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22-229 Hokan Languages

Hokan is not a language family but a stock, a series of hypotheses about distant genetic relationships among language families. The term 'Hokan' was coined by Dixon and Kroeber in 1913 from Atsugewi hoqi 'two', when they proposed that several language families and isolates in California might be remotely related: Karuk, Chimariko, Shastan, Palaihnihan, Pomoan, Yana, Esselen, and Yuman. Over the next five decades, several more were added: Salinan and Chumashan in California; Washo in Nevada; Seri in Sonora, Mexico; Tequistlatecan in Oaxaca, Mexico; Tonkawa, Karankawa, and Coahuilteco in south Texas and northeastern Mexico; Subtiaba in Nicaragua and Tlap(p)anec in Guerrero, Mexico; and Jicaque in Honduras. Subsequent hypotheses linked others throughout the Americas and as far away as Austronesia, but these have not withstood further scrutiny.

The initial Hokan proposals were made at a time when little data were available on the languages themselves. The first announcement was based on just five correspondence sets (words for 'tongue', 'eye', 'water', 'stone', and 'sleep') and several grammatical similarities. Now with better documentation, some of the relationships appear probable, and some have been abandoned. The validity of some may be clarified with further work, but evaluation of others will never be possible, because the languages have disappeared. Establishment of the relationships is complicated by the antiquity of the proposed stock. If the families are related, their common ancestor, Proto-Hokan, would be at least as old as Proto-Indo-European, if not considerably older. Yet much less is known about the individual Hokan languages and families than about the ancient and modern Indo-European languages.

Furthermore, many of the languages hypothesized to be Hokan have been in close contact with each other for centuries, even millenia, making it difficult to distinguish cognate morphemes and grammatical features from ancient loans. In some cases putative Hokan languages appear to share more features with languages classified outside of Hokan, many in the Penutian stock. Those similarities could be due to contact as well, to a more remote relationship between the two stocks, or of course to chance. The Hokan hypotheses have proven fruitful in stimulating work on the historical relationships of the languages, but it should be recognized that Hokan is not yet considered a fully demonstrated genetic entity.

At present, the most promising Hokan proposals link Karuk, Chimariko, Shastan, Palaihnihan, Yana, Washo, Pomoan, Esselen, Salinan, Yuman, Cochimû, and Seri. Tequistlatecan, Coahuiltecan, and Jicaque are still considered possible relatives. Subtiaba-Tlappanec has been shown to be closer to the Oto-Manguean stock, related to Hokan only if all of Oto-Manguean is. Chumash, Karankawa, and Tonkawa are no longer considered likely relatives.

## 1. The Languages

Several of the families and isolates are spoken contiguously across Northern California. Karuk (Karok), an isolate, is spoken fluently by about a dozen mostly elderly people along the Klamath River. Chimariko, also an isolate, was spoken along the Trinity River in northwest California until the 1930's. The Shastan family consists of three languages once spoken in central northern California up into Oregon: Shasta, New River Shasta, and Konomihu. All have disappeared, but Shasta was remembered into the 1980's. The Palaihnihan family consists of Achumawi (Pit River), still spoken by a few, and Atsugewi (Hat Creek), last spoken in 1988. Yana, an

isolate, was spoken into the first half of the 20th century in the foothills east of the Sacramento River. It consists of two pair of dialects: Northern and Central Yana, and Southern Yana and Yahi. The last speaker of Yahi was Ishi, a man who emerged in 1911 after decades of hiding in the wild from White settlers who had destroyed his people. He lived at the University of California Museum of Anthropology in San Francisco until his death in 1916, leaving a wealth of information about his language and culture.

In east central California and Nevada, around Lake Tahoe, is Washo, a language isolate. Washo is spoken by several dozen people, most over 50 years of age.

The Pomoan family consists of seven mutually unintelligible languages spoken north of San Francisco, from the coast inland to the Sacramento Valley. The languages were named with reference to the town of Ukiah: Northern Pomo, Northeastern Pomo, Eastern Pomo, Central Pomo, Southern Pomo, Southeastern Pomo, and Kashaya (Southwestern Pomo). Northeastern and Southeastern Pomo are no longer spoken. Northern, Eastern, Central, and Southern are spoken well by a few elderly persons, and Kashaya by several dozen, middle aged and older.

