

## New Words Council Creates Alutiiq Terms

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How do you say computer, or email in Alutiiq? A few years ago, this question would have been difficult for an Alutiiq speaker, because there were no Alutiiq words for these items. This situation is slowly changing due to the hard work of a dedicated council of Elders, including Nick Alokli, Florence Pestrikoff, Mary Haakanson, Paul Kahutak, Irene Coyle, Fred Coyle, Dennis Knagin, Sophie Katelnikoff Shepherd, Phyllis Peterson, Kathryn Chichenoff, Marty Peterson, and Martha Rozelle. The Nuta&rsquo;at Niugnelistat (New Word Makers) have been meeting monthly for nearly a year as part of a project funded by a National Science Foundation Documenting Endangered Languages grant.

The council&rsquo;s primary goal is to develop words in Alutiiq, using whatever methods they see fit. Some of the words developed so far are called calques, or &ldquo;loan translations&rdquo; in linguistic terms. This means that the English word is translated literally. Through this method, the city of Anchorage became Kicarwik &ndash; literally place to anchor. Another favored method of word formation is by translating the function or characteristics of the English word. Computer &ndash; umiartusqaq (thing that always thinks) and email - cukasqaq kaliqaq (fast paper) are some examples.

The New Words Council also deliberates over old words, to rejuvenate terms that are no longer used and nearly forgotten. One of these words is usuq&rsquo;arluni, which means to &ldquo;get worn out.&rdquo; This term is usually used with clothing, but it can also be used for people.

For more information on the New Words Council, or to receive copy of the master list of new words, please contact April at the Alutiiq Museum at (907) 486-7004.

ALUTIIQ TERM

ENGLISH TERM

mayuwarta

tram / ski lift (thing for climbing)

kuingcaraitsqaq

moving sidewalk (place where you don't have to walk)

akiilngum kaaRtaa

credit card (debtor's card)

kuufialista / kaufialista / kuugialista (different dialects)

barista (one who makes coffee)

tumaatuusaarua  
ketchup (kind of like tomato sauce)

ulutegwik

television (place for looking)

Learn More:

Indigenous New Words Creation - Perspectives from Alaska and Hawai'i, by Larry Kimura, Hawaiian Lexicon Committee, and Isiik April G.L. Laktonen Counciller (2009). In Indigenous Language Revitalization - Encouragement, Guidance & Lessons Learned, edited by J. Reyhner and L. Lockard, Northern Arizona University College of Education, Flagstaff.

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