

## Libraries and the Arctic: Language Education Support

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The Arctic inspires awe. This unique region of the world has been studied in many ways by many different disciplines. The discipline of librarianship can also add to its study. In this article, the authors, a practicing Canadian librarian at Brock University in Ontario and an Inuktitut student enrolled at the same university, offer a suggested role for libraries to play in the ongoing study of the Arctic. They explore and describe the role of libraries in supporting native Arctic language education. Support for learning and preserving native Arctic languages can be found in library collections, spaces and services. This article looks at support of native speakers and other interested language learners, support of language research, support of language preservation, and support of new publishing opportunities that can be provided by or through libraries. These language support examples come from a document analysis that perused web sites, conference proceedings, published scholarship in the form of books and articles, newspaper sources, and personal background knowledge of the authors. Documents were collected, categorized, and described. The language support categories that emerged illustrate the many different ways that libraries can engage in native Arctic language education support. In offering this role, the authors hope to provide a means for librarians to learn more about the Arctic as well as a way for libraries to contribute to knowledge of the Arctic.

Die Arktis weckt Ehrfurcht. Diese einzigartige Region der Welt wurde in vielerlei Hinsicht von vielen verschiedenen Disziplinen untersucht. Die Bibliotheksforschung kann auch dazu beitragen, die Arktis zu erkunden. In diesem Artikel schlagen die Autorinnen, eine praktizierende kanadische Bibliothekarin an der Brock University in Ontario und eine Inuktitut-Studentin, die an derselben Universität eingeschrieben ist, Bibliotheken eine Rolle in einer laufenden Studie zur Arktis vor. Sie erforschen und beschreiben die Rolle von Bibliotheken bei der Unterstützung der arktischen Sprachausbildung. Unterstützung bei dem Erlernen und Bewahren der einheimischen arktischen Sprachen findet durch die Bestände, Räumlichkeiten und Dienstleistungen der Bibliotheken statt. Dieser Artikel befasst sich mit der Unterstützung von Muttersprachlern und anderen interessierten Sprachstudenten sowie mit der Unterstützung von Sprachforschung, Sprachbewahrung und von neuen Veröffentlichungsmöglichkeiten, die von oder über Bibliotheken bereitgestellt werden können. Die Beispiele für die Sprachunterstützung stammen aus einer Dokumentenanalyse, die sowohl Websites, Konferenzberichte, akademische Veröffentlichungen in Form von Büchern und Artikeln und Zeitungsquellen als auch das persönliche Hintergrundwissen der Autoren erforschte. Die Dokumente wurden gesammelt, kategorisiert und beschrieben. Die auftretenden Kategorien zur Sprachunterstützung

illustrieren die mannigfaltige Art und Weise, wie sich Bibliotheken an der Unterstützung der Sprache der Einheimischen in der Arktis beteiligen können. Mit dieser Rolle hoffen die Autorinnen, dass Bibliothekarinnen und Bibliothekare mehr über die Arktis erfahren können und dass Bibliotheken einen Beitrag zum Wissen über die Arktis leisten können.

## Introduction

The Arctic inspires awe. The sheer majesty of the landscape is often imaged in visual form, as if words alone could not capture a full sense of its essence. As a unique place on earth, its study can span many disciplines – science, history, ethnography, archaeology, and even ecotourism, to name but a few. The discipline of librarianship does not usually figure into its study or description.

This article seeks to serve as a small attempt to remedy the paucity of knowledge about the Arctic in the general literature of librarianship. It uses library support for Indigenous (more specifically Inuit) Arctic language education as a way to open this door. This article describes library programs, services, or collections that have the potential to provide Indigenous Arctic language education support. The purpose of this article is to consider the question: Is there a role for libraries to play in Arctic language education?

Language education support for Indigenous Arctic languages can take many forms in and through libraries. The various forms that will be described in this article include support for language use by Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun (or more generally Indigenous) speakers, language learning purposes, language research purposes, language preservation, and new publishing opportunities. Each will be described in this article and illustrated through evidence of current practices taking place.

