

UC Berkeley

Survey Reports, Survey of California and Other Indian Languages

Title

Reviving a Penutian Language: Steps and Strategies in the Revival of Miluk Coos

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4825001w>

Author

Grant, Anthony P

Publication Date

1996

Reviving a Penutian Language: Steps and Strategies in the Revival of Miluk Coos*

Anthony P. Grant
University of St Andrews, UK.
apg@st-andrews.ac.uk

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses some of the linguistic and social issues involved in the ongoing revival of Miluk Coos, an extinct Penutian language of coastal Oregon, by two tribes in the area. It examines recent attempts at making Miluk linguistic material available and accessible to interested tribal members, and outlines the stages necessary for implementation before Miluk can be reintroduced as a spoken language.

1. Miluk Coos in its geographical and historical setting.

Miluk Coos is the more southerly of the two Coosan languages, Oregonian languages which have generally been linked to the Penutian hypothesis. Its immediate northern neighbor was the more widely-spoken Hanis Coos.

Before widespread contact with Euroamericans and population displacement took place in the 1850s speakers of Miluk Coos lived south of the speakers of Hanis Coos, in two areas, which were separate but closely-allied political entities. One community lived in on the South Slough of the Coos River, in Coos County, Oregon, and the other, whose members were referred to in Miluk as *gwsiya*, or in English, 'the Lower Coquilles', was settled in a village at the mouth of the Coquille River. Two dialects are thus distinguished: South Slough and Lower Coquille. It is likely that Miluk-speakers had lived further inland along the Coquille River but had been displaced by speakers of insurgent (Athapaskan) Upper Coquille, probably in the 18th and early 19th centuries.

When the Coos population was dispersed in the 1850s after the Rogue River Wars and as a result of land deals arising from the treaties enacted between coastal tribes and the United States Government, Miluk-speakers were forcibly settled, firstly at Fort Umpqua, then at Yachats in the so-called Coast reservation, on the northwestern Oregon coast, in what was traditionally Alsea territory. The period of forced settlement lasted from 1859 to 1875 and the Coos were brutally treated. They suffered years of hardship and hunger, no school was provided for the instruction of the children, medical supervision was inadequate, and by 1875 the numbers of the Coos were reduced to less than half what they had been in 1859. The Coast reservation was dissolved in 1875 and its lands thrown open for settlement by whites. Many Miluks returned to the Coos River and nearby territories which they had left a generation previously, but a number settled at Siletz, together with members of most Southwestern Oregon Athapaskan groups (including the Upper Coquilles) and members of other Oregonian tribes.

Miluk Coos is now extinct, and no words of the language are now being passed down to people of Miluk descent. The last person to know any words of the language, Mrs Daisy Wasson Coddling (b. 1874), who had never learned the language

beyond a few words, died in 1963. The last person able to construct new sentences, Mrs Laura (Lolly) Hotchkiss Metcalf, half-sister of Mrs Coddington, lived from 1862 to 1961, and had last spoken Miluk with others in about 1918, according to the Swadesh-Melton tape. The last person who was capable of giving connected texts in the language was Mrs Annie Miner Peterson (1862-1939), of whom more later.

The process leading to the ultimate extinction of Miluk Coos extended over more than a century. It is likely that even in the nineteenth century many speakers of Miluk Coos were shifting to Upper Coquille in the south or Hanis Coos in the north, while many probably also knew the local lingua franca, Chinook Jargon. Speakers of all these languages subsequently adopted English as their main language, and apparently actively discouraged children from learning their ancestral language, or from listening to tribal languages in conversation.

The usual patterns of exponential reduction in language use accompanying language loss - a decline in the use of the language as the speech community shrinks, a greater reliance on the language of the majority community, and a concomitant lessening of active and passive command of structure and lexicon in the dying language - also took place among the last speakers of the Coosan languages, with the added twist that some (but not all) Miluk-speakers, especially those who had grown up with people from South Slough, also knew Hanis and found more reason to speak that language, since by the 1930s there were a handful of people who could speak Miluk but maybe ten who knew Hanis. Consequently Miluk, Hanis and other languages assumed the role of in-group codes, with ever more restricted uses as the community of people who knew these languages grew smaller and smaller.

Miluk Coos never received any official recognition in southwestern Oregon, and was not used as a spoken or written language by evangelists or missionaries in Coos country or at Siletz (and indeed no Oregonian languages, except Chinook Jargon, Sahaptin and Nez Perce, were reduced to writing for evangelistic purposes last century).

2. Materials on Miluk.

There are five known sources of material on Miluk, all collected in western Oregon.

a) A wordlist of 104 items plus some numerals and paradigmatic forms collected in 1884 at Siletz, Oregon, by James Owen Dorsey, from an old man, Coquille Johnson.

b) Some 220 lexical forms and two short phrases collected in 1903 by Harry Hull St Clair II from George Barney during the course of St Clair's fieldwork on Hanis with Jim Buchanan and Tommy Miller (also known as Tom Hollis).

c) Extensive textual, lexical and grammatical material collected between 1933 and the late 1930s by Melville Jacobs at Charleston, Oregon, from Annie Miner Peterson. Some acetate recordings of songs and tales were also made. Jacobs' data comprises the vast majority of Miluk material.

d) A few dozen words and placenames collected during fieldwork in southwestern Oregon in 1942 by John Peabody Harrington from Lolly Metcalf and her half-sisters Daisy Wasson Coddington and Nellie Wasson Freeman.

e) A 65-minute tape recording including about 300 items, made in 1953 by Morris Swadesh with the assistance of Robert Melton, comprising forms from Lolly

Metcalf, a few of which were corroborated or commented upon by Daisy Coddling. This shows signs of English influence in the pronunciation.

It is rumored that Leo Frachtenberg, who worked extensively on Hanis, Lower Umpqua and Alsea, allegedly collected some materials in Miluk in 1909, including a version of the myth 'The Origin of Death', from Jim Buchanan (c. 1849-1932) - who in any case came from the Hanis village of Wualatch, and was a Hanis-speaker - but these have not been traced.

