

A Concise Dictionary
of Nakoda (Assiniboine)

Studies in the
Native Languages
of the Americas

EDITOR

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A Concise Dictionary of Nakoda (Assiniboine)

VINCENT COLLETTE

With Wilma Kennedy

Foreword by Chief Ira McArthur

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of the Indigenous Languages of the Americas

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Foreword

Chief Ira McArthur

A Concise Dictionary of Nakoda (Assiniboine) by Vincent Collette and Wilma Kennedy is the culmination of many hours of selfless dedication and commitment by the authors. Their work herein brings to life the hopes and dreams of Nakoda/Assiniboine Elders from the communities of the Pheasant Rump Nakoda First Nation, Ocean Man First Nation, White Bear First Nations, Carry The Kettle Nakoda Nation, and the Mosquito, Grizzly Bear's Head, and Lean Man First Nations, as well as the Nakoda/Assiniboine tribes of the Fort Peck and Fort Belknap Reservations of Montana, who recognize the state of endangerment of the Nakoda language, and encourage preservation and revitalization through any means necessary.

No amount of words can be written or spoken to truly capture the gratitude we all feel in our hearts for the efforts and contributions of the late Elder Wilma Kennedy. Recognizing that her knowledge was priceless, this work became a legacy that highlights her selfless love and dedication to the preservation of the Nakoda language. We also applaud and honor her family and the relatives of Carry The Kettle for allowing us precious time with her to complete this project. The proverb "when an Elder passes, a library of wisdom/knowledge is lost" is really true when used in the context of the state of our language. In this case, Wilma ensured that a small portion of her knowledge and wisdom would live on through her contributions so that we all may learn to love and cherish the Nakoda language as she had.

The word *koná* describes a person who is a friend, not in the manner in which we understand a friend to be in the viewpoint of today's western or Eurocentric society, but rather from the Indigenous viewpoint, that, from my understanding, regards a friend as someone who is held in high regard, not just by an individual, a family, or a small group of people, but rather by the Nation as a whole. In our Nakoda ways and teachings we address and regard Vincent Collette as *koná*. His personal contributions to this project and the time he spent away from his

family speak volumes of the type of man he is and the responsibility and reverence with which he undertook the research, collecting, and validating necessary to document our language. The care and diligence he manifests when working with our Elders and communities lends great credence to the quality of work that this book represents.

As with all things we do, in our everyday lives our Elders teach us to lift up and honor one another through kind expressions and gestures. And at this time, I want to mention the following individuals for their enthusiastic and wholehearted efforts to revitalize the Nakoda language in our communities and for the tribe as a whole: Armand McArthur, Juanita McArthur-BigEagle, and Keegan McArthur of Pheasant Rump; Peter Bigstone and Bronte BigEagle of Ocean Man; Leona Kroeskamp, Robert McArthur, Shay McArthur, and Sarah McArthur of White Bear; Nancy Eashappie, Matthew Spencer, Chad O'Watch, Iris O'Watch, Kyrsten Saulteaux and Theresa O'Watch of Carry The Kettle; Kenneth Armstrong of Mosquito/Grizzly Bear's Head/Lean Man; Michael Turcotte and Roger White of Fort Peck; and Kenneth Hegelson and Tom Shawl of Fort Belknap. We also lift up and honor our relatives who returned home to the Creator and whose legacies continue to inspire this work: Victor Sammy of White Bear, Armand McArthur of Pheasant Rump, Freda O'Watch, and Wilma Kennedy of Carry The Kettle.

I want to say thank you to the Elders, Council, and members of Pheasant Rump for allowing us to prioritize the preservation and revitalization of the Nakoda language not only within our band but also on behalf of all communities of the Nakoda tribe. Thanks also to Karen Buseman from the Summer Institute of Linguistics who provided the professional help in untangling the quirks of the Toolbox program used to compile this dictionary.

We also recognize the financial support provided by Mosaic Company, TransCanada, and Oakland Industries for this initiative. With partnership comes responsibility, and with responsibility arises opportunity.

We dedicate this work to the children, youth, and coming generations of the Nakoda tribe and pray that our language will bless our homes, families, and people for as long as our bloodline remains.

Messages from Funders

TransCanada Energy is honored to support the development of this essential resource to aid in the preservation of the Nakoda language.

Congratulations to Pheasant Rump and the Nakoda Nation for recognizing the need to preserve the language and culture by developing this dictionary of the Nakoda language. We thank Elder Wilma Kennedy (Carry The Kettle) for sharing her knowledge to provide the five thousand words and phrases to make this a reality. This is an important first step to save and revitalize the Nakoda language for future generations. The Mosaic Company is proud to sponsor this project and to support First Nations that surround our operations on projects and initiatives such as these.

Oakland Industries, Ltd. and our industry partner Team Power Solutions are grateful for the opportunity to have provided funding support to the community of Pheasant Rump Nakoda First Nation for preserving its culture through the development of this exciting publication by revitalizing the Nakoda language for future generations.

Pinámayaye no!

Introduction

A Short History of the Nakoda People

The Nakoda are an indigenous people of the Siouan family inhabiting the northern plains of North America, in both Saskatchewan (Canada) and Montana (United States). Before contact the Nakoda practiced a tallgrass prairie/parkland culture. In the winter they hunted moose, deer, and elk as well as small game along with fishing and trapping in the fall when they took coverage in the parklands. In the summer some Nakoda followed a seminomadic way of life and used dog travois to haul their tipi poles and other belongings as they followed the buffalo (killed traditionally with buffalo pounds and later with horses). (The Canadian parklands is a large transitional biome located between the boreal forest and the prairies, and it extends from southwestern Manitoba, cutting diagonally through Saskatchewan and up to central Alberta.)

Warfare and counting coups constituted an important part of their culture since they enabled a man to marry and gain respect and social status (DeMallie & Miller 2001:579). Nakoda culture is typical of the northern Plains and encompasses an impressive diversity of songs, dances, and ceremonies (see Denig 2000[1930]:162–71, 223–26). Still nowadays the Nakoda hold Sundances, a four-day ritual that includes vision quests by young men who search for help and protection from their guardian spirits, in June. The highlight of Sundances is the piercing of the young men's chests with skewers that were then attached to the center pole or "holy tree" (DeMallie & Miller 2001:579).

It is possible to roughly circumscribe Nakoda territorial boundaries prior to contact. Ray (1974:4) proposes that the Nakoda territory extended along the parklands from the western shores of Lake Superior, including a thin fringe of northern Wisconsin and Minnesota, to central Saskatchewan, including south-central Manitoba (Ray 1974:4). The Cree and the Nakoda/Stoney seem to have pushed westward from the Hudson Bay in the course of the late seventeenth century in order to extend their role as trade middlemen, but some authors like Andersen (1970:50) state instead that westward expansion might be a "latephase

or surge in an old westward migration of Siouan and Algonquian speakers along the forested edge of the northern Plains.” This parallels oral Nakoda history that suggests that their precontact homeland extended from Lake Winnipeg to the Rockies and also archaeological findings, such as Walde (2010), who states that ceramic ware of the terminal Mortlach phase found in southwestern Saskatchewan were produced by prehistoric bands of Nakoda. However, the question is complex, and others have proposed that Mortlach phase was the product of prehistoric Hidatsa (another Siouan group).