## Personal Backgrounds

Brock University in southern Ontario, Canada, serves as the backdrop for the writing of this article. One of the authors, Karen Bordonaro, is a liaison librarian at the University who studies internationalization in academic libraries, as well as linguistic uses of libraries by non-Indigenous speakers of English in various settings within and outside the United States and Canada. The other author, Shelby Angalik, Inuk from Nunavut, is a current Brock undergraduate student majoring in English who is considering the profession of librarianship as a possible future career. Together, Karen and Shelby have gathered the information that forms the main content of this article and have infused its descriptions with their personal perspectives.

## Arctic Connections

The personal language and library research interests of Karen and the lived Inuk Arctic experiences of Shelby serve as the initial starting background point for this article. Other starting

points beyond our personal settings, however, add further dimensions to our investigation of Arctic language education support in and through libraries. These further starting points encompass various connections between Brock University and the Arctic, and between Canada and the Arctic that can further add to the background of this article. In addition, connections between Arctic language support and Canadian governmental policies, and connections between Arctic language support and the literature of librarianship can additionally broaden an understanding of the context in which we are conducting our investigation. It should be noted at this point, however, that the further starting points described below were generally created by non-Indigenous people. So they do offer further perspectives to consider, but they cannot be said to represent fully how the Arctic can be understood or studied.

## Brock University and the Arctic

Brock University, though located at a sizeable geographic distance from the Arctic in its base of operations in southern Ontario, nevertheless has established some connections to the region. Shelby's physical presence as a student at the University is the clearest example of a connection between Brock and the Arctic.<sup>1</sup> Other examples exist as well, however, such as the Arctic solo travel expedition engaged in by Adam Shoalts, an alumnus of the University as described in both the alumni magazine (Firth, 2017) and online through his own expedition web site.<sup>2</sup> And a final example of a Brock connection with the Arctic can be seen in the hockey coaching work done by Joe Pelino, another Brock alumnus.<sup>3</sup>

## Canada and the Arctic

Canada, as a geographically located Northern country, has many obvious connections with the Arctic. Many of these wider connections can be seen in studies having to do with the climate or strategic location of the Arctic and its importance for Canada as a nation (Griffiths, Huebert, & Lackenbauer, 2011; Zellen, 2013; Coad & Reist, 2018). That the government of Canada is supportive of these scientific investigations concerning the Arctic is obvious as well (Campbell, 2017; Hoag, 2017). And in addition to scientific and strategic investigations connecting Canada with the Arctic, Canadian scholars also produce research that considers historical, political, and artistic connections with the Arctic (Zeller & Ries, 2014; Charron, Plouffe, & Roussel, 2012; Rathwell & Armitage, 2016). The exploration of larger sociological concerns about how Indigenous Peoples (more specifically Inuit) in the Arctic are represented and understood by non-Indigenous people in Canada is also a subject of current study that connects Canada with the Arctic (Johnston & Tester, 2014). Perhaps at this juncture it would not be remiss to note that the authors of this current article represent this same duality, with Karen as a non-Indigenous and Shelby as an Inuk from the Arctic.

<sup>1</sup> <https://brocku.ca/brock-news/2016/07/nunavut-student-heading-to-brock-after-earning-td-scholarship-for-her-leadership-efforts/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://adamshoalts.com/expeditions/alone-across-arctic-2017/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://brocku.ca/brock-news/2017/08/brock-alum-raising-awareness-of-inuit-culture/>

## Indigenous Languages and the Arctic

In addition to connections between Brock University and the Arctic, and the nation of Canada with the Arctic, there also exist connections between language issues and government policies relating to the Arctic that provide useful background information. Before considering such issues, however, it may be useful at this juncture to offer some general information about Indigenous Arctic languages here.

There is no one universal Indigenous Arctic language spoken by all Indigenous people of the Arctic. In addition, the intersections of Indigenous language, social culture and ethnic identity in this part of the world add further nuances that are not easy for non-Indigenous people to grasp (Dorais, pp. 293–308). In terms of language only, in fact, the scope is enormous, and ever-changing. A review of a 1990 book that came out under the auspices of the United Nations cultural arm, UNESCO, for example, makes use of the term ‘Eskimo’ that is no longer considered acceptable terminology while also noting that,

‘For the USSR, some 25 languages are covered in 107 pages; for Alaska, Aleut and four varieties of Eskimo tone Inuit, three Yupik are covered in 54 pages; for Canada, the Inuit dialect chain receives 105 pages; for Greenland (Greenlandic subsuming the local varieties of Inuit) receives 74 pages; and for Northern Scandinavia, the varieties of Sami (Lappish) are given 92 pages.’ (Comrie, 1991, p. 625)