Dialectal differences between South Slough Miluk and Lower Coquille Miluk, as documented in the materials, are not great. The dialects were evidently distinct but completely mutually intelligible. Only the first body of published material, that collected by Dorsey, comes from a Lower Coquille Miluk; the rest is from speakers of South Slough Miluk. However, Jacobs did collect some 350 or so verbal forms on filecards, parts of paradigms, from Mrs Peterson, who supplied pairs of what she described as Lower Coquille and South Slough equivalents for many of these (Lawrence Morgan, personal communication). Among the Coquilles, Mrs Peterson is regarded as an important historical figure and a revered tribal member (although she died before the Coquille Tribe was constituted, and would thus have been a member of the Coos Bay Tribe of Indians, as the Coos were then constituted), and on the whole little attention has been devoted by the Coquilles to privileging specifically Lower Coquille items of Miluk over their South Slough equivalents.

Dorsey's Miluk material was published (Frachtenberg 1914: 141-149) as was much of Jacobs (Jacobs 1939, 1940), which comprises the vast bulk of published Miluk data; the remainder of Jacobs' material, and the work by St Clair, Harrington and Swadesh, remains unpublished.

3. Post-extinction work on Miluk.

Since at least the late 1980s there has been some interest in reviving Miluk Coos as a language for everyday use, and this interest has grown considerably since around 1993. Interest has been expressed both by the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians, and by the Coquille Tribe of Oregon.

The first-named tribe, which includes a number of people of South Slough Miluk descent among its members, is interested also in the revival of Hanis Coos, and of Siuslaw-Lower Umpqua, since these were also ancestral languages of the tribe (which is itself avowedly a post-contact amalgamation of several mutually friendly coastal Oregonian tribes who intermarried and shared a common culture, but who used different languages). Many of the office-holders in the Confederated Tribes over the past decade or so, including at least one tribal chief, have had South Slough Miluk ancestry. South Slough Miluks mostly joined the Confederated Tribes, and some people of Lower Coquille ancestry, who did not wish to be counted in with the Coquilles, may have done likewise.

For its part the Coquille Tribe has its origin in a breakaway group of disgruntled ex-Coos tribal members, and comprises people who by descent are of mixed Miluk (of both types) and Upper Coquille ancestry. There was a certain degree of intermarriage between members of the two tribes on the Coquille River early last century, although there was never a 'Coquille tribe' as such. Many of the ancestors of members of the Coquille Tribe formerly resided at Siletz. (Interestingly, many people of Upper Coquille descent, for instance the renowned ethnographic consultant Coquille

Thompson and his descendants, and also Archie Johnson, the last speaker of Upper Coquille, always remained members of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, and did not seek to become part of the new Coquille Tribe.)

Although most Miluks and the speakers of Hanis Coos did not benefit from the treaties contracted with them by representatives of the United States Government in the early 1850s, members of the 'Nasomah' subtribe of Lower Coquille Miluks were mentioned in the treaties and, after almost a century's struggle, they did receive some compensation for their stolen lands; the modern-day Coquille Tribe comprises the descendants of those people who received compensation on behalf of their Nasomah ancestors. The Coquilles had originally been counted in with the other Coos Indians, in addition to being enrolled members of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians by virtue of their partial Upper Coquille ancestry, which accounted for their residence there last century, but they separated from an earlier organization of the Coos tribes in the early 1960s. Both local tribes are Federally recognized tribes (Confederated Tribes 1984, Coquilles 1989).

Political circumstances reflecting continued animosity between the tribes since the breakaway of the Coquilles (for example the Coquille Tribe's claim to entitlement to all land formerly occupied by Coosan-speakers) have so far dictated that the linguistic work on Miluk be done somewhat independently by the two tribes, with each taking technical advice from a different (non-Indian) linguist. Most research and revival work on Miluk has been done by or for the Coquilles. The Coquilles regard Miluk as a key element of their tribal identity, and as a *de jure* official language, for example in prayers and myth recitations in Midwinter and other ceremonies, and look forward to the day when it can be used as an everyday language among the Coquilles (Troy Anderson, personal communication). Miluk (and also Hanis and Siuslaw) play much smaller public roles among the Confederated Tribes, who have not declared them as official languages, although they cordially support their use and propagation as parts of their own tribal identity.

In practical terms the Coquille Tribe is somewhat less interested in reviving Upper Coquille, which is less well documented than Miluk (mostly Upper Coquille vocabulary has been recorded), although records of closely-related speech-forms exist, since it is part of the Tututni-Tolowa-Chetco complex of Oregon Athapaskan languages, several members of which have been extensively described. Especially interesting in this regard is Tolowa, the ancestral language of the people round Smith River, California, which has been superbly and copiously documented by their tribal linguist Loren Bommelyn, himself a Tolowa, who has studied linguistics at the University of Oregon, and who has spared no effort to become a fluent speaker of Tolowa.

Other linguists in the area have made studies of the languages of their ancestors. In this regard one notes Patricia Whereat, of South Slough Miluk descent and a former councilwoman for the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians, who took a Master's degree in linguistics at the University of Oregon, studying the structure of Hanis Coos, and Troy D. Anderson, a graduate in linguistics and anthropology of Stanford University and a Coquille tribal member, who has worked on Miluk Coos, as part of his academic and practical interest in the languages and ethnology of the groups who came to make up the Coquille Tribe.

Anderson, great-great-grandson of Lolly Metcalf, has been one of the prime movers in the revival of Miluk. In addition to compiling a dictionary, he has put Mrs Peterson's Miluk texts onto disk, using a one-to-one symbol transcription adapted to

the requirements of IBM machines, and has examined unpublished Jacobs Miluk materials at the University of Washington. He has also designed an alphabet for Miluk, reminiscent in its construction of the iconically phonetic principles of Korean *Han'gul* script, which is intended to highlight the unique visual image of the language. It is based around a computer-generated matrix resembling the organs of speech, within which the places and manners of articulation of the various sounds are depicted by stylized symbols. Furthermore Anderson taught language classes in Miluk (which he oriented toward learning short sentences and traditional texts, rather than to the development of fluency in the language) in the winter of 1994 to a largely White audience, and he has encouraged another Coquille tribal member, Mr Shirod Younker, to study the language at Oregon State University. Anderson was vice-president of CEDCO, the Coquille Economic Development Corporation, founded by his father Bruce A. Anderson, and he sees Miluk language revival as an important element in the revival of the Coquilles' economic and cultural fortunes.

4. Issues of language revival: models and strategies.

Revival of dead or obsolescent languages as media of everyday communication within a speech community has been conducted in many places, with varying measures of success.