The Nakoda, who were more commonly known as the “Assiniboine” — a term that means “Stone warrior” in Ojibwe (spelled variously as “Senipoet,” “Assinipoulak,” or “Assiniboëls”) — are mentioned in the Jesuit Relations as early as 1640. In 1678 French trader Daniel Greylson Dulhut made the first contact with the Nakoda and located the eastern range of their territory west of Lake Nipigon (Ontario) (Ray 1974:11). At that time French sources systematically placed the Nakoda between Rainy Lake-Lake of the Woods area in western Ontario, but Henry Kelsey reports in his voyage (1690–91; Ray 1974:12) that the Nakoda lived along the Carrot River and the Touchwood uplands in Saskatchewan. They made frequent trips to York Factory in the eighteenth century and had become trade middlemen along with their Cree allies between the Hudson Bay Company and western tribes who were in search of European goods (Ray 1974:6).

In the early 1700s the increased access to firearms and other European goods by Algonquian groups and their Nakoda allies enabled them to expand northward along the parkland and up to central Alberta. This may have been triggered by hostilities with the Dakota who had recently gained access to French firearms. By 1720 the Nakoda homeland included Touchwood Hills, the Assiniboine River watershed, the Red River, and likely the Qu’Appelle River in eastern Saskatchewan (Ray 1974:21). They acquired horses in the mid-eighteenth century from the Hidatsa, Mandan, or Crow but later lost access to them.

While in the early eighteenth century movements were done northwestward, in the late 1700s the bulk of the Nakoda bands moved southward out of the parklands and adopted a mounted buffalo-hunting culture. Alexander Henry (1808) reported that two thirds of the Nakoda lived between the Qu’Appelle and Souris Rivers and the remaining third in the Battleford region (DeMallie & Miller 2001:574). Later in the early nineteenth century some groups moved even farther south in actual northern Montana where they still cohabit with speakers of Gros Ventres (also known as Atsina), Yankton, and Yanktonai Dakota.

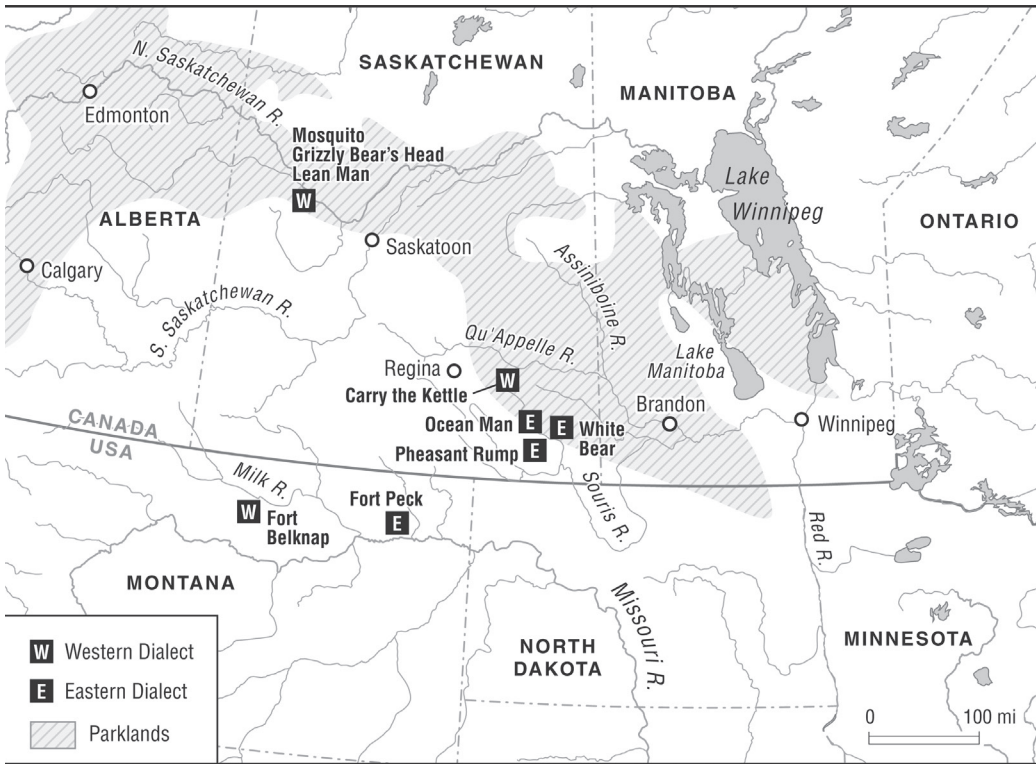
Two ethnically distinct groups of “Assinipoëts” are mentioned by early Hudson Bay Company traders like Kelsey (1690–91) and Henday (1754–55), who made trips inland from York Factory (Ontario). These are the “Woodland Assiniboine” (or “Northern Assiniboine”), who are the ancestors of modern Stoney, and the “Plains

Assiniboine” (or “Southern Assiniboine”), the ancestors of modern Nakoda. The distinction between Woodland and Plains Assiniboine follows an ecological cycle (Ray 1974). One group resides in the boreal forest and relies on hunting and fishing while the other roams the plains for buffalo, but both exploited the parklands in the winter. As suggested by Ray (1974:21) the Southern Assiniboine further divides into the Plains Assiniboine and an intermediate mixed group of Cree and Assiniboine inhabiting central Saskatchewan. This group is referred to as the “Keskatchewan and Southern Senipoet” (but see Russell 1990:chap.11).

Around the late eighteenth century, travelers and traders also started to note the different Nakoda band names. Many band names are found in the diaries of Alexander Henry the younger (1988), Denig (2000[1930]), Lowie (1910), and Rodnick (1937). The following list likely represents social groupings that are ancestors to the speakers of Western Canadian Nakoda, the dialect reflected in the present dictionary (all data from Rodnick 1937:410–12, with my translations):

- Čaḥtáda** “Moldy people band,” or “Strong woods people” (located in the Battleford area, Saskatchewan);
- Wazíyam wįcášta** “Northern people band” (groups living in the Battleford area; some members moved to Fort Belknap in the nineteenth century. They were named as such after their migration southward in the United States [Rodnick 1937:411]);
- Šahíyeskaḅi** “Piapot band” (lit. Plains Cree translators; this is an ethnically mixed band of Nakoda and Plains Cree led by Chief Piapot);
- Čaḥe wįcášta** “Wood mountain people”;
- Įšná ũbis’a** “They stay alone people” (formerly known as “Cypress Hills Assiniboine” and formerly allied to the “Wood mountain people”);
- A’ínina ũbi** or **Inína ũbi** “Silent people” (living near Cypress Hills, Saskatchewan).

According to Carry The Kettle elders, the last two bands listed are the ancestors of people living in Carry The Kettle (Saskatchewan). More research on this complicated topic could help refine the association of each band with a dialect of Nakoda. However, even a cursory look at the situation indicates that most Nakoda bands still inhabit their historic homeland (Battleford and Moose Mountain) while other bands moved southward or eastward (e.g., Carry The Kettle). As shown in the next section the historical identification and geographical locations of these Nakoda groups in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries seem



Map 1. Geographical location of the Nakoda People. Cartography by Erin Greb.

to align with contemporary dialectal divisions between the innovative Western Nakoda dialect and the more conservative Eastern Nakoda with an intermediate group (that of Fort Belknap) that shares features of both dialects (see table 2). Map 1 shows the modern distribution of Nakoda communities and dialects (W = Western Nakoda; N = Eastern Nakoda).

