Chapter 2 – Introduction to X-tra exercises

Today's news and objectives

17 proper nouns (henceforward **Prop**) all of them place names and 2 inflectional endings. Put together they will generate 51 words. You will train your perception and production of them all the next few hours.
And you will be going with the necessary process of internalising the general sound changes that play a part in all Greenlandic words.

Why is it important to master formation of words?

Because Greenlandic is a polysynthetic language where words change their shapes and sounds all the time.
Acquiring Greenlandic therefore is **not** just a question of learning new words but much, much more a question of achieving the ability to recognize the words you know in their ever-changing shapes and to be able to produce these changes yourself whenever you create words and sentences out of the lexicon-words and endings you learned.

Lexical material you need to know to manage today's exercises

17 important place names.
Of these *Aasiaat, Paamiut* and *Sisimiut* are blocked for inflection because they are plural words. To add inflectional endings one needs to do so to the baseform in singular. You will find the baseform after the colon.

It should also be noted that *Greenland* is inflected already. Literally *Kalaallit Nunaat* means ”The Greenlanders' **their** land” with an inflectional ending {at} meaning ”plural possessors' singular possession”.

Kalaallit Nunaat+ = Greenland
Aasiaat:Aasiak+ (city)
Danmarki- = Denmark
Kangerlussuaq+ (airport)
Maniitsoq- (city)
Nanortalik+ (city)
Narsaq- (city)
Narsarsuaq+ (airport)
Nuuk+ (capitol)
Paamiut:Paamioq- (city)
Pituffik+ (airport)
Qaanaaq- (city)
Qaqortoq- (city)
Sisimiut:Sisimioq- (city)
Tasiilaq- (city)
Upernavik+ (city)
Uummannaq- (city)

Two inflectional endings

Trm = {mut} or {nut} (case terminalis “to-case”. mut-variety after uinflected words and nut-variety after words already inflected

Abl = {mit} or {nit} (case ablative “from-case”. mit-variety after uinflected words and nit-variety after words already inflected

What you need to know about processes and changes (phonology)

Proper nouns like all other nominal stems fall in two groups. Some stems retain their final consonant before endings whereas other drop them. Stems marked with minus are consonant droppers whereas stems marked with plus are consonant retaining stems. The two inflectional classes are called p-stems and up-stems named after the shape the words have in case relative (used for instance as genitive).

You will need to learn whether a given noun is a p-stem or an up-stem simultaneously with acquisition of any noun in the lexicon. But again do not panic. Getting to know whether a noun is a p-stem or an up-stem is not at all more complicated than remembering gender with all the nouns you acquired in other foreign languages (French? German?).

Example

“to Qaqortoq” Qaqortoq-mut ➔ Qaqorto mut (*Qaqortumut)*

“from Nanortalik” Nanortalik+mit ➔ Nanortalik mit (*Nanortalimmit)*

Sound changes: Whenever language material meets with other material some kind of change is likely to occur.

The first few general rules you will need to master come here:

Lowering vowels: u ➔ o when followed by /r/ or /q/ and is pronounced [ɔ] like -or- in *horse.* And vice versa: If /r/ or /q/ after an o disappears o ceases to be an o and regains its /u/-shape. Hence *Qaqortoq-mut ➔ *Qaqortumut*

Consonant assimilation: Whenever two consonants meet the first assimilates to the second and form two identical consonants. With /r/ this assimilation also takes place but is not reflected in writing. *Qaqortoq* is written with -rt- even though it is pronounced with two t-s like [qɑ qɔt tɔq]. Hence Aasiak+nut ➔ *Aasiannut.*

Orthographic rule about /q/ in clusters: /q/ followed by any consonant but /q/ itself will be written as /r/ - but the /r/ will of course be pronounced like the following consonant in accordance with the assimilation rule above. Hence Kangerlussuaq+mut ➔ *Kangerlussuarmut* [ka ŋɛɬ ɬus su ɑm mut]