

ADAPTING THE CEFR TO ALGONQUIAN LANGUAGES¹

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Ever since it was released by the Council of Europe almost 20 years ago, the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) has slowly but surely established itself as the go-to tool for second language teaching, assessment and pedagogical design all around the world.

In Canada, as the demand is increasing for Indigenous language teaching and proficiency assessment, this framework seems to also be used by default.² However, because it was originally designed for robust European languages with a strong written tradition, some of the starting premises are not applicable to languages with much fewer speakers and fewer resources, such as Indigenous languages.

An adapted CEFR focussed on Indigenous languages would provide a valid and reliable tool for assessing learner proficiency, and would also provide an important tool for guiding the development of robust curriculum that would support policy goals for achieving success in Indigenous language learning.

In this article, we try to provide a tool to streamline learners' proficiency assessment, for teachers of Algonquian languages and any scholar with interest in language revitalization, curriculum design or documentation aimed at language instruction. We design a modified version of the CEFR, which could potentially be better suited to assess Algonquian

languages.³ We first provide an overview of the CEFR itself before delving into the situation of Indigenous languages in Canada. Then, based on a two-step trial we conducted by looking into two series of textbooks and consulting language experts, we identify some key concerns (necessary rescaling, limited exposure, generational changes, lack of written history or resources, registers and styles, dialectal variations). Finally, using input from language specialists and inspired by a similarly revised framework for the Romani language in Europe, we propose a revised and annotated version of the CEFR template to open the discussion.

WHAT IS THE CEFR?

The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (CEFR) is a set of guidelines used to describe proficiency in a foreign language across Europe and, increasingly, around the world (including Canada). Launched by the Council of Europe in 2001, it is currently available in 40 languages and was updated in 2018. The CEFR identifies six broad levels of competency, grouped in pairs: A1-A2 (basic user), B1-B2 (independent user) and C1-C2 (proficient user) summarized in the *Global Scale*.⁴ Interim skill levels are indicated by a plus sign (+) where an individual may have surpassed the previous level but does not quite meet the criteria for the next one. More recently, the addition of an official “Pre-A1” category acknowledges certain language milestones appropriate for very beginners, primarily simple formulaic language or memorized forms. Each level contains general descriptors that cover five domains of competency: listening, reading, spoken interaction, spoken production and writing (see *Self-Assessment Grid* in Appendix 1). Finally, it addresses spoken performance by

providing the *Qualitative Aspects of Spoken Language Use Table*,⁵ which outlines different qualitative aspects of language use (range, accuracy, fluency, interaction and coherence) to assess spoken production at different levels of competency.

The CEFR also addresses the notions of plurilingualism and pluriculturalism, which would apply to most Indigenous language speakers in Canada as they usually also speak English and/or French, as well as the issue of minority and endangered languages. The latter takes the shape of a curriculum framework specifically drawn up for the Romani language. This adapted framework aims at providing a common basis to develop educational material all over Europe “to strengthen the growth of Romani,” which is “in danger of disappearing” (Little and Simpson, 2008: 3-4). In our view, this framework also offers an interesting alternative for Indigenous languages because it is designed to accommodate three different sociolinguistic situations: children who do not speak Romani at home, children who are not fluent in Romani but whose parents and grandparents are, and children who are fluent in Romani but need to develop their skills (*Id*, 7). It also uses only the first four CEFR levels (A1 to B2) to assess proficiency in Romani, and offers activities designed around 11 themes closely related to the learners’ daily life and Roma culture (such as “myself and my family”, “my community”, “festivals and celebrations”, “travel and food” or “hobbies and the arts”).

ALGONQUIAN LANGUAGES: LIVING BUT ENDANGERED

Algonquian languages, like most Indigenous languages in North America, are in a distinctive situation in that they are in most cases spoken by a very limited number of

individuals who usually live in small communities, quite distant from one another (Drapeau, 2000). This situation of limited transmission and diffusion directly impacts the volume of resources available, from teaching material to literary works.