From the late eighteenth century on, a series of devastating epidemics of smallpox (1782, 1838, 1856) and influenza, along with a declining bison population, provoked extreme poverty and considerable population decline among the Nakoda who found themselves compelled to abandon their nomadic way of life and forced to amalgamate with their Plains Cree, Saulteaux, and Metis allies, but also with the Dakota. Like other Canadian Indigenous groups in the late nineteenth century, the Nakoda were forced to sign treaties with the encroaching federal governments. In Canada, Chiefs White Bear and Carry The Kettle bands signed adhesion to Treaty 4 in 1877, while Chiefs Mosquito, Grizzly Bear, and Leanman band signed adhesion to Treaty 6 in 1878. The two other bands in the United States signed the Judith River Treaty in 1855. Today the Nakoda People live in Saskatchewan (Canada) in Carry The Kettle and Mosquito/Grizzly Bear

Head/Leanman, White Bear, Pheasant Rump, and Ocean Man reservations, but also in Fort Belknap and Fort Peck reservations located in northeastern Montana.

Dialectal Situation of Nakoda

The Nakoda language, or “Assiniboine,” is a language of the Siouan family. All Siouan languages descend from a common ancestor called Proto-Siouan, which was spoken some three thousand years ago. Siouan languages split into four sublevel groupings: 1) Mandan; 2) Crow-Hidatsa; 3) Northern Mississippi Valley Siouan; and; 4) Ohio Valley Siouan. Proto-Northern Mississippi Valley Siouan is the common ancestor of the Dhegihan group (Omaha-Ponca, Kanza†-Osage†, Quapaw), the Chiwerean group (Chiwere†, Hoocąk) and the Dakotan group. The latter comprises Lakǰóta, Western Dakhóta (Yankton-Yanktonai), Eastern Dakhóta (Santee-Sisseton), and Nakhóta, which is the autoethnonym for both Stoney (also known as Stoney Assiniboine, or Stoney Nakoda) and Assiniboine or Nakoda People (Parks & DeMallie 1992). The first three Dakotan subgroups were known as “Sioux” and the last two as “Assiniboine” in colonial history.¹

Traditionally the classification between the Dakotan groups was done using the distribution of the phonemes *n*, *d*, and *l* (which are reflexes of the Proto-Dakotan phoneme *R) in specific corresponding words like those for “Indigenous person” (e.g., *Nakhóta*, *Dakhóta*, *Lakǰóta*) and “friend” but also in the male declarative particle, and the diminutive suffix. However, Parks and DeMallie showed in their seminal article (1992:240) that the *NDL* three-way distinction fails to clearly represent dialectal divisions since it does not explain the *n* in *Dakhóta* nor does it point to differences between Stoney and *Nakhóta*, which are now two distinct languages with unilateral mutual intelligibility where Stoney understand *Nakhóta* but not vice versa. In this section only, comparative data are presented in their phonemic form, so it might not match practical spelling practices.

Table 1. Diagnostic of dialectal differences

	‘friend’	‘male DECL.’	‘diminutive’	‘eight’
Stoney	—	no [dno]	-n	šahnóŋa
Nakhóta	khoná	no [no, ndo]	-na	šaknóŋa
W. Dakhóta	khodá	do	-na	šagdóŋa
E. Dakhóta	khodá	do	-da; -dą; -na	šahdóŋa
Lakǰóta	kǰholá	lo	-la	šaglóŋa

Source: Southern Stoney forms were provided by Corey Telfer from the Language Conservancy and the University of Calgary. Forms for Western Nakoda stem from the present work supplemented by conversations with Tom Shawl from Fort Belknap (Montana). Data from the Mosquito-Grizzly Bear Head

were provided by Kenneth Armstrong, and they are identical to the forms collected in Carry The Kettle. Eastern Nakoda forms are from Hollow (1970), Fourstar (1978), and Ryan (1999). We also benefitted from extensive conversations with Michael Turcotte (Fort Peck, Montana), Armand McArthur (Pheasant Rump, Saskatchewan), and Pete Bigstone (Ocean Man, Saskatchewan). All Lakota forms are from Ullrich (2011). Eastern Dakota Santee forms (S) as well as Yankton/Yanktonai (Y) forms are from Riggs (1992[1890]). Finally, Proto-Siouan (PS) and Proto-Dakotan (PD) reconstructions are taken from Rankin et al. (2015).

As shown in table 1 the comparative set for “eight” that contains a consonant cluster with initial *h*, *k*, *g*, or *h* is a much better diagnostic for dialectal differentiation than the *NDL* three-way division since it aligns with the five distinct ethnolinguistic groups.

Parks & DeMallie (1992:238; see also Parks & Rankin 2001:96) state that Nakoda splits into two dialects. This is based on lexical isoglosses and the metathesis of *tk* into *kt*. According to them one dialect (which we label “Western Nakoda”) is spoken in Mosquito/Grizzly Bear Head and Carry The Kettle reserves in (Saskatchewan) and to some extent in Fort Belknap (Montana), while the other dialect (“Eastern Nakoda”) is spoken in White Bear, Pheasant Rump, and Ocean Man reserves (Saskatchewan), as well as in Fort Peck (Montana). The distinction between these two dialects of Nakoda corresponds roughly to the two historical groups of Plains Assiniboine presented in the preceding section. A list of isoglosses is provided in table 2. Innovations are indicated by shaded boxes and bold characters. The three dashes (—) indicate no forms could be found in the literature. All data are presented in their phonemic form, thus simple stops and the affricate are *p*, *t*, *k*, and *č* and aspirated stops and affricate are *ph*, *th*, *kh*, and *čh*.

Table 2. Comparative dialectal data

	STONEY (<i>South</i>)	WESTERN NAKODA <i>Canada</i>	<i>United States</i>	EASTERN NAKODA	LAKÓTA
1) <i>tk</i> > <i>kt</i> ‘it is heavy’	ktá	ktá		tká	tké
2) stem reshaping (a) ‘sit’ ¹	įgá ‘stay’	yįkÁ, (h)įkÁ	yąkÁ	yąkÁ	yąkÁ
(b) ‘ask’ (PD *iwųǵA)	įyųśa	įyųǵA, į’ųǵA	įwųǵA	įyųǵA, įwųǵA	iyųǵA iwąǵa (S)
(c) ‘book’	owábi ‘book, paper, writing’	wa’óyapi	wówapi	wa’ówapi, wówapi	wówapi

(d) ‘camp’ (PD <i>*thɨwə</i>)	—	othúye	othúwe	othúwe	othúwe, othúwahe
(e) ‘and, also’	kho	khóya	khówa	—	khöhung khóya (S)
(f) ‘know’	θnoyá	snokyÁ	snokyÁ	snohyÁ (recent)	slolyÁ
				snohyÁ ²	
3) he ‘interrogative particle’	húwo (M) húwe (F) hí (neutral)	male and female speakers		male speakers only	male and female speakers
4) ‘seven’	šagowí, šagowí	iyúšna	iyúšna (~ šakowí)	šakowí (~ iyúšna)	šakowí
5) ‘walking cane’	θahné	sakné		sakyé (WB) sakné (FP)	sagyé
6) ‘left- handed’	čhaktá	čhaktá	čhatká	čhatká (~ swephátahə)	čhatká
7) ‘otter’	θíde gaphéya	ptá		šičéčə (PR) škéčə ~ ptá (FP)	ptá ‘otter’ škéčə ‘fisher’

1. The historical forms of this entry are Proto-Siouan/Catawba ***wú:ke* > Proto-Siouan **rú:ke* > Proto-Dakotan **yáká* ‘sit.’ Rankin et al. (2015) observed that “The sequence **w+u* seems to be inherently unstable in Siouan, and the result is always dissimilation of either the vowel to *a* or the glide to *r* (or its various reflexes).” This explains why these verbs in *y* are conjugated as Class 3 (*mągá* ‘I sit’) and not Class 2 verbs (Y-stem).

