Four Anthropological-Linguistic Notes and Queries

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1. Why "Halkomelem"?

Halkomelem is the Coast Salish language spoken on Vancouver Island from Malahat to Nanoose, around the mouth of the Fraser, and upriver as far as Yale. There are three main dialect groups: Island (on Vancouver Island), Downriver (on the mainland below Matsqui), and Upriver (in the Fraser Valley from Matsqui upstream). The name Halkomelem is Hill-Tout's (1902) anglicization of the Upriver form həlq̓əméy̓ləm, which is həńq̓əmín̓əm in Downriver and həl̓q̓əmín̓əm in Island dialects. On the Fraser, as reported by Duff (1952:11, 22) and Galloway (1977:xviii), the name is said to be derived from lək̓ʷém̓əl (in Downriver nək̓ʷém̓ən), the name of a village on Nicomen Slough near Deroche. (I do not know if Island speakers would agree with this etymology.) The name of the language seems to be a progressive verb form with a sense like 'be Nicomening', presumably 'be talking Nicomen'. But why Nicomen should have been the basis for the name of the language has been a mystery.

The answer may be eulachon. Writing of the smelts of British Columbia, Hart and McHugh (1944:8) report that the eulachon spawning area in the Fraser consisted of "only about 8 miles of the river between Mission and Chilliwack", with heavier concentration off Nicomen Island. (See also Clemens and Wilby 1946:100.) Duff (1952:70-71) reports that eulachon sometimes went as far upstream as Laidlaw but usually did not go beyond Chilliwack. "When news of their coming was heard," however, "people from as far up-river as Yale went down to meet them." It seems likely that people from below the Mission-Chilliwack area came upstream for the run. Jenness (1955:16-17) gives a Katzie account of the origin of eulachon and the rake used for catching them. The account suggests that the fish spawned near Port Hammond, but if Hart and McHugh are correct, then the Katzie must have gone upstream for them. Did Islanders come too?

It is well known that runs of eulachon, which come early in the year, are very important farther north. Those in the Nass and at the head of Knight's Inlet attracted people from far and wide. Something similar may have happened in the Columbia. Re-examining Lewis and Clark's population estimates, Boyd and Hajda (1987) concluded that the early run of eulachon in the Portland Basin may have been responsible for the seasonal concentration of people there.

Is it possible that the eulachon run in the Fraser was important enough that people came to the spawning area from over a good part of the Halkomelem area? And camping around Nicomen did they make it the basis of their term for their way of speaking?

There is a close parallel in the name for Northern Straits, lək̓ʷŋín̓əŋ, which is based on lək̓ʷə́ŋən, the name for the Songhees people in the Victoria area and perhaps for a particular site.

2. Going Round in Circles

Over the middle part of Native North America a ceremonial circuit is performed in a clockwise direction (Driver 1969:197). If dancers move in a circle, they do so with the center of the circle on their right. This direction is often identified as "sun-wise" or "with the sun", as the sun is seen (especially in higher latitudes) as moving in a clockwise direction. (Indeed, it is the movement of the shadow on a sundial that makes clockwise "clockwise".)

The central Northwest Coast is different. Among the Central Coast Salish* dancers in any performance move counterclockwise around the house. Processions in the Indian Shaker Church move counterclockwise. And as my Musqueam teacher Christine Charles explained, even a lady serving tea to her friends should proceed around the table in a counterclockwise direction. I do not know how widely the practice extends. Kwakiutl dancers move the same way. Bill Holm [1977:18] describes people's shock at the sight of an inept young man going the wrong way. And at Warmsprings, Sahaptin waš̓at dancers move counterclockwise (Yvonne Hayda p.c.).

Why this difference? I once heard a folklorist describe clockwise motion as usual for the Great Basin, and when I told him that on the Northwest Coast it is the opposite, his reaction was to suppose that this was a measure of the sophistication of Northwest Coast Indians. A critic of our climate might attribute it to the frequent absence of the sun. Mrs. Charles had another explanation. It may have no bearing on the origin of the practice, but it may explain why the practice persists, and as an unexpected bonus it tells us something about native technology.

To move clockwise is q̓íq̓əθət 'bind oneself', 'get oneself put in jail', from q̓íq̓ 'get bound', compare q̓íq̓ət 'bind it'. To move counterclockwise is yəxʷəθət 'free oneself', from yəxʷ 'get free', compare yə́xʷət 'free it', 'untie it' (also yə́xʷ 'thaw' [?]). Thus if you move in a clockwise direction you are tying yourself up, while if you move in counterclockwise direction you are freeing yourself. The winter dancers moving counterclockwise around the house possessed by their songs are 'unwinding'.