Interest among US and Canadian Indians in reviving their moribund or extinct ancestral languages has been growing over the past few decades, and groups with languages which range in descending order of copiousness of attestation from Huron (among the Hurons of Lorette, Quebec) or Miami-Illinois (among Miamis in northern Indiana and separately in northeastern Oklahoma, and also among Tamaroas in southern Illinois: John K. White, personal communication, December 1996) to the scanty records of Adai (by a group of Adai descendants near Natchitoches, Louisiana: Wallace Chafe, personal communication, July 1995) have been involved in various forms of language revival.

Most of these groups have gone back to the published (and in many cases also unpublished) sources on their languages, in order to have as full a picture as possible of the language. A workshop intended to assist Native Californians to make satisfactory use of the archival materials on their ancestral languages was held in June 1996 at the University of California at Berkeley, under the supervision of Professor Leanne Hinton of the Department of Linguistics, and attracted participants from all over the state.

Revival of a language, with the implicit or explicit goal of language revival being to make the dead language a natural medium of everyday use, comes in several stages, from learning a few greetings and culturally-relevant words to using the language fluently and productively.

In regard to what might be called the support of 'language heritage', the acquisition of a few culturally salient words and phrases as a badge of ethnic identity, the former is easily accomplished and catered for (many commercially available instructional materials on Native American languages consist simply of a cassette and a word- or phrase-list keyed to the cassette). This is also the model in use, for example, in books introducing Hawai'ian children of Filipino descent to their ancestral Ilokano or Tagalog languages: a few hundred words (mostly nouns), a cassette, and lots of attractive pictures in a quarto book. And in many cases this may be all that most of the

people want, since learning a second language which lacks native speakers is bound to be a minority pursuit.

There is material of this sort for a Coosan language. A booklet with some Miluk words and phrases has been produced (Grant 1994 a), while a language-learning tape for Hanis (Grant 1994b), consisting of words, phrases and a pronunciation guide, and with an accompanying booklet, is in circulation. It would not be difficult to produce some sound-recorded teaching material for Miluk.

It is also perfectly reasonable to be more ambitious and to set one's sights on the stars, that is, on the complete revival of a language. Many indigenous groups, and not only those in North America, have been attempting, in differing ways, to revive whole languages as functioning entities, as part of the redefinition of their identity, after the thread of continuity with the last speakers of the language has been broken, and no words of the ancestral language are known any longer to contemporary group members.

Some models of language revival include (among many types) the following techniques (instances are taken from languages of the Pacific Rim):

1) 'Pidginization' of a language, firstly teaching the vocabulary (and implicitly the phonology) of this language to tribal members, who then use the words in an English language framework. This is what happened in an experiment with moribund Quileute at LaPush, Washington, in the 1970s (Jay Powell, personal communication; see also Powell 1973). Quileute itself is not yet extinct, but many learners preferred to learn 'Pidgin Quileute' because of the structural and phonological complexity of the unpidginized form of the language. In fact, Pidgin Quileute is a mixed language, since its structure is English. It was seen as a halfway house, a point in the linguistic continuum between the tribal members' English and their acquisition of full Quileute. Powell has also mentioned (in a personal communication to the author) that the Shoalwater Bay Tribe of Washington is interested in holding language classes to teach Chinook Jargon, a traditional pidginized form of their ancestral Coastal Chinook (Clatsop and Shoalwater) language.

2) Synthesis of existing or surviving materials on a language, which may often be internally inconsistent but which are then used as a basis for developing a specifically new version of the language for greater use, for which in some cases new words are 'invented', apparently from nowhere. This has happened with Esselen in central California (David L. Shaul, personal communication, 1992). In this case the materials on the language were scanty; there was no traditionally-oriented text and little text of any sort, while only a few hundred words of lexicon and a certain amount of structure had been recorded. The continuity between this newer form of esselen and the older language is therefore only partial.

3) Synthesis of materials on differing dialects or emergent languages of one group as a basis for a new language. This underlies the development of the so-called Neo-Tasmanian, which draws material from several of the (quite discrete) communalects formerly spoken in Tasmania (Tasmanian aboriginal language policy is discussed in Crowley 1990). The revival has taken this form largely because next to no morphological information on the Tasmanian languages is available, but fairly extensive (if poorly-recorded) vocabularies of several dialects have been preserved from the nineteenth century (the last speaker of a Tasmanian language, a woman named Truganini, died in 1876). The revived language consists of lexemes from Tasmanian languages used in an essentially English typological framework, with English phonology. (There is some evidence that a pidginized form of one or another

Tasmanian language was used, possibly in conjunction with pidginized English, as a lingua franca among the remnant Tasmanian community on Flinders Island and at Oyster Bay, Tasmania, in the mid-nineteenth century.)

4) Use of existing materials on a language as a basis for revival. This strategy has been followed in the revival of Kaurna or Gawurna, the original language of the Adelaide Plains, South Australia (Jane Simpson and Rob Amery, personal communication; see also Amery 1993, 1995). These materials are largely lexical and to a lesser extent grammatical or paradigmatic, and are written in an inadequate orthography devised in the 1840s by two German pastors, Teichelmann and Schurmann. Some Kaurna linguistic material was recorded phonetically in the twentieth century, but the less accurate materials are preferred by the language revivalists because they are more copious.

The Kaurna case is the one which Miluk most closely resembles, but there are differences; notable in this instance is the fact that the little Kaurna textual material there is consists largely of a translation of the Ten Commandments, whereas the Miluk text is extensive, original (rather than being translated material), and what is more, it treats Miluk themes. The people reviving Miluk are ultimately aiming for linguistic authenticity: they are trying to recreate Miluk as it was once spoken. The same is true (as far as the sources will permit them) of people reviving Esselen and, to a lesser extent, Tasmanian. However, as yet there seems to be little new textual material being composed in revived Miluk of the sort which is being produced in Kaurna.

Of course, the ideology or strategy for language revival adopted by an indigenous group depends upon a number of factors, although a crucial one is the extent to which a particular language has been documented, and the nature of this documentation - lexical, grammatical, textual, or with all three types well-covered. In order to revive the structure of a language one must know what it was like in the first place. Some tribes have sought to revive a language as it was spoken by their immediate ancestors (who in some cases have left records of portions of their language), while others have gone back to published (or to extensive but unpublished) records in order to reconstruct the language as it was used decades or centuries previously; yet others, including those who are reviving the Coosan languages, have pursued a 'pack-rat' approach, integrating all available materials on the language, in the same way that linguists compile synthetic dictionaries of extinct languages drawing on all available resources.

