

A Sample Chinook Jargon Text from Grand Ronde, Oregon

Henry Zenk  
University of Oregon

In the first place, I would like to acknowledge my gratitude to all the Grand Ronde people who have been helping me, most especially to my friend and Chinook Jargon interpreter, Eula Hudson Petite. I am also grateful for the financial support recently granted me by the Melville and Elizabeth Jacobs Research Fund.

Comments

I taperecorded the following text, part of a longer narrative about a childhood experience of the informant, from an 87-year-old resident of Grand Ronde, during July of 1981. I have gone over my original transcript with the informant, eliminating repetitions and stutterings, replacing some English words with Jargon equivalents suggested by her, and expanding the narrative at some points (marked [ . . . ]). My intent was not to improve on the Jargon, but to compensate somewhat for the difficulty which this informant now experiences in giving free dictation in Jargon-- a language which she has used but very little for over 40 years. Before that, for a period of about 20 years, she and other members of her household had used Jargon daily to converse with her elderly mother-in-law. By the way, the household use of Jargon was not at all unusual at Grand Ronde. The appended (rough) table is meant to give some suggestion of the historical background to this phenomenon. The Grand Ronde Reservation community was, in fact, a veritable mixed-bag of different indigenous languages, none commanding social or numerical dominance

(the table neglects a number of numerically less important indigenous languages, as well as Canadian French, the native language of several locally well-remembered families). Very many Grand Ronde households were mixed-language households. In some of these, perhaps in many, Jargon was an important or even the dominant medium of communication. Furthermore, Jargon was an important medium of communication within the reservation community at large. (Documentation: work in progress.) This informant, along with some other surviving Jargon speakers from Grand Ronde, claims Jargon (which she calls "the Indian language") as her first language-- she has never had any degree of competence, passive or active, in any indigenous language other than Jargon, and she did not begin to learn English, or so she says, until the age of 6, when she began attending the Catholic boarding school at Grand Ronde. (Until the age of 6 she lived with her Kalapuyan-Canadian French mother, with long stays at her great-grandparents' home. Great-grandfather:Kalapuyan-Iroquois, great-grandmother:probably Chinookan.) Be that as it may, her present Jargon competence must derive in large part from her long residence with her mother-in-law. Before that, she had been away from Grand Ronde (in Salem, Portland, and Seattle) for about 15 years, during which time she apparently spoke only English. Her mother-in-law, she tells us, was "Chinook", from somewhere around Oregon City or thereabouts, and of marriageable age already when she came to the reservation. If the mother-in-law indeed was natively a Chinookan speaker, no one now remembers-- during her later life Jargon was her dominant and preferred language, "broken English" an (apparently) non-preferred second.

It is of interest here that Jacobs' principal Jargon (and Chinookan) informant, Victoria Howard, grew up at (and learned and used Jargon at) Grand

Ronde. Boas (1933), in criticizing Jacobs' Jargon structural Notes (1932), observed that Howard's Jargon "is certainly not the Chinook Jargon that has been used for years all along the coast, but seems to be a jargon affected by the Clackamas, a dialect of Chinook proper". Boas furthermore presented evidence that other Chinookan speakers did not use a like form of Jargon-- the implication, since greatly expanded upon by Silverstein (1972), seems to be that Howard's Jargon represents her own personally Chinookanized idelect. Silverstein's argument that much the same thing was also true of every one else's Jargon-- that is, that Jargon "structure" is definable "only in relation to a particular component first language of its speakers"-- is now well known. Thomason (1981), to the contrary, has assembled a large array of evidence indicating that Jargon does exhibit autonomous structural norms-- but it is precisely with reference to these that she likewise finds Howard's Jargon "deviant" (1981:317-20). To this discussion I add the following: all the features which Boas, at least, singled out as aberrant in Howard's Jargon-- special short forms of pronouns, munk instead of mamuk, and special duplicated forms-- are also exemplified in this short text. By the way, I have also obtained a possible confirmation for Jacobs' assertion (1932:27-8) that (at least some) other Indians considered Howard's form of Jargon a "better" Jargon, from the late Gertrude Mercier, one of the elder daughters of John B. Hudson (Jacobs' interpreter in Santiam Kalapuyan). According to Gertrude, there was a "better" ("more correct") form of Jargon at Grand Ronde, distinct from the Jargon which her own parents used (and very fluently, at that). The "better" Jargon, according to her, was that used by the families of "real Chinook" ancestry (I might add that, interestingly, the prestige of these families'

Jargon did not necessarily correlate with their social standing in the reservation community).

