-switched languages with different groups of people at their house – with elders, with children, and with people

their own age. The chart that follows shows the distribution of these responses. As can be seen, when asked about code-switching with each specific group, the greatest number of respondents said that they rarely or never code-switch Inuttitut and English: when asked how often they code-switch languages with elders (Q63), 46% say rarely or never; when asked how often they do so with children (Q64), 52% say rarely or never; and when asked how often they code-switch languages with people their own age (Q65), 43% say rarely or never.



**Figure 3. The frequency with which residents code-switch Inuttitut and English with certain groups of people.**

Respondents were also asked to evaluate the frequency with which other groups code-switch languages. They were asked how often children playing together code-switched Inuttitut and English at their homes (Q68). 10 respondents did not answer this

question stating that there were no children living at their home. However, of the respondents that did answer this question, 72.5% said that children rarely or never code-switch Inuttitut and English. 15% said that children sometimes code-switch the two languages, while 12.5% said that children code-switch Inuttitut and English often or very often.

**Table 76. Observed frequency of children code-switching Inuttitut and English**

	Frequency	Percent
Rarely or Never	29	72.5
Sometimes	6	15
Often or Very Often	5	12.5
Total	40	100

Respondents were also asked to give their opinions on which groups of people they believed code-switched Inuttitut and English the most (Q111) and the least (Q112). The distribution of these results is shown in Table 77 below.

**Table 77. Perceived likelihood of code-switching by age groups**

	Most likely		Least likely	
	N	%	N	%
Elders	4	6.4	31	50
Older adults	15	24.2	11	17.8
Young adults	29	46.8	2	3.2
Teenagers	13	21	8	12.9
Children	1	1.6	10	16.1
Total	62	100.0	62	100.0

As shown, the majority of respondents believe that young adults (aged 19-35 years) code-switch languages the most and that elders (60 years and older) code-switched languages the least. However, the results from the present study show that, in fact, it is the older adults (36-59 years) that reported code-switching Inuttitut and English the most. The results of this study match with respondents' opinions with respect to the fact that



elders code-switch Inuttitut and English the least.

Respondents were also asked for their opinions on the acceptability of code-switching (Q110). The majority of respondents, at 72%, believe that code-switching is acceptable, while 16% say that it is unacceptable. These results are shown in Table 78 below.

**Table 78. Perceptions of code-switching**

	Frequency	Percent
Acceptable	36	72
Neutral	6	12
Unacceptable	8	16
Total	50	100

When asked if people use English words in sentences when they speak Inuttitut (Q28), the majority of respondents stated that this happens often or very often. 26% of respondents said that this happens sometimes, while just 8% said that this occurs rarely or never. Table 83 illustrates these results.

**Table 79. Do you find that many people just use English words in sentences when they speak Inuttitut?<sup>21</sup>**

	Frequency	Percent
Rarely or never	4	8
Sometimes	13	26
Often or very often	33	66
Total	50	100

The survey sought to find out if code-switching occurred as a result of a lack of knowledge in either language. First, respondents were asked if they ever wanted to say something in English when speaking Inuttitut, because they did not know how to say it in Inuttitut (Q9). Nearly half the respondents said that this happened often or very often.

<sup>21</sup> The use of the word 'just' is problematic. It is difficult to draw conclusions from this question based on the ambiguity of the use of the word.

The distribution for this question is shown in Table 80.

**Table 80. When you are speaking Inuttitut, do you ever want to say something in English because you do not know how to say it in Inuttitut?**

	Frequency	Percent
Rarely or never	10	22.2
Sometimes	13	28.9
Often or very often	22	48.9
Total	45	100.0

The surprising result is that those who reported a high ability in spoken Inuttitut still said that they sometimes want to say something in English because they do not know how to say it in Inuttitut. This is likely due to vocabulary not existing in Inuttitut (i.e. technological and other terminology), rather than for those who ranked themselves with a low ability not having vocabulary coupled with the grammatical knowledge to say something in Inuttitut. This cross-analysis is shown in Table 81 below.

**Table 81. When you are speaking Inuttitut, do you ever want to say something in English because you do not know how to say it in Inuttitut?, by proficiency in Inuttitut**

When you are speaking Inuttitut, do you ever want to say something in English because you do not know how to say it in Inuttitut?	Speaking Proficiency in Inuttitut									
	Not at all		Poorly or very poorly		Acceptably		Well or very well		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Rarely or never	0	0	1	10	1	10	8	80	10	100
Sometimes	0	0	2	15.4	1	7.7	10	76.9	13	100
Often or very often	1	4.6	14	63.6	2	9.1	5	22.7	22	100

The reverse was also asked of respondents: When you are speaking English, do you ever want to say something in Inuttitut because you do not know how to say it in English? A much smaller percentage (16%) said that this occurs often or very often, while nearly half of the respondents said that this rarely or never occurs. These results are illustrated in Table 82.

**Table 82. When you are speaking English, do you ever want to say something in Inuttitut because you do not know how to say it in English?**

	Frequency	Percent
Rarely or never	24	48
Sometimes	18	36
Often or very often	8	16
Total	50	100

Again, these results were analyzed against proficiency levels in Inuttitut and are shown in Table 83 below. It is not surprising that the majority of respondents who report wanting to say something in Inuttitut when speaking English are those with a high level of proficiency in Inuttitut. However, there are a number of respondents with a low level of proficiency in Inuttitut who also report wanting to sometimes say something in Inuttitut when speaking English. This fact is likely due to vocabulary or phrases being known in Inuttitut but not in English.



**Table 83. When you are speaking English, do you ever want to say something in Inuttitut because you do not know how to say it in English?, by proficiency in Inuttitut**

When you are speaking English, do you ever want to say something in Inuttitut because you do not know how to say it in English?	Speaking Proficiency in Inuttitut									
	Not at all		Poorly or very poorly		Acceptably		Well or very well		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Rarely or never	2	8.3	13	54.2	3	12.5	6	25	24	100
Sometimes	0	0	7	38.8	1	5.6	10	55.6	18	100
Often or very often	0	0	1	12.5	0	0	7	87.5	8	100

### 3.3.6 Summary

Nearly three-quarters of the respondents report code-switching Inuttitut and English sometimes, often or very often. They were asked in what environments and with which groups of people they code-switch both languages and with what frequency.

Though half the respondents say they code-switch often or very often, the results for code-switching at work (or school) and at get-togethers are more dispersed. The same is true for code-switching with children, elders and peers.

Respondents were also asked for their opinions on the code-switching behaviours of other groups. When asked how often children in their home code-switched Inuttitut and English, a clear majority said that children rarely or never code-switch both languages. They were also asked to give their opinions on which groups of people code-

switch Inuttitut and English the most and the least. Their responses were younger adults (ages 19-35) and elders (60+) respectively. The latter matched up with the findings from the present study, that elders code-switch the least, but the former was not consistent with the present study's findings which showed that older adults (aged 36-59) code-switched most often.

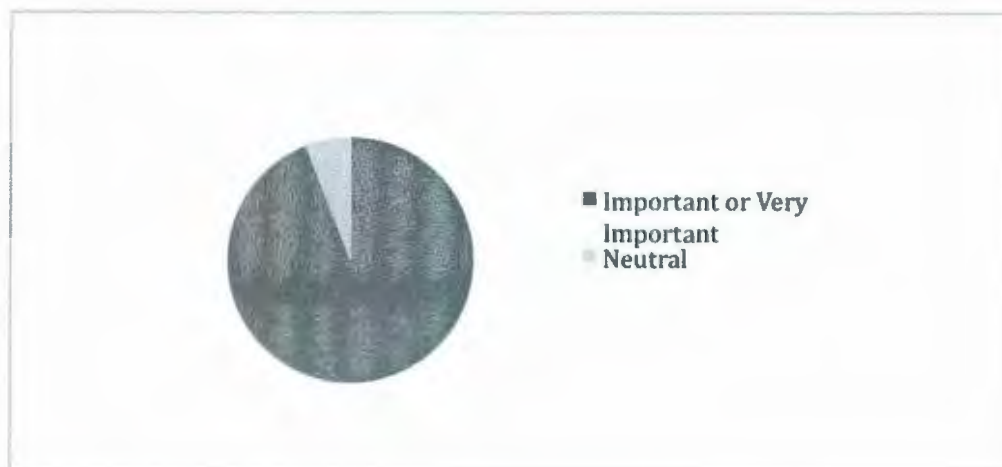
Questions were asked to gauge whether code-switching was a result of not knowing something in one of the languages. The fact that results show English to be the dominant language of use at least suggests that it would also be the dominant language when code-switching as well.

### **3.4 Attitudes and Actions**

The survey also sought to find out people's attitudes towards Inuttitut. Their opinions were given on a range of statements about the importance of the language, bilingualism and the use of the language in school and the community. Attitudinal and implementational behaviours form the second component of Cooper's language behaviours/behaviour towards language dichotomy and also comprise the fourth and fifth parts of the five-part framework.

#### **3.4.1 Contemporary**

When asked how important Inuttitut was to them (Q93), the vast majority of respondents stated that Inuttitut was important or very important to them. Only 6% of respondents stated that Inuttitut was neither important nor unimportant; no respondent said that Inuttitut was not really or not at all important, as Figure 4 illustrates.



**Figure 4. Importance of Inuttitut to residents of Nain.**

Respondents also feel that Inuttitut is important for their children (Q102). 90% of respondents state that it is important or very important for their children to speak Inuttitut. 8% of respondents feel that it is neither important nor unimportant for their children to speak the language, while 2% of respondents say that it is not really or not at all important for their children to speak Inuttitut.