Because of their small pools of speakers, their sociocultural representation is extremely circumscribed, which makes them very vulnerable to language abandonment (Dorian, 1998; Fishman, 2011) triggered by language shift towards a more dominant language. Bilingual by default and necessity (education, access to media, etc.), a large number of Algonquian speakers live in a constant state of diglossia where the forced cohabitation of their mother tongue and the language of the majority slowly erodes the vitality of their native language.

In Canada, Cree and Ojibwe are along with Inuktitut, the “only viable languages with large [enough] population bases [that their] long-term survival is likely assured” (Norris, 2007 : 27, also McMillan, 1994 : 224). However, this relatively positive evaluation masks the variation in vitality of these languages.⁶ Cree cannot be taken as a single speech community as there are many languages, each with several dialects, that are part of what is a large dialectal continuum (MacKenzie, 1980), with limited mutual intelligibility as distance increases. Cree speakers live in very distant communities ranging from Alberta to the Atlantic Ocean, and do not interact much with each other, especially when also separated by provincial legislation. There is no “agreed upon standard version of the Cree language” (Brittain and MacKenzie, 2010: 2-3), although there are regional spelling standards. In the Northern part of Western Canada and in Quebec, many Cree languages

are still passed on as a mother tongue to children, taught at school and spoken in most contexts in the communities. In other parts, there is no more transmission to children, and when there is no standard writing system, nor printed resources or oral recordings, the language can be severely endangered. The situation is similar with Ojibwe and Oji-Cree, and vitality must be evaluated on a community-by-community, or regional basis.

In this article, we take examples from the following languages: East Cree, spoken in Eastern James Bay; Innu, spoken in Quebec and Labrador; Atikamekw, spoken in Quebec; Nishnaabemwin or Odawa / Eastern Ojibwe, spoken on Manitoulin Island in Ontario; Oji-Cree (Severn Ojibwe), spoken in Northern Ontario; and Eastern Swampy and Moose Cree in Ontario. Oji-Cree, East Cree, Innu and Atikamekw are for the most part still passed on to children, but this is no longer the case for the other languages considered here. Working with a sample of languages with such varying degrees of vitality compelled us to find ways to adapt the numerous CEFR grids to allow for a better fit.

METHODOLOGY

What would an adapted CEFR framework look like for it to fit the reality of Algonquian languages? We explored some existing Algonquian language-learning textbooks/courses to determine what elements worked in favour of an adaptation and what looked like issues to be addressed. We followed the introduction of new grammatical elements such as verb classes or verbal inflection, the use of Conjunct Order verb forms across verb classes, obviation, etc., to see if the teaching progression could easily be converted to CEFR levels.

We also looked at the domains of use and the expected proficiency outcomes for different levels of instruction to verify if they could be matched to CEFR descriptors.

To further and strengthen our findings, we solicited feedback from L1 and L2 language teachers about the CEFR *Self-Assessment Grid* (Appendix 1). Our discussion took place during a language resource development workshop held at Carleton University in April 2019, with 6 expert language professionals (combining experiences as language teachers, curriculum developers, and lexicographers), all fluent, from four different Algonquian languages with various levels of vitality. Each expert was given a copy of said grid in the colonial language they mastered (English or French), and was asked to use it to rate language proficiency in their classes or more generally in their communities. While some of them only teach first language speakers, others work with both first and second language speakers. They were asked to annotate their grid individually and to indicate which descriptors they felt were adequate or inadequate, attainable or unrealistic. We then held a group discussion on each cell and compiled all the comments. We held a second discussion the following day to clarify and confirm our findings.

CEFR AND ALGONQUIAN LANGUAGES: KEY CONSIDERATIONS

To get an idea of the potential benefit of CEFR for Algonquian languages, we selected two of the most advanced textbooks we could find: *Spoken Cree (SC)* by Ellis (2000, 2004, 2016)⁷ (covering the Moose and Eastern Swampy Cree languages spoken in northern Ontario) and the series on Severn Ojibwe by Beardy⁸ (also spoken in northern Ontario),⁹ both aimed at six semesters of university-level courses (i.e. 216 instructional hours).

