

Lesson 2:5

Core concept: **PRONOUNS** don't work like they do in English.

Every language has a way to refer to “I”, “you”, “she”/“he”/“it”, “we”, “you guys”, and “they”. These and similar words are the pronouns.

But, each language uses its pronouns in unique ways.

For example, where English has different forms (like **I** versus **me** versus **my** versus **my place**) depending on the function of the pronoun, all dialects of Chinook Jargon just use the same pronoun word, so all 3 of those English forms are expressed by **naika** in CJ. (To express “at my place” we just say **kopa naika**.)

Now, let's get you acquainted with some of the other special ways Northern Chinook Jargon uses the pronouns it has!

1. Repeating an “I” subject

For the “I” subject of a sentence, some fluent Northern CJ speakers like to repeat the pronoun **naika**. (This comes from an Indigenous habit.) Examples of this, which mainly happens in statements (hardly ever in questions):

Naika heilo sik **naika** tumtum.

I not hurting my heart

“I’m not upset.”

-- Baptiste, Shuswap, BC

Kakwa, naika weik-kata **naika** tlatawa poos maika chako aiyak.

so, I can't I go.there if you come.here soon

“So I can't go there if you come here soon.”

-- Chief Narcisse, Salmon Arm, BC

Some Northern speakers even repeat other subjects than “I”, but that's not frequent.

2. The plural “you”, masaika

There are 2 different words for “you” in Chinook Jargon. So you say **maika** (*you singular (SG)*) when you're just talking to one person, but you have to say **masaika** (*you plural*) when you really mean “you guys”, “you folks”, “y'all”, etc. This habit comes from Indigenous languages, as well as Canadian/Métis French.

Poos naika mimaloos, masaika heilo haiyoo wawa kultus!

when I die, you.folks not a.lot talk mean

“When I die, don’t you folks go talking mean about me!”

-- William Andrew, Head Lake, BC

Maika kumtuks, heilo naika tumtum, pi naika tlatawa nanich masaika lesevek.

you.SG know, not my idea, but I go see you.folks’ bishop

“You know, it wasn’t my idea, but I visited you guys’ bishop.”

-- Jean-Baptiste, Sahhalkum, BC

3. Plural yaka

Something that’s found in every dialect of Chinook Jargon, but is especially strong in the Northern Dialect, is the use of **yaka** (normally meaning “she / he”) as a plural, “they”. It’s an Indigenous habit, originally from the Salish languages. This is usually very easy to understand when someone says it...

Haiyoo tilihum tlatawa Ø Kamloops; naika heilo kumtuks poos-kata yaka mamook Ø.

lots.of people go to Kamloops; I not know how YAKA do it

“Lots of folks will be going to Kamloops; I don’t know how they’ll do it.”

-- Johnny Peter, Clinton, BC

Okok steem-kaa wik-kata yaka stop aiyak.

those train cannot YAKA stop fast

“Those trains, they can’t stop very fast.”

-- Kamloops Wawa #17[b]

4. Sometimes “it” can be yaka

Less common is the use of **yaka** to refer to something that’s not alive. That is, sometimes speakers say “it” by using **yaka**. Usually this is done by people who also know English or French. We recommend not doing this very much, but you should make sure you understand when people talk this way:

Nesaika gavmin yaka mamook-pait.

our government “it” make-battle

“Our government has made wars.”

-- CM Buchanan, Seattle, WA

Paiya-ch’ikch’ik yaka aiyak-kooli kopa tanas-stik.

train “it” run in bush

“The train runs in the bush.”

-- Edward Clayson, Sr., in Vancouver, BC

5. Silent “it/some/etc.” (Ø)

You’ve already met up with one of the most Indigenous things about Chinook Jargon, the “silent pronoun” Ø. Let’s just remind you of it now. This pronoun is how you express “it”, “some (of it)”, and even “them” when you mean non-living things:

...pi haiyoo tilihum hunt tikki nanich Ø.

...and lots of people hunt want see it

“...and lots of people went looking hoping to find it (her corpse).”

-- Emile Timaskrit, Canim Lake, BC

Yaka aiyak mash Ø kopa trein pi Ø aiyak chako kopa iht polakli.

he immediately put it on train and it fast come in one night

“He’ll put it (salmon) right on the train, and it’ll show up quick overnight.”