Perhaps at this point, it would make sense to shift directly to Shelby’s voice alone in explaining what different kinds of Inuit languages can be found in the Arctic:

There are many languages used by Inuit in Inuit Nunangat (Arctic regions of Canada, Siberia, Alaska, and Greenland). But, in Canada, the two main languages are Inuktitut (used in Nunavut and Nunavik) and Inuinnaqtun (spoken in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut). There are many similarities between languages spoken by Inuit, but there are also a lot of differences. Dialects can differ from community to community and even from family to family. More broadly, there is the Baffin dialect spoken mostly in the northern parts of Nunavut, and the Kivalliq dialect spoken mostly in the southern parts. For centuries, Inuktitut has been an oral language, but with the introduction of settlers an Inuktitut alphabet using syllabics was created in order to translate the Bible. The syllabics from the Cree language were used and modified for Inuktitut. Around the 1970’s, the Makivik Corporation modified the written language by removing the fourth column of the alphabet. Having now three columns of the alphabet, it was much easier to use for printing and typing. Now, the fourth column is only used in Nunavik.

Taking up the thread once again of connections, Arctic language connections to government policies are also worth considering. Language connections can be seen in examples such as the federal government of Canada working with the province of Nunavut to ‘develop a nationwide language law’ (Pucci, 2017, p. 1) in order to protect Indigenous languages of the Inuit, First Nations and Metis in Canada.<sup>4</sup> This is paralleled in other parts of Canada as well, as in Nova Scotia

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<sup>4</sup>[Footnote from the editorial team of LIBREAS. Library Ideas for non-canadian readers: Inuit are groups of indigenous peoples, living predominantly in the Canadian Arctic, Greenland and Alaska, First Nations is the umbrella term for other groups of indigenous people living in Canada. Métis are groups of people with mixed, indigenous and settler, ancestry.]

where ‘the chief of Nova Scotia’s largest First Nation says he wants to pursue talks with the provincial government about declaring Mi’kmaq an official language in the province’ (MacDonald, 2017, p. 1). The current language concerns of Indigenous people are arising during a time of wider reconciliation efforts across Canada to come to terms with corrosive Indigenous legacies in the past (Gettler, 2017). This is a cultural issue too complex to be easily summarized here, but it is well worth noting as an important consideration in the broader backdrop to the content of this article.

## Libraries and the Arctic

Just as with language connections to the Arctic, so too can some connections be found between libraries and the Arctic that can add further helpful background information. Consulting the literature of librarianship is a useful way to gain background information on how librarianship may support or be practiced in the Arctic.

As implied at the start of the article, the literature of general librarianship is not exactly rife with Arctic content. One exception from the general literature, though, might be the library research done on various aspects of internationalization within the realm of libraries. This literature seeks to explore topics such as: notions of intercultural understanding (Hall, 1992); widened understandings of global literacy promotion (Global Literature in Libraries Initiative, 2017; Using Libraries to Support National Literacy Efforts, 2016); the use of Indigenous versus non-Indigenous languages in libraries (Gonzalez, 2017); the shared cataloguing, description, and community input for Indigenous materials organization across libraries (Smith, 2008); and the importance of digitization projects involving Indigenous language content (Sraku-Lartey, Acquah, Samar, & Djabbletey, 2017). All of these various aspects of general librarianship being studied could potentially lend themselves to Arctic perspectives as well.

And all of above is not to say that absolutely no library work exists on Arctic topics in the general literature of librarianship at all. There is some literature available, often from Canadian library authors, which will be referenced and used as examples in the next section of this article. As a preview, it can be noted here that these Arctic library articles found in this small subset of the literature touch on topics such as delivery service, cataloguing, and providing materials in Indigenous languages by practicing librarians in this region.