**Table 84. How important is it for your children to speak Inuttitut? (not read or write)?**

	Frequency	Percent
Unimportant	1	2.1
Neutral	4	8.3
Important	43	89.6
Total	48	100.0

Respondents were also asked for their opinions on the importance of Inuttitut to various groups. For example, they were asked how important they thought Inuttitut was to younger people. The majority of respondents, at 70%, said they thought it was important or very important to younger people. 12% of the respondents felt that Inuttitut



was neither important nor unimportant to them, while 18% felt that the language was not really important or not at all important. These results are shown in Table 85.

**Table 85. In your opinion, how important is Inuttitut to younger people?**

	Frequency	Percent
Unimportant	9	18
Neutral	6	12
Important	35	70
Total	50	100

When asked how important Inuttitut was to older people, the unequivocal response was that it was important or very important.

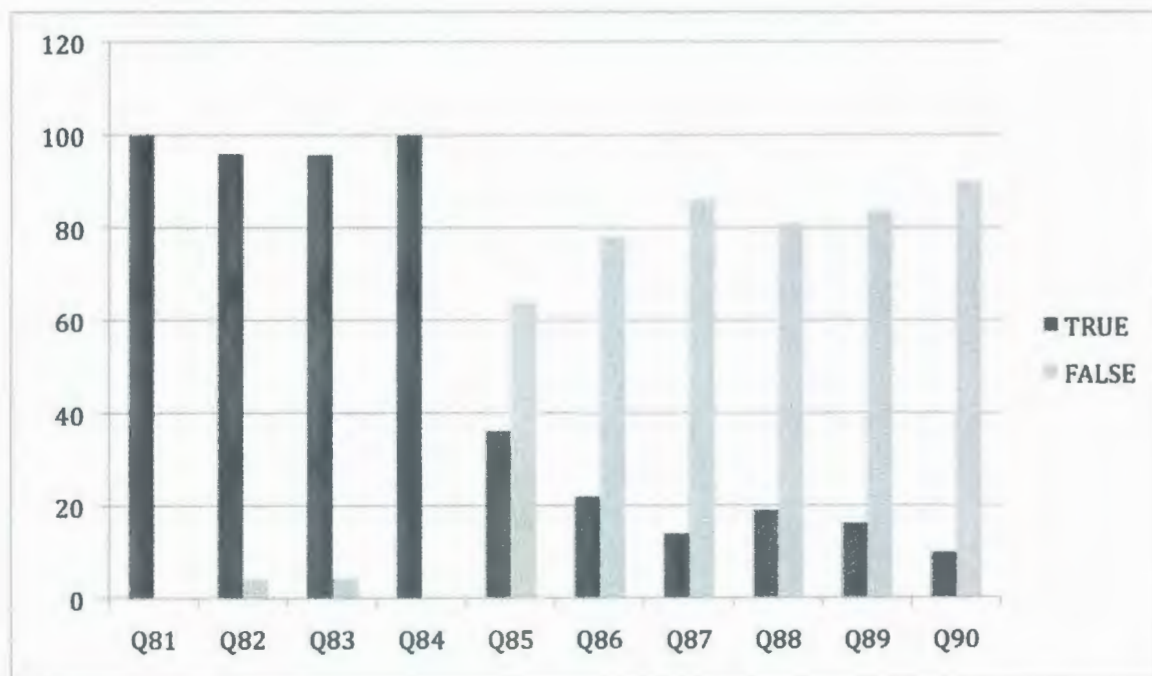
**Table 86. In your opinion, how important is Inuttitut to older people?**

	Frequency	Percent
Important	50	100
Total	50	100

It is clear that Inuttitut is important to the vast majority of residents in the community of Nain and that they believe it is important to others as well. This is supported by the responses to the following statements:

- Q81: Government and official forms should be available in Inuttitut.
- Q82: A lot more Inuttitut language should be used on television and radio.
- Q83: Inuttitut immersion education is a good thing.
- Q84: Public signs should appear in Inuttitut and English.
- Q85: You need to be bilingual to be truly bicultural.
- Q86: You have to be able to speak Inuttitut to be a real Inuk.
- Q87: People should not speak Inuttitut in the presence of non-speakers of Inuttitut.
- Q88: Primary and secondary education should be mostly in English.
- Q89: The Inuttitut language cannot cope with the modern world.
- Q90: Speaking Inuttitut will not help you get a job.

Respondents were asked whether they felt each of these statements were true or false and responses were either very strongly positive or very strongly negative for most of these statements:



**Figure 5. Response rates (by percentage) to individual statements.**

All respondents who answered these questions believe that government and official forms should be available in Inuttitut (Q81) and that public signs should appear in Inuttitut and English (Q84). Nearly all respondents (96%) believe that more Inuttitut should be used on television and radio (Q82) as well. The majority of respondents (83.7%) believe that Inuttitut can cope with the modern world (Q89).

When asked if primary and secondary education should be mostly in English (Q88), the majority of respondents (80.9%) disagreed with this statement. Furthermore, 95.7% of respondents believe that Inuttitut immersion education is a good thing (Q83). However, some respondents felt that the current Inuttitut immersion system was not good, “because you don’t develop good literacy skills”. Some also felt that, with improvement, it could be a good thing “if you have a good teacher and when the program is fully

developed” and “if teachers were more qualified”.

The majority of respondents (86%) believed it to be false that people should not speak Inuttitut in the presence of non-speakers of Inuttitut (Q87). 90% of respondents also believed it to be false that speaking Inuttitut will not help you get a job (Q90).

The two questions that received a slightly less strong response were the questions that dealt with the relationship between language and culture and identity. The first of these asked whether respondents believed it to be true or false that you need to be bilingual to be truly bicultural (Q85). 63.8% of respondents believed this statement to be false, or that you did not need to be bilingual to be truly bicultural. When these responses are broken down by proficiency and by age, of the 36.2% that believed this statement to be true, it is clear that the majority of these people have a high proficiency in the language and nearly half are 59 years of age or older, as illustrated in the following tables.

**Table 87. You need to be bilingual to be truly bicultural, by proficiency in Inuttitut**

You need to be bilingual to be truly bicultural.	Speaking Proficiency in Inuttitut									
	Not at all		Poorly or very poorly		Acceptably		Well or very well		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
True	0	0	5	29.4	1	5.9	11	64.7	17	100
False	2	6.7	14	46.7	3	10	11	36.6	30	100

**Table 88. You need to be bilingual to be truly bicultural, by age**

You need to be bilingual to be truly bicultural.	Age Group							
	19-38		39-58		59+		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
True	2	11.8	7	41.2	8	47	17	100
False	14	46.7	10	33.3	6	20	30	100

The second of these questions asked whether respondents believed that one must



speak Inuttitut to be a real Inuk (Q86). The majority of respondents (78%) believed this statement to be false. Again these responses were broken down by proficiency and by age to see if a pattern was present. 10 of the 11 people that believed this statement to be true had a high proficiency in Inuttitut. However, a slight majority of high proficiency speakers overall believed this statement to be false. With respect to age, all of the people who believed this statement to be true were 39 or older, but there was no majority within any of the age groups who believed the statement to be true. The distribution of the breakdowns by proficiency and by age are shown in Table 89 and Table 90 respectively, below.

**Table 89. You have to be able to speak Inuttitut to be a real Inuk, by proficiency in Inuttitut**

You have to be able to speak Inuttitut to be a real Inuk.	Speaking Proficiency in Inuttitut									
	Not at all		Poorly or very poorly		Acceptably		Well or very well		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
True	0	0	1	9.1	0	0	10	90.9	11	100
False	2	5.1	20	51.3	4	10.3	13	33.3	39	100

**Table 90. You need to be bilingual to be truly bicultural, by age**

You need to be bilingual to be truly bicultural.	Age Group							
	19-38		39-58		59+		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
True	0	0	5	45.5	6	54.5	11	100
False	16	41	15	38.5	8	20.5	39	100

Respondents were asked their opinion on the importance of having special policy or projects to look after the language (Q96). The response was unequivocal: it is important for there to be special policy or projects to safeguard Inuttitut. Table 91 shows the results.

**Table 91. In your opinion, is it important for there to be special policy or projects to look after our language?**

	Frequency	Percent
Important	50	100
Total	50	100

Though the survey focused on Inuttitut for the most part, it was important to gauge respondents' attitudes towards English as well. They were asked if they thought it was important to speak English well (Q103). The majority of respondents, at 86% felt that it was important or very important to speak English well. 10% of respondents felt that it was not really important or not at all important, while just 4% thought it neither important nor unimportant. These results are shown in Table 92.

**Table 92. Do you think it is important to speak English well?**

	Frequency	Percent
Unimportant	5	10
Neutral	2	4
Important	43	86
Total	50	100

A slightly higher percentage thought it was important or very important for children to speak English well (Q104). 88% responded to this effect. 8% thought that it was not really important or not at all important for children to speak English well, while 4% felt it neither important nor unimportant.

**Table 93. Do you think it is important for children to speak English well?**

	Frequency	Percent
Unimportant	4	8
Neutral	2	4
Important	44	88
Total	50	100

The results for these questions regarding the importance of both Inuttitut and

English show that residents of Nain believe that both languages are important. This is borne out in the results of a direct question asking which language is most important for an Inuk (Q105). 76% of respondents say that both languages are equally important. The remaining responses are heavily weighted in favour of Inuttitut though, with 22% of respondents stating that Inuttitut is especially important and just 2% of respondents saying especially English. These results are given in Table 94.

