

# 2011 Northwest Territories Scientific Research Licence

*Issued by:* **Aurora Research Institute – Aurora College**  
Inuvik, Northwest Territories

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*Funding:* University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) Postgraduate Research Awards  
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) via UNBC

*Team Members:*

*Title:* **Inuvialuit language and identity: perspectives on the symbolic meaning of Inuvialuktun in the Canadian Western Arctic**

*Objectives:* To better understand the role of Inuvialuktun (and its revitalization efforts) in the construction of Inuvialuit cultural identity.

*Dates of data collection:* August 4, 2011 to December 20, 2011

*Location:* Inuvik

Licence No.14956 expires on December 31, 2011  
Issued in the Town of Inuvik on August 03, 2011

**\* original signed \***

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Pippa Secombe-Hett,  
Director, Aurora Research Institute



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## Notification of Research

I would like to inform you that Scientific Research Licence No. 14956 has been issued to:

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to conduct the following study:

**Inuvialuit language and identity: perspectives on the symbolic meaning of Inuvialuktun in the Canadian Western Arctic (Application No. 1744)**

Please contact the researcher if you would like more information.

### SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

This licence has been issued for the scientific research application No.1744.

At the heart of this research lies the desire to better understand the role of Inuvialuktun (and its revitalization efforts) in the construction of Inuvialuit cultural identity. The objective of the study is to provide a detailed picture of language ideologies and language attitudes surrounding Inuvialuktun among potential and current learners in order to inform the development and design of language curricula and promotion. This core concern leads to a series of questions. Some of these questions are: Do younger Inuvialuks perceive Inuvialuktun as a necessary component of Inuvialuit identity in the 21st century? How important is a distinct sense of identity? What are some of the primary deterrents for Inuvialuit youth in re-acquiring their heritage language? What are current language ideologies surrounding Inuvialuktun, and how do they influence language learning motivation and language identity? How does current monolingualism shape Inuvialuit identity? How do younger Inuvialuks assess the feasibility of future bilingualism in the ISR? How will emerging multidimensional Inuvialuit identities incorporate Inuvialuktun? With a view to the current predominance of English in Inuvialuit society, the researcher hopes to provide some recommendations in regard to learning motivation for Inuvialuktun acquisition as second language, based on current published research and the data derived from this study.

While the results of this research will be of value to academic sociolinguistics, an equal emphasis is made on community benefit and participation. This research is rooted in the Mackenzie Delta and it is primarily intended for the people of the delta. In that sense, this research is a relational ceremony in which the researcher and the participant are knowledge seekers together. All questionnaires and interview schedules will be developed in collaboration with the Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre.

The researcher intends to work with three age groups of current and potential learners of Inuvialuktun: teenagers (15-19), young adults (20-39), and mature adults (40-60). These three age groups roughly correspond with the three institutional contexts within which they will be contacted: Samuel Hearne Secondary School (SHSS), Aurora College, and Inuvik Community Corporation language classes. To locate 'potential' learners of the 40-60-age group, i.e. individuals who are not currently learning Inuvialuktun, chain referral from learners at the Community Corporation classes will be used. Thirty to forty identical questionnaires will be distributed across these three age groups. Together with the participant, the researcher will go over the questionnaire, filling out all the appropriate items. A total of 15 to 20 semi-structured interviews stand at the center of this research. An effort will be made to equally distribute interviews between genders. At the same time, it is understood that a general gender bias may exist in the current language learner population. The potential effects of such demographic variations will be examined. While interviews may be conducted with current and potential learners, there is an emphasis on current learners, language planners, and future instructors.

It is the researcher's aim to work closely with the Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Center (ICRC), Aurora College's aboriginal

language and culture program, as well as youth and elders from the community of Inuvik. The researcher has been seeking input and guidance from ICRC staff on the research proposal and would like to continue this relationship throughout the course of the study. It is hoped that funds can be secured through Nasivvik to employ an Inuvialuit research assistant.

The collected data is anticipated to serve the ICRC in the first place. However, research is a process of mutual transformation and learning, making it of utmost importance that all participants, and the community at large, be informed of the results of their study. To this end, the researcher plans to give community presentations (at the various participating institutions), prepare a leaflet available through the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC), ICRC, SHSS, Aurora College, Inuvik Community Corporation (ICC), and host a website outlining major findings of this collaborative work in non-academic language. Project results will be made available on a project-related website at: [inuvialuktun.unbc.ca](http://inuvialuktun.unbc.ca). Participants and community members can call any time to request a hard copy of the results by mail, or by meeting with me in person.

The fieldwork for this study will be conducted from August 4, 2011 to December 20, 2011.

Sincerely,

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Jonathon Michel,  
Manager, Scientific Services

DISTRIBUTION  
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