While these textbooks were developed without reference to the CEFR framework or other assessment tools, some of their activities, themes and tasks can be matched with existing CEFR rubrics.¹⁰ The introductory levels focus on essential components of Ojibwe or Cree grammar, most notably noun gender and its interaction with all verb classes. They both provide sufficient content for students to attain the CEFR A1 level across the board. The Listening, Reading and Writing categories emphasize entry-level achievement of elementary language tasks. However, depending on the language, the scope of the vocabulary learned in the course would limit the responses that learners could give, since the *Spoken Cree* course introduces three times the amount of words compared to the *Severn Ojibwe* course.¹¹

Intermediate Ojibwe (Beardy, 1996b) and *Advanced Ojibwe* (Beardy, 1997) substantially increase the complexity of grammatical concepts, in particular the use of VTA, of Conjunct Order verb forms across all verb classes, obviation, noun possession and a broader range of vocabulary areas including colors, body part terms, currency and cost, environmental vocabulary. *SC II* and *SC III* do the same, with domains of use having to do with life in a Cree village, but *SC III* also aims at a higher literacy level with reading texts in syllabics (legends, biblical stories, treaties in translation) with various orthographic conventions (pointed or non-pointed syllabics).

Necessary rescaling

An estimate is that *Intermediate Ojibwe* and *Spoken Cree II* provide sufficient content for learners to achieve CEFR level A2, while *Advanced Ojibwe* and *SC III* provide sufficient content for learners to achieve CEFR level B1, perhaps B1+ or B2 for *SC III*. As far as we know there is no Indigenous textbook series that would lead to achieving the C (1, 2) level.

The C level is indeed problematic for Indigenous languages. While it is designed for second language learners, it should be roughly equivalent to what a native speaker can do. In the context in which CEFR was developed, such an ideal speaker could be defined as an ‘educated native speaker of a language with a strong and rich written tradition and whose intergenerational transmission was NOT disrupted by colonialism’. A highly proficient Indigenous speaker, however, would rarely, if ever, fit this description. Since the start of colonization in North America, there has always been disruption of intergenerational transmission, in addition to massive changes in lifestyle. All experts consulted noted that comprehension of elders’ speech was difficult for them (i.e. vocabulary and knowledge of life in the bush).

The same conclusion came from the evaluation of the CEFR *Self-Assessment Grid* (Appendix 1) by our language experts. Indigenous language learners increasingly expect to develop proficiency in reading and writing skills. Yet, our preliminary work with experienced Indigenous language teachers in reviewing the CEFR documents revealed their awareness of the challenges involved in learners achieving advanced proficiency levels (C levels) in these areas, which is reflected in the revisions that were made in the proposed adaptation of the CEFR levels. They determined that the grid descriptors were

applicable in all the areas highlighted in grey in Table 1 below. However, they felt the areas displayed in black showed relevance problems and required adjustments to their descriptors.

Table 1 Indigenous languages Experts assessment of the Self-Assessment Grid

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
UNDERSTANDING						
• LISTENING						
• READING						
SPEAKING						
• SPOKEN INTERACTION						
• SPOKEN PRODUCTION						
WRITING						

Echoing our findings with the textbooks, the C level was considered a non-target for all the languages involved, except for the *Speaking* category, since our experts were living proof that such a level of fluency could be reached. However, the consensus was that it was unlikely new learners could attain this level.

Limited exposure

Mastering skills like *Listening* or *Spoken Interaction/Production* requires a certain number of hours of study and exposure (O’Grady, 2018: 329-330). Because English- or French-speaking learners of an Algonquian language will face completely new vocabulary, word structure, syntax and pronunciation, it is likely that they will require significantly more hours of study to reach CEFR targets than would English-speaking learners of a Germanic or Romance language. Estimates suggest that the latter would require approximately 1060-1200 cumulative hours of study to reach the C2 level in a language with significant grammatical differences from their own (Alliance Française, U.S. Department of State’s Foreign Service Institute).