-- Kamloops Wawa #78

6. “Do/say/think” kakwa

One kind of sentence where you don’t use a pronoun in Chinook Jargon, even if you’re used to using one in English, is “doing”, “saying”, or “thinking” THIS or THAT. Instead, those expressions in CJ use the adverb **kakwa** (“like that / like this / that way / this way”, etc).

Pi wuht naika mamook kakwa kopa maika.

and also I do KAKWA for you

“And I’ll do that for you, too.”

-- William Waspulawh, Canoe Creek, BC

Yaka wawa kakwa kopa ipsoot.

he say KAKWA in secret

“He said that in secret.”

-- Frank McKay, North Bend, BC

Haiyas-leili yaka tumtum kakwa.

very-long.time she think KAKWA

“She’s thought that for a really long time.”

-- Louis James, Spuzzum, BC

7. “Another” is iht

Another very Indigenous part of Chinook Jargon is its tendency to use the word for “one” (**iht**) when we want to express “another” / “another one”. (This comes from the Salish languages.) Here’s one long example showing you how this works!

Kopa iht peipa yaka mitlait naika neim,
on one letter "it" have my name,
"On one letter it's got my name,"

pi kopa iht peipa yaka mitlait Etien yaka neim,
and on one letter "it" have Etienne his name,
"and on another letter it's got Etienne's name,"

pi kopa iht, yaka mitlait Batist yaka neim.
and on one, "it" have Baptiste his name
"and on another, it's got Baptiste's name."
-- William Celestin, Salmon Arm, BC

As a result, there really isn't any word that *just* means "another". You may hear some folks trying to use **huloima**, but that actually means "different/differently" and "strange/strangely"! Here's a neat example of the difference between **ih**t and **huloima**:

Iht ilahi iht wawa mitlait, pi iht ilahi iht wawa;
one country one language have, and one country one language;
"One country, there's one language that it has, and another country, another language;"

kanawi-kah tilihum huloima wawa alta.
everywhere people different talk now
"people all over the world are (speakers of) different languages now."
-- Hyacinthe, Neskonlith, BC

8. Okok... vs. ikta... in relative clauses

In relative clauses like "what I said", where the speaker *already knows* what that thing was, the "what" is expressed by **okok** (which is literally "this/that"):

Poos-ikta maika tumtum kopa okok naika wawa?
what you think about this I say
"What do you think of what I'm saying?"
-- August, Enderby, BC

Chhi-alta nesaika kumtuks Chinook peipa, kakwa heilo tl'iminwhit okok nesaika wawa.
just now we know Chinook writing, so not lies this we say
"We're just now knowing Chinook Writing, so it's not lies, what we say."
-- John the policeman, Lillooet, BC

But when the speaker *doesn't* already know what that thing was, the "what" is **ikta** (which is in fact is the word for "what" or "the thing"):

Tl'oonas taiyi Lio syutsum ikta yaka wawa.
maybe chief Leon tell what "they" say
"I reckon Chief Leon will tell about whatever they said."
-- Hyacinthe, Neskonlith, BC

Naika nanich kopa peipa kanawei-ikta...yaka wawa pi kanawei-ikta yaka mamook.
I read in paper everything he say and everything he do
"I'm reading in the paper everything he said and everything he did."
(all of what he said and all of what he did)
-- Emile Timaskrit, Canim Lake, BC

Exercises 2:5

Okay, now you can use what you've learned about the special ways we use Northern Chinook Jargon pronouns to figure out the meanings of these sentences...

- 1 **Kopitt naika wawa kopa maika...pi iht naika syutsum maika.**
finished my talking to you... but one I tell you
-- August, Enderby, BC
- 2 **Yaka tumtum kakwa.**
he think KAKWA
-- Jean-Baptiste, Sahhalkum, BC
- 3 **Boston wawa naika, Sawash kwanisum kapshwala yaka iktas Ø yaka lahash.**
Whites tell me, Natives always steal YAKA property and YAKA axe
-- Mike Simmons at the Treaty of Point Elliott negotiations, WA
- 4 **Alta naika chako-kumtuks masaika tumtum kopa okok nesaika mamook.**
now I find.out you.folks' thought about this we do
-- Chief Narcisse, Shuswap, BC
- 5 **Naika mamook-kumtuks kopa maika poos-ikta tlaska wawa kopa naika.**
I inform to you what they say to me
-- Peter Cole, Fountain, BC
- 6 **Naika haiyas-tikki tlatawa kopa masaika.**
I very-want go to you.folks'.place
-- Etienne Shilhowtkin, Shuswap, BC
- 7 **Alta naika iskum maika sik pi maika nanich Ø.**
now I grab your sickness and.then you see Ø
-- Doctor Tom, southwest Vancouver Island, BC

