Achumawi Database: Summary for November 2020

The current backup can be downloaded (with instructions) from the usual location at http://zelligharris.org/achumawi-db.html, and I have updated the webonary site https://www.webonary.org/odissi/. Lexicon entries will be enriched with examples in the future. To view examples of roots, prefixes, and suffixes in particular words, open the Lexicon view in the database, right-click the entry, and select **Show Entry in Concordance**.

This is a good time to broach the distinction between etymology and 'live' assembly of morphemes into words. Much of what is done in English by combining words (syntax) is done in Achumawi by combining morphemes into a single word. When the meanings of words have become so specialized that they can no longer easily be decomposed into the meanings of the constituent morphemes the decomposition is called etymology. But the boundary between these is not obvious.

Our sense of what "the meanings" are is a function of our translations into English. The locations of semantic precision and the locations of ambiguity in Achumawi are different from the locations of precision and ambiguity in English. In *icasq̇óóti* "smoking a pipe" the *ca* refers to the grasping the *sq̇ót* "pipe". In *ikuutááṁi* "smoking tobacco" (as an act of prayer), *ku* "press with hand" may allude to pressing the tobacco into a *sq̇ót*, but with *tam* (*ta* "make a line, move in a direction, etc." plus *-m* "thither, away", recorded both with and without glottalization) may indicate gesture with smoke. We see *tam* in e.g. *tykáátaami q̇á accát* "Ground Squirrel went out". In sánaataamí, the *n*-prefix intensifies the basic meaning so that it is not just "I go out" but "I go to get". However, the *n*-prefix can also be iterative, and it would be typical of the language for this verb equally well to mean "I go out again" or "I go out repeatedly", relying upon context to tell us which sense is intended. Divergence of meaning in the English gloss, depending on context requires us not only to get at some kind of essential meaning for each morpheme, but also to read their combination rather as one reads the combinations of glyphs in a Chinese ideogram.

Consider these examples involving *wam* and *wak*:

wam		*wak*	
tiiẇááma!, tuuẇááma!	Get into it!	*uuẇááké*	written, marked, basket design
tiiẇááme, tuuẇáámé	shirt	*uuẇáktáké*	target (Bauman: oo'weqtage)

There are many verbs that I at first analyzed as containing a root *wam* "severally, separating, going [thither] into", such as *tykánsiiẇáámí* "jumped back in again" and *álah̓ta tóóṫéh̓ẇámo'oy* "(place where) bear (was) torn in two", *wacaṁéq̇walmi* "wind broke up the house", *wacaq̇isẇalmi* "wind twists trees off in middle", *wacaṁíĺẇalmi* "wind bends trees over". (In these last three, *ca* "air moves; move through air" contrasts with its homomorph *ca* "grasp".) Are the stems *wam* and *wak* composed of

wa + *-m* "thither" vs. *wa* + *-k* "hither"? Is there a similar meaning associated with other occurrences of *wa*, some common modification, perhaps, of the meaning of an adjacent morpheme?

Dwelling as they do on the *acúmmá* "river" (lit. "flow thither") the Pit River people have various place names and other words which combine *cu* "thrust, flow" plus *wa* to denote flooding water:

- *ticuuẇááẏit*: "Horseshoe Bend (flood place)". The final *-t* is the "X-place" locative suffix, as in *támmít* "eating place". Verbs with stem-final *ẏ* collected in my Problems spreadsheet may be related to the *ẏ* animate copula.
- *as ticuuwááti*: "water rises". The *t* (plus stem-final *-i*) appears to be a reduction of *ta* "move in a line, progress, make a sequence", as in e.g. *titammi* "fly, go along a line, make a fence", and twice in *titaatit* "irrigation ditch" (the third and final *-t* is the "X-place" locative, as above).
- *icúúwalla̍*: "Pitville (flooding place)". The *-l̍a* is an allomorph of *-ẇa* forming place names, preceeded by *la* "move in a direction, make a line".
- *ticúúwalki*: "flood hither". The *-k* is the directional "hither", and the preceding *l* appears to be reduced from *la* "move in a direction, make a line" as above.

Understanding these as water crossing the *wéétát* "border, edge" of the riverbed brings them together with verbs such as these:

- tyktatííwalmíwci "they were neighbors".
- tiččííwálmí "walk next door, go over there", *tičííwalki* "walk from next door, come over here". The same stem is used when the two deer children fleeing the mother bear walk across the river on the outstretched leg of their uncle Crane: *tyktántííwalmi*.
- wílúúẏeq̇walmi one slides across (on boggy place)

Some verbs with wa + *l(a)* suggest creating a boundary, for example:

- álisti sk̍aw sk̍aw íwalmi rocks standing in a line
- álisti aqwalmi rocks in a string, rocks all along
- tíliikík̍wálmi groove an arrow shaft; plow over, cover over with plow.

Other such verbs require further analysis:

- *tatawál̍kaal̍é* "measuring stick"
- *walááwalki* "dew" *illááwalkí* "being frosty"
- *tinípp^hawwálam* "sharpen it!"

In this problem set, I have currently analyzed the verb stem *it^halúumi* "working" as *t^ha* "hear, obey" + *lu* "by pulling, as though pulled along" + *wam* (*wa* + *-m*).

At the present level of understanding, this surely appears to be an etymological speculation. But to the point, the distinction between etymology and living morphology depends upon your purposes. For a descriptive grammar claiming to represent the way Pit River people talked in the 19th and early

20th centuries etymology would be strictly subordinated as a details in the lexicon, unless it affected a significant class of words as a morphophonemic regularity; and for the purpose of historical reconstruction, distinguishing them can help with relative chronology, but for the purpose of coining new vocabulary for language revitalization an etymological reconstruction can be just as important as a solidly attested morpheme. Countless examples in the lexicon of the English language attest to this.