Although there are no estimates of required hours of study for a speaker of English or French to learn an Algonquian language, it is reasonable to assume that the number would be substantially higher. Therefore, the issue of hours of study in postsecondary program and course design for Indigenous languages requires further investigation, given its likely impact on levels of achievement. All the more so since, contrary to learners of languages widely spoken, it is very difficult, even impossible, for learners of some Algonquian languages to interact with speakers outside the classroom, either because there are too few of them or because they simply do not exist.

Vitality

A key premise of the CEFR is that languages are robust and safe. However, this is not always the case with any given Indigenous language. When the language is endangered, the proficiency level of teachers cannot be taken for granted (O’Grady, 2018: 330), nor can the speakers’ competence in all domains of use. Then comes the question of intergenerational transmission, home use and community use in everyday interactions. The reality that language shift might be happening now, or has already happened (Burnaby, 1981), cannot be overlooked. Hence, a revised CEFR for Algonquin languages should consider the vitality of the targeted language.

Dialects

Dialectal variation affects B1-C2 for *Listening* and almost all *Reading* levels. Whenever there is no standard orthography, even if written material exists, the lack of consistency

and the multiple orthographic systems are a huge barrier for a learner attempting to develop and practice reading skills. A good case study to understand where the problem lies is Innu, a language whose speakers have agreed, after 40 years, on one standard orthography (Baraby, 2003), but where mutual intelligibility declines as the distance between the communities increases. East Cree has fewer mutual intelligibility problems, partly solved at the written level by two standard orthographies (one for each larger dialectal group), allowing a little more transparency in the writing system than Innu. For Ojibwe dialects, the lack of standardisation in writing increases challenges. Most writing systems in other Algonquian languages that we know of, even when well-established, are not consistently written by speakers, and writing conventions show a range of variation (Fiero, 1985).

Written language

There is a common asymmetry between oral proficiency and literacy amongst Indigenous speakers: people can read but not write, or they can speak but not read or write. Many elders are at a C2 level for speaking, but only reach A1 for writing. It is important to note that even if the language has a standardized orthography, it is most likely recent and not yet mastered by most of the population. Reading at an advanced level for such languages would thus imply familiarity with several (past) orthographic systems and high awareness of the phonemic principles governing dialectal variation. Languages using syllabaries sometimes have people fixated on mechanical learning of the syllabary, but without developing reading proficiency of whole texts or fluency in writing. For example, some rare communities do have a newspaper available in the language, but very few younger speakers have the necessary proficiency to read or understand it. Thus, it becomes difficult

to use a descriptor like “I can read articles or reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular attitudes or viewpoints” (CEFR, *Reading* B2) as a baseline if none of the targeted audience is able to read a newspaper. Therefore, *Reading* descriptors are affected at all levels and *Writing* descriptors were unanimously declared non-applicable at the C levels by our experts.

Register and styles, cultural norms

The question of style is mentioned in the *Self-Assessment Grid* for writing skills at the C levels, where the descriptors (“I can select a style appropriate to the reader in mind” (C1) and “I can write summaries and reviews of professional or literary works” (C2)) were ruled out by our experts. The issue of styles and registers intersects with the paucity of written material and written literary tradition. Knowledge of cultural norms is what would determine proper use of the language, and thus descriptors for *Understanding* and *Reading* at the B2, C1 and C2 levels would have to be redeveloped to include language-specific norms. During our discussions, language teachers brought up the theme of politeness, highlighting how different the norms were between the Algonquian language they speak and English or French.

