Weweni Nd’nisidotami Ezhi-Anishinaabebiigeyaang—Carefully We Understand How We Write Anishinaabemowin

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Nindan ikidowinan n’gii zhibiiamaw’ag nokomisinanigba miinwaa nnishomisinanigba miinwaa nijansinanig wii bmosewaad waaban.  
These words I wrote for our grandmothers and grandfathers who are gone and the children who will walk tomorrow.

Zaam noongo e-Anishinaabemjig dabaadaamaagwa, gii nitaam-Anishinaabebiigeyaanh.  
Because I am talking about those who use the Anishinaabe language today, I wrote first in Anishinaabemwin.

N’gii Zhaaganaashi-biige name. Debwe-edamying ikidowinan eta name gaa Anishinaabe-biianayaanh.  
I wrote English below. Only the true meaning of the words to us I wrote them below.

It does not really sound good all the time. I did not use elegant English.

N’bagosendam daa bishigendamiig oshme nitaat gekinomaagemiig.  
I am hopeful that yous will like it and lean more this way.

Gishpin weweni giindaamiieg wii nsostaamiig gaawiin tesiinon enewe-gego maampii.  
If you read carefully, you will understand these words are more than linguistic artifacts.

Mii maanda ezhi enendamoyaang Anishinaabemong.  
This is Anishinaabe epistemology.
WeNi N d’NisidotaMi ezhi-aNishiNaabebiigeyaaNg Anishinaabe-adisookananig naadamaawiyangidwa ji-nsostaayaang wii mino-bimaadiziyaang.

*This is why Anishinaabe literature helps us understand how to live well.*

Boochigwa nitaAnishinaabemoyaang ji-nsostam Anishinaabe inaadiziwin, Niswi-Shkode-Bimaadzijig.

*It is necessary to speak Anishinaabemowin well to understand who we are as Anishinaabe, the People of the Three Fires.*

Pane n’gagwejimdizo’mi, wenesh ezhitchiwebag, awenen ezhchiged?

*Always we are asking ourselves, what is happening, who is doing?*

Nookaaznamnid ezhichige-ikidowinan oshme pii gego-goya-ikidowinan.

*We use doing words more than someone or something words.*

Nd’anchtoonaan ikidowinan ji-debwedibaajimawyaang.

*We change words to tell stories and make them true.*

Mii sa geyabi ezhi-enendamoyaang noongwa pii kina goya niizh-eneeweyaang.

*This is still how we think today when everyone is bi-lingual.*

Nd’nsostanaa waabamayaang miinwaa enendamoyaang bebkan igo.

*We understand, we see, and we think differently.*

Mii sa ezhi-waamjige geyabi daa zhaabwitooyang pane igo.

*This way of seeing still is what must be saved forever.*

Robert Warrior gii kido:

*Robert Warrior has said:*

“Ezhi-zhibiigeying miinwaa ezhi-enendamoying wiiptan aanjisemigag. Aanawi mii maanda danewaa enendamowin gaa’iin maashi giizhichigaademagadsiinon.”

“The literary and intellectual witness of Native people in education is vast and growing. Yet this is a discourse that remains distressingly underdeveloped.”¹

Kina gego wewiipi-aanjitoonaan sa gwa.

*Everything quickly is changing very much.*

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¹ Warrior (2003:139).
Robert Dale Parker gii kido gaye:

*Robert Dale Parker says also:*

“Shki-Anishinaabe-biigewin gii bi dagooshin . . . Shki-Anishinaabe-bii-
gem-jig shki-biigewaad aabdeg sa gwa.”

“Indian literature seems to us to have reached a threshold . . . Indi-
an writers of course are indeed remaking the old and forging the
new. . . .”


Mii sa gwa aanii dash kinomaageyaang Anishinaabemowin noongo.

*This is why we must teach the Anishinaabe language today.*

Niizhwak-shi-nisimdana Anishinaabe-newewinan maampii Kchimookiman-
kiing.

*Two hundred and thirty Indigenous languages are spoken here in
America.*

Geyeg ge-shkiitoojig geyabi wii giigidoowaad epiichi jaaganewag igo giinwa.

*Those who are able still to speak now are dying off.*

Shkwaa midaaswi ensa boonigag swi igo eta geyabi daa tenon Anishinaabe-newewinan.

*In ten years three only will be the indigenous languages spoken.*

Bebikaan bemaadzijig daa zhagaabwiwag wii zhaabwiitowaad maanda Anishinaabemowin.

