

The Languages of Native America:

HISTORICAL AND COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT

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Introduction

Chimakuan is a small family which must have been located in the northern part of the Olympic Peninsula of western Washington State before the intrusion from the north of Nootkan Makah or the Clallam dialect of Straits Salish, although just how much of this area was held seems impossible to say. The family contains just two languages. Chemakum was located in the northeastern corner of the peninsula, in the vicinity of Port Townsend, and has been extinct for some fifty years. Quileute is found on the west coast south of Makah, and now has about ten speakers. The distinctiveness of Chemakum from the surrounding Salish languages was noted by George Gibbs (1855:431). The name for the family, adopted by J. W. Powell (1891) in his influential classification, is due to Albert S. Gatschet. The time depth of the family seems to be roughly comparable to that of either of the two branches of Wakashan.¹

Descriptive Sources

Data on Chemakum comes primarily from a vocabulary collected by Franz Boas in 1890 (Boas 1892). Fuller material on Quileute was collected by Leo J. Frachtenberg in 1915 and

1916 and by Andrade in 1928 (cf. Andrade 1931, 1933). In recent years Quileute field work has been carried out by Eric P. Hamp, James E. Hoard, and J. V. Powell. Powell has contributed a study of Quileute deictics (1971), and has collaborated in the presentation of Quileute place names (Powell, Penn, and Others 1972; also Powell and Woodruff 1976:488-496, Appendix 1; Powell and Jensen 1976:61-67). A dictionary has recently been published (Powell and Woodruff 1976).

Comparative Studies

Brief notes on the relationship between Chemakum and Quileute by Manuel J. Andrade were published posthumously (1953b). Morris Swadesh (1955) published most of Boas's Chemakum data in a normalized orthography in a list of 664 items. He was able to match Quileute forms to 246 (37%) of them. By way of illustrating possible cases of suffixes deriving from former stems, Swadesh (1948:116-118, sec. 4) presented comparisons within and between the Chimakuan languages, and also to Wakashan languages.

Powell's dissertation on comparative Chimakuan (1975) represents an exemplary reworking of the data, going back to the original transcriptions for Chemakum. It contains a lexicon of 286 comparative sets that are considered conservative, and 48 that are more problematical. He had previously (1972)

offered a partial treatment of Chemakum grammar approached from the point of view of a knowledge of Quileute, and treats comparatively of selected grammatical problems in this later study: stem formation, classifier vowels, lexical suffixes, and relational and modal suffixes.

Phonology

Both Swadesh (1953a:35; 1955:60) and Powell (1975:38) have presented charts of Proto-Chimakuan segmental phonemes. The consonants were probably the voiceless stops and affricates $\underset{.}{p}$ $\underset{.}{t}$ $\underset{.}{c}$ $\underset{.}{č}$ $\underset{.}{k}$ $\underset{.}{k}^w$ $\underset{.}{q}$ $\underset{.}{q}^w$, the glottalized stops and affricates $\underset{.}{p}$ $\underset{.}{t}$ $\underset{.}{λ}$ $\underset{.}{c}$ $\underset{.}{č}$ $\underset{.}{k}$ $\underset{.}{k}^w$ $\underset{.}{q}$ $\underset{.}{q}^w$ $\underset{.}{ʔ}$, the voiceless fricatives $\underset{.}{s}$ $\underset{.}{š}$ $\underset{.}{x}$ $\underset{.}{x}^w$ $\underset{.}{χ}$ $\underset{.}{χ}^w$ $\underset{.}{h}$, the voiced resonants $\underset{.}{m}$ $\underset{.}{n}$ $\underset{.}{l}$ $\underset{.}{y}$ $\underset{.}{w}$, and corresponding glottalized resonants $\underset{.}{m}$ $\underset{.}{n}$ $\underset{.}{l}$ $\underset{.}{y}$ $\underset{.}{w}$. Powell (1975:50-62, sec. 3.122) presents evidence to suggest that the palatal consonants $\underset{.}{č}$ $\underset{.}{č}^w$ $\underset{.}{š}$ have arisen from earlier labiovelars $\underset{.}{k}^w$ $\underset{.}{k}^w$ $\underset{.}{x}^w$ which preceded front vowels. He also makes likely (1974; 1975:42-50, sec. 3.121) the presence of the glottalized resonants, which do not survive as such in either of the daughter languages, although these might pertain to a slightly older stage than the proto-language. Consonantal sound changes in Chimakuan include loss of nasals and of glottalization of resonants in Quileute, just as in Nootkan Makah and Nitinat (cf. Haas 1969:112, fn. 16; Thompson and Thompson 1972). Palatal affri-