Scarcity of language resources

Access to pedagogically useful written and spoken language resources varies by language and dialect, with modest but increasing availability of materials. Questions of dialect variation and acceptance of orthographic standards often have an impact on the acceptance and utility of materials. Cree and Anishinaabemowin (Ojibwe) reflect this reality, with both

having local standards for the use of syllabic and alphabetic writing systems. As of today, and to the best of our knowledge, there are very few monolingual films or TV shows in any Algonquian language that would allow someone to practice their listening skills. Therefore, *Listening* at B1, B2 and C1 levels are affected. For example, at B1, the descriptor that states “I can understand the main points of many radio or TV programs...” was crossed out because there are no such programs to listen to. Some radio shows do exist, for example some hockey tournaments are broadcast in Innu or Cree, but they are usually not available on the web for on-demand listening. Moreover, compared to the vast resources available for European languages, there is very little production of literature, podcasts, films or videos conceived IN an Algonquian language today. If any, they are often translations from French or English or are not readily usable as pedagogical material.¹²

The general shortage of written material affects *Reading* at all levels: in A1, it was suggested to replace “reading catalogues” with picture books. Simple everyday material such as advertisements, brochures, menus and timetables were crossed out (A2), as they are usually not produced nor available in the language. The few that do exist are often the result of translation, with inconsistent quality, which means that they may not be appropriate for language learning. Our experts decided that “Short, simple personal letters” (or e-mails) could remain as part of the A2 *Reading* descriptor though. From B2 onwards, the descriptors apply to languages with literary traditions and were thus hardly applicable. Written production in the language, when it exists (see the Cree school board book catalogue),¹³ tends to be limited to elementary school readers and children’s books.

OUR PROPOSAL: AN ADAPTED VERSION OF THE CEFR *SELF-ASSESSMENT GRID*

In view of all the different issues we identified, as well as the concerns and limitations expressed by our experts pertaining to the C levels, we decided to emulate the approach put forth by the group who worked on the Romani language (Little and Simpson, 2008).

We worked at adapting the current CEFR *Self-Assessment Grid* descriptors to make them fit better within the reality experienced by these Indigenous communities. Our first decision was to limit our grid to 4 levels, that is from A1 to B2, skipping the C levels altogether as they were not considered realistically attainable. We then eliminated all mentions in the descriptors of material that is not easily accessible or available, such as “catalogues”, “television programs”, “films”, “broadcasts”, “contemporary literary prose” or “literary works”, and instead selected replacements (e.g. “picture books” or “postcards”) suggested by our specialists.

While the Romani framework offers 11 different grids, one per theme, each perfectly adapted to topic-specific activities and skills, we decided to focus our work on one general grid, mostly based on the different aspects of current Indigenous daily life, in keeping with the grid of descriptors they drew for *Romanipe* (Little and Simpson, 2008: 23-24).

The descriptors we chose are a mix of the original descriptors, those of the *Romanipe* grid and input from our specialists and ourselves (see our revised version in Appendix 2). We tried to use broad enough wording to encompass learners of all ages – not exclusively children, as was done for Romani – and made sure to keep a constant link with the Indigenous languages and cultures. For instance, the descriptor for *Listening* B1 mentions

“I can listen to a talk about my community history or traditions” instead of a radio or TV program as it is in the original CEFR grid. *Speaking-Production* B2 reads “I can retell a familiar legend in phrases or simple sentences” when the original refers to educational background or past/present jobs.

This version is only a preliminary template, aimed at gathering as much feedback from teachers and other language experts as possible. As a prospective tool valuable at the policy level and at the curriculum design level, it will require testing on a much broader scale. Whether it is about necessary adjustments to the descriptors, a reflection about the benefit of such a tool in real-life classrooms or a need for more community/language-specific grids, we welcome constructive criticism to open the discussion on the importance of assessment in Indigenous languages.

The aim of this first attempt is to garner enough attention and generate a group dynamic to join forces and come up with an Algonquian language CEFR.

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² It has become the default benchmarking norm for many institutions, such as the Université de Montréal which uses the CEFR levels for all its language courses, including the Algonquian language Innu

(<https://centre-de-langues.umontreal.ca/cours-et-horaires/cours/innu/>).