2. Parks and DeMallie (2012b:181n84) state that the verb “to know” evolved as follows: *snokýa* > *snoyá* > *snohyá*. This scenario is unlikely because the *ky* and *hy* forms are innovations from the more conservative *snohyÁ* that is the expected comparative match for Lakłóta *slolyÁ*.

Some important landmarks of Nakoda dialectology stem from table 2. First, there is no major phonological, morphological, and lexical differentiation between the Nakoda dialects, which means that it was spoken as a relatively unified language in the recent past. Second, many important innovations like (1, 2a) occur in the western dialect spoken in Carry The Kettle and in Stoney, suggesting that the western dialect is not only different from the conservative eastern dialect but that it has been in contact with Stoney more intensively than the eastern dialect.² The innovative western dialect also shows morphological innovation involving a switch of *w* into *y* that is not found elsewhere (2c, d). Third, the speech of Fort Belknap (Western Nakoda, United States, in table 2) does not share many phonological or morphological isoglosses with the innovative western dialect (except for 2f) and aligns mostly on the more conservative eastern dialect (for 1a, 2a,

b, c, d, f). Although on the basis of lexical differentiation only (4–7) it could be considered as an intermediate dialect more similar to the speech of Carry The Kettle, a suggestion made by Linda Cumberland (2005:36n16). Fourth, Eastern Nakoda has extended the meaning of some words (3, 6, 7) or borrowed some lexical items (5) from their Dakhóta neighbors with whom they have cohabited since the nineteenth century. Fifth and last, in dialectology, isoglosses do not share the same structural significance; as demonstrated by Chambers and Trudgill (1988:112–14) lexical isoglosses are more superficial than phonological ones since the former are “[. . .] subject to self-conscious control or change.” For example, isogloss (7) is not a frequent word and is much less relevant than phonological (1) or morphological isoglosses (2) in determining Nakoda dialectal divisions. The reader interested in the comparative and historical dialectology of Nakoda and Stoney is referred to Collette (2022).

Language Vitality

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Nakoda was still largely spoken in Canadian reservations, but it started losing ground in favor of Plains Cree or English. MacLeod (2000:447) reports that in Mosquito/Grizzly Bear’s Head/Leanman Reserve (located in the Battleford area in Saskatchewan), the migration of three Plains Cree women from the nearby Red Pheasant Reserve at the turn of the twentieth century weakened Nakoda language transmission since the children of these mixed couples learned Plains Cree from their mother despite the fact their fathers spoke Nakoda. Rodnick (1938) provides a good overview of the sociocultural mechanisms of language loss in Fort Belknap at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Nakoda is now a moribund language spoken by a handful of elderly people of the great-grandparent generation, although some children are exposed to the language through their grandparents. The situation in Canada is even more dire than in the United States, and, according to my estimate, there are less than ten fluent speakers left in Canada and probably a few dozen in Montana. However, in Montana there is a group of partly or nearly fluent speakers in their forties and fifties whose work as language teachers and dedication to language revitalization is crucial for the survival of Nakoda. In Canada the language is used in very restricted contexts such as greetings, introducing oneself, and giving orders but also in highly significant contexts such as singing and praying. This is why the Nakoda language is still considered as the backbone of Nakoda culture and the basis of ethnic identity. The response of the Nakoda language to new domains is minimal. Since in many languages of the Plains there is a tendency to avoid loanwords from European languages, speakers are often prompted to

create new and descriptive terms that are often long and difficult to remember. In Carry The Kettle (Canada), which is the reservation that has the highest number of Nakoda band members, some substantial efforts have been deployed to revitalize and teach the language in school to both the staff members and the children through land-based activities. Moreover, a Nakoda language curriculum (reflecting other Canadian indigenous language curricula) has been approved by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education so that high school teenagers can have their Nakoda language classes credited.

Nineteenth-century material concerning the Nakoda language is scarce since it was considered a dialect of Yanktonai Dakota (Parks & DeMallie 1992:237). Denig (2000[1930]) provides a few words for animals, cultural items, numbers, personal names, dances, and ceremonies in his monograph as well as an extensive wordlist (in Schoolcraft 1854:416–21). The language he wrote down reflects Eastern Nakoda. Prince Maximilian of Wied-Neuwied, a German explorer and ethnologist, also collected a short Nakoda wordlist (in Thwaites 1904–7:215–17) in which he pays special attention to phonetic and accentual details. At the end of the nineteenth century, Edward Griva, who was stationed at St. Paul Catholic Mission in Fort Belknap, compiled a dictionary and translated a catechism (Parks & Rankin 2001:110). Modern linguistic studies on Nakoda include Levin (1964), Hollow (1970), Taylor (1981, 1983), Schudel (1997), West (2003), and, most importantly, Cumberland (2005). Collette, McArthur, and Kennedy (2019) is a pedagogical book based on fieldwork done in Canada. Nakoda texts have been published in Lowie (1910, 1960), Drummond (1976), Farnell (1995), Schudel (1997), and, most importantly, Parks and DeMallie (2002, 2012a, 2012b). There are some short lexicons of Nakoda like that of Fourstar (1978) and one comprehensive dictionary compiled by Douglas Parks (2002), but none of these integrate sentence examples and grammatical explanations. In all, the Nakoda language benefits from high quality (both oral and written) documentation, thanks to the work done by Linda Cumberland, who transcribed oral material collected in the 1980s by anthropologists Douglas Parks and Raymond DeMallie (Parks & DeMallie 2002, 2012a, 2012b). Even though Nakoda is a moribund language, the recording repository and the work done at the American Indian Study and Research Institute (at Indiana University) will hopefully contribute to the revitalization and strengthening of Nakoda in the future.

Methodology

Funding for this project was provided by Pheasant Rump Nakoda First Nations from 2018 to 2020. The fieldwork was carried out with elder Wilma Kennedy, one of the last fluent speakers living in Carry The Kettle (Saskatchewan). The

first step was to cross-check and review all the existing sources of the language, especially Ryan (1998) and Parks (2002). Along the way we also collected many valuable stories about the Nakoda People, legends, and colorful expressions as well as archaic words that do not appear in any known sources of the language. The second step consisted of eliciting the derivatives for simple verbs (those marked as *Adv* or *Vrefl*, for example, in verbal entries), many of which do not appear in published sources of the language. During elicitation we also made sure to include one or two textual or seminatural sentences (i.e., sentences volunteered by the speaker) so that the readers would better understand the grammatical structure and word order of the language. Only a few sentence examples stemming from English sentence translation were included since these often fail to reveal the grammatical intricacies of the language. The third step consisted in reviewing four Nakoda readers written in the Western dialect: one from *Carry The Kettle* published by Valerie Drummond (1976) and three others from Fort Belknap (Parks & DeMallie 2002, 2012a, 2012b). A few hundred sentences stemming from these texts were included in the entries. Finally a few short stories were also obtained from Mrs. Nancy Eashappie from *Carry The Kettle*, and some of the sentences have been integrated into the dictionary.