And in addition to these articles describing practices that will be highlighted in the next section, some work on gathering Arctic research material for librarians has taken place as well. For example, Spencer Arcadia, an academic librarian in the United States, published a list of Internet resources for the February 2011 issue of *College & Research Libraries News* on ‘Arctic Research: Environment, Health, and Culture of the Circumpolar North’ (Arcadia, 2011). He is also currently working on a forthcoming book tentatively titled ‘*Arctic Social Sciences and Humanities: The Role of Library, Archival, and Information Sciences in the Circumpolar North*’, which could also widen the knowledge base for librarians.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.apecs.is/news/polar-news/1718-call-for-paper-proposals-arctic-social-sciences-humanities-and-the-roles-of-library-archival-and-information-sciences.html>

Besides considering the library literature, a further useful way to learn about libraries and the Arctic can be to consider its practice in everyday library settings in this region. One very direct way to do this is to consult local Arctic library associations operating in this region of the world. An example of an association like this is the Nunavut Library Association. Perusing their web site can give interested librarians an inside look at how libraries operate in this very unique setting, and what some of the opportunities and the challenges could be in serving Inuit populations in Nunavut.<sup>6</sup>

All of the connections and settings described above serve as contextual background information for the main content of this article. This information is meant to illuminate where the question of how libraries can support Arctic language education came from. And it offers interested librarians a brief glimpse at how Arctic library work can potentially be understood and investigated.

## Document Analysis

The main content of this article comprises examples of library practices that illustrate the various ways that libraries can play a role in supporting Indigenous language education in the Arctic. The evidence for these various ways comes from identifying and collecting documents that show or describe current library practices that either already support or have the future potential to support Indigenous Arctic language education in and through libraries.

The examples described below come from an array of different documents that included web sites, conference notifications and proceedings, and books and relevant articles from the literature of librarianship and news sources that contain mentions of the Arctic. Documents were found through general web searches, library databases such as LISTA (Library, Information Science and Technology Abstracts), education databases such as Education Source and ERIC, the new database iPortal (the Indigenous studies portal research tool developed by the University of Saskatchewan), book catalogues of Brock University Library and WorldCat, regional newspaper and online radio sources, and from word-of-mouth and the personal background knowledge of the authors.

The methodology used to analyze the documents followed a sequence of collection, categorization, and description. Collected examples were grouped by categories. The categories that emerged from this grouping included library support of Indigenous Arctic language education through these various ways: through language use, language learning, language research, language preservation, and publishing opportunities. The examples were then perused for content and details that could potentially shed further light on a particular category. Examples were aligned, and the following descriptions of practices below were developed.

## Language Support Examples

Libraries, whether public, school, or academic, can engage in Arctic language education support in a multitude of ways. The ways below illustrate a number of different options for other libraries that may also be interested in playing a role in providing this support.

<sup>6</sup> <https://nunavutlibraryassociation.ca>

Once again, this seems to be an important place to hear Shelby's voice directly. By describing her personal goals concerning the support of literacy in the Arctic potentially through librarianship, she can offer the rest of us a unique perspective on why Indigenous (or more specifically Inuktitut or Inuit) Arctic language support could be an important role for libraries to play.

Due to Inuit having more recently been colonized, we are still transitioning and trying to find a happy middle in keeping our culture alive but also keeping up with the times. Our language is a major part of who we are. We have perspectives and thoughts that cannot be translated into English, our culture is embedded within the language. I am really interested in studying literacy in the western culture because I gain new perspectives from reading in English as well. Growing up in a generation stuck between two cultures, with one (western culture) being forced more predominantly than the other (Inuit culture) has been difficult but opened my eyes and probably others in my generation. With literacy, I feel I can take from my Inuit culture and western literacy and help Inuit youth in bettering their education, not necessarily only in schools, but in everyday life as well. I cannot stress the importance of Inuktitut enough. Having Inuktitut in our youth's day to day lives will strengthen Inuit culture. As Inuit, what we need more is the help from other Inuit when it comes to literacy, we need our own librarians who can incorporate Inuit culture in every aspect of learning. I became interested in literacy for children, especially Inuit youth. I want Inuit youth to have the proper education that they need without completely assimilating to the western culture, but instead incorporating Inuit culture into the western culture. I was taught that most Inuit are illiterate, by seeing all the statistics you would assume so too. But that is only in the English language that many Inuit are considered illiterate, not in Inuktitut. We have to understand that we are an oral culture, for centuries our knowledge and values have been passed down through storytelling. We are still transitioning into using the written language. In the near future I would really like to see our education system favour Inuit in every aspect of literacy, and blend Inuktitut literacy and English literacy together.