*Each person differently they are standing, making decisions to save
this Anishinaabemowin.*

Aanind ge niinwi, nwiikajitonaa Kchikinomaagegamigong Michigan wii ankenmaageyaang maanda Anishinaabemowin.

*Some of us, we are trying at the University of Michigan to transfer
this Anishinaabe language.*

Zhitooyaang maanda Anishinaabemowin miinwaa enewewin naakiniigewin.

*We built the Anishinaabemowin voices and understanding ways of life
(language and literature program).*

E-shkimaadzijig nda’kinooamawananiig.

*The young people are being taught by us.*
So, it is necessary this that we do it, teach the Anishinaabe language, to save it we have to write it and speak it everywhere and everyday.

Maanda Anishinaabemowin Naakiniigewin Michigan gii maajtamigad midaaswi shi zhaangaaswi shi niizhwaasmidana ensa boonigag.

This Anishinaabemowin Program at Michigan it started in the 1970s.

Nanagodinong bimaadizijig nookaaznaawaa wi kidowin “Ojibwe” miinwaa mii sa naasap edamying.

Sometimes people use the word “Ojibwe” and really it has the same meaning as Anishinaabemowin.

Pane n’debwetawdizomi, aapchigwa niishiyang niigaan zijaajig daa aayaayaang.

Always we believe in ourselves, the best and the leaders we should be.

Mii igo mii maanda enji mashkoogaabwemigag mii maampii Kchimookman-kiing.

This really is now one of the strongest here in America.

Nd’nookaaznaan ACTFL nikeyad gagwedwinan ji’nosostaaminid wenen nitaa-Anishinaabemod.

We use the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages proficiency standards to know who speaks well.

Pii ezhichigeyaang debwemigad Anishinaabemowin dibishko kina bebkaan shki-enewewinan.

When we use this it is clear that Anishinaabemowin is like all the other modern languages.

Mbegwaa niizhwak shi naanimdana kinoomaagaazojig aayaawag maampii mii noongwa ji-nandagikendamowaad maanda Anishinaabemowin.

Right now two hundred and fifty are here as students of this Anishinaabe language.

Aaniind gondag daapnanaawaa maanda Anishinaabemowin zaam doogish-kaanaawaa Nishnaabewiwaad.

Some of these take this Anishinaabe language because they are some part Anishinaabe.
Aaniind ge gondag daapnanaawaa Anishnaabemowin wii gikendamowaad maampii Michigan gaa bi ezhiwebag.

Some of these take this Anishinaabe language to learn here in Michigan what happened.

Miinwaa aaniind daapnanaawaa wii giizhaapshkamowaad maanda ezhi-kinomwindaawaa.

And some of them take it to finish out their language requirements.

Ndo’Dengwe-Mazinagan-biige-mi, damnoyaang Niizhing-Bimaadiziwin Gwiingwa’aageg Miinising, kinomaagazojig Giinwaa-Mazinateschigan-keg.

We write on Facebook, we play in Second Life on Wolverine Island, students make Yous-Tubes.

Nd’saab-teg-ke’mi ezhinikaade ojibwe.net miinwaa ingo-boon zhaazhe gwa midaaswi-shi-niizhing-daaswak gii maawadishewaad.

A web place we made called ojibwe.net and in the time from one winter to the next already 12,000 have visited.

Maanda kchigaming enigog kaamigising geyabi ge gonemaa midaaching da aayaaawag gondag Anishinaabemjig.

Here in the great lakes there still are maybe ten thousand of these Anishinaabe speakers.

Kina goya kchi’nokiiwag ji-nandagikendanaawaa maanda Anishinaabemowin, ensa ikidowin, ensa enendamowin.

Everyone really works to understand this Anishinaabemowin, each word, each idea.

Gaawiin wiikaa Aanishinaabeg gaa nendasiinaawaa Anishinaabemowin daa maajaamigoba.

Not ever the Anishinabe people did they think the Anishinaabe language would leave.

Noongwa aapchi gwa nd’kchi -nookiitaanaa wii zhaabwiitooying maanda eneweying.

Today very much, very hard we work to save this way we sound.

Zhaazhe gwa gaa naakwaa binoojiinig gaa pa damnowaad kina igo gaa Anishinaabemowaad.

Long ago when children would play they all really did speak Anishinaabemowin.
Miinwa igo pii Anishinaabe gii bwaakenmaa’aad boochigwa gii zhoomingwenid zaam gii Anishinaabemtawaad.

And really when an Anishinaabe recognized someone there was a smile because they spoke Anishinaabe.