The relevance of these linguistic facts to technology is this. These extensions in meaning of 'bind oneself' and 'free oneself' must come from the practice of binding something--as a feather to an arrowshaft--with a clockwise motion, requiring that it must be freed with a counterclockwise motion. Although this seems to me (a right-handed male of Northwestern European descent) to be the natural way to do it, long exposure to cultural relativism makes me question whether anything is natural. In this case at least, the words suggest my nature and Coast Salish nature are the same. (One might test this conclusion by unwinding museum specimens, but I do not recommend it.)

There is another reason for moving counterclockwise around the house, especially when you are entering for the first time and greeting people. If you turn to the right, you have the people seated along the wall at your right (the honored side) and you can (in the modern tradition) shake their hands. Although notions of unwinding and winding and of right and left may not

account for the original choice (assuming there was one) of moving counterclockwise, they may well have inhibited the spread into our region of going the wrong way.

3. Going in Other Directions, the Regional Axis, and Canoe Types

In Halkomelem, as in neighboring languages, there are no terms for compass directions, no terms truly corresponding to 'north', 'south', 'east', and 'west'. It is easy to elicit terms that Halkomelem or Straits speakers identify as 'north wind', 'south wind', etc. But checking actual usage shows that direction, which is quite variable and generally off the cardinal points, is only one component of meaning. Others are season, temperature, and precipitation. Thus a Cowichan identified stáyəwət as a wind coming from the direction of Nanaimo (roughly north) in the summer and bringing clear, warm weather, and he identified sátəc as a wind coming from the same direction in winter and bringing freezing cold weather. A Musqueam couple identified stɬ̓ywət as a 'west wind' coming from over Point Grey (northwest of the village) at Musqueam and bringing fair weather in summer. Further up the Fraser, they said, during fish-drying season it generally blows upstream from about mid-morning through the day, while another wind, called həwq̓ʷéɬəɬ, blows downstream at night. They identified sátəc as a 'north wind' coming over North Vancouver (roughly northeast of the village) and bringing cold weather in winter. Upriver at Laidlaw (between Chilliwack and Hope) a Tait speaker identified stíwət as a 'south wind' (while indicating a northwesterly direction) and said it brings dry weather, and she identified sɬ̓təc as a cold winter wind from upriver. Thus stɬ̓ywət can blow from the north or west and sátəc from the north or east. Season and temperature are more constant than direction. These are terms for meteorological conditions specific to a place. (I have collected wind names from several places in Halkomelem and Straits country and hope eventually to get wind roses from the same places for comparison.)

Direction of motion (outside the house) is commonly specified by terms that relate it to shore and the flow of water, e.g., Musqueam ɬáxʷ 'go/come toward the shore (when on land)', cám 'go/come inland', ɬé·l 'go/come toward shore (if on water)', tá·l 'go/come seaward', wəɬ̓ʷí'ləm 'go/come downstream', xʷíwəl or (in Cowichan) təyəl 'go/come upstream'. Location can be similarly specified, as ni kʷə cécəw 'on the shore', ni kʷə cáləqʷ 'in the bush', ni kʷə ʔəhíw or (in Cowichan) ni kʷə təyt '[located] upstream', etc. Derived forms express 'shore side', 'bush side', 'upstream side', 'downstream side'. Because the house was invariably built along the shore, these terms were often used with reference to the house. One might also speak of the 'inland upstream corner', 'shore-side downstream corner', etc. Inside the house, movement toward the fire can be equated with movement upstream, while movement away from the fire can be equated with movement downstream or shoreward when on water.

On Georgia Strait ("the gulf"), in Musqueam, one can go tékʷəl 'across', or one can go to the tɬ̓ywət or to the yix. These last two words identify the ends of this regional axis. The word tɬ̓ywət is usually glossed 'north', though not in James

Point's skʷík̓ʷəm tə tɬ̓ywət 'It's kind of red in the west.' It is the root or stem of stɬ̓ywət, the name of the wind that comes from the west or north, and it seems to share an element with tɬ̓ywəl 'move upstream' and tɬ̓yt '[be located] upstream'. An 'upstream' meaning would make sense; in Cowichan (though perhaps not in Musqueam) you can say you're going wəɬ̓q̓ʷíləm 'downstream' when you set out for Victoria or La Conner. The word yíx is usually glossed 'south'. I do not know of any reason to relate it to anything meaning 'downstream'.