Along the central Pacific coast were two Hokan languages. Esselen, an isolate, was spoken south of San Francisco around Big Sur until 1770, when the people were absorbed into the Spanish missions at Carmel, Soledad, and San Antonio. The language declined rapidly, disappearing before the 20th century. To the south, from the coast inland to Soledad, was Salinan, with dialects Antoniano and Migueleño named after the Spanish missions where their speakers lived. Salinan was last spoken around 1960.

In southern California, Arizona, Sonora, and Baja California is the Yuman

family, with Diegueño languages Iipay, Kumeyaay, and Tiipay; Cocopa; the River languages Yuma, Maricopa, and Mojave; the Pai languages Upland Yuman (Havasupai, Hualapai, Yavapai, Tolkapaya, Yavape, Kewevkapaya), and Paipai; and Kiliwa. Most of the Yuman languages are still spoken by several hundred people, and at least Cocopa, Havasupai, Hualapai, and Paipai are still learned by children. The family as a whole is related to Cochimû, spoken in Baja California into the early 19th century. Across the Gulf of California in Sonora is Seri, spoken by several hundred.

Tequistlatecan or Chontal, of southern Oaxaca, Mexico, consists of two closely related languages: Huamelultec (Lowland Chontal) and Tequistlatec (Highland Chontal), each with about 5000 speakers.

Coahuiltecan was once thought to include a number of extinct, sparsely documented languages of south Texas. It is now clear that the area contained at least seven families and isolates. Those that may be Hokan are Coahuilteco (an isolate) and the Comecrudan family consisting of Comecrudo, Cotoname, Solano, and Aranama.

The Jicaque (Tol) family consists of two languages, that of El Palmar in western Honduras, represented only by a short wordlist from 1890, and Tol, spoken by about 300 in La Montaña de la Flor near Orica, Honduras.

## 2. Typological Characteristics of the Languages

Not surprisingly, the languages show considerable structural diversity. Some have small phonological inventories, others large: Karuk has stops  $p$ ,  $t$ ,  $\check{c}$ ,  $k$ , and  $\int$ , while Central Pomo has stops  $b$ ,  $p$ ,  $p^h$ ,  $p'$ ,  $\int$ ,  $\int^h$ ,  $\int'$ ,  $d$ ,  $\int$ ,  $\int^h$ ,  $\int'$ ,  $\check{c}$ ,  $\check{c}^h$ ,  $\check{c}'$ ,  $k$ ,  $k^h$ ,  $k'$ ,  $q$ ,  $q^h$ ,  $q'$ , and  $\int$ . Many show consonant symbolism and/or vocalic ablaut. In Karuk, for example, a shift of  $\underline{u}$  to  $\underline{a}$  conveys diminutive meaning:  $\acute{u}\acute{x}a\acute{u}$  'mother's sister', diminutive  $\acute{a}\acute{x}a\acute{a}$ .

Morphologically, some languages are highly polysynthetic, others less so. An interesting feature of some is a somewhat unusual distribution of meaning between roots and affixes. Atsugewi, for example, contains a number of verb roots whose central meaning indicates the nature of the substance involved, among them *-swal* ‘for limp material to move or be located’, *-hmu* ‘for a cover for a horizontal surface to move or be located’, and *-sa* ‘to move into or through mud’. Affixes indicate the kind of action involved, such as *ca-* ‘by wind, by blowing’ or *ma-* ‘with the foot, by kicking’ and direction or location, such as *-im* ‘thither’ or *-mi* ‘down onto the ground’. The use of such roots and affixes can be seen in the verbs below.

Atsugewi (Talmy 1972: 432, 439, 444)

*waswámi*

*'w-ca-swal-mi-ə*

FACTUAL-by.wind.blowing-limp.material.move-down.onto.ground-FACTUAL

‘the clothes blew down from the clothesline’

*sohməcaw*

*s-'w-uh-hmu-cam-ə*

1-FACTUAL-from.linear.object.moving.circumpivotally-for.cover.for.

horizontal.surface.to.move-to.athwart.a.firesite-FACTUAL

‘I threw a blanket over the fire’

*sa:sátipuʔma*

s-ʔw-ma-sa-tip-uʔ-im-ə

1-FACTUAL-with.foot-move.through.mud-thither-FACTUAL

‘I stepped into a deep mudhole’

Many of the California Hokan languages show elaborate sets of instrumental and directional affixes like these, many with highly specific meanings.