Aabdeg n’da wiindamooananig gaa ezhiwebag pii kinooamawangidwa Anishinaabemowin.

Now we have to tell what happened when we teach Anishinaabemowin.

Geyeg Anishinaabensag gii aayaawaad gaa enji-gaanaawenjigaazwaad wi pii.

Those young Anishinaabe were kept in a place locked up (a boarding school) in that time.

Aname-ininiwag miinwaa Aname-ikwewag, Zhaaganash-kiing miinwaa Kchimookiman-kiing Kinoomaagejig o’gii windamawawan gegwa debwetawdizoke.

The prayer-men and prayer-women, the Canadians and ones from the country of the Big Knives (the United States) told them not to believe in themselves.

Midaaswi-shi-shaaswi niizhwaasmidana-shi-naanan, zhimaaganish miinwaa Carlisle-kinoomagegamigong-ked ezhinkaazod Captain Pratt gii kidod “nisad Anishinaabe jizhaabwiimawad inini.”

In 1875 soldier and founder of Carlisle Boarding School, Richard Pratt said “kill the Indian to save the man.”

Gii gojitoowag ji-jaaginazh inaadiziwin, ezhi-enuewewin.

They did try to kill on purpose a way of living, a way of speaking.

Gonemaa waa bakinaagewag, gonemaa bakinaageyig.

Maybe they will win, maybe we will win.

Ishkwa-jaaginazh-ganagazid mii sa aabdeg daa nsostaawaad.

In the time after the killing (post colonial times) this history must be understood.

Vine Deloria Jr. gii kido:

*Vine Deloria Jr. has said:*

“Aabdeg g’da zhaabwitoonaan enewewinan naasap kina bebkanan enewewi-nan miinwaa ji-ni shpigaabowying.”

“The effort to preserve and revive the tribal traditions must be placed in the most significant intellectual context possible.”

Miidash noongwa nd’a’kinoomaage Anishinaabe-Aadizookaanag gii Anishinaabe-biigewaad.

*So today I teach Anishinaabe literature that was written in the Anishinaabe language.*

Nd’bebkanini-gindanmi Anishinaabe-kwe Jane Schoolcraft gii zhibiige-gamod pii nijansinan gii maajaawaad, midaaswi-shi-shwaaswi midaaswi-shi-naanan:

*Differently we can read Anishinaabe author Jane Schoolcraft who wrote-rhythmically when her children left (for boarding school) in 1815:*

*Nii’aa nd’enendam
(Oh I am thinking)*

*Mekawiyaaanh
(I am reminded)*

*Ednakiiyaanh
(Of my homeland)*

*Waasawekamig
(A faraway place)*

*Ednakiiyaanh
(Of my homeland)*

*N’daanisens e
(My little daughter)*

*N’gwizisens e
(My little son)*

*Ishe naganagwaa
(I leave them far behind)*

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Waasawekamig  
(A faraway place)

Ednakiyaanh  
(Of my homeland)\textsuperscript{5}

Wenesh gaa enendamod wa tkweman Henry Schoolcraft?  
\textit{What was she thinking, the wife of Henry Schoolcraft?}

Henry Schoolcraft gaawiin debwe-chipiitenimsiiad debendaagozijig.  
\textit{Henry Schoolcraft did not really respect the local people.}

Aanii dash tkweman, gashwan, ikwe gii nsostanaan swi enewewinan gegag-wa gii kchi-maawid nagamong?  
\textit{Why does this wife, mother, woman who understood three languages almost cry in this song?}

Zaam gaa nitaa-zhibiige, mashkozikidowinan kina da nosostanaawaan.  
\textit{Because she wrote well and her strong words can be understood by all.}

\textit{Or, we can read differently Pride and Prejudice which was written in 1797 and made into a book in 1813 while the British were still fast-arriving here.}

Austen gii kido:  
\textit{Austen said:}

\begin{quote}
\textit{“It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife.”}\textsuperscript{6}
\end{quote}

Pii gojitooyaang ji-ankenootaaminid, kinomaagazojig gikendaasowaad gaawiin memwech enendamosiin Anishinaabemwin.  
\textit{When trying to translate this sentence, students learn it is not possible to think exactly like this in Anishinaabemowin.}

\textsuperscript{5} Parker (2007:141).

\textsuperscript{6} Austen (2000:1).
Mii maanda ezhi-Anishinaabe-bii’an:

This is the translation:

Debwemigad bimaadiziwin-kendamowin nishkezid inini bangi gego ednid

It is true about life-knowledge a single man if he has a little something of

minogshkeweziiwin kwean igo gonemaa daandewenmaan ge wii wiinsemigad.

value, a good fortune, a woman maybe wants to walk with him.