Tribes in North America have now become adept at searching out even the most recondite wordlists and collections of linguistic materials. A new generation of tribal historians, as well-versed as other archivists and possessed of much more self-motivation, has made it its business to know and to collect all the primary sources on the language and ethnology of a particular group. Some languages, such as Adai or the Texan language Coahuilteco, are too scantily attested ever to be available for use as first languages in their respective communities. (Miluk is in a more fortunate position.)

Rob Amery's discussions of work on Kaurna have dealt with a number of theoretical and practical issues that can be largely replicated for Miluk, if this should be what Miluk descendants want. Amery (1995) discusses the situation of Kaurna and neighbouring languages in terms of *language reclamation*: people of Kaurna descent are being enabled to have access to the material on their ancestral languages, knowledge of these languages is being made widely available to those descendants who want it, and language kits are being designed for use in local schools.

Language reclamation is a necessary first step to language revival, and it is wonderful to see language reclamation of this sort proceeding apace in North America, even among the smallest and most sidelined tribes.

Language reclamation on some scale has been feasible for Miluk ever since the publication of Jacobs' two text collections, in 1939 and 1940, but these collections are still not widely read or used in the community (though most or all Coquilles at least know about them). There are a number of obstacles which preclude the Miluk originals of the texts being widely enjoyed and appreciated - for instance the orthography in which Jacobs wrote Miluk was an adaptation of systems used by American ethnologists earlier this century, and differs in many ways from either the American Phonemic orthography used in linguistic instruction in the US today or from any form, no matter how regularized, of American English orthography. It is characterized by the use of diacritics and other unfamiliar symbols, such as subscript dots, small capitals, schwas, and barred /s, as a means of representing Miluk phonology. Therefore, it does not correspond readily to the way in which most English-speaking people would like to see un-English sounds being represented. Grant (1994b) offered an interim phonemic orthography for Hanis which relied on spelling conventions already established for other Indian languages using Roman letters, with some largely transparent digraphs for unfamiliar sounds; this has been used occasionally by the Confederated Tribes for writing Hanis and Siuslaw, and this could be adapted for Miluk and taught without much trouble.

In an earlier paper, Amery (1993) discusses a number of neologisms in Kurna which were coined by the pastors from indigenous lexical materials in order to express Euroamerican concepts which White settlers were then introducing into the Adelaide area. He shows that a second wave of neologisms has been created over the past few years by local Aboriginal people (whose preferred self-designation is *Nunga*) in the course of their use of Kurna in songwriting classes, as a language in which to create new songs and stories, thus initiating a new period of Kurna language planning.

There has been some development of neologisms in the Coquille revival of Miluk (for instance, phrases meaning 'please' and 'thank you' have been coined, in order to accommodate Miluk to more Western expectations of the social dynamics of communication), but the process has not been extensive, and the adoption of new vocabulary items from Hanis, Upper Coquille or Chinook Jargon, to fill lexical gaps in Miluk, has not taken place. If Miluk were to be revived for everyday use, a considerable amount of vocabulary extension and expansion would be required, and terminology needed to express the features of a modern society would have to be coined, since much of the recorded Miluk vocabulary consists of ecological terms and bodypart names, rather than names for acculturational items or abstractions. However, at the moment language revival precedes language planning.

The resuscitation of previously extinct languages has taken place, even when several centuries have elapsed between the death of the language and its revival.

Hebrew, which fell out of use as a spoken language in the early centuries of the first millennium of the Christian era, and which is popularly but erroneously believed to have been revived by Eliezer Ben-Yehuda in the late nineteenth century on the basis of the language of the Old Testament, is the most commonly-cited example of a successfully-revived language. There is a degree of myth in this. Ullendorff (1971) has shown that the grammar and lexicon of a limited corpus such as the Hebrew Bible would not provide sufficient material for the construction of a language suitable for all modern needs. Modern Hebrew, or Ivrit, is of course not the direct descendant of

Biblical Hebrew, since more than a millennium elapsed between the death of Hebrew as a spoken language and the emergence of the modern language. It is probable that if Hebrew had not become extinct as a spoken language, its twentieth-century form would look rather different, and would sound very different, from Ivrit.

Ben-Yehuda's achievement was to codify the language of the copious Hebrew materials that had been produced, and on the basis of this codification, to get people speaking Hebrew to one another as an everyday language for everyday purposes. Hebrew was certainly not an unknown language or a closed book to the Jews. Jews who had received a religious education, especially men, were more or less familiar with Hebrew, which they had learned in schools as the centerpiece of their education. Quite apart from the role of Hebrew as a language of religious discourse - prayers, rituals, religious writings - and as a language for writing about 'loftier' subjects, some knowledge of Hebrew had been available as a lingua franca to educated Jews of varying linguistic backgrounds throughout Europe and western Asia). Ben-Yehuda could draw on the resources not only of the Bible, but also of some two thousand years' worth of writing in Hebrew on a variety of topics - poetry, religious matters, translations of works from other languages - in short, on a huge corpus. From the resources of this corpus he was able to coin neologisms, and to take further steps in language planning for Hebrew.

Another instance that is often quoted as a case of successful language revival is that of Cornish, although in fact, what the several hundred Celtic-language enthusiasts in Cornwall speak is in fact Cornic or Revived Cornish, and more than a century elapsed between the death of the last fluent speaker of Cornish and the revival of a form of the language in the early twentieth century. This language draws mostly upon Middle Cornish (pre-1600) lexicon and structure (although the pack-rat approach has been pursued, and data from other periods of Cornish are drawn upon where necessary), with a standardized orthography, and which has an extensive overlay of Welsh and Breton morphological and lexical items in cases where evidence from Cornish sources was lacking. Grammars, dictionaries (for learners as well as dictionaries intended to codify the language) and teaching materials have been produced for Cornic, though as yet no children are acquiring it as a first language (though this may happen in succeeding generations). This language is certainly Celtic, but it is also artificial. Nobody ever spoke Cornish in the manner in which it has been revived.

5. Problems of Miluk language revival: a selection.

Could Miluk be revived? The view from the outset looks promising. By comparison with Esselen, Tasmanian (of any sort) and Kaurua, Miluk Coos is in a favorable position for language revival, even though such a revival is built on a closed corpus of data. Materials are moderately extensive (there are some 182 printed pages of text, some of them bilingual in Hanis - a language whose structure is better understood than that of Miluk - and all have been provided with fairly close section-by-section translations into English by Melville Jacobs, the collector), and the available data include approximately 2000 lexical items (though somewhat fewer morphemes), and a considerable amount of grammatical information. The texts themselves are largely mythic or narrative in form and document the history, beliefs and concerns of the Miluk Coos - in short, they are Coos literature. The recording of the material is

semi-phonemic and is probably almost as close to a phonemic recording as can be obtained without putting the material through a process of overt phonemicization: all the necessary phonetic detail is certainly there. We have sound-recorded evidence on intonation and pronunciation from the tales and songs in Miluk which Jacobs recorded from Mrs Peterson. The texts have been published and are available for study.