I therefore submit this text as partial evidence that Victoria Howard's Jargon, rather than being her own personal idiosyncrasy, represents a (perhaps Chinookanized) dialectal variety of Jargon which was spoken in (whether or not it originated in) the Grand Ronde Reservation community.

#### References

Boas, Franz

1933 Note on the Chinook Jargon. Language 9(2):208-13.

Jacobs, Melville

1932 Notes on the Structure of Chinook Jargon. Language 8(1):27-50.

Silverstein, Michael

1972 Chinook Jargon: Language Contact and the Problem of Multi-Level Generative Systems. Language 48 (2):378-406, 48(3):596-625.

Thomason, Sarah

1981 Chinook Jargon in Areal and Historical Context. University of Montana Occasional Papers in Linguistics 2:295-396.

## Text

wel<sup>?</sup>, k<sup>h</sup>wá:nsəm náIga p<sup>h</sup>ápa yawáwa<sup>1</sup>, "wek<sup>h</sup>A'ntši máIga  
Well, always my father he-said, "Never (are) you (to)

ǐó:do k<sup>h</sup>óbá . hayá:š t'Amá:nəwAs .  
go there (to that old woman's place, down the creek). Big supernatural power (she was reputedly an Indian doctor).

wek<sup>h</sup>A'ntši ".  
Never."

wel<sup>?</sup>, náIga tándəm , náIga áłki ǐó:do ná:nItš náIga sé:li  
Well, I thought, I will go see (for) my self!

wel<sup>?</sup>, ?áłki náIga šuš<sup>3</sup> náIga k<sup>h</sup>wáł k<sup>h</sup>óba tšéł<sup>4</sup>.  
Well, afterwards my shoes I hang by (the) creek.

?ál:da nakí:kweli tšéł náIga ǐó:do, álda náIga tšéł ǐó:do .  
Now down-I (to the) creek I go, now I water-go (wade).

[álda naIł'ó? k<sup>h</sup>óbá .] námun<sup>h</sup>á:go<sup>5</sup> k<sup>h</sup>wilt k<sup>h</sup>ápA dowr .  
Now I-arrive there. I-do-like-so-to (the) quilt at (covering) (gesturing:pushing aside)

wek yágA ná:nItš k<sup>h</sup>á:da . álda yágA tš<sup>h</sup>á:go  
(the) door. Not (did) she see (what was) happening. (Nevertheless) now she beckons

yaliImá -- "tš<sup>h</sup>á:gow" . náIga ǐó:do . ?álda náIga mI'let ,  
(with) her-arm -- "come in" I go (in). Now I sit,  
(she says).

k<sup>h</sup>á:gwa . ?əen yáɣka mun<sup>h</sup> lIplá sáble, ?álda yámunk  
like so (gesturing:turned And she makes-fire-baked bread, now she-makes-it-  
away from her).

lIplá . náIga tU'mdəm , ?áłki náIga mA'kmAk ?óguk ?áłki  
fire-baked. I think (to myself), FUT I eat this, FUT (then)

kéltes káda náIga labú:š tš<sup>h</sup>á:go !  
just how will my mouth become! (crooked?-- as I had been led to believe?)

welʔ, yámunʔ ɬUʔkɬUkɬUʔk<sup>6</sup>. yawáwa, "yak<sup>h</sup>wá máIga mAʔkmAk  
Well, she-breaks-it-into-several-pieces. She-says, "here you eat

ʔóguk". o:: dret káltes wèkʔIʔkTA náIga tUm<sup>7</sup>!  
this". Oh indeed just nothing (could) I think (of to do)!

∫álda naʔIʔskAm uksáble námunʔ mIʔlæt k<sup>h</sup>ábA náIga labú:š .  
Now I-take that-bread I-put-it into my mouth.

álda náIga mAʔkmAk . álda náIga munʔ mIʔlæt náIga lImá  
Now I eat. Now I put my hand

k<sup>h</sup>ábA náIga labú:š .∫ wekʔ<sup>h</sup>á:dA náIga labú:š . ∫álda  
to (touching) my mouth. Nothing wrong (with) my mouth. Now

náIga mIʔlæt k<sup>h</sup>ágo yáxKA .∫ álda náIga mákmak ,  
I sit likewise (to) her (turn to be with her). Now I eat,

náIga mak munʔ ʔáɬki hí:lu<sup>8</sup>. wekʔ<sup>h</sup>Aʔntši ʔIʔkTA k<sup>h</sup>á:dA  
I eat until (it is entirely) gone. Never (did a) thing happen.

namámuk témdəm, o: k<sup>h</sup>áldəs ɬáskA tʔlənɪ:nxwət .  
I-make (the) thought, Oh, merely (did) they lie (about her).

