Achumawi Database

Summary of August 2023 work

You can download the current backup from

• <u>http://zelligharris.org/Achumawi/achumawi-db.html</u>

I have updated the webonary at

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

I left for California on Wednesday 16 August and returned on Wednesday 30 August. The main purpose was to participate in the last session in the Language House. I've also created two new Keyman keyboards. Learning how to do that and then executing the process has been time consuming. Changes and updates in the database prior to and during that time have not resulted in significant generalizations to report here.

The sections in this report are

- 1. Keyboards
- 2. Language House
- 3. Kinááciiwíní song
- 4. Atsugewi database project

1. Keyboards

A good amount of time and energy in August went into learning how to use Keyman Developer and creating two keyboards.

- The Pit River keyboard serves both of the Pit River languages, Achumawi (*Ó tissi*) and Atsugewi. <u>This brief description</u> is packaged with it.
- The second keyboard is for the Wintu language. The installation package includes <u>this brief</u> <u>description</u>.

Go to <u>this page</u> to download and install either keyboard or both. You can also open that page with the <u>keyboards</u> link which is now at the top of the database download page.

Much of this work was done while I was in in Redding then at the Language House 24-27 August, then finished on my return home.

2. Language House

From the NSF/DEL grant just ending, I reallocated \$10,500 to rent a house from Janna Howard in Montgomery Creek. (This was mostly travel funds unspent during the pandemic.) The Indigenous Language Network (ILN) organized classes and intensive workshops during the three months of summer 2023. In addition to guiding these activities, Connor Yiamkis has been able to gather audio and video data for his dissertation work on acquisition of Achumawi phonology by English speakers (members of the indigenous community). Domains in the kitchen and elsewhere in the house were well specified with phrases posted to help people self-narrate their activities in those areas. Equipment was provided for duplicating these materials and laminating them for durability so that participants could establish like domains in their homes. Small booklets were prepared. One of these has a prayer, all or part of which can be used to open and close gatherings and activities. This prayer was also printed on the backs of shirts, and Kricut equipment was used to put personally meaningful phrases and images on clothing.

This workshop was intended for those with prior preparation by attending the language classes which Connor and others had been conducting, largely in Zoom meetings. There was an excellent plan and agenda in place. However, after a notice was posted on Facebook, others arrived who lacked that preparation. This compelled some ad hoc changes to the plan.

I regret that I didn't recognize the opportunity to take those without prior preparation into a separate process to learn some basics. It unfortunately didn't occur to me as I was fielding many requests to find things in the database and figure out how to say things, and I was still working on keyboards.

It was nonetheless a very positive experience for all the participants. Several people remarked its deep value for strengthening community. There are plans afoot to establish a Language House in another location as a long-term resource.

3. Kinááciiwíní song

The rhythm of the song is syncopated in a really interesting way. Here I've marked the sound of the clap stick with | and I put ' on the off-beat where the clap stick is lifted up off your hand. Listen.

- The root *na* by itself has a general sense of moving, traversing, changing, e.g. in *yááná qa tóósi* (a deer is moving, there goes a deer, etc.).
- When it is in the '-ing-' participle *innááci* 'growing' it is used often to name a place where something grows and propagates, etc.
- kinnááci you go/grow/flourish
- iwí all around
- The *-ni* at the end may be only a syllable to fit the rhythm. Taken literally, it puts the verb in the past tense.

Thól '(for) a long time'. With *can* perhaps it means 'for a long period of time'. The final *a* is to fit the rhythm of the song. Grandma Lela thought it was an old word, and I transcribed what she said as *thóócina*, but the elders who came to the school for my 'evening class' (the Webster sisters and others) said it was *thólcan kinááciiwíní*. Cora Wolfin then said *té siší* 'that's the way I said it'. Compare the similar word *twílcan* 'sometime', from *twíl* 'once' (also *twíl wa* 'from time to time', etc.)

We changed the words for a second verse:

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ís si wa óó is sii, ís si wa óó is sii,
| ' | '| ' | ' | ' | '| ' | '
ís si wa óó is sii, ki náá cii wi´ nii
| ' | '| ' | | ' | ' | ' | '
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"Speaking the Pit River language you spread out all around."

I'm looking for the recording of Grandma Lela singing this song and talking about it (November 8-9 1971). It's what Creator sang to the people after creating them as he sent them in their several directions. I no longer have the original tapes, they are in the American Philosophical Society archive now. I've asked them to digitize each of my tape reels as a whole. It may have got missed in the process of the CLA digitizing what the particular person doing the work thought were distinct parts of the recording. With the whole tape and a picture of my written label on the tape box I might be more able to find it.

Down at Art and Michelle's house I talked to a fellow who makes clap sticks all the time. He said you can use a clap stick comfortably when it is made as long as your shoulders are broad. He said to cut the halli when it's dormant in winter, not when it's growing. It may look dead but as long as there's pith within it's growing. Grandma Lela talked about making flutes from halli, cutting a clear stretch between joints. They used to burn out the pith with something hot.

4. Atsugewi Database Project

In addition to new keyboard support, the new NSF/DEL grant commencing this month includes development of a FLEx database for the Atsugewi language. I will travel again to California to facilitate to introduce the Atsugewi linguist Leonard Talmy to Paul Cason. Len is functionally blind now. Paul will do this work mostly remotely from Alturas, with email and telephone consultations. We will also collect recordings of Lenny's pronunciations of examples. Len also wants to work with a student of phonology to get his knowledge of Atsugewi phonology written up.

At the time of writing his 1972 dissertation, Lenny had analyzed a large portion of the material in his field notebooks. In one notebook he wrote with a marker indicating the endpoint of that progress. All of the analyzed morphology is on large file slips. Each slip has one morpheme at the top, and a list of examples below. This indicates a work process for creating entries in the FLEx lexicon, entering each example in a series of 'interlinear text' collections (perhaps one collection for each initial letter) and linking the example from there into the lexicon entry. Later, entering data directly from the field notebooks into a different set of 'interlinear text' collections (perhaps by speaker + date or range of

dates, as in Achumawi) will provide a cross-check, and will put each example in context of other things recorded that day, which can provide illuminating insights.

Then Lenny's notes past his 'I stopped here' marker will be entered, and by then it should be possible to analyse them and add new lexical entries on the strength of the above. And that will provide a basis for working with archival material collected by other linguists, which will require normalization of their orthography and often requires rectification, e.g. for de Angulo, Curtin, and even Harrington (who did not recognize the k/q contrast).

This plan will surely be revised as we gain experience, but it gives a good basis for starting.