**Table 94. In your opinion, which language is most important for an Inuk person?**

	Frequency	Percent
Both equally	38	76
Especially Inuttitut	11	22
Especially English	1	2
Total	50	100

While the majority of respondents believe that both English and Inuttitut are important, Table 95 illustrates that most people (80%) still feel that it is possible to live successfully without speaking English (Q107).

**Table 95. You can live successfully without speaking English.**

	Frequency	Percent
True	40	80
Neither true nor false	3	6
False	7	14
Total	50	100

Furthermore, respondents were asked whether they felt it was necessary for non-Inuit who live in and/or visit Nunatsiavut to make an effort to learn the language (Q108). The majority of respondents (88%) agreed with this statement. These results are shown below.



**Table 96. It is necessary that non-Inuit people who live in and/or visit Nunatsiavut make an effort to learn Inuttitut.**

	Frequency	Percent
True	44	88
Neither true nor false	3	6
False	3	6
Total	50	100

Respondents were also presented the following range of statements on bilingualism and asked to judge them as true or false:

People who speak both Inuttitut and English fluently<sup>22</sup>:

Q71: Have a better understanding of Inuit culture and heritage.

Q72: Communicate better.

Q73: Have more dignity and self-respect.

Q74: Learn more quickly.

Q75: Are usually older people.

Q77: Find it difficult to learn a third language.

Q78: Have fewer opportunities in life.

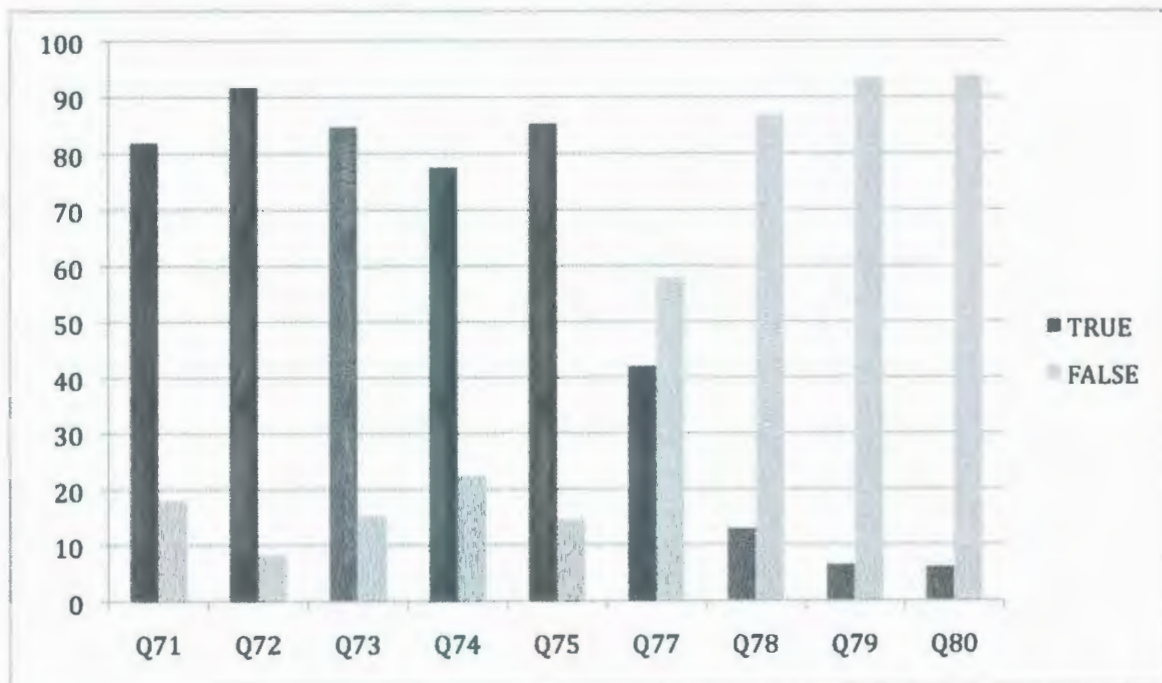
Q79: Do not do very well at school.

Q80: Are usually less intelligent.

This series of statements asks the respondent to judge people who speak both Inuttitut and English fluently against another group. The comparison group against which bilingual speakers are judged is open for interpretation. One interpretation can be that the comparison group is made up of unilingual English speakers; another is that the comparison group is unilingual Inuttitut speakers. A third interpretation is that both groups of unilingual speakers could be included in the comparison group. Because of the language situation in the community where English has become the dominant language, it is the belief of the author that the comparison group is unilingual English speakers.

<sup>22</sup> Q76 has been left out of the analysis because the leading statement, "People who speak both Inuttitut and English fluently" negates the following statement "usually speak poor English". This question would be taken out of a revised questionnaire.

Therefore, for example, the first statement would be interpreted as ‘People who speak both Inuttitut and English fluently have a better understanding of Inuit culture and heritage than those who do not speak Inuttitut’.



**Figure 6. Response rates (by percentage) to statements regarding bilingualism.**

It is clear that the majority of respondents believe that those who speak both Inuttitut and English fluently have a better understanding of Inuit culture and heritage (Q71); communicate better (Q72); have more dignity and self-respect (Q73); and learn more quickly (Q74). Furthermore, 85% of respondents believe that those who do speak Inuttitut and English fluently are usually older people (Q75). The majority of respondents do not believe that speaking both languages fluently limits opportunities in life (Q78). Respondents also do not believe that bilingual speakers are less intelligent (Q80) or do not do very well at school (Q79).

### 3.4.1.1 Attitudes to Inuttitut and School

As was demonstrated from two earlier questions, most respondents believed that Inuttitut immersion education was good and that primary and secondary education does not need to be mainly in English. The next several questions build on people's attitudes towards the role that the school can play in the safeguarding of the Inuttitut language.

Respondents were asked whether or not they agreed or disagreed with the following questions:

Q113: School is the best place to safeguard the Inuttitut language.

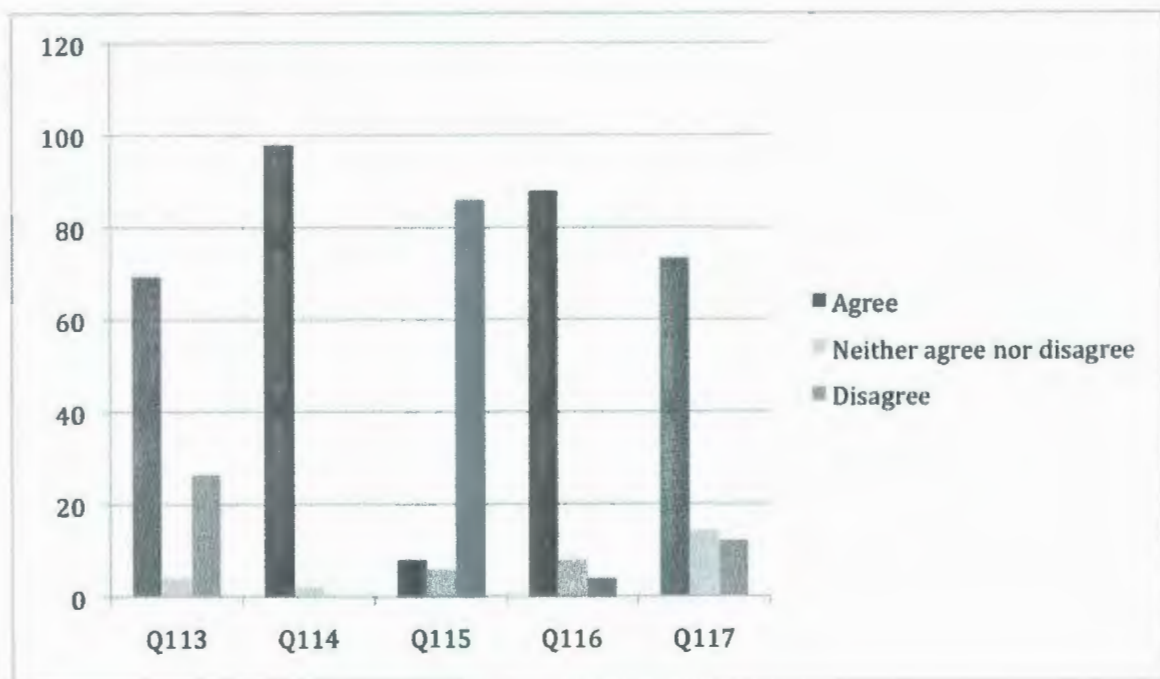
Q114: Inuttitut should be used in school more often.

Q115: Inuttitut should be used in school less often.

Q116: It is better for children to begin their education in their first language rather than in their second language.

Q117: To help children succeed at school, you must speak English at home from time to time.

Figure 7 illustrates the results for these questions.



**Figure 7: Attitudes towards Inuttitut and School**



Respondents were asked whether they thought that school was the best place to safeguard Inuttitut (Q113). The majority of respondents (69.4%) agreed that school was the best place to safeguard the language. However, 26.5% of respondents disagreed. Those that disagreed with the statement were then asked where the language was best safeguarded. The majority of those that provided an alternative stated that the home was the best place to safeguard Inuttitut. Some further elaborated to say that "home is the best place, but in a lot of cases it has to be the school because home doesn't know". Others suggested on the land through land-based programs, at work or in the community.

Two questions were asked with respect to whether Inuttitut should be used in school more often (Q114) or less often (Q115). Overall, respondents felt that Inuttitut should be used more often in school, not less often. When asked if English should be spoken at home from time to time to help children succeed at school (Q117), 73.5% of respondents felt that English should be spoken at home at least occasionally.