Furthermore there is interest among Miluk descendants in reviving the language as a spoken medium. This factor is the most important consideration of any, as far as language revival is concerned, since a language revived *in vacuo* has no chance of survival. And of course no reasonable person would deny that all descendants of Miluk-speakers are fully entitled to have complete access to the riches of their ancestral language in whatever modes and formats avail them best. Unfortunately the number of Miluk descendants interested in continuing with Miluk language classes held by the Coquille Tribe in the 1994 season was not great, at most a few percent of tribal members.

This attendance pattern reflected a syndrome which has been found in many publicly-held Indian language classes elsewhere in the US, where the most assiduous students tended to include a high proportion of non-Indians, with diehard language enthusiasts, connoisseurs of Indian culture (often people who had many friends in the local Indian community), and, more often than not, New Agers seeking their cosmic roots, comprising the backbone of the class, while many people whose ancestors had spoken the language under study were soon deterred by the means of instruction or by what they viewed as the unnecessary complications introduced into the language as it was being taught. The possession of Indian ancestry is in itself no guarantee that one will find the acquisition of an Indian language as a second language a straightforward or painless process.

Given that the intensive study of, and use of, Miluk is and will remain a minority interest among the Coquilles, to make Miluk an everyday spoken language once more, in the way in which Ivrit has become an everyday language, would be to discharge a Herculean task. Many of the features which rest on the continued and regular contact between learner and native speaker/teacher, and which have made the Master/Apprentice scheme, devised by Leanne Hinton, so successful for students of several languages in Native California, or which have brought success to the Language Nest scheme for the perpetuation of Maori in New Zealand, are simply not available to people who wish to revive dead languages.

Problems in making an extinct language available for learning are potentially legion, even in the case of a sensitively-documented language such as Miluk. They exist at many levels and assume many forms, not all of them having to do with the structure of the language. Many problems relate to the level of knowledge of the revived language by individuals and can be remedied, and some relate to the totality of knowledge of a language - what we know about the particular forms and usages of a language - and will remain forever problems.

Non-linguistic problems include a paucity of information on many social aspects of language, for instance the forms and situational applicability of greetings and leave-takings - among the very first things that people learning a language wish to know. In the case of Miluk, much 'social knowledge' about language, the sort of behavior-based knowledge which would have been second nature to users of the language, and which has been all too infrequently described in detail, has to be gleaned from a study of interaction in the texts themselves.

Other problems of language revival affect the form, rather than the function, of language. In this particular instance, they include information gaps in attested paradigms, and lack of certainty as to the grammatical acceptability of sentences devised to demonstrate grammatical principles (unless they are drawn from the texts). There are no longer any native speakers of Miluk who can pass judgment on the acceptability of a sentence.

Indeed, the amount of knowledge about Miluk which has been internalized by people interested in the language is as yet not sufficient to create even a small body of near-native speakers, which is what is needed if the language is to be revived as anything other than a ritual language, the medium of texts recited by people who do not know exactly what the words they are saying mean.

For many people, the complexity of Miluk would be sufficient deterrent to studying it as a second language (for much the same reason that Pidgin Quileute became popular). Miluk differs from English in just about every conceivable way. Its phonology includes numerous sounds produced at several points and manners of articulation which are not used in English, and it includes a number of word-initial consonant clusters which English does not permit. Its structure is extremely complex for people who know only English. It is highly inflected, with a high morphemic density within a word, with nominal and verbal systems whose underlying structures and characteristics differ greatly from that of English, and it exhibits a number of morphophonemic changes which affect the surface realization of the form of an inflected word. It has relatively free word order and ergative syntax. The vocabularies of English and Miluk are also entirely different.

One of the greatest problems in developing teaching materials in Miluk is the lack of a published reference grammar of the language. In contrast to what is available for Siuslaw-Lower Umpqua and Hanis, no grammar of Miluk has been published. Miluk grammar is documented (there is paradigmatic material, sometimes of somewhat questionable value, from J. O. Dorsey and Melville Jacobs) but much of it is only implicitly documented, and it remains to be extracted from the texts by careful comparison and cross-analysis of forms. The main features (and many minor ones) of Miluk have been recorded in the texts but have not been inventorized, and nobody has compiled long lists of verbal inflections in Miluk, illustrating regular and suppletive-stem verbs, lists of the sort which are available for many other languages. Fortunately Troy Anderson's transcriptions of the Peterson texts onto diskette can be used with concordancing packages, which should alleviate this problem to some extent by allowing the user to search for occurrences of particular morphemes.

More importantly, the authenticity as first-language output of much of the material is potentially questionable. Some 95% of the material reflects the Miluk speech of Mrs Peterson, who was a fluent, but technically not a native, speaker of the language. Her first language was Hanis, which was the language of her mother and stepfather (her biological father was Irish and played no part in her upbringing); she had learned Miluk from her mother's mother during her childhood, and had heard Miluk tales, which she had learned line by line, through repetition and by rote, from a number of Miluk-speakers from South Slough and the Lower Coquille River who were living around Yaquina and Yachats in the north of coastal Oregon (many of these tales were also known to Hanis-speakers). It is quite possible that Mrs Peterson was, at one time, as fluent in Miluk as she was in Hanis (and she certainly was at ease telling narratives and relating myths in Miluk), but when Jacobs met her in 1932 there was nobody else in the vicinity with whom she could converse in Miluk, yet there were still

a few speakers of Hanis in the area, so that her daily languages were Hanis, or English, which she acquired during her twenties.

All recorded sentence and text material was taken from Mrs Peterson. Consequently any grammar of Miluk is a grammar of second-language Miluk as recalled by someone who had had no opportunity to use the language for many years. However, it seems from the few clues available to us that her Miluk was fluent and accurate and did not differ in most essentials from that of L1 Miluk speakers. Sources other than Mrs Peterson's materials serve only to corroborate much lexicon and to supply a few new words and placenames.

