Achumawi Database

Summary of November 2022 work

You can download the current backup from

- http://zelligharris.org/Achumawi/achumawi-db.html

I have updated the webonary at

- https://www.webonary.org/odissi/

Nobel Laureate Tim Hunt is far from the first scientist to point out that most of the day to day work of doing science is boring, working repetitively over the data. In this short video clip from a talk he explains very clearly in few words why we do it anyway. Surprises emerge.

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9mBU_gTGsuw

The sections of this report are:

1. More on waci and Rp
2. Words about speaking
3. Utter, hear, obey

1. More on *waci* and Rp. I have far to go to work through occurrences of those stative roots in the Rp class. The Rp roots (p for 'peripheral') are CV roots that occur in the periphery of the verb stem, before or after the central template. Rcv roots normally occur in slot 1 or slot 3, but can also stand alone as the main root, e.g. *ticáái*. This may also be true of the Rp subset.

I am still cleaning up occurrences of *waci* and its various combined forms such as *wacóo*, *waaci*, *wacicka*, *wacumá*, etc. For the present I am just peeling these off into the 'auxiliary verb' grammatical category in the lexicon. The grammatical category appears on the **Lex. Gram. Info** line in the Analysis view.

While doing that, I saw many instances of *uc* as the underlying form of *c* 'do' in the **Lex. Entries** line in the Analysis view. Back before I recognized the verb stem template and the CV and CVC shapes of roots in it, I assumed that *tuci* and *uci* showed *uc* as the base from which other variants are derived. Now I recognize *c* as the auxiliary-verb Rc root that occurs in *waci*, etc., and in many other places. The *u* may be a *w* prefix (as in e.g. *tit^{h}ééwi*, *sóót^{h}ééwi* "hear, obey"), possibly the stative *w* that is a longer-range quarry as I beat through the brush re-analyzing *waci*. I have changed all occurrences of lexical entry *uc* and *ucc* to *c* and *cc*, and returned to *waci* and its siblings.

After that, I'll move on to *wate*, *wa*, *way*(*mi*), *waka*(*m*), *walmi*, *wal*, *wam* at the ends of words. At the beginnings of words are things like the difference between remote past *ckw-* (in contrast to *ck-*) and the initial stem vowel *o* alternating with *awa* (in contrast with stem vowel *i* or *a*). Is there a consistent semantic difference associated with this, perhaps the 'stative, durative' meaning of the Rp root *w*? To find out will require inspecting large sets of examples.

The similar alternation of e.g. *tépti* 'go back (home)', *siyápti* 'I went back' suggests a *y* prefix or Rp root *y̓* 'manifest, attaining, situated'. Rcv roots normally occur in slot 1 or slot 3, but can also be the main root of a very simple verb stem. If *w* and *y* are in the Rp subset, it appears that they also occur as the two forms of copula, *uw* 'be' and *iy̓* 'be'. The *uw* forms are used with adjectives and other stative or durative words used attributively, and *iy̓* is used with animate nouns. (I'll turn to inanimate nouns in a bit. Rather than animate/inanimate, it might be more accurate to think in terms of volition.)

This immediately links in the distinction between the two 3rd-person pronominal prefixes; *y̓-* is used before *uw* (*allu y̓uwí* 'he's hungry') and *w-* is used before *iy̓* (*pʰíw̓a wiy̓í* 'he's here', *iqpiimí twiy̓í* 'he's Wintu'). For 'inanimate' nouns (referring to things without volition and locomotion) the 'iterative/intensive' *n-* intervenes between the *y* 3rd person and the *uw* root, as though to emphasize its stasis in place, for example: *as ty̓ánuwí* 'it is water'. The initial *t-* is for things that are manifestly so, cp. *sí yánuwí* 'there aren't any'. (The *si* is in the lexicon as s_2, 'indefinite, unmanifest, be unable'.)

2. Words about speaking. In the course of this, I had some trouble analyzing these two words:

ticw̓apw̓aaci	'be a spokesman'
kicw̓apw̓ac kúcóo qá miw̓ú ó tissi	'help us with our words'

Separating the auxiliary verbs *w̓aaci* and *w̓ac* ('do continuously, habitually, or as a characteristic') and the prefixes *ti-* and *ki-* leaves the stem *cw̓ap*, which I find also in

ticwaplaaláwi	'fancy (polite) talk'
tiċw̓apl̓aaláwi,	'fancy talk; alter one's speech; to say it differently; tongue twister'
wacwaplaaláwí	'he talks in a fancy way'
tiċw̓apláálawi	'speak in a broken way' [Said of Sissun Jim, the Wintu doctor.]
icwapl̓áálawáké'	'punching, poking at someone(?).' [Ritual insult?]

I had assumed that these were analyzed as *ċ̓wa* 'bite, use teeth' and *plá* 'tongue, use mouth' plus stative *w*, some kind of semantically indirect idiom about chewing your words or the like.

However, *plá* does not occur in the two 'spokesman' words above, and if we take *ċ̓wa* and *plá* out of consideration in there is nothing left to connect the 'special way of speaking' words with speech.