³ It is important to note that we briefly explored other frameworks aside from the CEFR, but they were not all relevant. For example, the Canadian Language Benchmarks scale was designed for adult second language learners of English and French, focussing on the needs of immigrants for integration into Canadian society and the workplace. Another, NETOLNEW, is a relatively new (2016) assessment tool for Indigenous languages in BC, developed collaboratively by community members and researchers in education/linguistics. However, this tool functions best in a specific context such as the Mentor-Apprentice learning model, especially where the language may be severely endangered. Rather than a template for standard linguistic benchmarks, it serves more as a motivational tool with “can do” statements and individual learning goals. In the USA, the ACTFL offers three grids of performance descriptors for language learners that are much closer to the CEFR ones. Each grid covers one mode of communication (Interpersonal, Interpretive or Presentational) across three ranges of performance (Novice, Intermediate, and Advanced). It was however predominantly created for English-speaking learners from the US to answer very specific needs for standardized tests.

⁴ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/table-1-cefr-3.3-common-reference-levels-global-scale>

⁵ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/table-3-cefr-3.3-common-reference-levels-qualitative-aspects-of-spoken-language-use>

⁶ According to Statistics Canada 2016, an estimated 96,575 could speak in Cree; 28,130 could speak Ojibway, 15,585 spoke Oji-Cree and 11,360 spoke Montagnais-Naskapi.

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/98-200-x/2016022/98-200-x2016022-eng.cfm>

⁷ Earlier versions of *SC I* and *SC II* were published in the 1960s and then entirely revised.

⁸ *Introductory Ojibwe: parts one and two in Severn dialect*, *Intermediate Ojibwe: Parts one and two in Severn dialect*, and *Advanced Ojibwe: Parts one and two in Severn dialect*.

⁹ Severn Ojibwe (Oji-Cree) is spoken in northern Ontario (Valentine 1994). Teaching materials for Severn Ojibwe courses for university language learners were prepared in the mid-1990s (Beardy 1996a, b; Beardy 1997). The introductory-level text is an adaptation of an earlier text prepared in the 1980s (Mitchell et al 1988). All three volumes are written in a roman orthography developed for varieties of Ojibwe in northern

Ontario. It is similar to that in Nichols and Nyholm 1995, the main difference being the treatment of consonant clusters.

¹⁰ It is highly likely that time spent in class and the textbook would be the primary, and for some, only sources of Ojibwe or Cree language content.

¹¹ Ojibwe: 1,122 (Introductory 354; Intermediary 320; Advanced 448) vs Spoken Cree 4,580 (Introductory 1,280; Intermediary 1, 680; Advanced 1,620). The SC number includes 94 morphemes (medials and finals), some of which are repeated in dependent nouns, given in the 3rd person. Otherwise, all entries are types, not inflected tokens, thus confirming the large and rich vocabulary of the SC textbooks.

¹² The 2019 Canadian federal election leaders' debate was dubbed in several Algonquian languages and made available on YouTube, but with only one voice for all 4 leaders, and as a translation product – not ideal for language learning.

¹³ To access the Cree School Board catalogue, see <https://www.eastcree.org/cree/en/catalogue/>

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APPENDIX 1:

THE CEFR SELF-ASSESSMENT GRID

		A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
U N D E R S T A N D I N G	Listening	I can recognise familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.	I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.	I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly. I can understand television programmes and films without too much effort.	I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided I have some time to get familiar with the accent.
	Reading	I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.	I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters.	I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.	I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular attitudes or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose.	I can understand long and complex factual and literary texts, appreciating distinctions of style. I can understand specialised articles and longer technical instructions, even when they do not relate to my field.	I can read with ease virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts such as manuals, specialised articles and literary works.
S P E A K I N G	Spoken Interaction	I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can't usually understand enough to keep the conversation going myself.	I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).	I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. I can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining my views.	I can express myself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. I can use language flexibly and effectively for social and professional purposes. I can formulate ideas and opinions with precision and relate my contribution skilfully to those of other speakers.	I can take part effortlessly in any conversation or discussion and have a good familiarity with idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. I can express myself fluently and convey finer shades of meaning precisely. If I do have a problem I can backtrack and restructure around the difficulty so smoothly that other people are hardly aware of it.
	Spoken Production	I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.	I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job.	I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes and ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.	I can present a clear, smoothly-flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.
W R I T I N G	Writing	I can write a short, simple postcard, for example sending holiday greetings. I can fill in forms with personal details, for example entering my name, nationality and address on a hotel registration form.	I can write short, simple notes and messages relating to matters in areas of immediate needs. I can write a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something.	I can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.	I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. I can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view. I can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences.	I can express myself in clear, well-structured text, expressing points of view at some length. I can write about complex subjects in a letter, an essay or a report, underlining what I consider to be the salient issues. I can select style appropriate to the reader in mind.	I can write clear, smoothly-flowing text in an appropriate style. I can write complex letters, reports or articles which present a case with an effective 'logical' structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points. I can write summaries and reviews of professional or literary works.