Some work on producing secondary materials on Miluk, with the intention of documenting or formulating features of the language as it is attested, has already been carried out. Howard Berman wrote a partial, unpublished and undated (but very useful) grammar of the language, based on his close philological examination of the the Peterson texts and other materials, and on his continued work in the Jacobs Collection, University of Washington (Berman n.d., ms). Anderson (1990) is a dictionary of Miluk, written as a Master of Arts thesis, featuring headwords in English, with Miluk equivalents given with a textual citation. Grant (1994a) is a (hastily-produced) wordlist of Miluk items, including forms from minor sources (ie. non-Peterson), compiled on behalf of the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians.

What is to be known about the structure of Miluk will ultimately rest on the Jacobs texts and, to much lesser extent, on the other pieces of evidence. These need to be worked over, inventorized and analysed as far as they will permit, before teaching materials, aiming at the spontaneous generation by language-learners of novel but (presumably) grammatically-acceptable Miluk sentences, can be devised.

Certain items are going to be needed before Miluk can be taught efficiently in formal instruction as a second language. These include:

- a) a two-way dictionary of the language, with extensive explanation and exemplification of Miluk forms for the benefit of speakers of English;
- b) a solid descriptive grammar, complete with numerous paradigms illustrating the conjugations of verbs, plentiful examples showing how ergativity works in Miluk texts, and so on;
- c) a graded stepwise textbook introducing features of Miluk structure one by one, with plenty of (hopefully authentic) examples;
- d) a cassette tape or CD-ROM demonstrating the sounds of the language, with sound material electronically retrieved from the recordings of Mrs Peterson made by Jacobs, and with one-to-one equivalents in a usable and simple phonemic orthography (preferably one which can be easily typed).

But before any of these can be produced, there will need to be people available who know the Miluk materials exhaustively and who are completely familiar with the structures and items of the closed corpus.

6. A potential step toward the revival of Miluk: the example of Latin.

It is perfectly possible to teach a dead language to the point where people are familiar with its lexicon and structure, where they can read it fluently, and where necessary can also write or speak it. This is what has happened with Hebrew, and the same experience has befallen anyone who has studied Latin in school.

Latin and the Romance languages parted company as mutually-intelligible varieties of the same language well over a millennium ago. Nevertheless, Latin has been copiously documented from several eras, and is the medium of a colossal literature. It can be taught as a foreign language: there are textbooks, dictionaries, and reference grammars (not to mention the useful but hardly authentic CD-ROMs and cassette tapes). Many people who learn Latin still use the old grammar and translation method that was traditionally used in grammar schools, whereby they learn the language by reading genuine or artificially-created Latin texts, and constructing pre-existing or new Latin sentences on models already taught to them. The materials in use have been produced by people who have learned the language, which was taught to them through formal instruction by others who had learned the language, in an unbroken cultural tradition stretching over centuries, and who had a knowledge of the language as close to native-speaker competence as it was possible to attain.

Latin has been used for a remarkably wide variety of purposes over the past millennium, and has fallen into disuse more recently than one might think. Prefaces to scholarly editions of classical Greek and Latin texts were regularly written in Latin into the early decades of this century. The Vatican uses Latin as its official language and has a terminology bureau whose job is to coin neologisms in the language for use in public proclamations. Nobody speaks Latin as their first language nowadays, but one recalls that in the sixteenth century Michel de Montaigne was brought up with Latin as his first language, on the orders of his father (with the effect that the household servants had to learn it in order to speak with the child), while in Hungary aristocratic young women were brought up to speak Latin as their first language until the nineteenth century.

All this was possible because scholars had written grammars and dictionaries of Latin, and had made it a language which was codified and which could be taught to people as a *lingua franca* of the educated and as a vehicle of literature. Quite simply, these people had learned Latin as another language which was capable of application to everyday use in many spheres, a language which complemented the functions which their mother tongues played, and they were able to pass this knowledge on.

Of course, Latin became the language of an elite who could afford to be taught in the days before free universal education. Indeed, the learning of Latin became almost synonymous with formal education (for instance, it was *Latin* grammar which was taught in 'grammar schools'). Acquisition of Latin was often the gateway to privilege, and scholars from as far afield as Ireland, Finland and Croatia were able to communicate in the language and share an almost pan-European literature to which new creative works were being added into the eighteenth century.

Latin's supranational status was a valuable reason for its perpetuation, and the converse of that of *Miluk* as a badge of Coos or Coquille identity, but one could certainly learn *Miluk* for a greater appreciation of Coos literature. However, this will not be possible until people learn *Miluk* as a language rather than as a string of unintelligible sounds which go to make up texts. Of course, Latin was also used in ritual contexts. Many people who used Latin in these contexts did not understand what they were saying: for centuries Catholics recited the Ordinary of the Mass in what is generally termed Ecclesiastical Latin, more often than not without a clue about the meaning of the words they were saying.

The danger of creating a linguistic elite among the Coquilles, of the sort which once existed among those people in Western Europe conversant with Latin - that is, a clique consisting of those who can read *Miluk* as a ritualistic or 'high' language (even if

they cannot construct elaborate new utterances) - is real, and at the moment any air of mystery about the ability to read Miluk would be exacerbated by the opacity of the spelling system which Jacobs used for recording and publishing his texts, but the effects are unlikely to be harmful or disruptive, since the number of people interested in learning to read and appreciate the Miluk texts in the original is not large.

On the other hand, any revival of the use of Miluk beyond the repetition of purely formulaic and stereotyped utterances will require a body of people who are conversant with the language, who both know it and can teach it. People who are comfortable with written Miluk would potentially be in a good position to help propagate knowledge of the language to others.

7. The revival of Miluk: a way forward?

Miluk already has a role to play in the life of the Coquille Tribe, and can be said to have been reclaimed to some extent. It has been used in the last few years as a medium for storytelling at the Midwinter Ceremony: a narrator learns and recites stories in Miluk, which are then translated passage by passage into English. Some new Miluk texts have been composed; these are mostly short prayers to be said at ceremonies, and were composed by Troy Anderson at the request of the Coquille Tribe.

At the moment the role of Miluk in Coquille life is at best approximately parallel to that of Manx in ceremonies in the Tynwald Parliament of the Isle of Man, or of Latin in the Oxford and Cambridge Degree Congregations: the language is used, and indeed the use of the language has illocutionary force in itself (laws cannot be promulgated in the Tynwald unless the titles of the bills are read in Manx, while Oxford and Cambridge degrees have to be conferred through the medium of Latin), but its use is confined to fixed formulaic utterances, which can be learned by rote. At such a level, and for other emblematic uses (for instance as the source of names for local institutions or places) Miluk could be used indefinitely, as long as there were people interested in learning to pronounce and recite the relevant texts.