Inconsistency as to glottalization (whether the first part of the stem is *ċ̓wap* or *cw̓ap* or *cwap*) and the need for a root having something to do with speech, suggest that we may be looking at the glottalized *s̓* 'speak, say' root. At the time I was recording these words in writing (no audio record, unfortunately), I had not yet recognized glottalized *s̓* in places where it is more obvious, such as *siś́í* "I said", so it was not an option for me to consider. Here's what the analysis with *s̓* 'speak, say' looks like, taking one example from each group:

ti- s̓ wa p w̓aac -i	'be a spokesman'
ti- s̓ wa p laalá w -i	'fancy (polite) talk'

There is no *wap* root; it may be the stative *wa* followed by *p* 'put, place'. The *laalá* may be onomatopoeic, as in English 'glossolallia'.[1]

Speaking for someone or 'helping with words' was evidently an important role, not only to articulate clearly, perhaps speak loudly, but also to put the parts of verbs together in a way that everyone could understand. A special example is the 'intepreter' for a doctor, especially when the doctor is singing. In any kind of singing, pitch and length are changed to suit the rhythm and tune, and a doctor singing and perhaps dancing while in a trance or trance-like state might not articulate clearly. I had previously analysed the stem in *qa winas̓tʰúúmaaki kúcí* 'the one who would interpret' with *s̓* plus *tʰu* 'hear, obey', and *ma* 'look, see, find, know how'.[2] This *s̓ tʰu ma* analysis provides some indirect confirmation of the *s̓ wa p* analysis above.

Another such word is *tistʰíwci* 'answer back, retort', where the *i* of *íw* 'reciprocally, together' supersedes the default *a* vowel of *tʰ* 'hear, obey, utter'.[3]

---

1 Its occurrence in the onomatopoeic *lááláq* 'Canada geese' (cp. Yana *laalagi*) is suggestive but likely coincidental.

2 Bauman has *was'toamage*, probably from Ike Leaf; de Angulo lists stems *-ástùmág-*, *-úwástùmág-*, *-óstùmág-*.

3 The *tʰe*, and *tʰu* forms appear to be from the combination of *tʰa* with the *w* and *y̓* discussed above.

3. Utter, hear, obey. I've assembled the examples of verbs with *tʰa*, *tʰe*, *tʰu*, and will look for consistent semantic differences between them that could be due to *w* or *y*.

There is one expression, *téh téh yááwaaci'* 'he's talking loud', which suggests that the aspirated *tʰ* originated from loss of a vowel resulting in a *th* consonant cluster. I know that this is a plain *t* and a plain *h*, because immediately before it I recorded *tʰéhtʰehhí'* 'very light, faint, faded'.

The verbs with *tʰa* are about uttering or producing sounds. The simplest form, with only the 'do' auxiliary *c*, is *téhtac aatʰaací* 'pounding acorn', referring evidently to the *qʰum qʰum qʰum* 'utterances' of mortar and pestle.

titʰákyi	pray
tístí túwaatʰákyi	pray
táátʰáác̓i	shout
tíítʰam; tóótʰam kúci	call, call on telephone
wíntʰaméhceqí	hiccup
watíící' wíc witʰanuwí	sounds like someone crying (cp. X *wíc wicéuwí* 'looks like X')

With *hw* 'breath, whisper; light', the sound cannot be heard: *wítʰahwi* 'deaf', *síntʰahwa* 'I don't hear/understand'. In *acpú títʰanyi* 'believe' (with *acpú* 'straight, true') the last part may be *y* 'manifest, attaining, situated' which also serves as the 'animate' copula. The *n* may be the intensive/iterative prefix, though placing the root before it is anomalous.

The verbs with *tʰe* have 'listen, obey' meanings

titʰéewi	hear, mind
mhitʰécpi yúwá mimú 'ó tisi	I'll mind your words
titʰécpuumi	hear well, understand
titʰécpííya	Behave! Be obedient!
títʰécpiiyi tucci	have no experience of (cursing)
titʰéptaswaci	listen closely (cp. *ticéptaswaci* 'watch')
titʰéctiiki	be frightened by sound
titʰéél a'áyi	sound good

The analysis of *titʰésqápqátí* 'feel defeated' with familiar morphemes is not as straightforward.

Several stems with 'listen' meanings were recorded with *tʰa*, but may actually have the *tʰe* root. Two of these each have a brief schwa in the second syllable, which could as easily be reduced from *e* as from *a*:

titʰanááyi	listen hard
titʰalúwumi	work (something like 'pulled to obey', following instructions?)

A third example, one of the few words that I got from Gladys O'Neil, it was recorded on the fly in conversation. An *e* vowel is lowered toward *æ* before *q* or *h* (cp. *tehtac* 'acorn'), here before the *q* of *qát* 'approach, compress':

títʰaaqátyumi	listen to everyone

However, *tíítʰanti* 'pay attention' clearly has an *a* vowel in the audio record (7:30 of LA49.014), and an obvious parallel to *titʰanááyi* 'listen hard', above. At this point, I only raise the question, pending good analyses.

The *tʰu* root occurs in the ‘interpret’ verbs alluded to earlier, and one other:

waʔtʰúúmaake	interpreter
tinaʔtʰúúmaaki	interpret
wʔisuntʰótké	one who understands

Two verbs have *tʰ* followed by the vowel of another morpheme.

tínááluutʰi	pay close attention, care about
tínááluutʰámé’ yályú	heedless man (i.e. a brave man, heedless of danger)

In *tínááluutʰi* the stem vowel *i* follows, and in *tínááluutʰámé’* the initial *a* of *ámé’* ‘lacking, without’. The *lu* root apparently says one’s attention is ‘pulled’ or attracted, but whether it is drawn to a sound is quite unclear.

Apparently unrelated are the words of arriving, reaching a destination (*ỷáátʰuukí* it's arriving here, *ỷáátʰuumí* it's arriving there), and *ỷáátʰáákí* ‘it's coming out’.