Taking Shelby's words into account, the content of this article will now shift to the categorized descriptions of examples collected from the document analysis.

## Language Use

For people who are already Indigenous speakers of Arctic languages, libraries can most certainly support their further Indigenous language use. This can be done through the incorporation of the Indigenous language itself as a way to search the library's collections. For example, the Nunavut Arctic College Library offers a 'change language' option on their web site for Indigenous speakers of Inuinnaqtun and Inuktitut (see Figure 1 below).<sup>7</sup>

By offering Indigenous Arctic language search interfaces, this library is strongly supporting language use. These search interfaces can not only support language use by Indigenous speakers at College, but they also support the language use of Indigenous speakers in the community as well.

Other support of language use by Indigenous speakers can also appear in physical signage on the library premises. Again at the Nunavut Arctic College Library, this can be seen in signage at

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.arcticcollege.ca/en/arctic-college-library-services>



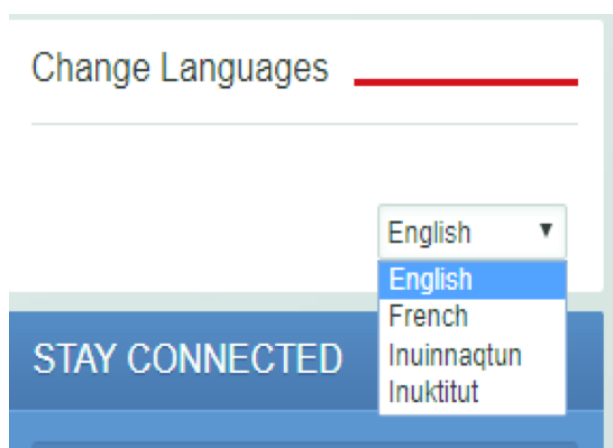


Figure 1: Nunavut Arctic College Library Services Language Choices

the entrance (see Figure 2 below). By offering this support, this college is playing a major role in literacy in Nunavut, even if there are no universities present in this region.



Figure 2: Indigenous Language Signage

Library support of Indigenous Arctic language use can appear in different types of libraries as well. The Maani Ulujuk Ilinniarvik library in Rankin Inlet, Nunavut, for example serves as a library for both high school students and community members who are Inuktitut speakers. It carries books in both Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun for their use (Dumancic, 2011). And the Legislative Library in Nunavut ‘needs to have staff with good written and oral Inuktitut and English language capability to provide services’ (Earle, 2008, p. 3). Further law library support for Indigenous speakers can be seen as well in the establishment of the Akitsiraq Law School in Nunavut (Ableson, 2006).



## Language Learning

In addition to supporting Indigenous speakers, libraries can also potentially support other language learners as well, as for example, in supporting learning for those with no prior knowledge of the language but with a desire to learn it.

This library support could take the form of supplying beginner learner materials to these library users. For example, the Juneau Public Library in Alaska (also a part of the North, even if outside Canada) recently sponsored language learning workshops in its space for Tlingit, a Indigenous Arctic language in Alaska.<sup>8</sup> In addition to offering space and supplies (tables, chairs, whiteboards), the library also made available online access to a free Tlingit workbook (Barrett, 2017).<sup>9</sup>

Another language learning support that libraries can offer is making materials in Indigenous Arctic languages accessible to those wishing to learn these languages. Carol Rigby, for example, devised a classification scheme in order to catalogue a series of Inuktitut curriculum materials that can strongly support language learning (Rigby, 2007). In more recent work, Rigby has continued to promote the use of Indigenous Arctic language into cataloguing standards even through commercial vendors (Rigby, 2015).

Helping to celebrate academic achievement in the learning of a Indigenous Arctic language is another example of libraries supporting language education. At the University of Alaska Southeast in November 2017, for example, a student at the university was the first person to ever earn a Tsimshian language credit in the United States, and her celebration was held at the campus library (Dudzak, 2017). And the learning about Indigenous Arctic languages and cultures can occur in the other direction as well, as reported by a librarian who was hired to work on an adult literacy project in Kugluktuk, Nunavut (Mulder, 2003).

## Language Research

Another component of language education that libraries can support beyond language use and language learning is language research. By supporting and helping to develop research about Indigenous Arctic languages, librarians can also serve an important role in Indigenous Arctic language education. This could be done by becoming aware of specialized polar research being done about the Arctic, and then by sharing or making that information accessible to their library users.