The final statement in this series probed whether or not it is better for children to begin their education in their first language rather than their second language (Q116). The majority of respondents (88%) felt that it is better to begin school in their first language. However, the question presupposes a consistent definition of the terms used in the statement, that all respondents and the researcher understand first language to mean one thing and second language to mean another.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, the children about whom the respondents are referring may have different first languages from one another.

Respondents were also asked whether they thought the best place for children to

<sup>23</sup> After 11 questionnaires had been conducted, the researcher began to ask respondents what their understanding was of first language vs. second language and whether they felt Inuttitut or English was the first language. 17 respondents were asked: 11 said Inuttitut; 4 English; and 2 did not know.

learn Inuttitut was a bilingual school or an Inuttitut-only school (Q118). The results were split down the middle with 50% vying for each option.

### 3.4.2 The Future of Inuttitut in Labrador

A number of questions were asked to get a sense of whether the language will continue to be spoken in the future. Respondents were asked to state whether they believed the following statement to be true or false: We speak Inuttitut here in this community and it will always be that way (Q109). As shown in Table 97, 70% of the respondents believed this statement to be true; 10% were unsure; while 20% disagreed with the statement.

**Table 97. We speak Inuttitut here in this community and it will always be that way.**

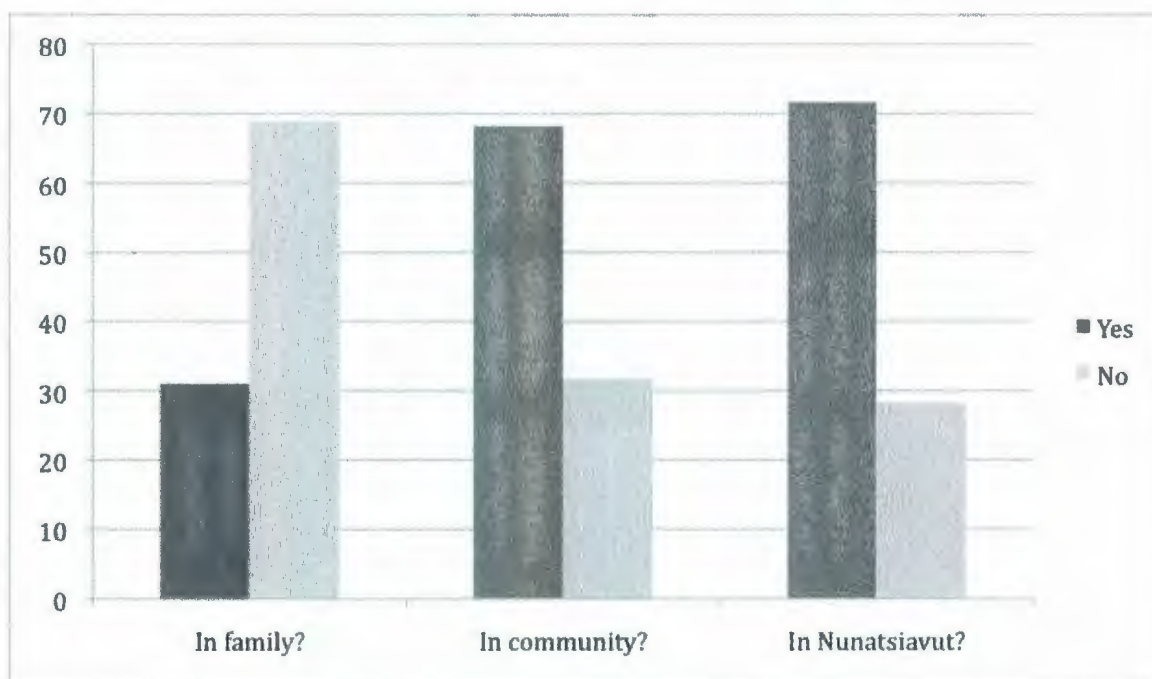
	Frequency	Percent
True	35	70
Neither true nor false	5	10
False	10	20
Total	50	100

However, when respondents were asked if they thought it was likely that the Inuttitut language would be lost in Nunatsiavut (Q92), only 10% of respondents said that this was not at all likely. The same percentage of people (20%) who disagreed with the previous statement also thought that it was very likely that Inuttitut would be lost in Nunatsiavut. The remaining 70% answered in a neutral manner. The category “neutral” was conflated from “not very likely”, “maybe” and “probably not”. The distribution of results can be seen in the following table.

**Table 98. Do you think it likely that the Inuttitut language will be lost in Nunatsiavut.**

	Frequency	Percent
No	5	10
Neutral	35	70
Yes	10	20
Total	50	100

Respondents were also asked if they thought that in the next generation (or the generation that has not been born yet), Inuttitut will be spoken (Q101) in their family, in the community and in Nunatsiavut. The distribution of these responses is illustrated in the following figure.



**Figure 8: Likelihood of Inuttitut being spoken in the future.**

The percentages of respondents that believe that Inuttitut will continue to be spoken in the community and in Nunatsiavut are similar to Questions 92 and 109, with



68.2% stating that Inuttitut will continue to be spoken in the community and 71.7% believing that the language will continue to be spoken in Nunatsiavut. However, only 31.1% believe that Inuttitut will be spoken in their family in the next generation.

### **3.4.3 Summary of Attitudes and Actions**

Overall, it is clear that Inuttitut is very important to the residents of Nain, both to the individuals themselves as well as for their children. They also believe that it is important to others in the community. There is a belief that measures need to be taken to safeguard the language, eg. materials available in Inuttitut, public signs in both language and more Inuttitut used on television and radio. Even though some people feel that the best place to safeguard Inuttitut is in the home, many people say this is no longer possible as a result of language loss. Therefore, the best place to safeguard the language is now in the school environment.

Respondents also feel that bilingualism is important for residents of the community, and especially for children. But this bilingualism should go both ways: Visitors or non-Inuit living in the community should make an effort to learn the language.

Though most people feel confident that Inuttitut will continue to be spoken in the community and in Nunatsiavut, fewer people have the same confidence that Inuttitut will be spoken in their own families.

### **3.5 Summary**

Due to the stratified judgment sampling technique employed for the research, there were a fairly even number of respondents who reported high and low levels of speaking

proficiency. There were, however, a greater number of respondents who reported a high level of comprehension compared to speaking ability. This points to the issue of passive or receptive bilingualism, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

It is clear from the data collected that English is the predominant language of use in Nain. This is also supported by the fact that nearly two-thirds of respondents are uncomfortable speaking Inuttitut. While English is the predominant language, Inuttitut continues to hold great importance to the residents of this community. Though it was recognized that the home environment plays an important role in safeguarding the language, most young parents speak to their children in English as a result of their limited proficiency. Therefore, the school environment is where residents are looking to ensure the future of the language. While many believe that Inuttitut programming needs improvement in the school and that Inuttitut will not likely be spoken in their family's next generation, the majority of residents still believe that Inuttitut will survive into the future.

# Chapter Four: Discussion

This chapter provides an analysis of the results of the research as presented in the previous chapter. The organization of the chapter follows from the results: §4.1 provides a discussion on the proficiency levels of respondents, focusing on oral and comprehension proficiency; §4.2 discusses the importance of intergenerational transmission in acquisition of the language; §4.3 discusses language use in Nain, particularly with respect to young people and children; while §4.4 provides a discussion on the attitudes towards Inuttitut, with particular attention to its relationship with culture and identity, education and its future in Labrador. The chapter concludes with a summary in §4.5.

## 4.1 Proficiency

In order to determine how proficient residents of Nain were in Inuttitut, four areas of proficiency were examined: speaking, listening comprehension, reading comprehension and writing. While literacy skills are important in the maintenance of a language, they are dependent on speaking and listening comprehension. Thus, it is these aspects of proficiency that are the focus of the discussion here.

The results of speaking proficiency from Table 10 are repeated below as Table 103. As can be seen, the largest group of respondents reports speaking Inuttitut well or very well.



**Table 99. Self-evaluations of proficiency in speaking Inuttitut**

	Frequency	Percent
Not at all	2	4
Poorly or very poorly	21	42
Acceptably	4	8
Well or very well	23	46
Total	50	100

Because the survey sample was a stratified judgment sample rather than a random sample, these results cannot be extrapolated to the larger community. Therefore, it would not be accurate to assume that a similar percentage of the community population speaks Inuttitut well or very well. In fact, the survey conducted by the Torngâsok Cultural Centre in 2000 showed that 24.7% of the respondents in Nain reported having Inuttitut as their first language. The sample for the 2000 survey was very close to the whole population of the community, so those results more accurately reflect the language situation.

Though the results for the current survey cannot be extrapolated to the larger community, they do present some interesting information about the sample population itself. For example, these results show that there is a greater number of people that understand Inuttitut well or very well compared to the number of people who report being able to speak Inuttitut well or very well. The distribution of responses for proficiency in both speaking and listening comprehension is repeated in Table 104 below.

**Table 100. Speaking and listening comprehension proficiency**

	Speaking		Listening Comprehension	
	N	%	N	%
Not at all	2	4	0	0
Poorly or very poorly	21	42	18	36
Acceptably	4	8	4	8
Well or very well	23	46	28	56
Total	50	100	50	100

All respondents who reported speaking Inuttitut well or very well also reported understanding Inuttitut well or very well. Three of the additional five respondents who reported understanding Inuttitut well or very well reported a low proficiency in speaking ability, while the other two reported an acceptable level of speaking proficiency. The fact that there are more people that understand Inuttitut well than there are people that can speak the language well is not surprising. In fact, Mazurkewich noted in the research she conducted in 1989 in Nain with Kindergarten children (as discussed in §1.2.3.1) that children spoke English to both English- and Inuttitut-speaking interviewers even though they had little difficulty in understanding the Inuttitut spoken to them during the interview. These results indicate the presence of passive bilingualism, or receptive bilingualism, where one understands the language well, but does not have the same level of oral proficiency (see Sherkina-Lieber, in preparation). This fact is understood by many people throughout the community. For example, it is not uncommon to hear a conversation where one person is speaking Inuttitut and the other replying in English.