Spelling System and Sound Description

The orthography used in this dictionary is known as the “Fort Belknap” orthography (FBO hereafter). It was developed jointly by the Nakoda speakers from Fort Belknap and anthropologists from Indiana University. Nowadays almost all Nakoda material is published in the FBO, so it is slowly becoming the standard spelling. It is based on the APA (American Phonetic Alphabet) and is partly phonemic and indicates primary stress. The major difference between FBO and Lakota orthography is that the former does not indicate aspiration of stops and affricates. As seen in table 3, the phonemes *p*, *t*, *k*, and *c* are written either with the letters ⟨b⟩, ⟨d⟩, ⟨g⟩, and ⟨j⟩ (between vowels, or at the beginning of a word) or ⟨p⟩, ⟨t⟩, ⟨k⟩, and ⟨c⟩ (in consonant clusters). The following table displays the orthographic equivalents for different spelling systems (based on Cumberland 2005:448–50). Some of these spelling systems, especially those used in Ryan (1998) and by the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Center (SICC) are imprecise and do not fully reflect the sounds of the language in that they have variants for a single sound or lack a symbol for specific sounds. In table 3 the Fort Belknap spelling system, as used in this dictionary, is presented in a darker shade. A more keyboard-friendly spelling uses ⟨r⟩ for *ř*; ⟨x⟩ for *ħ*; and ⟨n⟩ for nasal vowels (e.g., *q* is written ⟨an⟩).

Table 3. Chart of spelling systems for Nakoda

PHONEMES	IPA	APA	CUMBERLAND (2005)	FORT BELKNAP	RYAN (1998)	SICC	INDIANA TEXTS
Unaspirated consonants	p	p	p	b, p	b	p̄ ~ b	p
	t	t	t	d, t	d	t̄ ~ d	t
	k	k	k	g, k	g	c̄	k
	tʃ	č	c	j, c	j	k̄ ~ g	c
Aspirated consonants	p ^h	p ^h	p ^h	p	p	p	p ^c
	t ^h	t ^h	t ^h	t	t	—	t ^c
	k ^h	k ^h	k ^h	k	k	—	k ^c
	tʃ ^h	č ^h	c ^h	c	ch	c̄	c ^c
Ejective consonants	pʼ	p̣	pʼ	pʼ	pʔ	pʼ	pʼ
	tʼ	ṭ	tʼ	tʼ	tʔ	—	tʼ
	kʼ	ḳ	kʼ	kʼ	kʔ	kʼ	kʼ
	tʃʼ	č̣	cʼ	cʼ	—	c̄ʼ	cʼ
Fricative consonants	s	s	s	s	s	s	s
	ʃ	š	š	š	sh	š̄	š
	x	ħ	ħ	ħ	x	h ġ	ħ
	sʼ	ṣ	sʼ	sʼ	—	—	sʼ
	ʃʼ	ṣ̌	šʼ	šʼ	—	š̄ʼ	šʼ
	xʼ	ħ̣	ħʼ	ħʼ	—	ħ̄ʼ	ħʼ
	z	z	z	z	z	z	z
	ʒ	ž	ž	ž	zh	j	ž
	y	ğ	ğ	ğ	ḡ	ğ̄	ğ
Nasal consonants	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
Glottal consonants	h	h	h	h	h	h	h
	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	ʔ	—	ʔ
Glides	w	w	w	w	w	w	w
	y	y	y	y	y	y	y

PHONEMES	IPA	APA	CUMBERLAND (2005)	FORT BELKNAP	RYAN (1998)	SICC	INDIANA TEXTS
Oral vowels	i	i	i	i	i	i	i
	e	e	e	e	é	e	e
	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
	u	u	u	u	u	u/o	u
Nasal vowels	ĩ	ᵚ	ᵚ	ᵚ	ĩ	iŋ	ᵚ
	ã	ᶑ	ᶑ	ᶑ	ã	aŋ am an	ᶑ
	ũ	ᵚ	ᵚ	ᵚ	ũ	uŋ oŋ	ᵚ

CONSONANTS

Nakoda has twenty-seven consonants, displayed in their phonemic transcription (which is based on the American Phonetic Alphabet) in table 4 (taken from Cumberland 2005:15–17).

Table 4. Nakoda consonants

		LABIAL	LAMINO- DENTAL	LAMINO- ALVEOLAR	PALATO- ALVEOLAR	VELAR	LARYNGEAL
Obstruents							
stops	unaspirated	p	t			k	ʔ
	aspirated	p^h	t^h			k^h	
	glottalized	p'	t'			k'	
affricates	unaspirated				č		
	aspirated				č^h		
	glottalized				č'		
fricatives	voiceless			s	š	ħ	
	glottalized			s'	š'	ħ'	
	voiced			z	ž	ǵ	
Sonorants							
nasals		m	n				
glides		w		y			h

Listed in table 5 are all of the Nakoda consonantal phonemes with their spelling in the Fort Belknap orthography along with English equivalents, Nakoda examples, and some phonological information when necessary. The dial # indicates a word boundary, while V and C stand for a vowel and a consonant respectively; the underscore _ indicates the point of insertion of a sound. For example, #_ means “at the beginning of a word.”

Table 5. Consonant descriptions

PHONEME	SPELLING	ENGLISH EQUIVALENT	EXAMPLE	ALLOPHONES AND PHONEMIC CONTEXTS	
/p/	B b	bat, tab	bahá ‘hill’	voiced / #_	
	P p	spit	ǎba ‘day’ a’ ǎkpapsu ‘perfume’ ptǎ ‘otter’	voiced / V__V unvoiced / C__ unvoiced / __C	
/p ^h /	P p	Peter	pahá ‘hair’ apá ‘s/he hits sb, smth’		
/p’/	P’ p’	(none)	p’ó ‘it is steam’ cup’ó ‘it is foggy’		
/t/	D d	damp	dágu ‘what, thing’	voiced / #_	
	T t	stick	adé ‘my father’ - kta ‘potential, future’ hutká ‘root’	voiced / V__V unvoiced / C__ unvoiced / __C	
/t ^h /	T t	team	tanó ‘meat’ a’ úta ‘s/he shoots at sb’		
/t’/	T’ t’	(none)	t’á ‘to die’ ot’ǎ ‘it is thundering’		
/k/	G g	gum	gúwa ‘Come!’	voiced / #_	
	K k	scan	ogíhi ‘s/he can’ wǎtkó ‘s/he is crazy’ šǎktógeja ‘wolf’ akták ‘running’	voiced / V__V unvoiced / C__ unvoiced / __C unvoiced / __#	
	/k ^h /	K k	keep	kuwá ‘he chases him’ ǎkú ‘chin’	
	/k’/	K’ k’	(none)	k’ú ‘he gives it to him’ wak’á ‘I dig it’	
/č/	J j	jam	júsina ‘it is small’ čášeja ‘dead tree’		

