

Lesson 2:3

Core concept: **SILENCE**.

Since we've mentioned quantities, and took that thought farther by going negative, let's extend it to the times when Northern Chinook Jargon lets us say nothing at all.

This is one of the many Indigenous features of how Chinook Jargon works. Quite a few of the Native languages that are the ancestors of CJ have perfected very efficient ways of expressing certain things – and the least effort possible is to stay silent.

We're going to show the Jargon's **SILENT** synonyms with the symbol "Ø". When you see Ø, don't say anything at all.

But, take note: as easy as it is to pronounce perfectly, *Ø is not a pause!* Don't devote any time to Ø. Minimize. Even one second of silence would mean you were putting in just as much effort as saying an actual word.

So another way to describe our Ø is, it just means to skip on to the next word. A sentence like:

Naika mitlait Ø Vankoova
("I'm **in** Vancouver")

sounds like 3 words in Chinook, not like:

~**Naika mitlait** (*pause*) **Vankoova**~

...which would take just as long to say as 4 Chinook words would.

Half a dozen of the most useful grammar tools have **SILENT** versions:

1. Ø "at, in, on", etc. versus **kopa**;
2. Ø "that (*something happened*)" versus **poos**;
3. Ø "it/some", etc. versus **yaka/tlaska**;
4. Ø "be at" versus **mitlait/stop**
5. Ø "and/or" versus **pi**,
6. (*after a motion verb*:)
Ø "for" versus **kopa/poos**.

Let's go over each of these now!

#1 SILENT "at/in/on", etc.

The word for "at, in, on" and almost all preposition-type meanings is **kopa**, for example being used 4 different ways here:

Naika ... mamook-tz'um peipa kopa maika Lejun, kopa maika chikamin kopa
I ... make-write letter to you Le.Jeune, about your money for
“I’m ... writing a letter to you, Le Jeune, about your money for”

Kamloops Wawa peipa kopa 1898.
“Kamloops Wawa” newspaper from 1898.
“the Kamloops Wawa newspaper from 1898.”
-- Johnny Louie, location unknown, BC

Now, even though there is a SILENT version of **kopa**, you can’t actually do without all of those **kopa**’s, all at once. The sentence you’ve just read would be nonsense if you did that!

So let’s get a feeling for when you can leave out **kopa**...there are 2 main tricks.

When you’re talking about *being located someplace*, you can use **Ø** instead of **kopa**. In other words, you can swap **kopa** in for each of the **Ø**’s in these next 2 examples, and it would mean exactly the same:

Alta naika mitlait Ø Kaniim-Leik ilahi.
now I be.there at Canim Lake village
“Now I am at Canim Lake Reserve.”
-- Johnny Harris, Canim Lake, BC

Maika mamook-kumtuks kopa naika... Ø kah-ilahi maika mitlait.
you make-know to me... at where-village you be
“Let me know...which village you’ll be at.” (at which village you’ll be)
-- Andrew Thomas, Sahhalkum, BC

And speaking of locations, you can also use **Ø** instead of **kopa** when you’re expressing motion, *going someplace*, like “come to” and “get to”. Again, if you switched **kopa** in for the **Ø**’s here, it would have precisely the same meaning:

Chhi naika chako Ø yakwa-ilahi.
just.now I come to here-place
“I’ve just come to this place here.”
-- William Pierriche, Wilmer, BC

Heilo-ikta syutsum tl’ap kopa yawa Ø Klinton.
no-kind.of news arrives at there to Clinton
“No kind of news reaches over there to Clinton.”
-- Johnny Peter, Clinton, BC

#2 SILENT “that (something happened)”

This SILENT version works in a little different way than what we’ve just been discussing. It’s not optional. When you’re talking Chinook, and saying the equivalent of “I knew” or “said” *that* something *really* happened, you always have to use a SILENT “that”. If you don’t, you always have to use **poos**, which has a very different meaning of “*supposedly*” or “*might*” happen. Let’s show examples of each, to make this clear. First, with “knowing” (**kumtuks**)...

Maika kumtuks Ø haiyoo sno alta.
you know that lots.of snow now
“You know **that** there’s lots of snow now.”
-- Chief Narcisse, Salmon Arm, BC

Wel yawa, naika chako-kumtuks poos okok peipa yaka til-mamook.
well then, I come.to-know whether this writing “it” heavy-work
“Well then, I’ve learned what kind of rough business this writing is.” (speaking ironically)
– Peter Cole, Barkerville, BC

The same idea applies with differences such as “being sad” that something really did occur, versus “being afraid” that something might happen:

Yaka sik-tumtum Ø heilo yaka lahanchoot.
she hurt-heart that not she confess
“She’s upset **that** she didn’t confess.”
-- Chief Andrew, Chu Chua, BC

Tloosh maika heilo k’wash poos heilo maika tl’ap maika chikamin.
good you not afraid whether not you receive your money
“Don’t be afraid **that** you **might** not receive your money.”
-- Baptiste Simon, Little (Shuswap?) Lake, BC