Anishinaabemong, niizh bimaadzijig aabdeg sa gwa zaagidiwag ji-wiinsemigad.

In the Anishinaabe writing, two people have to love each other and walk together.

Mii gii ezhi-enendaamowaad geyeg Anishinaabeg pii biwidgeg gaa bi daagooshinwaad.

This was how they were thinking those Anishinaabeg during the Colonial period.

Gaa gikendaagwad ina? Gaa nsostawigowaad Anishinaabeg ina, geyeg Shki-Kchi-mookimanwag?

Was this known? Did they understand the Anishinaabe people, those new Americans?

Maage gaa wiindamawawad ina “bgoji-maadzijig” gaa aawaad?

Or did they tell others the Indians were “wild savages?”

Nsostawigowaad Anishinaabeg ina geyeg Shki-Kchi-mookimanwag noongo?

Do they understand the Anishinaabe people today, the contemporary Americans?

Gekpii noongo e-Anishinaabemjig maajii-biigewaad miinwaa.

Finally, today’s Anishinaabe can begin to write again.

Pii gii zhbiiaaminid Anishinaabemowin Maajaamigad, niin miinwaa Howard Kimewon gii nookazinaan gete-kidowinan (zhimaaganishag, aapadend-wag) miinwa moozhton-ikidowin (taa-haa, ni’ii).

When we wrote the story “When the Anishinaabe Language Leaves,” we used old words (soldiers, ones who never returned) and emotional expressions (taa-haa, ni’ii).
Mii sa debwemigad nita-Anishinaabemwin, dibaaajimo-enewewin.

This sounds much more eloquent in Anishinaabe, it is the language of stories.

Baatiindoon shki-zhibiigewinan noondewenan.

More new texts are needed.

Maanda n’gii zhibiian:

Here is something I wrote:

Nengaatch Gwa

N’gii baamsemi megwemtigwake

nengaatch gwa . . . nengaatch gwa

Mii gwa gii ni dagooshinaang jiigabiig gii aandaangag

nengaatch gwa . . . nengaatch gwa

Iwedi, megwaa n’boochiweyaamba gdo’ikidowinan gii maandoonanaanaanaan

nengaatch gwa . . . nengaatch gwa

Mashkode mashkiki gaa zhaabwitooyaanh ode’aan

nengaatch gwa . . . nengaatch gwa

Asiniisan ekwa boodegaan, enji jiimaanabo

nengaatch gwa . . . nengaatch gwa

gaa maamdaa bimoseyaang mii maampii

miiskwaasii’ing

zaam nookaa

aabdeg sa gwa naaksheyaang

nengaatch gwa . . . nengaatch gwa.

Slowly

We walked through the woods

Slowly . . . slowly

To arrive at the beach as the clouds were changing

Slowly . . . slowly

There, while we visited, I gathered your words

Slowly . . . slowly

They are strong medicine I save in my heart

Slowly . . . slowly

They are rocks washed ashore by the water’s kiss

Slowly . . . slowly
We cannot walk in this place
the swamp
because it is too soft
we must lie down
slowly . . . slowly.?

Wenesh edamying, “miiskwaasii’ing”—miiskwa, miiskwe, minikwe, aakiing?
What does it mean, the word “swamp”—red, bleeding, drinking, earth?

Oshme nsostaaminid Anishinaabemong.
We understand more in Anishinaabe. (Look, for instance at the sound pattern.)

Wenesh ikidowinan edamying “poem”?
What word do we use to mean “poem”?
Dibaajimoons? Little story?
Nagamokidowin? Little song?
Waabaamowin? What we see?
Odesaabiins? Heart string?

Gaawin tesiinon bezhig ikidowin eta.
There is not one word only.

Kina goya gweyak bebkani-giigidowag giishpin debwiindamawinangwa.
Everyone is correct speaking differently, if they tell truth to us.

Pane gwejimdizoyaang, wenesh ezhiwebak, wenen ezhchiged?
Always we ask ourselves, what is happening, who is doing?

Nd’nendamomi kina goya daa gagejimdizowaad, wenesh ezhiwebak, wenen ezhchiged?
We think everyone should ask, what is happening, who is doing?

Zaam maanda Anishinaabemowin aabdeg dibadaadaaan pii tkwesh-kodaadying.
Because of this Anishinaabemowin must be talked about when we meet.

Mii sa i’iw.
That is all.

REFERENCES