Each of these two words has a derivative referring to people. The xʷtɬ̓ywəl are the 'Northern Indians', identified as those from Deep Bay, Comox, and Cape Mudge northward. The xʷyíxəl are the people from around La Conner southward, that is, the people of Puget Sound. The šxʷyixəlaʔɬ smənmé·nt are the Cascade Mountains east of Puget Sound. (The s- plus -aʔɬ combination of prefix and suffix produces a modifying form.) Thus it seems that tɬ̓ywət and yíx refer to the northwestern and southeastern ends of Georgia Strait and probably to regions rather than simply directions.

The Halkomelem yíx can probably be identified with the Lushootseed root ləš of dxʷləšúcid 'Puget Sound speech'. This root may have a more limited meaning south of the Halkomelem area. A Clallam, Sam Ulmer, identified nəxʷyəš as the people of Coupeville on Whidbey Island, that is, the Skagit in the narrowest sense.

These two terms are also used to distinguish the two principal styles of "Coast Salish" canoe. The Central Coast Salish used several types of canoe: the "westcoast" or Chinook type with the high slender bow and vertical, flat-topped stern; the shovelnose, especially good for poling up rivers; the reef-net canoe, which seems to have been a modified shovelnose; a war canoe with a high, flaring bow; a makeshift canoe of whole cedarbark, used by hunters on lakes; and, most common of all, the Coast Salish type with the relatively low, pointed bow and stern and horizontally notched bow. Drucker (1955:64) and Stewart (1984:50-52) identify this type as the Coast Salish version of the Northern canoe type; Elemendorf (1960:172) calls it the "notched-bow type." "Coast Salish" is an appropriate designation only in that no non-Salish made the type, but it is misleading in that not all Coast Salish made it. It was confined to the sheltered salt water of the Georgia Strait-Puget Sound Basin.

This canoe was made in two styles. Perhaps both were made nearly everywhere, but there were regional preferences. These two styles were correctly identified by Barnett (1939:282-284; 1955:112-113), but the native terminology has not been clarified. In essence, it appears that there is a generic term for 'canoe, craft, vehicle' that is used for the preferred style, while the term with regional reference is usually used for the other.

One style was slender with gently rising bow and stern and an oblique cutwater. It was used for salt-water hunting and fishing and was the one most commonly made and used by the Straits and salt-water Halkomelem people. Where it was the most common type it was generally called by the generic term snəx̓ʷəɬ (Clallam snəxʷɬ) 'canoe, craft, vehicle'. But to distinguish it from the other style it was also called syíxaʔɬ 'southern' or 'of

Puget Sound, Puget Sound style' (from yíx 'Puget Sound' and the adjective-forming s- -aʔɬ). Probably it was also imported from that direction. Barnett identified this style with a rendition of syíxaʔɬ. The Lushootseed term for it is sdəxʷíɬ (Waterman 1920:18; Carlson and Hess 1978:20), clearly identifiable with the Halkomelem and Straits generic term.

The other style was broader with less spring (according to James Point) and a vertical cutwater. It was better adapted to river travel and was the style most commonly made and used by the Squamish and upriver Halkomelem people. These people called it by the generic 'canoe' term, snəxʷíɬ in Squamish, slə́xʷəɬ in Upriver Halkomelem. Barnett identified this style with a rendition of this term, evidently not realizing that it is the generic term throughout the region. The Musqueam called it sqʷxʷáṁəxaʔɬ 'Squamish-style' (from sqʷxʷáṁəx 'Squamish'). People elsewhere called it by another term. Boas (1891:566) recorded the Songhees as "stiuwaitatl" (saying it meant a "boat with a square bow" but with no analysis). I recorded the Samish (from Charley Edwards) as stíwatɬ. In Lushootseed it is stiwátɬ, which Carlson and Hess (1978:20) and Waterman (1920:17) identify as a "freight canoe" and Smith (1940:292) identifies as a "woman's canoe." It seems likely that this term is based on tə́ywəɬ, identifying it as the 'northern' as opposed to the 'southern' style.

The "west coast canoe" seems also to have been named for a direction. The most widespread name for it is q̓xʷə́ẇɬ or q̓xʷə́ẇɬ, probably from Clallam q̓íxʷ 'west (ocean) wind' and -wəɬ 'canoe, vessel'. This type, like the two styles of Coast Salish canoe, is said to have been made nearly everywhere. But the names of all three reflect regional preferences and perhaps original sources.