Like many of the other questions, age proved to be a significant factor in the comprehension proficiency of respondents, with a Pearson correlation factor of 0.633

and significant at the 0.01 level. This suggests that understanding Inuttitut increases as age increases. In the 19-38 age category, for example, only 3 of the 16 respondents reported understanding Inuttitut well. The remaining 13 respondents said they understood Inuttitut poorly or very poorly in the 39-58 age category, the number of respondents who reported understanding Inuttitut well or very well increased to 11 (out of a total of 20) and all of the respondents aged 59 and older said they understood Inuttitut well or very well. These results are illustrated in the following table.

**Table 101. Proficiency in understanding Inuttitut, by age**

Comprehension Proficiency in Inuttitut	Age Group							
	19-38		39-58		59+		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Poorly or very poorly	13	72.2	5	27.8	0	0	18	100
Acceptably	0	0	4	100	0	0	4	100
Well or very well	3	10.7	11	39.3	14	50	28	100

When the comprehension proficiency is analyzed against oral proficiency, it can be seen that there are five respondents who reported understanding Inuttitut well or very well, but did report speaking Inuttitut at the same level as illustrated in Table 102.

**Table 102. Comprehension proficiency, by proficiency in spoken Inuttitut**

Comprehension Proficiency	Proficiency in spoken Inuttitut									
	Not at all		Poorly or very poorly		Acceptably		Well or very well		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Poorly or very poorly	2	11.1	14	77.8	2	11.1	0	0	18	100
Acceptably	0	0	4	100	0	0	0	0	4	100
Well or very well	0	0	3	10.7	2	7.1	23	82.2	28	100



The data show that one of the respondents who reported speaking Inuttitut acceptably, but understanding it well or very well, was in the 39-58 age range, while the other was in the 19-38 age range. The three respondents who reported speaking Inuttitut poorly or very poorly, but understanding it well, fell in each of the three age ranges.

When respondents were asked to evaluate the proficiency of children, 22.4% said they understood Inuttitut acceptably, whereas only 8.5% said they spoke Inuttitut acceptably. These results indicate that some people might feel that younger children are receptive bilinguals. Given the fact that the majority of children are not spoken to in Inuttitut (only 4.2% of respondents report speaking to children in Inuttitut most or all of the time and 86% of respondents say that young parents speak mostly or always English to their children), this might suggest that the presence of receptive bilingualism is being projected onto younger generations where it might in fact not exist. However, because these evaluations are opinions of respondents, more in-depth research would have to be conducted to reach a firm conclusion.

It is also true that evaluating the proficiency of others at a level that is higher than what in fact might be the case is seen with other age groups as well. For example, 83.7% of respondents evaluated older adults, aged 36 to 59 years of age, with a high level of proficiency. However, the self-assessments for that particular age range were not as positive. Only 9 of the 21, or 43% of 36-59 year olds rated their abilities in spoken Inuttitut as high; whereas 8 respondents, or 38%, said they speak Inuttitut poorly or very poorly. One said that they did not speak Inuttitut at all, and 3 (or 14%) reported an acceptable level of proficiency. What is clear is that there is a discrepancy

between self-assessments and evaluations by other generations. This could be indicative of assigning a healthier linguistic situation to the community than actually exists.

This trend of receptive bilingualism is not uncommon in communities where language shift has occurred. Further evidence that language shift is occurring in Nain is supported by the number of conversations that respondents could carry out in either Inuttitut or English and the proficiency of those respondents. Only respondents who reported having a high level of proficiency in Inuttitut could carry out most or all of their conversations in either language. Only one person reported a high level of proficiency in Inuttitut, while not being able to carry out most of their recent conversations in Inuttitut or English. Those respondents who reported speaking Inuttitut poorly or acceptably said that they could carry out very few or none of their recent conversations in either language. These results show that the vast majority of those who speak Inuttitut also speak English, while those that speak English do not necessarily speak Inuttitut, indicating a clear language shift towards English. This trend has been noted in other language communities undergoing language shift: "It is also a recurring ethnolinguistic reality that the speakers of the threatened language are mostly bilingual, almost always speaking (and often also reading and writing) the mainstream language as well as (or even better than and in preference to) 'their own'" (Fishman 2001: 9).

Furthermore, 63.3% of respondents said that they found it easier to converse in English. This question, however, is ambiguous: it could be interpreted with respect to internal knowledge or with respect to situational factors. For example, some

respondents may have reported that they find it easier to converse in English because they have a low proficiency in Inuttitut, thus indicating lower internal knowledge of the language. However, some respondents may have said they find it easier to converse in English, because that is the language most people use in most environments, so situational factors would be the reason for ease of conversation. Furthermore, because domains where Inuttitut is spoken are becoming more limited, situational factors could be impacting internal knowledge. The less use and practice people have with a language, the weaker their internal knowledge of the language becomes, thus affecting confidence and comfort when speaking the language.

#### **4.2 Acquisition**

Intergenerational language transmission is one of the six major evaluative factors in assessing the vitality of a language (UNESCO 2003). The results in this study showed a positive correlation between spending one's childhood in a home where Inuttitut was spoken, and proficiency in Inuttitut. The Pearson correlation coefficients for proficiency in Inuttitut and growing up in a home where adults spoke to each other mainly in Inuttitut and where adults spoke to the respondent mainly in Inuttitut were 0.606 and 0.687, respectively. Though causal relationships cannot be drawn from these correlation tests, the correlational data does support what is accepted in language acquisition theory, that children who grow up in a particular language environment will acquire that language.

The data from the current study reveal some statistics that do not bode well for the natural intergenerational transmission of the language. First, the vast majority in



the 19-38 age category, or those most likely to have children or who already have young children, have a low reported proficiency. Second, 15 of the 16 respondents (or 93.8%) in this group report using English most or all of the time in their daily life. Third, when specifically asked what language they used when speaking to children at home, the same percentage reported speaking English most or all of the time. Only one person in this age group said that they sometimes use English and sometimes use Inuttitut; no respondent in this age group said that they use Inuttitut most or all of the time when speaking to children.

Furthermore, the overall perception of those surveyed was that young parents spoke mostly or always English to their children; 86% of people responded this way. 12% of respondents said that young parents use English sometimes, and Inuttitut sometimes, whereas just 2% said that young parents use Inuttitut most or all of the time.

#### **4.3 Language Use**

It is evident from the results that the dominant language of use among the residents of Nain that were surveyed is English. This is true for the environments in which people interact as well as those with whom they interact. The majority of respondents use English most or all of the time at home, work, school and socially, as well as with elders, children and peers. The figures are even more staggering with respect to the younger population. When asked what language children use when playing at home, 90.7% of respondents said that children use English most or all of the time. An even larger percentage of respondents, at 97.6%, state that teenagers use English most or all

of the time at their house. Furthermore, given that 86% of respondents believe that young parents speak mostly or always English to their children, these statistics do not paint a promising picture for the future of Labrador Inuttitut. This also relates back to acquisition. If children are not hearing it in their homes either from adults speaking it to each other or from their parents speaking Inuttitut to them, the children will not acquire it as a first language.

#### **4.4 Attitudes and Action**

The results of the survey show the residents of Nain that were surveyed place a great deal of importance on Inuttitut. Though the majority of those surveyed use English most or all of the time, 100% of respondents believed that government and official forms should be available in Inuttitut and that public signs should appear in Inuttitut and English. Furthermore, most people believed that more Inuttitut should be used on television and radio. This reflects a desire to see Inuttitut being used in more domains. For those with a high level of proficiency, it would give them the opportunity to use Inuttitut more often; for those with a low level of proficiency, it would give them an opportunity to learn and practice what they are learning.

##### **4.4.1 Language, Culture and Identity**

Tulloch (2004) identifies two broad categories for why Inuit youth in Nunavut valued Inuktitut, and those are for symbolic and practical reasons. Though respondents in this study were not asked directly for the reasons why they valued Inuttitut, it is likely that Nain residents value the language for symbolic reasons since

English is the dominant language in the community and the reality is that, for most residents, Inuttitut is not required to function in everyday life. Thorburn (2006) also points out that Innu-aimûn is valued for its ties to culture and identity as well.

This said, when asked whether one needed to be bilingual to be truly bicultural or whether one had to be able to speak Inuttitut to be a real Inuk, the majority of respondents believed these statements to be false. Both of these statements tie language to culture and identity, yet most people felt that it is not necessary to speak the language to maintain one's culture and identity as an Inuk. Fishman argues that "the loss of a traditionally associated ethnocultural language is commonly the result of many long-ongoing departures from the traditional culture, thereby robbing that culture of most of its erstwhile and potential defenders and establishing a rival identity that does not require (although it may still claim to admire) the traditionally associated language" (Fishman, 2001: 21). Yet the language is still valued seemingly for a symbolic reason. Tulloch identifies "Inuktitut [as] the mother tongue, and [is] treasured for that reason" (Tulloch 2004: 293). And this is arguably why residents of Nain value Inuttitut, because it is the mother tongue of, in many cases, their parents, grandparents and older generations.