PHONEME	SPELLING	ENGLISH EQUIVALENT	EXAMPLE	ALLOPHONES AND PHONEMIC CONTEXTS
/č ^h /	C c	chill	c ába ‘beaver’ n c í ‘over here’ pak c á ‘s/he combs it’ c á c ‘such’	
/č’/	C’ c’	(none)	ci c’ ú ‘I give it to you’	
/s/	S s	sit	s ihá ‘foot’ owádas s akyabi ‘fridge’ ag s ías ‘proudly’	
/s’/	S’ s’	(none)	- s’ a ‘habitual’	
/z/	Z z	zipper	z izibena ‘thin cloth’	
/š/	Š š	shadow	š úga ‘dog’ a’[t š ı] ‘s/he lies about smth’ ab á š ‘some on the other hand’	
/š’/	Š’ š’	(none)	š’ ága ‘s/he is strong’ waš’áke ‘unbearably’	
/ž/	Ž ž	measure	ž ená ‘those’ o ž úna ‘it is full’	
/ħ/	Ĥ ĥ	(none)	ħ óda ‘it is gray’ wó ħ ıya ‘s/he pouts’	
/ħ’/	Ĥ’ ĥ’	(none)	ħ’ eyáyana ‘grapes’ na ħ’ ı ‘s/he hears sb’	
/ğ/	Ğ ğ	(none)	ğ ı ‘it is yellow’ šak nóğ ı ‘eight’	
/m/	M m	mine	m ína ‘knife’ sm u yá ‘it is smooth’ s á m ‘beyond, over’	
/n/	N n	night	n ıwá ‘to swim’ an ı ‘s/he steps, climbs’ mah é n ‘inside, in’	
/w/	W w	water	w á ‘snow’ ow á ‘all’	

/y/	Y y	yes	yatká 'he drinks' áya 's/he/it becomes'
/h/	H h	happy	hiyá 'no' wó'ahope 'respect'
/ʔ/	'	button [bɛʔŋ]	wa'ówabi 'paper' ní' 's/he is living'

The glottal stop [ʔ], written in this dictionary with an apostrophe (<'>), deserves a few comments since it is both phonemic and nonphonemic. Obviously, glottal stops are indicated in the spelling when they are phonemic, that is when they contribute to a difference in meaning between two words as in *tá* 'moose' versus *t'á* 's/he/it is dead.' However, to ease the reading the Fort Belknap spelling system also marks phonetic glottal stops when they occur between vowels on morpheme boundaries, although this is fully predictable. Thus 'my father' (*mi-* 'my' + *-ade* 'father') is written *mi'áde* 'my father' and not *miáde*. Some speakers also use *y* or *w* as a linker between two vowels, so the reader has to bear this in mind when looking for a word in the Nakoda/English section. Lastly, to find a word that has a glottal stop as *t'* or *k'* inside a word, follow the regular alphabetical order indicated in the preceding list. For example, the verb *wót'i* appears after *wótijaǵa anówabi* and before *wotkícuni*.

VOWELS

Nakoda has eight vowels: five oral (*i e a u o*) and three nasal (*ǝ ǝ̃ ɤ̃*), as indicated in table 6. Nasal vowels are indicated by a small hook underneath. A nasal vowel is produced by letting air go through the nasal cavity and the mouth simultaneously. The closest English equivalent of nasal vowels occurs in the words *mean*, *mango*, and *bingo*. The vowels *e* and *o* do not have a nasalized counterpart in Nakoda.

Table 6. Nakoda vowels

		FRONT	CENTRAL	BACK
Oral	high	i	a	u
	mid	e		o
	low			
Nasal	high	ǝ̃	ǝ̃	ɤ̃
	low			

Table 7. Vowel descriptions

PHONEME	SPELLING	ENGLISH EQUIVALENT	EXAMPLE	ALLOPHONES AND PHONEMIC CONTEXTS
/a/	A a	at, hat	aké 'again' waná 'now' tóga 'enemy'	
/ǎ/	ǎ ǎ	man (nearest equivalent)	ǎba 'day' taǎbá 'birch' wǎcǎ 'raccoon'	
/e/	E e	bet	ecágen 'always' dágeyešǎ 'shut up' šagé 'claw'	[ɛ ~ e ~ i]
/i/	I i	beat	iná nína 'very' wǎkni 'fat'	[i ~ ɪ]
/ǐ/	ǐ ǐ	mean (nearest equivalent)	ǐhá 'he laughs' gǐza 'it creaks, squeaks' hǐ 'hair, fur, pelt'	
/o/	O o	open	ómna 'he smells it' hoǎpá 's/he coughs' tó 's/he/it is blue'	[o] or [ɔ]
/u/	U u	two	ubǐzade 'barn swallow' sudá 'it is hard'	[u] or [ɔ]
/ǔ/	ǔ ǔ	monk (nearest equivalent)	ǔbi 'they are' matǔbi 'I was born' ecǔ 's/he does it'	

STRESS

In Nakoda stress is phonemic and usually falls on the second syllable, although there are many exceptions where stress falls on the first syllable. This is unpredictable; hence the indication of primary stress in the spelling system. Stress position can make a difference in meaning between two words that would otherwise be spelled alike, as in the following pairs of words:

coná <i>vtI</i>	s/he believes sb, smth
cóna <i>post</i>	without, lacking, deprived of

ohÁ <i>vi</i>	1) s/he cooks by boiling; 2) s/he wears a shoe
óhə <i>post</i>	among, in the middle, in it

As seen here, the orthography utilized in this dictionary makes use of an acute accent mark on vowels to indicate primary stress (e.g., á, í, ú, etc.). However, the reader should bear in mind that often words occurring in phrases or sentences bear a different stress than when occurring in their citation form. This process is called “phrase level rhythmic stress pattern” and seeks to produce alternate syllable stress of the type C[́]VCV C[́]VCV or CVC[́] CVC[́] (Cumberland 2005:59–60). For example, while the noun *həwí* ‘sun, moon’ has its primary stress on the second syllable in its citation form, it shifts to the first syllable in a phrase like *həhébi həwí* ‘moon’ to keep the alternating syllable stress. Although such a stress pattern seems to be the exception rather than the rule (Cumberland 2005:66), we have kept it in the sentence examples when the speaker produced it.

Key to Entries

General Information

Each entry is ordered on the basis of the first letter of the citation form, printed in boldface. The alphabetical order is the following (note that some glottalized consonants (p') and (s') do not appear initially):

a ą b c d e g ģ h ħ ĩ i j k k' m n o p (p') s (s') š š' t t' u ʉ w y z ž —affixes

In Nakoda the **citation form** for a verb is the 3rd person singular, which is marked by a zero morpheme (-Ø-). It is the simplest form of any inflected verb, and each verb inflected for “plural,” “1st person plural” or the “potential modality” contains, so to speak, the citation form, as with *wóda* ‘s/he/it eats’ and *wówada* ‘I eat.’ For example, in the following set of verbs the citation form appears in all the inflected forms:

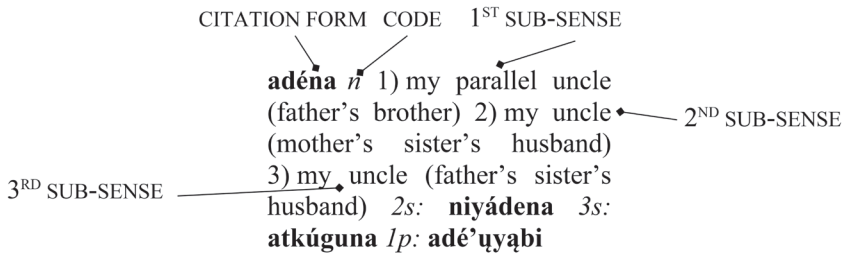
šųkmánų	s/he steals a horse, horses
šųkmáwanų	I steal a horse, horses
šųkmáyanų	you steal a horse, horses
šųkmá'ųnųbi	we steal a horse, horses
šųkmánųbįkta	they will steal a horse, horses
šųkmánųbįktešį	they will not steal a horse, horses

As in any dictionary, the number of possible inflected forms for a single verb is enormous, reaching well over one hundred different forms. Normally inflected forms are not listed in a dictionary entry, but rather the principle of forming them is expounded in a grammatical treatise or a verb compendium. However, some inflected forms that cannot be guessed are also included in the entries.