Some months ago, in my report for work in June, I speculated that *wací* (what de Angulo calls an adverbial "medio-passive-continuative suffix" -*aswadz*) might be the 3rd person prefix *w*-plus the familiar auxiliary root *c* "do". The 3rd person prefix *w*-, in contrast to the *y*- 3rd person, generally indicates habitual or characteristic behavior, or a force of nature. In this analysis, *waci* is an auxiliary verb with an impersonal sense of "one does" or "keeps doing". Examples that I gave include:

- *sóóťúẏci* "I got angry", *sóóťúẏwaci* "I'm angry (still)"
- *ámmi* "eating", *ámwaci* "always eating"
- *yáámúċci* "he lifts it (with arms)", *yáámuċwaci* "he holds it in arms"

The material surveyed above suggest a more general system of verb stems incorporating an auxiliary verb that begins with this impersonal *w*-. To this we may even be able to add things that have become more 'lexicalized' (so to speak) as 'grammatical elements', such as

- *wa, la*, etc. "instrumental"
- *wa, la*, etc. "place where, place of"
- *wáté, láté*, etc. "locative"
- *ẇal* "comitative" (*amitt^héwcan ẇal ẏályúúcan ẇal íyápte haatiiẇiw* "a woman and a man went to Hat Creek", *ḣaẏ suwí mí ẇal tupte kúci* "I was planning to go with you")

In the first three of these, at least, the assimiliation of *w* to a preceding consonant adds weight to the view that 'lexicalization' has taken us across the border from live word derivation into etymology.

I spent some time in November trying to pin down the stem *ċiilák* "possess" in *tiiċiiláki* "possess, have; beget or bear children"; *tiiċiiláke* "money, possessions, wealth". After fruitless search for *ċiil, ċil* I was left with an etymology deriving from *ċi* "stand, be upon" + *la* "make a line, control a sequence" + -*k* "hither". For uses of *ċi* with meanings other than "using the foot", consider:

sááċiimí; saaċiimiiẏáámí	I fell; I made it fall	-*m*	downward
tánásiċílamámé'	unable to jump over	*si*	move fast, jump
tulúpċíci	sunset	*lup*	come together, pile
wacaspútċící	(wind, hand) tore the top off	*spúť*	pluck out
uulúcċíci aaqu	bald mountain	*luc*	clean

Other forms with *ċi*:

- *ċíílay* "twist". In: *iiċíílayí'* "twisting", *wacaaċíílayi* "he twists it with fingers", *acaaċíílaayáké* "twisted". Perhaps related to rope-making. If it includes *la* "make a line, control a sequence" it may fall in the problem set with stem-final *ẏ*, but compare *lay* "bright, clear", *láylaayí* "bald".
- *iiċísta* "island" (cp. *tiiċísta* "put it up high!" immediately before in the same 1973 notes from Lela Rhoades).

The root *ṗil* occurs in *icuuṗííli* "driftwood pile" (*cu* "thrust, flow"), *iliiṗííli* "being curly", *yiliiṗííli* "she braids" and in placenames with *aaṗílcumí'* "branches crossing". Harrington says this is from *yánẇaaṗílcumík*, with the annotation "brush falls across the creek. You cannot cross on the brush in the water for it is not stout." Apparently from a tangle of driftwood on a stream one can harvest a good *ċaaṗil̇*, *ċaaṗíĺóo*, "canoe paddle".

The final *-k* seen above in *yánẇaaṗílcumík* occurs only sporadically at the end of a verb which may also occur without it. Some examples:
- *yaak^háátik* "he died" (lit. "he cut").
- *yáásatwík* "(clouds) cleared off".
- *yáánámcik ċíkkoh̊* "footprint".
- *wáláámíícík* "it frosts".
- *q^hehé tẏátẇik itt^hú cah̊h̊úm* "that one killed my dog".
- *q^hehé tyáncícciimík kacc^hú lápĺé* "he lost his bow".
- *sínwaak^háátákék itt^hú ċíkkoh̊* "I cut my foot".
- *allúúẇa sóóĺiikacík qa wáhhac* "because of hunger I reach for bread".
- *wacuuċíícík* "(water) flows over rim (of bucket)".
- *wálaacámcik* "(waterfall) shoots into ground".
- *aẇaaták qá ċul* "(spider) is trapping the moon in web" (dim moon predicts bad time).
- *sáttít tímmáámí ka aalú yááċáċcik* "Glass Mt. look(s) at cloud rises" (ref. to Silver Lake). The *t-* has been called the infinitive; it is 3rd person in subordinate clauses.
- *sánwáhhaacík* "I make bread (*wáhhac*)".
- *sínṁahhák* "I'm warm".
- *tytáptééník* "went (remote past)", *tytáptík* "have gone (recent past)"
- *wapĺiiċík* "(fire) blazes"

The majority of these are from Curtin in 1888, Radin in 1919, and Harrington ca. 1930. None are from de Angulo (also before 1931). In my notes, only the farthest downriver speakers added the *-k*. Rile Webster (Madesi) and Edna Webster (Ilmawi) were the most consistent, Lela Rhoades (Itsatawi) less so. When I asked Rile about the glosses that Craven (Big Valley) had given for *tytáptééní* and *tytáptí*, he corrected them to *tytáptééník* and *tytáptík* with no change of meaning. Nor do I see any obvious semantic distinction between e.g. *sóóĺiikací* "I come to ask for a handout" (LR 1972, 1974) and the above *sóóĺiikacík* (evening class, 1971, probably Edna).