As a side-issue, we may note that the discussion of possible gradual stages of implementing the use of Miluk has been largely from a *functional* perspective, whereby the range of situations where Miluk is available for use is increased cumulatively. One can also envisage a method of gradual *formal* implementation of the use of the language. It should be mentioned that the possibility of introducing the Miluk language to the Coquille Tribe step by step in the form of a 'Pidgin Miluk' within a framework of English morphosyntax (which would gradually be more and more 'Milukized') has been adumbrated by Troy Anderson in e-mail discussions with myself in 1996; however, so far nothing has happened. The process of gradual acquisition of a language as a symbol of tribal identity is one which merits serious consideration, and for which there are precedents: Amery (1995) points out that this is the way in which many words of ancestral languages have been incorporated into songs and stories constructed by Kaurnas and other Nunga people.

However, the successful revival of a language as an everyday medium of communication depends upon a community of people who are capable of creating new utterances in the language, and this community depends upon their being people willing to speak Miluk to one another and to raise children speaking Miluk. This is equally true of those languages which still have fluent native speakers who are of an

age to produce children. If an endangered language is not learnt in the home, no amount of formal instruction or encouragement at school will produce fluent speakers, and that endangered language is doomed. Pouring money into bilingual and bicultural programs, in the hope of reviving an endangered or extinct language which is not being learned by children, is a waste of resources unless there is support for language learning from a non-school environment to which a child feels attracted.

Of the extinct Penutian languages of Oregon, Miluk is theoretically in quite a good position for eventual revival as an everyday language. There is rather more material (and a greater proportion of it in print) for Hanis, while there is less evidence (but most of it available in print) for Siuslaw-Lower Umpqua. Materials for Alsea, Takelma, Kalapuya (especially the Central cluster and the Northern dialect called Tualatin) and Molala are even more plentiful than those for Hanis. However, the Coosan languages and Siuslawan are associated firmly with tribes who are actively interested in reviving these languages, at least for purposes of identification; there is less interest among linguists or others in reviving, say, Molala, because a 'Molala' tribe no longer exists, though there are people of Molala descent (for instance at Grand Ronde) who are aware of their Molala ancestry. But there is nobody around to take up the cudgels and to press for the revival of Molala.

Whether any revival of Miluk as a spoken language will ever take place is, however, doubtful. At the present time the language lacks the essential items of codification - a dictionary and a descriptive grammar - from which a textbook for teaching the structure and lexicon of the language could be devised. There are also very few people, if any, who could read, translate and analyse at sight an untranslated Miluk text, or who could construct grammatically-acceptable Miluk sentences of the complexity of the average sentence in Jacobs' collections of Miluk texts. A structural analysis of Miluk precedes assimilation of the fruits of this analysis, which precedes codification, which precedes second language learning, and that precedes language instruction in Miluk.

To try to bring about the revival of Miluk as a community language at the present stage would be to run before one can walk. And we should also note that recent legal setbacks to CEDCO's plans for expanding the Coquille economic base in the Coos Bay area have made cultural revival a low priority for the Coquille Tribe. The Coquille Tribe faces an uncertain economic future, and only when it is once more on an even keel can we expect much interest to be taken in language revival.

The primary sources for Miluk, plus secondary materials such as Berman's grammatical sketch and Anderson's English-Miluk dictionary (plus other unpublished materials of his, such as his Miluk-English vocabulary list and his machine-readable version of the Miluk texts) constitute the data from which teaching materials can be evolved, once an orthography for the language has been agreed upon. Internalization and analytical assimilation of the primary and secondary materials needs to precede attempts to construct new Miluk utterances for language-teaching purposes.

Further descriptive work on Miluk might also be of use to the non-Miluk linguistic community. Documenting Miluk grammar and constructing a well-planned two-way dictionary and a solid textbook for teaching the language would not only assist people of Miluk descent to learn the language, but would also enable the language to be utilized more readily in comparative Penutian work oriented towards proving the hypothesis that the Penutian languages are genetically related to one another. Unpublished material on several Penutian languages, especially those in Oregon, has not so far been explored as rigorously as it might have been. The result

has been that a number of Penutian languages (for instance Kalapuya and Molala), which are primarily documented in extensive unpublished material, have been severely underused in comparative work.

This benign neglect (which will grow more malign as the original field notebooks of workers such as Frachtenberg and Jacobs yellow and crumble into dust, and the sound recordings become more unplayable with the passing of each decade) compares unfavorably with the treatment which has been accorded extinct Indo-European languages (for instance the Tocharian languages of Turkestan, which have been extinct since the Late Middle Ages and which were only rediscovered this century), by comparatists in Indo-European, for which dictionaries, grammars and text collections have long since been produced. For all we know, Molala (for example) may be the Penutian analogue to Hittite or Vedic Sanskrit, and insights into its structure and lexicon may revolutionize our understanding of the workings of this far-flung family. Miluk, too, has yet to be used to the full in comparative Penutian work, because its structure and lexicon, though documented, have largely - until the work of Berman and especially Anderson - remained a closed book.

The prospects for successful revival of Miluk *in some form and at some level* are good, given the tribal interest and commitment, the relatively large amount and high quality of material, and the moves towards developing this material. However, progress in reviving Miluk will only come when the language has been documented well enough to permit production of grammatically-oriented teaching materials.

The revival of Miluk on the level of Tynwald Manx or Ecclesiastical Latin has already begun, and it is likely that the revival of Miluk will remain at this ritualistic level unless structured pedagogical materials are produced and implemented in some form of tribally-run educational program. Production of usable and student-friendly teaching materials, and of reference works, in a user-friendly orthography, would enable the more dedicated students of Miluk to progress to a command of the language which would permit them to read the texts provided by Mrs Peterson. We must hope that the next decade or so sees the rise of a generation of people interested enough in the language to devote their attentions to learning it, and to passing it onto others.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

* I would like to acknowledge the untiring and most generous assistance of Troy Anderson, Lawrence Morgan and Donald Whereat in my studies of the Coosan languages, Jay Powell and Terry Crowley for observations on similar language restoration and reclamation projects, and also the help of Bruce Rigsby, Rob Amery and Jane Simpson for orienting me towards much of the literature on the revival of Kaurua, and of Paul Mahoney in supervising the sound recording of the cassette in Grant (1994b).