Now, with “saying/telling/asking” a fact versus a possibility:

Taiyi Jimi... wawa Ø heilo tloosh, okok peipa.
chief Jimmy...say that not good, that newspaper
“Chief Jimmy...says **that** that newspaper isn’t any good.” (there’s no doubt in his mind)
-- Johnny Louis, location unknown, BC

Pi naika wawa poos maika patlach iht sno peipa kopa naika.
and I say might you give one year newspaper to me
“And I asked **if** you **would** give me a year of the newspaper.”
-- Patrick Felix, Cayoosh Creek, BC

This last **poos** example is also how we express “asked you to...” and “told you to...” You have to pick up the clues about exactly what’s meant when someone uses this phrase, **wawa poos**.

#3 SILENT “it/some/any”, etc.

This SILENT version is another mandatory one, not an optional choice like #1 (“at/in/on”) was. The idea here is about pronouns. Living beings -- people, animals, spirits, God, and so on -- take the pronoun **yaka** “she/he”. There’s no gender in this language, so just this one word **yaka** is enough for everybody.

Naika brotha yaka tikki Chinook peipa kopa maika.

my brother he want Chinook paper from you

“My brother wants the Chinook newspaper from you.”

-- August Andrew, Spuzzum, BC

Yaka tlatawa swim kopa kreek.

she go swim in creek

“She went swimming in the creek.”

-- Chief Emile Timaskrit, Canim Lake

And, due to having a strong Indigenous heritage, Northern Chinook Jargon is also happy using yaka to mean “they”, when you’re talking about more than one person, etc.:

Abel pi wuht yaka tloochman...naika patlach skookum lapelitaas kopa yaka.

Abel and also his wife... I give strong punishment to them.

“About Abel and also his wife...I’ve given a harsh punishment to them.”

-- Anonymous, BC

However, **yaka** is normally *only* for living beings. So, when you’re talking about “it” or “they” or “some (of it/them)”, including the dead body of a person or animal, you instead use **Ø**, the SILENT “it/some/any”:

Huloima weik tlaska tikki Ø alta.

other not they want it now

“The others don’t want it now.”

-- Johnny Louie, location unknown, BC

Pi nesaika lolo Ø kopa mimaloos-ilahi.

and we bring it to dead.people-place

“Then we brought her (dead body) to the cemetery.”

-- Mary Pete, Deep Creek, BC

Naika heilo mitlait Ø.

I not have any.

“I don’t have any.”

-- Andrew Jules, Sahhalkum, BC

Tl'oonas- ikta-mamook saiyaa (Ø).
gosh.knows-why far it
“Gosh knows why **it**'s so far.”
-- Joe, Canim Lake, BC

#4 SILENT “be at”

Another totally optional, and less common, SILENT synonym is for the verb “be at” / “be there”, **mitlait**.

O, dleit haiyoo hum-bak samon Ø kopa nesaika kreek.
oh, really lots.of hump-back salmon be.there in our creek
“Oh, **there's** really lots of humpback salmon in our creek.”
-- Patrick Felix, Neskonlith, BC

Heilo lepleit Ø poos wash okok tanaas.
none priest be.there in.order.to wash that child
“There **wasn't** a priest **there** to baptize that child.”
-- William Waspulawh, Canoe Creek, BC

Let's mention that you can't use a SILENT synonym for **mitlait** when that word means “to have”!

#5 SILENT “and/or”

One SILENT synonym that's very typical of Northern Chinook Jargon can mean either “and” or “or”. It's optional to substitute this Ø for **pi**, but it's common when you're talking about pairs (or bigger sets!) of things that go together naturally, like “feet and hands” or “dad and mom”:

Iht man, mimaloos yaka lipyei Ø yaka limaa, nanich yaka.
one man, dead his foot and his hand, see him
“A man whose feet **and** hands were crippled saw him.”
-- Kamloops Wawa #147

Yaka mash yaka papa Ø yaka mama Ø kanawei-ikta yaka tikki kopa okok ilahi.
he leave his father and his mother and every-thing he love in that country
“He left his dad **and** mum **and** everything he loved in that country.”
-- Yves Le Jeune, Liège, Belgium

#6 SILENT “for”

This last SILENT synonym is another one that's mandatory. You have to use Ø to mean “for” when you're talking about any movement that's “for” the purpose of doing something. Got that? A motion verb gets joined to the purpose of that motion by using Ø:

Tloosh maika tlatawa Ø mamook-st'iwí'etl.
good you go in.order.to make-prayer
“Go pray.”

-- William Celestin, Salmon Arm, BC

Chako Ø patlach kopa naika tanas-book.
come in.order.to give to me little-book
“Come (here to) give me some booklets.”