Often this specialized research can be found through current conference proceedings. One example of such a conference was the 2017 Ninth International Conference on Arctic Social Sciences that took place in Umea, Sweden.<sup>10</sup> Another such conference is the upcoming 2018 Polar Libraries Colloquy convened on the theme of 'Developing Polar Networks: Ideas & Possibilities for the Future'.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.alaskapublic.org/2017/07/06/free-tingit-workbook-part-of-language-revitalization/>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.sealaskaheritage.org/sites/default/files/BeginningTlingitWorkbook.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.trippus.se/web/Presentation/web.aspx?evid=1+k2p0UcaP8eXy9TNfnXsQ=&ecid=loNJV+HVzL0o7zbDGv/zsQ=&ln=eng&view=category&template=desktoph>

<sup>11</sup> <https://polarlibraries.org/27th-polar-libraries-colloquy/>

Another example can be found in specialized web sites devoted to topics in Arctic research. One such web site comes from a consortial group called the University of the Arctic, which describes itself as a 'cooperative network of universities, colleges, research institutes, and other organizations concerned with the education and research in and about the North'.<sup>12</sup> This web site can provide a wide portal to the scholarship of the Arctic for interested librarians. The Arctic Lingua thematic network, in particular, serves as a very specialized clearinghouse for polar research that focuses on Indigenous Arctic languages through language documentation and language technologies studies.<sup>13</sup>

## Language and Cultural Preservation

Moving beyond the support of language research, library support through cultural preservation work is another avenue that libraries can use to support Indigenous Arctic language education. As with the other types of library support above, this can also take many forms.

One such way is through resource sharing projects. Yvonne Earle describes the creation of this type of a project by using the example of creating and developing a catalogue of Indigenous wildlife resources in Nunavut (Earle, 2003). While potentially not teaching use of an Arctic language, this project still preserves cultural knowledge about life in the Arctic for Inuit.

A similar example is that of a photographic web project, Project Naming, which was described by David A. Smith in 2008. This project, in part, brought together visual images from Nunavut as well as Micronesia, and solicited Indigenous input from people of those regions to improve the descriptions of the photographs. A project of this nature also helps preserve the culture of Arctic people while also preserving Indigenous names of individuals appearing in its contents (Smith, 2008).

Informing much of the present day preservation of both the language and culture of the Inuit is a set of principles called the Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ Principles) that deserves mention here as well. This set of principles emerged from Inuit values and beliefs, and it includes much content on languages of instruction that need to be supported when developing curriculum guides in Nunavut. Shelby's grandfather played a direct role in the production of this manual describing these principles.<sup>14</sup>

In terms of library applicability to language and cultural preservation, the importance of applying the IQ principles to a library environment is well described by Patricia Doucette, a non-Indigenous librarian who served as the Manager of Library Services at Nunavut Arctic College from 1999 to 2003 (Doucette, 2003). In this article, she makes the interesting point that,

'Seventy-seven per cent of the respondents identified audiovisual materials as the resource to which they most wanted access. I believe that this preference directly relates to the nature of Inuit culture. As a medium for the provision of information, a video is much more familiar than written materials to people who are accustomed to being taught through oral traditions.' (Doucette, 2003, pp. 261–262).

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.uarctic.org/about-uarctic/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.uarctic.org/organization/thematic-networks/arctic-lingua/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.gov.nu.ca/sites/default/files/files/Inuit%20Qaujimajatuqangit%20ENG.pdf>

This comment is supported by research done in the field of adult education as well that looks at the preferred use of incorporating visual learning into classes of other Arctic peoples in Western Canada (Robinson, 2009). It also emphasizes our initial opening comment at the start of this article, that understanding the Arctic may often seem to involve images in addition to words.

## Language Publishing Opportunities

Shifting back to written language support, opportunities to help with the publishing of books in Indigenous Arctic languages is the last category we identified in our document analysis as a way that libraries can support language education.

An example of a book published in this way can be seen in a dictionary of Inuktitut suffixes produced by the Arctic College Library of Nunavut with the impressive title of “*UTKUHIKŠALINGMIUT UQAUHIITIGUT UQAUHILIURUT. DICTIONARY OF UTKUHIKSALINGMIUT INUKTITUT POSTBASE SUFFIXES*.” This book was given a full book review in the journal *Arctic* that appeared in December of 2016 (Dorais, 2016, pp. 435–436).

