

# Ainu

Module type: Exercise

Class: Phonology

Keywords: Ainu, Indigenous language, phoneme, minimal pairs, contrast

Ainu is a language spoken by the Ainu people in the Hokkaido region of Japan (and surrounding islands). Ainu is commonly considered a language isolate, meaning that it is not part of a larger language family. It is classified as nearly extinct with only a few remaining native speakers, though there are efforts to revitalize the language and other important aspects of Ainu heritage and culture (Gayman 2011).

## Instructions

Consider the data below:

[arka]	'to be in pain'	[arpa]	'to go'
[arki]	'to come'	[tsup]	'sun'
[hani]	imperative particle	[tani]	'now'
[kusu]	'because'	[esani]	'peninsula'
[sapa]	'head'	[poro]	'big'
[tap]	'shoulder'	[mak]	'mountain side'
[kuru]	'person'	[sapo]	'older sister'
[mat]	'wife'	[poru]	'cave'
[tan]	'this' (demonstrative)	[tapan]	'such'
[tup]	'two'	[rusuy]	'to want'

Find all the minimal pairs

List the phonemes

## Sources

Gayman, Jeffrey. 2011. Ainu right to education and Ainu practice of 'education': Current situation and imminent issues in light of Indigenous education rights and theory. *Intercultural Education* 22(1): 15-27. DOI: 10.1080/14675986.2011.549642