4. Loans from the South

Ever since Boas described the spectacular ceremonies of the Kwakiutl, anthropologists have been inclined to suppose that ceremonial activities and associated terms have diffused from the Wakashans southward/eastward to the Salishans and others. Boas identified as Kwakiutl (or, as we might now say, Northern Wakashan) several terms associated with the ceremonial complex he called the "secret societies." One is stúkʷali, a term used by the Twana (Elmendorf 1948:625) and others for the secret society that they probably acquired from the Makah and Nitinaht. The term can be identified with Makah χukʷ'ali and Nootka χu·kʷ'a·na 'wolf ceremony' and the Kwakiutl λugʷala 'one who has found a supernatural power' (Lincoln and Rath 1980:180). The word is analyzable in Kwakiutl, and so there is no doubt that it is a loan in Salish. Another such term is Halkomelem and Northern Straits míɬə 'perform in the winter dancing' and its derivative smíɬə 'winter ["guardian spirit"] dancing'. Boas (1897:661) identified this Salish term with the Kwakiutl mìλa, the name of a set of performances in the winter ceremony. The Kwakiutl word seems to be derived from a root 'tease' (Lincoln and Rath 1980:87), and again a Wakashan origin seems likely. The only ceremonial term Boas thought the Kwakiutl had borrowed from a

Salish source is xʷixʷi, the Kwakiutl version of the Coast Salish sxʷáyxʷəy performance. Otherwise terms presumably spread from north to south.

However, it also seems that at least one ritual term has spread northward to the Coast Salish, perhaps from as far south as the Kalapuya, while at least one more may have spread in the other direction. The first appears in a myth told by my Musqueam teacher James Point. It tells of a war between two masters of winds. The one in the south (the yíx) is yáɬməx. In another context Mr. Point identified yaɬməx as "a big, black, ugly man at the South End, who sends bad weather," and he identified tən-yaɬməx as "yaɬməx weather, warm and wet." Farther south, the Lushootseed-speaking people (Smith 1940:71; Hess 1976:505) and Twana (Elmendorf 1960:489) had a wealth power called tiyúɬbax. (A correspondence of Halkomelem a to Lushootseed and Twana u´ is regular.) The Cathlamet for 'supernatural helper' is -yuLɛma. Boas (1901:194) gives tiō´LEma 'supernatural helpers', iā´iuLEmax 'his supernatural helper', and (1911:672) Lā´yuLEmax 'their supernatural helpers'. (Is the final -x a deictic element? Is there a form tiyuLEmax?) In the Clackamas dialect of Kiksht, Jacobs (1959:505-509) recorded -yuɬmax 'spirit-power'. Lower Chinook seems to have an unrelated word for 'guardian spirit'. In Santiam Kalapuya 'dream power' is yu·ɬma (Jacobs 1945:51). In Tualatin Kalapuya it is yuɬmei (Jacobs 1945:181).** It would appear, from the regular appearance of the final x in the Salish forms that their source is Kathlamet. From the presence of the word in two Kalapuyan languages and absence in Lower Chinook, we might argue for a Kalapuyan origin.

There is another term with a similar or even wider distribution. Throughout the region where the winter dancing has survived and flourished, there is a well-known type of syə́wən 'winter dance song' called (in Halkomelem) sqə́yəp or sqéyəp. The dancer with this type of song uses red paint. At one time, it is said, a sqə́yəp dancer cut himself or herself with a knife or danced with a knife piercing the body. Writing on the Lushootseed people, Haeberlin and Gunther (1930:72) identify "sqaip" as a war spirit, who gave the vision-seeker the power to cut himself with a knife while dancing. Writing on the Quinault, Olson (1936:146, 148) identifies "skadjap" as a class of spirits used by shamans. And writing on the Tualatin Kalapuya, Jacobs (1945:179-180) identifies sGiyuB as a type of spirit power that made its possessor bleed from the mouth. Clearly we are dealing with the the same term expressing a similar idea. Less clearly related, but possibly so, is the Nez Perce isxi·p, a type of shaman (Walker 1968:25-26). In the case of sqə́yəp and related terms, the initial s- suggests a Salish source.

Here is evidence that two ritual terms and practices have spread through a region extending from the Willamette Valley to Georgia Strait. Everything we know about the social networks in this region suggests there ought to be more. Maybe southern ritual words have even entered Wakashan.

*The Central Coast Salish are a cultural subdivision of the Coast Salish continuum, identifiable as the speakers of the

Halkomelem, Straits, Squamish, and Nooksack languages (Suttles 1968; Kew 1980).

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