A number of the languages contain rich systems of evidential markers that indicate the source and reliability of information conveyed. In Central Pomo, for example, speakers rarely make a statement without specifying the source of their knowledge. Announcing the arrival of guests, a speaker would use the first sentence below if she were indoors and heard steps or speech, but the second if she were standing on the porch and saw the guests arrive.

Central Pomo (Frances Jack, speaker)

*u:l      ʔe                      qóčammanme:.*

u:l      ʔe                      qó=ča-ʔ-ma=**nme:**

now      COPULA                      to=run-MULT.EVENT-MULT.AGENCY=AUDITORY.EVIDENCE

‘They’re here!’

*u:l      ʔe                      qóčammaya.*

u:l      ʔe                      qó=ča-ʔ-ma=**ya**

now      COPULA                      to=run-MULT.EVENT-MULT.AGENCY=PERSONAL.WITNESS

‘They’re here!’

The verb root *čá-* ‘for one to run’ was used here for a group arriving in one car. (An entirely different verb root *hlá-* is used if a actually group runs.) The fact that several persons arrived in the car is indicated by the multiple agency suffix *-ma*. Direction toward the speaker is indicated by the proclitic *qó=*. Other evidential markers in Central Pomo indicate hearsay evidence, general truth, inference, knowledge from personal performance of an action, and knowledge from the effect of an action or state on the speaker.

Case systems vary among the Hokan languages. Some show nominative/accusative patterns. In Atsugewi, for example, the form of all first person subject pronominal prefixes (on factual verbs) is s-.

Atsugewi (Talmy 1972: 433, 444, 453)

<i>s-uswalq'</i>	‘I picked up the rag’
<i>s-a:sápu:ma</i>	‘I stepped into a deep mudhole’
<i>s-usaq'w</i>	‘I got a thorn stuck in my finger’

Other languages show agent/patient patterns. In Central Pomo, the forms of pronouns do not reflect subjecthood or objecthood, but rather agency, specifically control. The first person agent pronoun *ʔa:* is used when the speaker is in control; the first person patient pronoun *tó:* when the speaker is not in control, regardless of their status as subjects or objects and the transitivity of the clause.

Central Pomo (Frances Jack, speaker)

<i>ʔa: qóyow.</i>	‘I came.’
<i>ʔa: bayéw.</i>	‘I understand.’
<i>ʔa: mú:tu dačéw.</i>	‘I caught him.’
<i>to: dačewya.</i>	‘(He) caught <b>me</b> .’
<i>to: ló:ya.</i>	‘I fell.’
<i>Mú:tu q<sup>h</sup>á:p<sup>h</sup>’a:yaw to:.</i>	‘I feel sorry for her.’

Most of the languages show verb-final word order, with varying degrees of fluidity for pragmatic purposes, but some, like Chontal, are verb-initial. Several of the languages, among them Washo, the Pomoan languages, and the Yuman languages exhibit special switch-reference or clause combining systems. In Central Pomo, one set of markers is used to link actions or states that are portrayed as components of a single event, usually sharing core arguments, as in the first sentence below. A different set is used to link those that retain their distinctness, like =*hla* in the second.

Central Pomo (Florence Paoli, speaker)

<i>ʔé</i>	<i>wa</i>	<i>ma</i>	<i>šačówʔk<sup>h</sup>e</i>	<i>yal</i>	<i>ča:l</i>	<i>démmahi?</i>
be	Q	you	will whip	us	home	take <b>and</b>
‘Are you gonna take us home <b>and</b> whip us?’						(single event)

<i>ʔé</i>	<i>wa</i>	<i>ma</i>	<i>šačówʔk<sup>h</sup>e</i>	<i>yal</i>	<i>ča:l</i>	<i>démmahla?</i>
be	Q	you	us	will whip	we	home go <b>and</b>
‘Are you gonna whip us <b>when</b> we go home?’						(two events)

Good overviews of work on the Hokan stock are in Langdon 1974, 1979 and Jacobsen 1979.

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