The citation form is followed by an italicized **class** code that indicates the lexical class of the word in question (i.e., *noun*, *verb*, *adverb*, etc.) and a **gloss** indicating a possible English translation.



Entries with two or more distinct but related meanings or **subsenses** (which sometimes align with different lexical classes) are indicated by successive numbering: 1), 2), 3), etc., in the entries.

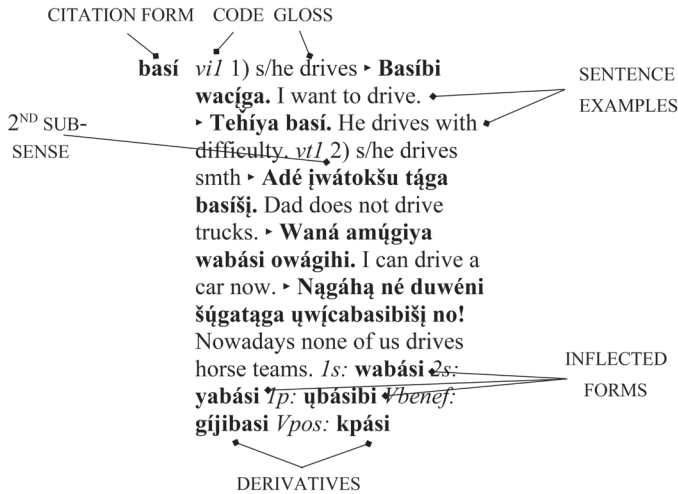


Although this dictionary is based on the speech of Carry The Kettle (Saskatchewan), some Eastern Nakoda variants collected during fieldwork are included and indicated with the codes PR (Pheasant Rump), OM (Ocean Man), WB (White Bear), FP (Fort Peck) or simply listed as *Variant*. Finally, morpheme entries such as *-Ø-* and *-'* are listed at the end, after *ž*.

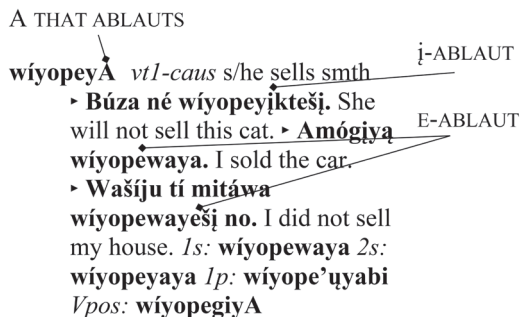
Entries for Verbs in the Nakoda-English Section

Verb entries contain minimally a citation form, a class code, subsenses numbers (if applicable) and gloss(es). Many entries also include **sentence example(s)**, and verbs have the **inflected form** for 1st person singular (*I*), 2nd person singular (*you*), and 1st person plural (*we*) when it was collected. Some verb entries also include derivative forms labeled *collective*, *contracted*, *abstract*, *benefactive*, *causative(s)*, *collective*, *dative*, *ditransitive*, *possessive*, *reciprocal*, *reduplicative*, and *reflexive*. (A complete list of derivatives along with their abbreviations is given in table 8.)

Although the inclusion of all inflected forms may appear superfluous, this is not the case for Nakoda person markers since it is often difficult for second-language learners of Nakoda to figure out the insertion point of the *I* and *you* person markers.



Lastly, some verbs that end in the sounds *a* or *q* may change to *e* or *i* when followed by certain suffixes, enclitics, demonstratives, or particles that trigger this sound change. This process is known as “ablaut,” and it is indicated by the capitalized letters *A* or *Ā* in the citation form of a verb. Two very common ablauting elements include the negative enclitic *-ši* that triggers **e-ablaut** (*wóda* > *wódeši* ‘s/he does not eat’) and the potential enclitic *-kta* that triggers **i-ablaut** (*wóda* > *wódiḱta* ‘s/he will/can eat’). The following entry displays both types of ablaut.



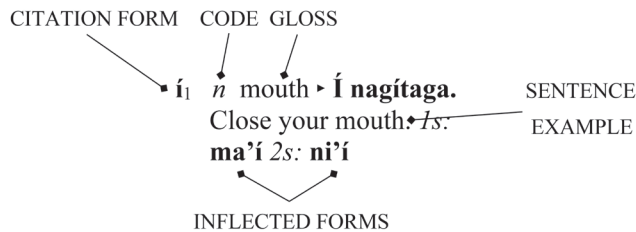
Documenting the process of ablaut is important but also challenging since there are some dialectal or intergenerational differences; some speakers from a community will ablaut a verb’s final *a* while speakers in other communities will not do so. Moreover, in direct elicitation some speakers do not ablaut a verb but do so in natural speech, so textual examples were sought in order to properly assign the ablauting process. Derived nouns that ablaut are not indicated in order to limit the use of uppercase symbols.

Entries for Nouns in the Nakoda-English Section

Noun entries are of various types. Common nouns are often simple, but some nouns occur with their possessive inflections for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd person. Ethnonyms, hydronyms, and toponyms as well as surnames and proper names have the first letter capitalized.

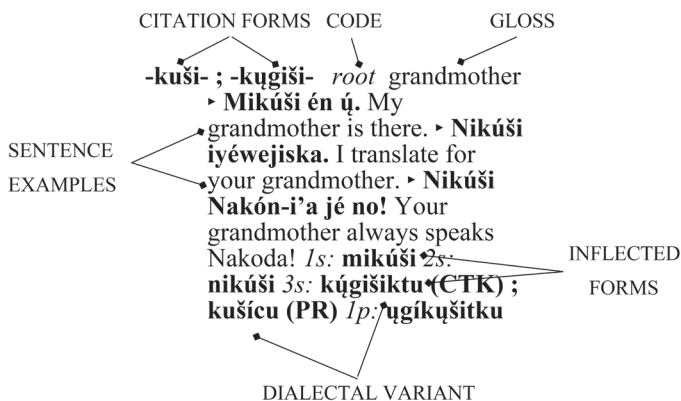
common noun	í'yute <i>n</i> ruler
ethnonym	Bigána <i>nprop</i> Piegan people, person of Piegan descent
hydronym	Miníšoše wakpá <i>ngeo</i> Missouri River
toponym	İštágitų tí <i>ngeo</i> Indian Head (Saskatchewan)
surname	Wówaši <i>nprop</i> O'Watch (surname in Carry The Kettle Saskatchewan)
proper name	Wíčášta háska <i>nprop</i> Tall man (name of Armand McArthur)

Entries of nouns for body parts contain the inflected forms for 1st person singular possessor (*my*) and 2nd person singular possessor (*your*). We did not include the 3rd person singular possessor form (*his/her/its*) simply because it corresponds to the citation form.