Source:

<https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?docu mentId=090000168045bb52>

APPENDIX 2

TABLE 2 : SELF-ASSESSMENT GRID, ADAPTED VERSION FOR ALGONQUIAN LANGUAGES

		A1	A2	B1	B2
UNDERSTANDING	LISTENING	I can understand words related to my family, daily activities, items of clothing and food, the main celebrations and commemorations, songs, dances, legends of my community and other leisure/sporting activities.	I can understand simple instructions given about my daily life at home/ in the community. I can understand simple explanations of matters of most immediate personal relevance. I can understand the main points and purpose of a simple legend or story.	I can understand a story or account about my family or community. I can listen to a talk about Indigenous history, traditions or way of life and understand the main points.	I can understand in detail an extended talk about Indigenous life, history or culture, as well as reasonably familiar issues that arise in the modern world.
	READING	I can recognize and understand basic words related to my family, daily activities, items of clothing and food, the names of familiar legend characters and songs on a poster, flash card, menu or in a picture book.	I can read and understand short texts, (e.g. a familiar legend, story, personal narrative), with very familiar words of high frequency. I can read and understand simple texts about daily life, history or traditions. I can understand short simple personal letters or e-mails.	I can read and understand an account of Indigenous people past and present experiences. I can understand texts that use high frequency everyday language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.	I can read and understand a detailed description of daily life issues. I can read and understand an account of the experiences of a person or group from my community in which they express a specific viewpoint. I can read and understand a biographical text about a well-known person or a legend character.
SPEAKING	INTERACTION	I can ask for basic items in the home. I can respond nonverbally or with single words or very brief answers to questions about my daily life (family, home, activities, likes and dislikes, and experiences) provided the other person is ready to repeat or reformulate things at a slower rate of speech. I can greet and respond to greetings appropriately.	I can ask and answer simple questions about familiar topics and activities (crafts and hobbies, typical events and community activities). I can handle very short social exchanges, but not enough to keep the conversation going myself.	I can ask and answer a range of questions about aspects of Indigenous life and culture. I can answer questions about my life and how I see the traditions of my culture. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).	I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. I can discuss in detail the traditions of Indigenous communities and their impact on daily life. I can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, while expressing and supporting my opinions.
	PRODUCTION	I can use key words or basic phrases to describe my family, home, activities, job, likes and dislikes.	I can use a series of simple phrases and sentences to describe my family and community, my living conditions, my educational and/or professional background. I can retell a familiar story in phrases or simple sentences.	I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe personal experiences, events or feelings. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a legend, a story or an aspect of Indigenous life, history or culture and describe my reactions.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest, highlighting the significant points. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue and debate the validity of various opinions. I can share my experience about learning an Indigenous language and illustrate the talk with examples taken from different varieties of the language.
WRITING		I can copy or write words or lists related to my family members, daily activities, items in the home, food and clothing as well as important events or legends. I can write a short, simple postcard, for example sending holiday greetings.	I can write short texts using familiar vocabulary to describe an aspect of Indigenous history or tradition, or to give a brief summary of a familiar legend, story or personal narrative. I can write short, simple notes and messages relating to personal or very familiar matters. I can write a very simple personal letter.	I can write simple connected texts on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. I can write letters describing personal experiences and impressions.	I can write clear, detailed texts on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. I can write an essay or report, debating the validity of a particular viewpoint. I can write content highlighting my personal viewpoint of certain events and experiences.