REFERENCES

Amery, R. M. 1993. 'Encoding new concepts in old languages: a casestudy of Kaurua, the language of the Adelaide Plains.' *Australian Aboriginal Studies* 1993 (1): 37-47.

1995. 'It's ours to keep and call our own: reclamation of the Nunga languages in the Adelaide region, South Australia.' *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 113: 63-82.

Anderson, Troy D. 1990. *Miluk Dictionary*. Unpublished Master's thesis, Stanford University.

Berman, Howard. n.d. 'Miluk grammar'. Unpublished manuscript, 30 pp.

Crowley, Terry. 1990. 'Tasmanian Aboriginal Language: Old and New Dialects.' Reprinted in: Michael Walsh and Colin Yallop (eds.), *Language in Aboriginal Australia*. Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press.

Frachtenberg, Leo J. 1914. *Lower Umpqua Texts, with Notes on the Kusan Dialects*. Columbia University Contributions to Anthropology 4. Leiden: E. J. Brill.

Grant, Anthony P. 1994a. *Degála* [One's way of speaking]: *a collection of words and phrases from the Miluk Coos language*. Unpublished booklet. 16 pp.

1994b. *Haanis il'eyis* [The Hanis language]: *words and phrases in the Hanis Coos language*. Booklet, 24 pp., and 90-minute cassette tape. Coos Bay: Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians.

Jacobs, Melville. 1939. *Coos Narrative and Ethnologic Texts*. University of Washington Publications in Anthropology 8 (1): 1-126.

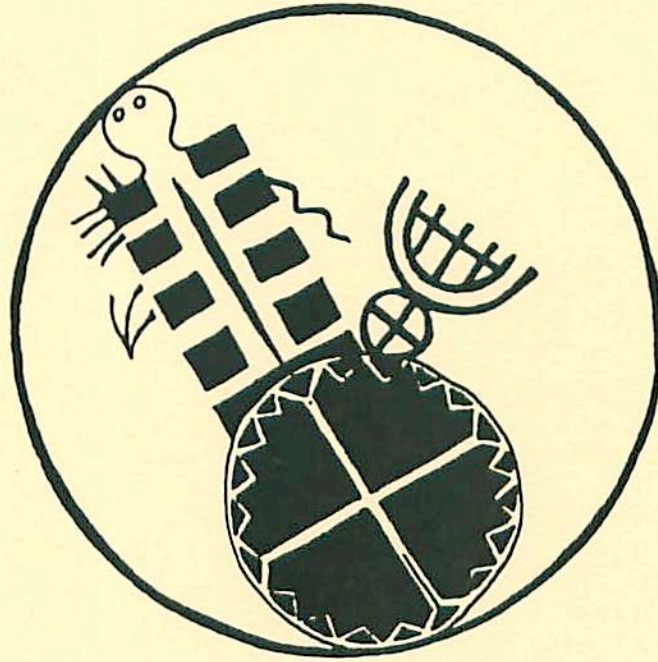
1940. *Coos Myth Texts*. University of Washington Publications in Anthropology 8 (2): 127-260.

Powell, Jay. 1973. 'Raising Pidgins for Fun and Profit.' Paper presented to the North West Conference on Language Teaching.

Ullendorff, Edward. 1971. 'Is Biblical Hebrew a Language?' *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 34: 241-255.

REPORT 10

**SURVEY OF CALIFORNIA AND
OTHER INDIAN LANGUAGES**



**THE HOKAN, PENUTIAN &
J.P. HARRINGTON CONFERENCES
And
THE MARY R. HAAS
MEMORIAL**

**June 28-29, 1996
University of California at Berkeley**

Leanne Hinton, Editor

REPORT 10

**SURVEY OF CALIFORNIA AND
OTHER INDIAN LANGUAGES**

THE HOKAN, PENUTIAN &
J.P. HARRINGTON CONFERENCES
And
THE MARY R. HAAS
MEMORIAL

June 28-29, 1996
University of California at Berkeley

Leanne Hinton, Editor

copyright © 1997
by the Survey of California and Other Indian Languages
cover design by Leanne Hinton (Santa Barbara Chumash rock painting)

This volume is dedicated to the memory of

MARY R. HAAS

Professor emeritus of Linguistics

at the University of California at Berkeley

INTRODUCTION

This volume of the Survey Reports is the Proceedings of the Hokan, Penutian and J.P. Harrington Conferences, held at the University of California at Berkeley on June 28-29, 1996. Part I includes five of the papers that were presented at that conference, and also a paper by George V. Grekoff, who was unable to attend the conference but arranged in advance to submit an article for inclusion in the Proceedings. During the conference, a memorial session was also held for Mary R. Haas, who died a month before the conference. Part II of this volume consists of the presentations that were made about her life and research.

We gratefully acknowledge grants from Joseph Cerny, Vice Chancellor for Research and Dean of the Graduate Division, and William Simmons, Dean of Social Sciences, that helped make this conference possible.

Leanne Hinton
Volume and Series Editor

THE HOKAN, PENUTIAN AND J.P. HARRINGTON CONFERENCES

and the

MARY R. HAAS MEMORIAL SESSION

June 28-29, 1996
University of California at Berkeley, Alumni House

PART I: PAPERS FROM THE HOKAN, PENUTIAN AND J.P. HARRINGTON CONFERENCES

Catherine A. Callaghan - Hulpun: my home town language	1
Anthony Grant - Reviving a Penutian Language: Steps and Strategies in the Revival of Miluk Coos	7
Margaret Langdon - Notes on Highland Oaxaca Chontal internal reconstruction	25
George V. Grekoff - Surface-Marked Privatives in the Evaluative Domain of the Chimariko Lexicon	35
Suzanne M. Wash - Hyphenating Harrington-Style	57
Margaret Langdon - J. P. Harrington and Al Hayes	83

PART II: THE MARY R. HAAS MEMORIAL SESSION

Introduction - Leanne Hinton	95
Wally Chafe - Remarks on Mary Haas	97
Murray Emeneau, UCB - Mary Haas and Berkeley Linguistics	99
Margaret Langdon, UCSD -- Mary Haas as a teacher	101
William Shipley - Mary Haas as a Historical Linguist	103
James Matisoff - Remembering Mary Haas's Work on Thai	105
Pam Munro - The Contribution of Mary R. Haas to the Study of Southeastern Languages	115
Karl Teeter - The Importance of Mary R. Haas	119
Mary R. Haas 1910-1996 - Awards and Honors	125
Mary R. Haas: Bibliography	129

PART I

**The Hokan, Penutian
and J.P. Harrington Conference**