ʔálda náIga kʔéləpa . náIga wáwa, "ʔáɬki náIga  
Now I return (home). I say (to her), "later I'll

tš<sup>h</sup>áku kʔéləpa". ∫yap<sup>h</sup>áɬš náIga kʔúp<sup>9</sup> binz .∫  
come back (to see you again). She-gives me (a package of) white beans.

o: , naItUʔmdUm , wekʔ<sup>h</sup>Aʔntši áɬki naUʔLU kʔéləpA . ʔálda  
Oh, I-think, Never will I-carry (these) back. Now

námunʔ tUʔmdUm , ʔáɬki námunʔ xwá::p<sup>9</sup> yakwá . natUʔmdUm  
I-make-(the)-thought, I'll-make-hole (perforate) here (in the I-think,  
packet).

xwá:p .      ʔáłki na t<sup>h</sup>I'k t<sup>h</sup>I'k t<sup>h</sup>I'k .      /ʔukbínz łáska  
 (a) hole.      After that I (go along): drip-drip-drip.      Those-beans they

t'łU:xt'łUx k<sup>h</sup>ábA tšák . 7      áłki naIk'éləpA .  
 fall-fall      in (the) creek.      Afterwards I-return (get back home).

wikʔI'ktA náIga wáwa .  
 Nothing (did) I      say (to my father).

#### Notes

1. ya- : short form for yága, yáxka (3 p.s.). Short pronominal forms are used at least sporadically by all the Grand Ronde Jargon speakers I have heard. This informant uses them habitually, though more variably than Victoria Howard in Jacobs' Texts. The other pronominal forms used by surviving speakers are: úguk/uk- (Dem.); náIga/na-, naI- (1 p.s.); máIga/ma-, maI- (2 p.s.); nísáIga, (n)tsáIga, sáIga/nIsáI-, saI- (1 p. pl.); (very rarely used: mésáIga, ʔm̄tsaIga 2 p. pl.); láska/łas- (3 p.pl.).

2. Asked to dispense with English "self", the informant produced the following, with some help from Eula Petite: áłki náIga łó:do p<sup>h</sup>us náIga nánItš nawítka, p<sup>h</sup>us áłki náIga k<sup>h</sup>A'mtəks ('I'll go that I might see if that's right, that I might then know').

3. The informant's English competence extends to the ability to utter šuz at will, but of course, šuš is a Jargon word, šuz an English word. All the contemporary Jargon speakers maintain such pairs. E.g.: p<sup>h</sup>áyA/fáyər, wam/wərm, k'lis/gris, wIn/wInd, etc.

4. In the original transcript, this sentence reads: ... náIga šuš náIga haen/ náIga k<sup>h</sup>wáł k<sup>h</sup>óbA/ k<sup>h</sup>rik/.

5. námun(k)-k<sup>h</sup>ágo : munk, corresponding to mámuk in other varieties of Jargon, is the form normally used by all Grand Ronde speakers. The longer form is also used, but much less frequently (very infrequently by some). Interestingly, some speakers render the long form mámunk, in apparent recognition that munk is the primary form. Another source of the latter usage could be admonitions remembered from childhood, of the form: (máIga) má-munk ...

'you do ...', or wek (máIga) má-munċ ... 'don't you do ...' (independent máIga can always be added for emphasis).

The use of munċ needs to be better analyzed. Consider the following pairs from one speaker: yága hA'm 'he is smelly' / yága munċ hAm 'he smells (something)'; yága mímlus 'he dies' / yága munċ mímlus 'he kills'; láska lAxayem 'they are poor, pitiful' / náIga munċ lAxayem láska 'I pity them'.