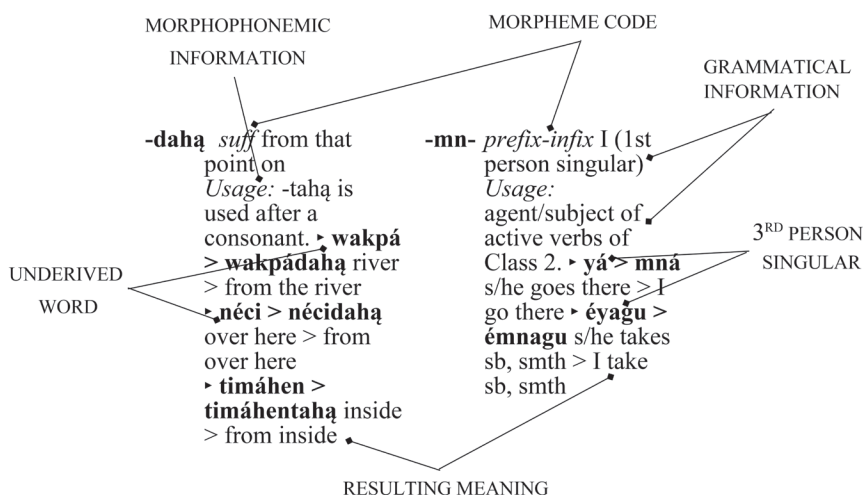
Lastly, since kinship nouns cannot be used without a marker for the possessor, we have listed them as roots and not as inflected nouns. What we label here as roots are not words but uninflected dependent nominal forms. They appear with dashes (e.g., -ROOT-) and no stress. When there are two roots, the first root occurs with 1st and 2nd person markers, while the second root occurs with the 3rd person marker.

As seen in the preceding entry, the 3rd person form has an unpredictable and apparently meaningless element *-gi-* that makes it necessary to list the two roots for many kinship terms as well as the inflected forms including the 3rd person. Of course, another way to avoid this option is to list all the inflected forms as single entries, boosting by a few dozen the number of entries.



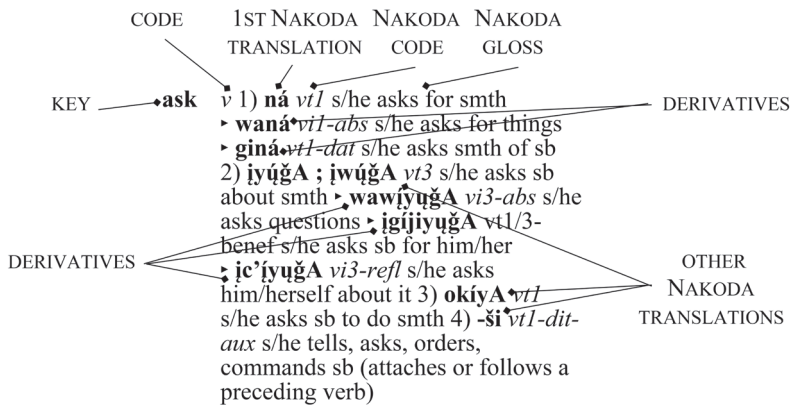
Entries for Morphemes in the Nakoda–English Section

Morphemes (or affixes) are bound forms that bear meaning. They can be lexical or grammatical but cannot occur in isolation and must be added on a stem (or root). Nakoda has **prefixes** that are always added before a stem (although some prefixes occur before or inside the stem). **Infixes** are added inside a stem. **Circumfixes** is a term used here when two independent grammatical morphemes occur together on a stem. **Suffixes** are added after the stem. There are eighty morpheme entries in this dictionary, all of which include a **morpheme code**, the **underived word** or the **3rd person singular** form onto which the morpheme in question is added (located before the sign >), as well as the **resulting meaning** (located after the sign >). In many cases the *Usage* indicates the verb class and other grammatical (type of verb and verb class) or morphophonemic information (sound changes occurring on morpheme boundaries).



Entries in the English–Nakoda Section

Entries in the English–Nakoda section (English hereafter) are not a mere reflection of those in the Nakoda–English (Nakoda hereafter). In some respect the English section acts like an index to the Nakoda section. The major difference is that the English section does not contain sentence examples or inflected forms and grammatical information is minimal, so the reader should consult both the English and the Nakoda section to deepen his/her knowledge of a word, its inflections, and usage in a sentence. As shown in the following diagram, many entries in the English–Nakoda section contain derived words so the learner can get familiarized with word construction. Verbal entries in the English section contain an English **key** and its **class code**, a Nakoda translation(s), along with its/their code(s), a gloss, and, in many cases, Nakoda verb **derivatives**.



For noun entries that pertain to an important aspect of the culture or life-ways of the Nakoda People, verbs describing related activities or states have also been added to the entries. Here are two examples with the nouns *drum* and *dog*.

drum *n* v 1) **gamúbi** *n* drum ▶ **nábé gamúbi** *cp* hand drum ▶ **çagámubi** *n* log drum ▶ **gamúbina** *n* small drum; 2) **gamú** *vt1* s/he beats on smth; makes a drumming sound; 3) **muyá** *vs* it is a drumbeat; 4) **h'oká** *vt1* s/he sings with a drum group; beats the drum in a pow-wow or dance ▶ **h'oká yigábi** *cp* drum singer

dog *n* 1) **šúǵa** *n* dog, canine; horse (in possessed forms only) ▶ **šúǵagana** *n*-redup lap dog ▶ **šúk-** *cont* dog, horse, sheep; 2) **šúǵawí** *n* female dog, bitch; 3) **gisúna šúǵa** *cp* chow dog; 4) **šúkháskusku** *n* mangy dog, coyote, wolf; unkept dog; 5) **šúǵámna** *vs* s/he/it smells like a dog; 6) **šúk'ohábi** *n* boiled dog, puppy soup; 7) **tašúkkiyA** *vt1-caus* s/he makes smth his/her own dog; 8) **šúǵícoco** *vt1-redup* s/he calls his/her own dogs

Glossing and Class Codes

Some English words and abbreviations are overtly used in this work, as we have tried to ease the burden of redundancy and the use of full words like *somebody*, or *something*, etc. This is especially true for verb entries where the following codes are in use:

people	the use of <i>people</i> occurs with collective verbs (VII-COLL) since the subject is not a single person but a group of people.
s/he/it	agent or subject of the verb (<i>it</i> is often not included since some verbs do not apply to animals but only to humans);
sb	short form for <i>somebody</i> that indicates the animate patient/object of a transitive verb (<i>sb</i> obviates the need of either choosing <i>him</i> over <i>her</i> , or even worse adding <i>him/her</i> all over the dictionary in order to indicate the animate patient/object function);
smth	short form for <i>something</i> that indicates the inanimate object of a transitive verb;
things	the use of <i>things</i> occurs with abstract verbs (VII-ABS) in order to indicate that the patient/object onto which the action is directed is nonspecific (e.g., <i>wópetu s/he buys things</i>).

There are numerous class codes used in this dictionary, and it is essential to know them in order to fully understand the grammatical information contained in an entry. They are all listed and described in table 8.

Table 8. Class codes and abbreviations

CODE	MEANING	DESCRIPTION
abs	abstract verb	derivative with a nonspecified object/patient; wa- or w- is the abstract object prefix (class 1) as in <i>wópetu</i> 's/he buys things'
adv	adverb	modifies the meaning of a following verb as in <i>Naháñ</i> <i>wagáǵi</i> kte no. 'I am still going to make it.'
art	article	used after a noun to indicate its definiteness (the) or indefiniteness (a, an)