cates and fricative have coalesced with corresponding alveolars c c' s in Chemakum, and new palatals have come from older velars *k *k' *x here. In this language also, semivowels *y and *w have become before stressed vowels č and k^w respectively, merging with other phonemes.

Powell has noted (1975:24-25, sec. 2.12(h); 40-41, sec. 3.11) that two Quileute phonemes have been introduced in borrowings, λ primarily from Wakashan (subsequently added to through coalescence of t and ɬ) and infrequent g from English and perhaps Salish Quinault (cf. also Hamp 1977:282).

There were three vowels in the proto-language, a i o (or u). Powell (1975:120-121, sec. 3.24) notes factors that have given rise to differential vowel length, but it is uncertain whether this was already present in Proto-Chimakuan, as Swadesh thought. There was probably also at least one phoneme of stress. Quileute has developed an additional vowel e'.

Lexical Diffusion

There have been some lexical borrowings between Chimakuan and Wakashan, primarily between Quileute and Makah. Some examples were noted in Andrade 1953a, partly by the editor Swadesh. Jacobsen (1976) discussed over 40 words that seem to have been borrowed. The majority seemed to have gone from Makah to Quileute, but the possibility of borrowing between

Proto-Nootkan and Proto-Chimakuan must be kept in mind. Some 16 of these words pertain to fish and fishing, and sea mammals and their hunting. Some place names have also been borrowed in both directions.

Future progress in historical Chimakuan studies will presumably have to arise from continued study of Quileute and from additional comparisons to other nearby languages.

External Relationships

The possibility of a genetic relationship between Wakashan and Chimakuan has long been thought of, in part as members of a Mosan group of languages along with Salish. (The term Mosan is a coinage based on similar words for 'four' in these languages.) These families show considerable structural similarities, such as extensive use of suffixation and the potentiality for most words to act as predicates. The evidence for relatedness has been most thoroughly studied by Swadesh (1953a, 1953b).² Swadesh (1953a:41-42, sec. 10) calculated a time depth for the Wakashan-Chimakuan relationship of about 6500 years (i.e., greater than that for Indo-European), and for Mosan as a whole of about 9000 years (1953a:26, sec. 0). In Swadesh's comparative Mosan vocabulary (1953b), 171 of the 261 sets contain representatives of these two families. Powell (1976) has taken up this question again and presented

154 sets containing Quileute and/or Chemakum forms compared to Nootkan and/or Bella Bella ones. This demonstration does not seem completely convincing, partly because of the possible presence of loan words between these two contiguous families, partly because of some considerable semantic shifts assumed, and partly because the sound changes recognized are not as thoroughgoing as they perhaps should be, allowing for the necessarily great time depth involved. (Most suggestive here is Chimakuan $\underline{\pm}$: Wakashan $\underline{\lambda}$, $\underline{\lambda}'$ [beside $\underline{\pm}$: $\underline{\pm}$, $\underline{\lambda}$: $\underline{\lambda}'$]). This relationship thus remains a very attractive possibility.

Going farther afield, Mary R. Haas (1960:980-983) has presented a list of 24 comparisons between the two Chimakuan languages and Proto-Central Algonkian or Proto-Central-Eastern Algonkian -- the first evidence ever presented for Sapir's "Algonkian-Mosan" grouping.

Notes

1. See especially Powell 1975:1-12, Chapter 1, for fuller information on descriptive sources and historical studies. For bibliography, see also Adler 1961:199-200 and Freeman 1966:107-108, 325-327, and for recent general surveys, Haas 1973:680 (Salishan, Wakashan, and Chimakuan), 681-682 (Algonkian-Wiyot-Yurok and wider connections), and Thompson 1973: 981, 1000-1002.

2. See Swadesh 1953a:27-28, sec. 1, for a bibliography of previous comparisons.

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