6. Duplication (for this informant, triplication is about as frequent) expresses "distributive plural number" (Jacobs). The Jargon with which Boas was familiar lacked any such process. I ventured to read to the informant a translation of the Howard sentence from which Boas selected his points to criticize (lás-munċ'á:uk'au dunú:sdunus ká:nawi íkda, which I read to her as 'they tie up a little bit of everything'; cf. Silverstein 1972: 606). I then requested a Jargon rendering from her. Her answer, while it doesn't perfectly reproduce Howard's original, does perhaps give some sense of one Jargon speaker's feeling for "distributive plural number": "láska munċ'áU / k<sup>h</sup>ánu I'ktA láska ?I'skAm láska k'á:U k'aU k'aU / everything they got they tie / láska k'á:Uk'aU"; (again:) "k<sup>h</sup>ánu ?I'ktA láska p<sup>h</sup>áletš álda / náIga munċk'áU / náIga munċ'áU / that means whatever they give you then you take it 'n tie it up / see mámuċk'áU mámuċk'áU".

7. Truncated word-forms (apart from pronominal short forms)-- in the text, tUm (for tUmtUm) and mak (for makmak)-- occur sporadically in the Jargon I have heard. I have also on occasion heard wa (for wawa 'talk'), and Ik (for IktA 'what'). (Some speakers remember from childhood the expression tš<sup>h</sup>i álda mA<sup>h</sup>A'mps '(so) just now you know'--k<sup>h</sup>Amps for k<sup>h</sup>Amteks 'know'--; used often by some parents when talking to their children.)

8. In this form of Jargon, the negative elements hílu and wek are functionally distinct. Consider: yága hílu k'welán 'he has no ear' (obstinately refuses to listen) / wek yága munċ k'welán 'he isn't listening'; wek p<sup>h</sup>ap<sup>h</sup>á náIga 'I'm not the father', wek máIga náIp<sup>h</sup>ap<sup>h</sup>á 'you are not my father' / hílu náIga p<sup>h</sup>ap<sup>h</sup>á = náIga p<sup>h</sup>ap<sup>h</sup>á hílu 'my father is gone, is no more'; wek sáIga híhi 'we aren't laughing' / saI hílu wIn híhi '(we laugh so hard that) we laugh (ourselves) out of wind' (idiom for expressing a good, hard laugh).

9. The forms k'up 'white', xwa:p 'hole', correspond to the more usual indigenous-language speakers' forms tk'up, lxwap (Thomason 1981:391). Such (apparent) simplifications of difficult clusters are not unusual in the Jargon of the speakers I have heard.



Appendix

US Indian Agents' Population Estimates: Grand Ronde Reservation

"Tribal" designations in U.S. Indian Agents' reports (spellings standardized)	Agents' counts by year				Probable identifications of tribal with lang. designations (dotted lines: likely mixed- lang. census groups)
	1865	1872	1878	1887	
Clackamas	22	57	59	38	UPPER CHINOOKAN
Oregon City	35	48	43	25	
Tualatin	67	61	61	35	NORTHERN KALAPUYAN
Yamhill	37	35	38	16	
Santiam	83	71	76	28	CENTRAL KALAPUYAN
Mary's River	26	32	32	26	
Luckiamute	29	23	26	24	
"Calapooia" (?) <sup>1</sup> -----		21	31	5	
Yonkalla				6	SOUTHERN KALAPUYAN
"Umpquas and Calapooias" <sup>1</sup> -----	187				
Umpqua		131	135	76	UMPQUA ATHAPASKAN
Cow Creek -----	23	28	28	28	
Rogue River	111	83	129 <sup>2</sup>	23 <sup>2</sup>	TAKELMA
Shasta			72 <sup>2</sup>	20 <sup>2</sup>	SHASTA
Molala	49 175 <sup>3</sup>	57	55	34	MOLALA
Tillamook	300 <sup>4</sup>	202 <sup>4</sup>		5	TILLAMOOK SALISHAN

<sup>1</sup> The name "Calapooia" has usually been identified with a central-Willamette Valley (Brownsville-Albany area) band. However, there is much confusion surrounding who these "Calapooias" really were as against those who were originally counted under the "Umpquas and Calapooias". The latter were probably for the most part southern Kalapuyans who with their neighbors the Umpquas signed the Calapooia Creek Treaty of 1854.

<sup>2</sup> Many Takelmas and Shastas left Grand Ronde for Siletz. A number of others moved rather freely back and forth between the two Reservations.

<sup>3</sup> This figure, referring to signers of the Molala Treaty of Dec. 21, 1855-- that is to say, the elusive and very little-known Southern Molalas-- is a real mystery to me. How it is to be explained, I at present have no idea whatsoever

<sup>4</sup> The greater part of these Tillamooks lived on the coast to the west of Grand Ronde, and were for the most part separate from the Grand Ronde community.