Another publishing support opportunity for libraries can occur through spreading awareness or buying material for their collections that are produced by Indigenous authors. One example of a library guide that has collected information on Indigenous publishers is maintained by the University of Toronto Libraries.<sup>15</sup>

There do exist Indigenous publishers of children’s books who produce work in Indigenous Arctic languages as well that could offer another language education support mechanism for libraries. See, for example, Inhabit Media’s book on *Inuit Inngiusingit: A Collection of Inuit Choral Music*.<sup>16</sup>

## Future Opportunities for Library Support

While performing the document analysis that resulted in the categories and examples above, we also came across other documents and pieces of information having to do with the Arctic that might lend themselves to future library support possibilities.

These examples include fairly recent educational initiatives such as Yukon College’s introduction of ‘First Nations core competency for all graduates’ (Yukon College, 2015). As the only institution of higher education in the Yukon Territory of Canada, this initiative is worth paying attention to, because it could potentially include library support in reaching this curricular goal. It could also potentially involve library language material provision and services in addition. Yukon College is also currently undergoing the process of transforming from a college into a university, and it has proposed new degrees such as a Bachelor of Arts in Indigenous Governance, which might have library ramifications as well (Yukon Government, 2017).

A similar educational initiative is playing out at the University of Prince Edward Island. In this case, the Faculty of Education at the University is partnering with the Government of Nunavut

<sup>15</sup> <https://guides.library.utoronto.ca/Aboriginalpublishers>

<sup>16</sup> <https://inhabitmedia.com/2016/08/10/inuit-inngiusingit/>

to offer the 'first-ever graduate-level course taught in Inuktitut' (University of Prince Edward Island, 2017). With an Indigenous Arctic language serving as the language of instruction, library support could also help strengthen the student experience, so this initiative bears watching as well.

Both of these initiatives seemed poised to promote growing calls for incorporating more Indigenous learning opportunities into higher education circles in Canada in the coming years (Chiose, 2017). As a counterpoint to these seemingly positive announcements, however, it must also be noted that unhappy developments have occurred recently as well. Peter Varga, in a newspaper article decrying the lack of a university in the Arctic, stated that, 'Nunavummiut and other peoples of the Canadian Arctic have little chance of shaping the development of their northern lands and culture without an Arctic-based university run by peoples of the region, for peoples of the region' (Varga, 2017).

## Need for Further Research

The need for future study of how libraries can best support Arctic language education remains immense. Besides a more in-depth consideration of the examples offered above, a deeper understanding of the contexts that these examples come from and operate in would also go far in strengthening future library support.

One key element to a deeper contextual understanding would be the ability to hear more directly the voices of more Indigenous language users in the Arctic as to what their library needs and desires are. The importance of understanding Inuit knowledge when studying the Arctic must be acknowledged. In addition, more voices of librarians working in this region would be welcome as well.

One very rare example of hearing both voices at once, that of an Indigenous speaker as well as of a practicing librarian in the Arctic, can perhaps provide some direction for the future. In a paper presented at the 19<sup>th</sup> annual Polar Libraries Colloquy in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 2002, one presentation entitled 'A Greenlandic Inuk librarian's point of view on the future of Inuit libraries, language and literature' was offered by a librarian from the National Public Library of Greenland (Jermissen, 2002). In this paper, she addresses library challenges such as orthography (spelling changes) in the Indigenous language, the lack of funds needed to classify much primary source material, and the unique cultural setting of Greenland as factors to consider in library work in this region. Laying out such a groundwork can help plot the future course of research concerning libraries and the Arctic.

## Conclusion

Libraries do have a role to play in supporting Indigenous Arctic language education. This support can play out in a number of different ways: by supporting Indigenous speakers and language learners through library material collection and support, by designating the library as a physical place in which to use and study these languages, by supporting and making available research about the Arctic, by participating in cultural and language preservation efforts, and by

providing awareness or direct support of publishing opportunities. In conclusion, supporting Indigenous Arctic language education in and through libraries can open the door to one small way of potentially expanding understandings of the Arctic through the field of librarianship.

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