#### **4.4.2 Language and Education**

Inuttitut was re-introduced into the schools on the north coast of Labrador in the late 1970s<sup>24</sup>, and, in 1987, the First Language Program (see §1.2.3.1) was

<sup>24</sup> The language was taught as a core subject rather than as a language of instruction.



introduced in Nain. Inuttitut continues to be taught in Nunatsiavut, though to varying degrees in each community.<sup>25</sup>

The respondents in this study continue to believe in the value and importance of Inuttitut in the schools. The majority of respondents (80.9%) disagreed with the statement that primary and secondary education should be mostly in English and corroborated this by supporting the statement that Inuttitut should be used more often in school. Furthermore, nearly all of the respondents (95.7%) believe that Inuttitut immersion education is a good thing.

While the majority of people agreed that it was important for Inuttitut to be a part of the education system, some people pointed out that the quality of the programs, i.e. curriculum and delivery, could be improved upon. For example, one respondent made the comment that the Inuttitut immersion program could be a good thing “when the program is fully developed” and “if teachers were more qualified”. This comment might be explained by the words of another respondent who said that “[students] don’t develop good literacy skills [in the Immersion program]”. These sentiments are not unique to the situation in Labrador. For example, Tulloch (2004) reports that “the youth [in Nunavut] are calling for higher quality Inuktitut language courses, particularly in the high schools. [And] although such classes exist, students call into question the amount and level of material that they cover, requesting higher standards” (Tulloch 2004: 298). Comments such as these should never be taken as criticisms of

<sup>25</sup> Inuttitut as a core subject is taught in all five Nunatsiavut communities: in Nain, Hopedale, Makkovik and Rigolet from Kindergarten to Grade 9, where it is also taught as a high school credit course; there is no Inuttitut teacher in Postville, but the language is taught using the Rosetta Stone language program. Inuttitut Immersion is offered only in Nain and Hopedale: in Nain from Kindergarten to Grade 3 and in Hopedale, in Kindergarten and Grade 1.

the individuals who work in this field, but rather as a recognition that the system in which they work must be supported in a greater capacity, with respect to both human and financial resources.

When asked whether they thought that the school was the best place to safeguard the language, more than two-thirds of those surveyed (69.4%) agreed that it is the best place to safeguard the language. Many others stated that home is the best place to safeguard the language. However, there appears to be some ambivalence around this issue, as captured in the following comment: “home is the best place [to safeguard Inuttitut], but in a lot of cases, it has to be the school, because [the people at home do not know]”. Others suggested language learning on the land through land-based programs, at work or in the community. If the linguistic situation in the community were in a healthier state where young adults had a high level of proficiency in Inuttitut, then safeguarding the language at home would be a realistic suggestion. However, as the results in this study indicate, the proficiency levels of those in the youngest age category, 19-38 year olds, are low, where slightly more than 80% of this age group report speaking Inuttitut poorly or very poorly, or not at all. Because the majority of young people are not proficient in Inuttitut, it is evident that efforts must be made outside the home in order to reverse the language shift that has occurred. At the same time, the school cannot bear all responsibility for the safeguarding of the language. It is important to remember the role of the individual and the importance of personal responsibility in the safeguarding of Inuttitut. Tulloch (2004) points out that Inuit youth in Nunavut also recognize that personal responsibility is important to ensure that the language is passed on to future generations.

#### **4.4.3 The Future of Inuttitut in Labrador**

The experience of other Aboriginal and circumpolar groups shows that increased use of the dominant language comes at a significant cost to the heritage language (Taylor et al., 1993). This situation is being borne out among the Inuit of Nunatsiavut, where in the span of about 40 years, English has replaced Inuttitut as the dominant language in the community.

This survey asked respondents about their opinions on the future of Inuttitut in their family, in their community and in Nunatsiavut. As discussed in §3.4, the majority of respondents believe that Inuttitut will continue to be spoken both in Nain and in Nunatsiavut in the next generation. However, less than a third of the respondents believed that Inuttitut will be spoken in the next generation of their families. In some cases, this is not unrealistic as there are families in the communities that have continued to remain stronger with Inuttitut than other families. However, it does point to the issue of personal responsibility as discussed in the previous section. It might also suggest that respondents' expectations of Inuttitut being spoken in future generations within the community and Nunatsiavut is somewhat idealistic. Taylor et al. (1993) also found that many of the respondents' expectations of their children's fluency in Inuttitut in Nunavik were idealistic.

#### **4.5 Summary**

The goal of this research was to assess the current language situation in the community of Nain, Nunatsiavut by taking a snapshot of a sample of community residents. It is evident through this research that the community has undergone a language shift



where the dominant language has shifted from Inuttitut to English. This is demonstrated through the data from each of the language behaviours, as defined by Cooper (1980): proficiency, acquisition and use. The greatest proportion of highly proficient Inuttitut speakers are 59 years of age or older, while very few respondents in the 19-38 age range report speaking Inuttitut well or very well. Furthermore, the majority of those who are proficient in Inuttitut are also proficient in English, whereas the reverse is not true. As Fishman (2001) points out, this is a sign of language shift.

In addition to the discrepancy in proficiency levels between age groups, a contributing factor towards proficiency for the youngest and future generations is language use and acquisition. Young adults and young parents speak mostly or always English to children. If children are not hearing the language, they will not learn the language. As has been shown time and time again, the most effective method of learning a language is through intergenerational transmission. All of these statistics point to the fact that Inuttitut in Nain is threatened. In fact, UNESCO's Interactive Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger categorizes Nunatsiavummiutut<sup>26</sup> as "definitely endangered"<sup>27</sup>

The majority of respondents have a more idealistic view of the future for Inuttitut, stating that they believe Inuttitut will be spoken in Nain and in Nunatsiavut at least in the next generation. The outlook for their individual families was not as optimistic, however, with fewer respondents saying that the language will be spoken in

<sup>26</sup> Nunatsiavummiutut means the language spoken by Nunatsiavummiut, or people from Nunatsiavut. The Atlas uses names of languages that are considered most appropriate by the respective regional editors.

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?pg=00206>

the next generation in their families.

Though the linguistic situation of the community shows that Inuttitut is threatened or “definitely endangered”, the vast majority of respondents believe that the language is important. They believe it should be made more visible through public signage, media communications and government documents. The majority of respondents also strongly believe that Inuttitut should be supported through the education system stating that more Inuttitut should be taught in school. Though the language is no longer required for practical purposes in the community, it is valued for its ties to culture and identity as “the mother tongue” of Nunatsiavummiut.

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## APPENDIX A: SURVEY OF THE LINGUISTIC SITUATION OF NAIN

### PROFICIENCY

#### Speaking

1. How well do you **speak** Inuttitut?  
☐Very well   ☐well   ☐acceptably   ☐poorly   ☐very poorly   ☐not at all
2. Which language do you find easier to converse in?  
☐Inuttitut   ☐English   ☐Both just as easily
3. Could you easily have a conversation in Inuttitut about most everyday things?  
☐Very easily   ☐quite easily   ☐so-so   ☐difficult   ☐Very difficult
4. How often do you think you speak Inuttitut correctly?  
☐Always   ☐Most of the time   ☐Sometimes   ☐Rarely   ☐Never
5. How often can you express the same thought in a number of different ways in Inuttitut?  
☐Always   ☐Most of the time   ☐Sometimes   ☐Rarely   ☐Never
6. How many recent conversations could you have carried out just as well in either English or Inuttitut?  
☐All   ☐Most   ☐Very few   ☐None
7. How satisfied are you with your ability in (spoken) Inuttitut? [**Do not ask elders**]  
☐Very satisfied   ☐fairly satisfied   ☐more or less  
☐fairly unsatisfied   ☐very unsatisfied
8. Do you feel comfortable speaking in Inuttitut? (Circle one.)   Yes / No
9. When you are speaking Inuttitut, do you ever want to say something in English because you do not know how to say it in Inuttitut?  
☐Very often   ☐often   ☐sometimes   ☐rarely   ☐never
10. When you are speaking English, do you ever want to say something in Inuttitut because you do not know how to say it in English?  
☐Very often   ☐often   ☐sometimes   ☐rarely   ☐never



## Comprehension

11. How well do you **understand** (spoken) Inuttitut?

- ☐Very well      ☐well      ☐acceptably      ☐poorly      ☐very poorly

## Reading and Writing

12. How well do you **write** Inuttitut?

- ☐Very well    ☐well    ☐acceptably    ☐poorly    ☐very poorly    ☐not at all

13. How well do you **read** Inuttitut?

- ☐Very well    ☐well    ☐acceptably    ☐poorly    ☐very poorly    ☐not at all

➤ **If the responses to question 12 and 13 are (very poorly) or (not at all), skip to question 18.**

14. Where did you learn to read and write Inuttitut? (Check all that apply.)

- a. ☐In the family, from a relative
- b. ☐At school
- c. ☐By yourself
- d. ☐Through Church
- e. ☐Other (specify)

