

The current backup can be downloaded (with instructions) from the usual location at <http://zelligharris.org/achumawi-db.html>

There have been distractions this month with the logistics of pandemic sequestration, so the pace of work has felt slow. I trust that you all are keeping well and safeguarding everyone you contact. Here are some highlights.

1. I've done a little more work identifying those 'short roots' that can occur in different positions in a verb stem template that I've indicated as <by doing x><do y><while doing z>, where only the central <do y> slot is obligatory. A snapshot of my work in progress file for sorting them out is posted here:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/13iFrhqUHyj1GNhifyZwNYYYYCtdIQoqfCUKhanMKZ1LU/edit?usp=sharing>

I believe this system of word formation is not merely etymological, but rather an active process to generate words. What I mean by 'etymological' is illustrated in English by the difference between the broad usage of *full(y) filled* and the narrow, specialized usage of *fulfilled*. Our unavoidable use of English translations can give the impression that each complex Achumawi verb has a narrow, specialized meaning of this sort. A simple example: *watammi* (with *ta* "make a line" + *-m* "thither") can be either "flies there" (in a line 'as the crow flies') or "makes a fence," among other imaginable translations, depending on the context. Our translations can be very misleading because they intersect just part of the range of meaning in Achumawi, and they are not open to context in the same ways. Whether or the combining of these 'short roots' in this template was an active process to generate words, this word-forming process needs to serve that purpose for language revitalization.

2. I've identified other roots that apparently don't participate in this pattern. I do not think this will be explained as a grammatical class of words to which certain rules apply or don't apply. I suspect there is a functional (semantic) explanation. For example, *ammi* "eating" does not occur with, e.g. *ca-* "by using the hands". To say *icammi* or perhaps *icaami* would make no functional distinction because no one eats using the alternatives that can occur before the main root—with the feet, with the head, with the buttocks, etc. If one eats with a knife or a spoon, say that noun plus the *-wa* instrumental. In this particular instance, *icammi* is the dual imperative, so "you two eat with your hands" would be *icaacammi*.

The root *k^hát* "cut" appears to be of this sort, except for one instance recorded with *li* "with extended hand and arm, or with a hand-held tool": *wáliik^háátí* "cuts with (saw, scythe, etc.)" Again, there is a functional constraint on what you can cut with, so contexts are difficult to imagine in which one of the other short roots could occur in that first slot.

The *k^hat* root has an interesting twist. In reference to cutting, it almost always requires the iterative *n-* prefix and that still mysterious *wa-/o-* prefix. Without these prefixes, a *k^hat* verb means one is psychically "cut off" by losing consciousness (fainting, blacking out) or by dying, and is the usual expression for one recently dead: *sóók^háátí*. *sánwaak^háátí* "I cut", *sáák^háátí* "I'm dead". But where there is no ambiguity, these prefixes are omitted: *táák^hááta* "cut it!", as *wáka waak^háátí wéétát* "the water (agentive) cuts the riverbank". (Choice of the *w-* 3rd person, vs. *y-*, is generally for impersonal 'forces of nature' and for characteristic activities which 'that kind' do.)

A snapshot of my work in progress on these 'single' roots can be viewed here:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1o8OgFaL1tIk-x3GdFSIPDZtrD54p5fu8WljiHh15QtQ/edit?usp=sharing>

3. Some years ago I unexpectedly received a package containing seven CDs with recordings of Ike Leaf working with my old friend the late Shirley Silver, and occasionally with (I assume) Jim Bauman. These have been difficult to play, and I've been working at extracting WMA and MP3 files from the .cda pointers on the disks. According to the labels, I am missing many: I have 5-A, 5-B, 10, 12, 14 part 1, 14 part 2, and 17. Does anyone have the others?