-- Baptiste Simon, Little (Shuswap) Lake, BC

In all other circumstances, “for the purpose of” / “in order to” is expressed by **poos**, like here:

Naika haiyas-tumtum poos maika mamook kanawei st'iwí'etl kopa iht book.
I big-heart so.that you put all prayer in one book
“I really hope for you to put all the prayers in one book.”

-- William Waspulawh, Canoe Creek, BC

Naika tilihum heilo patlach tanas chikamin poos help kopa naika.
my people not give bit.of money in.order.to be.helpful to me
“My people don't give me any spare change to help me out.”

-- William Celestin, Salmon Arm, BC

Exercises 2:3

Now you've learned 6 different SILENT synonyms for some of the most common words in Northern Chinook Jargon. We think you understand the idea. Now, translate these sentences from real speakers, figuring out which Ø each one is using:

1 **Naika tikki st'iwí'etl Ø Sundei-hous.**

I want pray Ø church

-- William Celestin, Salmon Arm, BC

2 **Poos naika kumtuks Ø iht man mitlait tanas chikamin...**

if I know Ø some person has little.bit money

-- William Waspulawh, Canoe Creek, BC

3 **Chako Ø patlach kopa naika tanas-book.**

come.here Ø give to me little-book

-- Baptiste Simon, Little (Shuswap) Lake, BC

4 **...kanawei-ikta: kateshisim Ø kanawei shanti...**

every-thing: catechism Ø every song

-- Johnny Baptiste Dennis, Sechelt, BC

- 5 **Poos maika Ø kopa yakwaa...**
when you Ø over here...
 -- Charlie Frye, North Bend, BC
- 6 **Kopa okok, maika patlach Ø kopa yaka.**
by(doing) this, you send Ø to him
 -- Etienne, Salmon Arm/Shuswap, BC
- 7 **Tlaska haiyas-tikki Ø.**
they love Ø
 -- Basil Paho, Camp 16, BC
- 8 **Naika tlatawa kopa Biva-Leik Ø kopa Hos-Flai.**
I go to Beaver-Lake Ø to Horsefly
 -- Michel, Soda Creek, BC
- 9 **Naika stop Ø Samon-Am alta.**
I be.there Ø Salmon-Arm now
 -- Chief Narcisse, Salmon Arm, BC
- 10 **Naika mamook-peipa Ø maika.**
I write Ø you
 -- William Andrew, Head of the Lake, BC
- 11 **Jool yaka wawa Ø lesevek yaka patlach lipleit kopa nsaika.**
Jules he say Ø bishop he give priest to us
 -- Jean-Baptiste, Sahhalkum, BC
- 12 **Tloosh masaika mash tlaska neim kopa okok peipa, haiyas man Ø tanas man.**
good.that you.folks send their name to this newspaper, grown man Ø young man
 -- Kamloops Wawa #120[a]
- 13 **Naika Ø kopa Nikola.**
I Ø at Nicola.
 -- Jamie Michell, Nicola, BC
- 14 **Tl'oonas yaka tlatawa Ø nanich maika.**
maybe she go.there Ø see you
 -- Johnny Peter, Clinton, BC
- 15 **Poos Ø kopitt, nsaika wawa.**
when Ø done, we talk.
 -- Joe(?), found on a tree stump at Cadwallader Creek, BC

Tips for Southern speakers 2:3

Most of the SILENT synonyms are also traditionally known in the Southern Dialect, but just aren't used as often as we use them. Silent "and" seems more like just a Northern thing, though.

About “have”: there’s no such word as the Southern CJ *t’ú?an* in the North. Instead, we use the verb **mitlait**, as in:

Naika mitlait haiyas book.

I have big book

“I have the big book.”

-- William Waspulawh, Canoe Creek, BC

Sometimes in the North, people also use the verb **stop** for “have”:

Heilo naika stop tanas chikamin poos patlach kopa maika.

not I have little.bit money in.order.to give to you

“I don’t have even a bit of money to give to you.”

-- William Waspulawh, Canoe Creek, BC

The South doesn’t know **stop** at all.

Aside from the idea of “having”, both dialects use **mitlait** in mostly similar ways, like “being located” somewhere, and “there is” this-or-that.

And even in the Southern Dialect, you can use ***mifayt*** for ‘have’, even though it’s less common there.

One last comment about this: in the North, we don’t say things like **“I have a question”**, with “have” plus a noun for “question”. Instead, what’s normal is to say “I want to ask” (**Naika tikki wawa... / Naika tikki ask...**) or “I want to know” something (**Naika tikki kumtuks...**).

Poos is equivalent to Southern CJ **pus**, but in the North it’s only used with a following *verb* as the purpose; it’s not used to express “for” a noun or adverb – we use **kopa** instead. Compare:

<i>Southern CJ</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>Northern CJ</i>
pus mayka	“for you”	kopa naika
pus dála	“for money”	kopa tala
pus k ^h óltəs	“for nothing; for no good reason”	kopa kultus (or just kultus!)
pus kwánsəm	“forever: for always”	kopa kwanisum