15. Do you understand books, stories or articles better in English or Inuttitut?

- ☐English              ☐Inuttitut              ☐both the same

16. How many hours in the past week have you spent reading anything in Inuttitut?

- ☐0      ☐1-2 hours      ☐3-5 hours      ☐5-10 hours      ☐more than 10 hours

17. Do you find it easier to write in English or Inuttitut?

- ☐English              ☐Inuttitut              ☐both the same

### **Evaluation of older and younger generations**

18. How well do you think young people (less than 19 years old) speak Inuttitut?
- ☐Very well    ☐well    ☐acceptably    ☐poorly    ☐very poorly
19. How well do you think younger adults (ages 19-35) speak Inuttitut?
- ☐Very well    ☐well    ☐acceptably    ☐poorly    ☐very poorly
20. How well do you think older adults (ages 36-59) speak Inuttitut?
- ☐Very well    ☐well    ☐acceptably    ☐poorly    ☐very poorly
21. How well do you think children beginning school speak Inuttitut?
- ☐Very well    ☐well    ☐acceptably    ☐poorly    ☐very poorly
22. How well do you think most children beginning school understand Inuttitut?
- ☐Very well    ☐well    ☐acceptably    ☐poorly    ☐very poorly
23. How well do you think young people understand elders when they talk? Do they understand them very well or do they have difficulty in understanding them?
- ☐Very well    ☐well    ☐more or less    ☐with some difficulty    ☐with great difficulty
24. How well do you think young people understand elders when they (the elders) talk amongst themselves? Do they understand them well or with difficulty?
- ☐Very well    ☐well    ☐more or less    ☐with some difficulty    ☐with great difficulty
25. In your opinion, how often do older people have difficulty understanding the Inuttitut spoken by younger people?
- ☐Very often    ☐often    ☐sometimes    ☐rarely    ☐never
26. When speaking with children, how often is it necessary to name certain things in English rather than in Inuttitut in order to be sure they will understand or can everything be said in Inuttitut?
- ☐Very often    ☐often    ☐sometimes    ☐rarely    ☐never

27. When people speak to an elder, do you think they make a special effort to speak Inuttitut well?
- ☐ Very often    ☐ often    ☐ sometimes    ☐ rarely    ☐ never
28. Do you find that many people just use English words in sentences when they speak Inuttitut?
- ☐ Very often    ☐ often    ☐ sometimes    ☐ rarely    ☐ never

### Acquisition

29. Did you spend your childhood (up to the age of 15) in a home where adults spoke to each other mainly in Inuttitut?
- ☐ Yes    ☐ No
30. Up to the age of 15 years, did you ever live with an adult who spoke to you mainly in Inuttitut?
- ☐ Yes    ☐ No
31. How old were you when you started learning Inuttitut? \_\_\_\_\_
32. Did you take Inuttitut through the core program in school? Yes / No
- If yes, what grades? \_\_\_\_\_
33. Did you take Inuttitut through an immersion program in school? Yes / No
- If yes, what grades? \_\_\_\_\_
34. Have you ever formally enrolled in an Inuttitut language course at a school, college or university? Yes / No
- If yes, where? \_\_\_\_\_
35. Have you ever taken informal Inuttitut language courses or received private language tutoring? Yes / No
- If yes, where? \_\_\_\_\_



## Language use

36. As a rule, in daily life, which language do you use?

- ☐ Always Inuttitut    ☐ mostly Inuttitut    ☐ sometimes Inuttitut/English  
☐ mostly English    ☐ always English

37. As a rule, at home, which language do you use to speak to elders?

- ☐ Always Inuttitut    ☐ mostly Inuttitut    ☐ sometimes Inuttitut/English  
☐ mostly English    ☐ always English

38. At home, which language do you use to speak to children?

- ☐ Always Inuttitut    ☐ mostly Inuttitut    ☐ sometimes Inuttitut/English  
☐ mostly English    ☐ always English

39. At home, which language do you use to speak to people your own age?

- ☐ Always Inuttitut    ☐ mostly Inuttitut    ☐ sometimes Inuttitut/English  
☐ mostly English    ☐ always English

If you speak Inuttitut (if not, skip to question 43):

40. How often do you have whole conversations (including phone calls) in Inuttitut in your homes?

- ☐ Very often    ☐ often    ☐ sometimes    ☐ rarely    ☐ never

41. How often, on average, do you speak Inuttitut at home?

- ☐ Very often    ☐ often    ☐ sometimes    ☐ rarely    ☐ never

42. Do you speak Inuttitut more to people you live with or people who visit?

- ☐ People who I live with    ☐ Visitors    ☐ Both equally    ☐ Not applicable

43. At your house, which language do children use when playing?

- ☐ Always Inuttitut    ☐ mostly Inuttitut    ☐ sometimes Inuttitut/English  
☐ mostly English    ☐ always English

44. At your house, which language do teenagers use when they are together?

- ☐ Always Inuttitut    ☐ mostly Inuttitut    ☐ sometimes Inuttitut/English  
☐ mostly English    ☐ always English

45. How often do you use Inuttitut in homes other than your own?  
☐Very often    ☐often    ☐sometimes    ☐rarely    ☐never

*In what contexts and with what frequency do Inuit hear and speak Inuttitut?*

46. How many homes do you normally visit in a month? \_\_\_\_\_
47. And in how many of those do you repeatedly hear Inuttitut spoken? \_\_\_\_\_
48. How often do you hear it spoken in those homes?  
☐Always    ☐very often    ☐often    ☐sometimes    ☐rarely
49. And in how many do you speak Inuttitut?
50. To what extent do you speak it in those homes?  
☐Always    ☐very often    ☐often    ☐sometimes    ☐rarely
51. With people at work (or school) which language do you use?  
☐Always Inuttitut    ☐mostly Inuttitut    ☐sometimes Inuttitut/English  
☐mostly English    ☐always English
52. Which language do you speak with friends when you participate in sports and social activities in your community?  
☐Always Inuttitut    ☐mostly Inuttitut    ☐sometimes Inuttitut/English  
☐mostly English    ☐always English
53. At get-togethers with friends, which language do you speak with each other?  
☐Always Inuttitut    ☐mostly Inuttitut    ☐sometimes Inuttitut/English  
☐mostly English    ☐always English
54. Are there any other situations/environments where you speak Inuttitut regularly (ie. church, hunting/fishing, etc.)?  
\_\_\_\_\_
55. If someone speaks to you in English, do you answer in English or Inuttitut?  
☐Always Inuttitut    ☐mostly Inuttitut    ☐sometimes Inuttitut/English  
☐mostly English    ☐always English

56. If someone speaks to you in Inuttitut, do you answer in Inuttitut or English?
- ☐ Always Inuttitut    ☐ mostly Inuttitut    ☐ sometimes Inuttitut/English  
☐ mostly English    ☐ always English
57. If you are in a group of Inuit friends and there is a non-Inuk person who does not speak Inuttitut, which language would you speak with the group?
- ☐ Always Inuttitut    ☐ mostly Inuttitut    ☐ sometimes Inuttitut/English  
☐ mostly English    ☐ always English
58. If you are in a meeting and there is someone who does not speak Inuttitut, which language would you speak with the group?
- ☐ Always Inuttitut    ☐ mostly Inuttitut    ☐ sometimes Inuttitut/English  
☐ mostly English    ☐ always English
59. Do you feel that there are types of words being lost, such as words to do with the country?
- ☐ Yes    ☐ somewhat    ☐ no    ☐ I don't know

➤ **If (yes), or (somewhat):**

What kinds of words are not known today?

60. What do you think about words like *Kagitaujak* (computer), (radio), (telephone)? Do you prefer to say them in English or in Inuttitut?
- ☐ Always Inuttitut    ☐ mostly Inuttitut    ☐ sometimes Inuttitut/English  
☐ mostly English    ☐ always English
61. In your opinion, in general, in your community, which language do young parents speak to their children?
- ☐ Always Inuttitut    ☐ mostly Inuttitut    ☐ sometimes Inuttitut/English  
☐ mostly English    ☐ always English

Mixing is using both languages together when you are speaking.

62. How often do you mix Inuttitut and English?
- ☐ Very often    ☐ often    ☐ sometimes    ☐ rarely    ☐ never

➤ **If the response to question 62 is (never), jump to question 68.**



63. At your house, how often do you mix Inuttitut and English when speaking to elders?
- ☐ Very often    ☐ often    ☐ sometimes    ☐ rarely    ☐ never
64. At your house, how often do you mix Inuttitut and English when speaking to children?
- ☐ Very often    ☐ often    ☐ sometimes    ☐ rarely    ☐ never
65. At your house, how often do you mix Inuttitut and English when speaking to people your own age?
- ☐ Very often    ☐ often    ☐ sometimes    ☐ rarely    ☐ never
66. How often do you mix Inuttitut and English when you are with work colleagues (or other students)?
- ☐ Very often    ☐ often    ☐ sometimes    ☐ rarely    ☐ never
67. At get-togethers with friends, how often do you mix Inuttitut and English?
- ☐ Very often    ☐ often    ☐ sometimes    ☐ rarely    ☐ never
68. At your home, how often do children playing together mix Inuttitut and English?
- ☐ Very often    ☐ often    ☐ sometimes    ☐ rarely    ☐ never
69. Do you feel that your use of Inuttitut is criticized by older generations?  
[Do not ask elders.]
- ☐ Very often    ☐ often    ☐ sometimes    ☐ rarely    ☐ never
70. Do you feel that your use of Inuttitut is praised by older generations?  
[Do not ask elders.]
- ☐ Very often    ☐ often    ☐ sometimes    ☐ rarely    ☐ never

## Attitudinal

*What are Inuit attitudes towards knowing the Inuttitut language?*

*What are Inuit attitudes towards being bilingual in Inuttitut and English?*<sup>28</sup>

Respondents will be first presented with a series of statements about people who speak both Inuttitut and English fluently and asked whether they think these statements are true or false.

