

**Initial Change in Sheshatshiu Innu-Aimûn:
Infixation and feature packing**

Aim: Establish a formal analysis of a morpho-phonological process called *Initial Change* (IC) in Sheshatshiu Innu-Aimûn (SI-A) (Bloomfield 1946; MacKenzie 1980; Clarke 1982; Burgess 2009). This requires exploring SI-A’s autosegmental conditions on phonological feature packaging and unpacking (overwriting, fission and fusion). All the patterns are phonologically modular, making no reference to readjustment rules or allomorphy.

Background: IC is a non-concatenative morphological alteration of verbs in the conjunct order marked by changes to its initial vowel, thereby creating copious allomorphic forms. SI-A presents three distinct patterns: conservative (IC), innovative (IC2), and a third (IC3), which is prefixing.

(1) Initial Change in SI-A (Burgess 2009:77-81)

	IC	IC2	IC3
a:	-ija: ijæ:	-ijə	e(:)-
i:	-ija: ijæ:	-ijə	e(:)-
e	-ije	-ijə	e(:)-
u:	<i>no-change</i>	-iju:	e(:)-
ə (*a, *i)	-e(:)/ε	-ijə	e(:)-
u	we/ε	wej	e(:)-

Analysis: Building on Brittain & Dyck (2006), IC is taken to be a singular exponent of a CP head, containing floating features: FRONT and LOW, and two pieces of skeletal material. Consistent with Kalin (2022), this exponent is derivationally a prefix (IC3), but is then created linearised as an infix, anchored to first vowel, where it creates additional syllabic space. The floating features then integrate into the space, unpacking /e-/ into -ij- FRONT and -a- LOW. Integrating the floating features with the underlying features of the verb’s vowel creates feature licensing conflicts e.g. *{ROUND, FRONT}. ROUND is a melodic-head, winning all cases of incompatibility. This is confirmed elsewhere e.g. allomorphy of LOC & DIM: atim^u+iss > atim[**u**]-ss ‘dog.DIM’, and in vowel harmony: /atim^u/ [t**u**m] ‘dog’. ROUND and FRONT also can both be onsets. Together, autosegmental fusion, fission and sequencing lead to the attested allomorphs, with IC2 requiring a subset of IC’s conditions.