- 8 **Alta naika skookum naika tumtum.**
now I strong my heart
 -- William Andrew, Head Lake, BC
- 9 **Okok shal, tloon sun kopitt, yaka chako-dlai.**
that shawl, three day later, "it" get-dry
 -- Chief Qualicum, Nanaimo, BC
- 10 **Patlach Ø wuht!**
give Ø more
 -- George Gibbs, Fort Vancouver, WA
- 11 **Yaka wawa poos nesaika heilo kooli kopa Sundi, pi nesaika mamook kakwa.**
he say for us not travel on Sunday and we do KAKWA
 -- Charlie Frye, North Bend, BC
- 12 **Tl'oonas atlki naika haiyoo naika kumtuks Shooshwap-wawa.**
maybe some.day I much I understand Secwépemc-language
 -- William Celestin, Salmon Arm, BC
- 13 **...pi yawa masaika haiyoo mukmuk mitlait kopa masaika tanaas.**
...and then you.folks lots.of food have for you.folks' children
 -- William Waspulawh, Canoe Creek, BC
- 14 *(Asking At-wine if the boys were still alive; he said:)*
"Yaka haiyoo pait."
YAKA much fight
 -- At-wine, Yakima, WA
- 15 **Yaka wawa kakwa kopa naika okok-sun.**
he say KAKWA to me today
 -- Peter Cole, Lillooet, BC
- 16 **Pi wuht...Tk'op-man tlaska mamook iht haiyas dam kopa iht kreek.**
but also...white-man they make one big dam on one creek
 -- Patrick Felix, Neskonlith, BC
- 17 **Yaka tz'um-peipa ankati yaka tolo naika kopa kanawei-ikta.**
his writing back.then "it" beat me in every-way
 -- Charles Ross, Puyallup, WA
- 18 **Poos-kantzih chikamin Ø?**
how.much money Ø
 -- Captain, High Bar, BC

Tips for Southern speakers 2:5

The Northern Dialect doesn't have any shortened pronouns, so these Southern words...

- ***nay/na*** 'I'
- ***may/ma*** 'you'
- ***ya*** 'she/he'
- ***nsay/nsa/sayka*** 'we'
- ***msay/msa*** 'you folks'
- ***tlas*** 'they'

...won't be well understood in the north. We just use...

- **naika** 'I'
- **maika** 'you'
- **yaka** 'she/he'
- **nesaika** 'we'
- **masaika** 'you folks'
- **tlaska** 'they'

...which every Southern speaker also understands perfectly.

Hey, the North doesn't have the longer form ***yaɣka***, either. Just **yaka**, same as in the Southern dialect.

It's important to know that Southern & Northern *do both have* all of these:

- plural **yaka** (especially among Indigenous speakers),
- and lots of silent "it/some/etc." (Ø),
- and "do/say/think" **kakwa**,
- and also **iht** meaning "another" (spelled ***íxt*** in the south).

In relative clauses, the South almost exclusively uses **ikta**, and hardly ever **okok** (spelled ***úkuk*** in the south). So you're way more likely in the Southern dialect to say things like:

nayka munk-nánich mayka ikta nayka múnk
(for "I'll show you what I made"),

contrasting with Northern: **Naika mamook-nanich maika okok naika mamook.**

In the South, you can go ahead and repeat just about any pronoun, but...then it has a specific effect of throwing a *strong focus* onto that person. So the Southern version of one of our examples above,

nayka wík sík nayka támtəm

(for “I’m not upset”),

has more of a sense of “Hey, as for me, I’m not upset.” The Northern pronoun repetition doesn’t bring in an emphasis like that.