People who speak both Inuttitut and English fluently:

- |     |   |       |
|-----|---|-------|
| 71. | Have a better understanding of Inuit culture and heritage | T / F |
| 72. | Communicate better  | T / F |
| 73. | Have more dignity and self respect                        | T / F |
| 74. | Learn more quickly  | T / F |
| 75. | Are usually older people                                  | T / F |
| 76. | Usually speak poor English                                | T / F |
| 77. | Find it difficult to learn a third language               | T / F |
| 78. | Have fewer opportunities in life                          | T / F |
| 79. | Do not do very well at school                             | T / F |
| 80. | Are usually less intelligent                              | T / F |

### Statements

- |     |  |       |
|-----|--|-------|
| 81. | Government and official forms should be available in Inuttitut                 | T / F |
| 82. | A lot more Inuttitut language should be used on television and radio           | T / F |
| 83. | Inuttitut immersion education is a good thing                                  | T / F |
| 84. | Public signs should appear in Inuttitut and English                            | T / F |
| 85. | You need to be bilingual to be truly bicultural                                | T / F |
| 86. | You have to be able to speak Inuttitut to be a real Inuk                       | T / F |
| 87. | People should not speak Inuttitut in the presence of non-speakers of Inuttitut | T / F |
| 88. | Primary and secondary education should be mostly in English                    | T / F |
| 89. | The Inuttitut language cannot cope with the modern world                       | T / F |
| 90. | Speaking Inuttitut will not help you get a job                                 | T / F |

<sup>28</sup> These two questions were not asked during the survey, but were included as a reference to the framework for the interviewer. They will be removed in future versions of the questionnaire.

### Intention to Enrol in an Inuttitut Language Course

91. Would you attend an Inuttitut language course in the next 12 months? Y / N  
If not, why not?  
\_\_\_\_\_

92. Do you think it likely that the Inuttitut language will be lost in Nunatsiavut?

☐Very ☐not very ☐maybe ☐probably not ☐not at all

93. How important is Inuttitut to you?

☐Very important ☐important ☐neither important nor unimportant  
☐not really important ☐not at all important

94. In your opinion, how important is Inuttitut to younger people?

☐Very important ☐important ☐neither important nor unimportant  
☐not really important ☐not at all important

95. In your opinion, how important is Inuttitut to older people?

☐Very important ☐important ☐neither important nor unimportant  
☐not really important ☐not at all important

96. In your opinion, is it important for there to be special policy or projects to look after our language?

☐Very important ☐important ☐neither important nor unimportant  
☐not really important ☐not at all important

97. Do you think the Inuttitut language in Nunatsiavut is changing or not?

☐Yes ☐No ☐I don't know

What type of changes do you see? \_\_\_\_\_

- If the response to question 97 is (no) or (I don't know), jump to question 99.



98. If yes, what do you think about these changes?
- ☐Very good      ☐good      ☐neither good nor bad      ☐bad      ☐very bad
99. Do you think the Inuttitut spoken by young people is different from elders' speech?
- ☐Yes      ☐No      ☐I don't know
- **If the response to question 99 is (no) or (I don't know), jump to question 101.**
100. If yes, does this change concern you?
- ☐Yes      ☐somewhat      ☐no
101. Do you think that, in the next generation (the generation that has not been born yet), Inuttitut will be spoken:
- |                     |          |
|---------------------|----------|
| ❖ In your family?   | Yes / No |
| ❖ In the community? | Yes / No |
| ❖ In Nunatsiavut?   | Yes / No |
102. How important is it for your children to speak Inuttitut? [Not read or write]
- ☐Very important      ☐important      ☐neither important nor unimportant  
☐not really important      ☐not at all important
103. Do you think it is important to speak English well?
- ☐Very important      ☐important      ☐neither important nor unimportant  
☐not really important      ☐not at all important
104. Do you think it is important for children to speak English well?
- ☐Very important      ☐important      ☐neither important nor unimportant  
☐not really important      ☐not at all important
105. In your opinion, which language is most important for an Inuk person?
- ☐Especially Inuttitut      ☐especially English      ☐both equally

106. If you think that it is important to know how to speak English, what are your reasons? (Check all that apply.)
- a. ☐ To be more successful at school/work
  - b. ☐ To make English-speaking friends
  - c. ☐ To find a job more easily
  - d. ☐ To better understand non-Inuit culture
  - e. ☐ To have a better education
  - f. ☐ To have better access to services/information, e.g. health care
  - g. ☐ Other (specify):
107. True or False? You can live successfully without speaking English.
- ☐ Definitely true      ☐ fairly true      ☐ neither true nor false  
☐ fairly false      ☐ definitely false
108. Do you agree or disagree: It is necessary that non-Inuit people who live in and/or visit Nunatsiavut make an effort to learn Inuttitut.
- ☐ Completely agree      ☐ agree somewhat      ☐ neither agree nor disagree  
☐ disagree somewhat      ☐ completely disagree
109. True or False? We speak Inuttitut here in this community and it will always be that way.
- ☐ Definitely true      ☐ fairly true      ☐ neither true nor false  
☐ fairly false      ☐ definitely false
110. Some Inuit tend to mix Inuttitut and English. What do you think of this way of speaking?
- ☐ Completely acceptable      ☐ somewhat acceptable      ☐ neither acceptable nor unacceptable  
☐ somewhat unacceptable      ☐ completely unacceptable
111. In your opinion, which people tend to mix Inuttitut and English the most?
- a. ☐ Elders (60 + years)
  - b. ☐ Older adults (36 – 59 years)
  - c. ☐ Young adults (19 – 35 years)
  - d. ☐ Teenagers (12 – 18 years)
  - e. ☐ Children (under 12 years)

112. In your opinion, which people tend to mix Inuttitut and English the least?

- a. ☐Elders (60 + years)
- b. ☐Older adults (36 – 59 years)
- c. ☐Young adults (19 – 35 years)
- d. ☐Teenagers (12 – 18 years)
- e. ☐Children (under 12 years)

#### Attitudes to school

113. Do you agree or disagree: School is the best place to safeguard the Inuttitut language?

- ☐Completely agree    ☐agree somewhat    ☐neither agree nor disagree  
☐disagree somewhat    ☐completely disagree

If not, where? \_\_\_\_\_

114. Do you agree or disagree: Inuttitut should be used in school more often?

- ☐Completely agree    ☐agree somewhat    ☐neither agree nor disagree  
☐disagree somewhat    ☐completely disagree

115. Do you agree or disagree: Inuttitut should be used in school less often.

- ☐Completely agree    ☐agree somewhat    ☐neither agree nor disagree  
☐disagree somewhat    ☐completely disagree

116. Do you agree or disagree: It is better for children to begin their education in their first language rather than in their second language?

- ☐Completely agree    ☐agree somewhat    ☐neither agree nor disagree  
☐disagree somewhat    ☐completely disagree

117. Do you agree or disagree: To help children succeed at school, you must speak English at home from time to time?

- ☐Completely agree    ☐agree somewhat    ☐neither agree nor disagree  
☐disagree somewhat    ☐completely disagree

118. Is the best place for children to learn English a bilingual school or an English-only school?

- ☐Bilingual school                      ☐English-only school



119. File number:

120. Gender: Male / Female

121. Age: \_\_\_\_\_ 25 or under 26-30 31-35 36-40 41-45 46-50 51-55 56-60  
61-65 66-70 71-75 75 or older

122. Occupation:  
What do you work at?

**LIST TO BE USED BY INTERVIEWER ONLY – DO NOT READ TO PARTICIPANT**

- a. ☐ hunter
- b. ☐ homemaker
- c. ☐ seasonal worker
- d. ☐ businessperson
- e. ☐ manual labour in community
- f. ☐ manual labour outside community
- g. ☐ office worker in community
- h. ☐ office worker outside community
- i. ☐ teacher
- j. ☐ human services worker (with children/adults)
- k. ☐ home care worker
- l. ☐ unemployed
- m. ☐ other

123. Level of education:  
Did you go to school? If so, what was the highest grade you finished?

**OR Fill beforehand if known, make list for interviewer**

- a. ☐ never in school
- b. ☐ began primary / elementary
- c. ☐ finished primary / elementary
- d. ☐ began high school
- e. ☐ finished high school
- f. ☐ began training
- g. ☐ finished training
- h. ☐ began university
- i. ☐ finished university
- j. ☐ do not know

124. How many people live in your house? \_\_\_\_\_

- a. ☐ parents
- b. ☐ grandparents
- c. ☐ children
- d. ☐ older brothers and sisters
- e. ☐ younger brothers and sisters
- f. ☐ others

Of these people, does anyone speak Inuttitut regularly at home? If yes, who?

➤ **Interviewer: if you know the answer, just fill it in for question 125 and 126.**

125. Do you have children? (Circle one.) Yes / No  
If so, how many? \_\_\_\_\_

126. Do you have a partner? (Circle one.) Yes / No

127. How many hours per week do you watch TV? \_\_\_\_\_

128. How many hours per week do you listen to OKâlaKatiget radio? \_\_\_\_\_

129. How many hours per week do you listen to CBC radio? \_\_\_\_\_

130. Do you have access to the Internet at home / at work? Yes / No  
(If yes, circle one or both above.)

Anywhere else?

131. Do you speak any languages other than Inuttitut and English? If yes, which ones? \_\_\_\_\_

132. Does/did your mother speak Inuttitut? Yes / No / I don't know

133. Does/did your father speak Inuttitut? Yes / No / I don't know

134. Do/did any of your grandparents speak Inuttitut? Yes / No / I don't know

135. Where were you born?

136. Where did you grow up?

137. Have you ever lived outside Nunatsiavut? If yes, where and for how long?

## APPENDIX B: MAP OF NUNATSIAVUT

