

## **Twana and the difficult language belief\***

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Certain Southern Puget Sound Salish speakers believed that the neighboring Twana language was difficult to learn as a second language. This belief was said to have been why few of them or other outsiders learned Twana and why the Twana were more bilingual than others in a region noted for bilingualism. A reappraisal of data shows Twana was not anomalous and that a degree of mutual intelligibility, rather than bilingualism, accounted for much of the interlanguage communication in the area. Furthermore, the precontact belief about a difficult language actually concerned not Twana but the unrelated language of a neighboring tribe. The belief was applied to Twana only after many Southern Puget Sound Salish speakers moved onto the Skokomish Reservation and the language previously labeled as difficult all but died. Following the subsequent virtual death of the Twana language, new language beliefs are emerging in the region.

### **1 Introduction**

The Twana are a Coast Salish people of western Washington State.<sup>1</sup> Their traditional territory was one of two salt-water basins between the Olympic and Cascade mountain ranges. The region surrounding their aboriginal home was rich in tribal and linguistic diversity. Most of the traditional languages of the region are members of the Salishan family.

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<sup>1</sup> For a brief history of the Twana, see N. Thompson (1994). A treatment of precontact Twana culture and society is found in Elmendorf (1960), while those topics for the early reservation-period are covered in Eells (1985).

In the late nineteenth century, several decades after contact and with the establishment of the reservation system, the notion was first recorded that the language of the Twana was believed by their neighbors to be difficult to learn as a second language. Versions of this belief were then recorded over the next one hundred years. Explanations were also given as to why Twana was hard to learn. The conclusion reached by researchers was that in precontact times the Difficult Language Belief (hereafter DLB) caused the Twana to compensate for their neighbors having trouble with the Twana language by becoming almost universally bilingual. This compensation, it is said, meant that almost none of the surrounding people bothered to learn the Twana language.

Following a presentation of the DLB, supporting observations and the consensus on the precontact situation, we examine the validity of the supporting observations. Based on a century of firsthand language use observations, we then offer a reappraisal of how and when the DLB came to be applied to the Twana. We conclude that Twana was never really a difficult language to learn.

## 2 Background

The Twana (also spelled *Twanoh* or, more accurately, *Tuanook*) were the original occupants of the Hood Canal watershed below the eastern slope of the Olympic Mountains and spoke a language distinct from those of their neighbors. Their territory occupied approximately 750 square miles (Drachman 1969:3). The largest of about ten Twana tribes, the Skokomish ('big-river people') lived in six settlements along the Skokomish River. Other Twana tribes included the Hoodsport, Quilcene and Duhlelap (in the area of modern-day Belfair). Larger communities were stratified into a number of social classes while smaller ones, like Vance Creek, were egalitarian. Members of the upper class filled a number of professional positions, serving as politicians, doctors (or shaman), canoe makers, basket weavers, hunters, warriors and herbalists. For the upper class, exogamous marriages were the norm and partners were often of distant lands, the goal being to establish and maintain economics-based unions between families.

The Twana were never very numerous, their numbers being far smaller than those of their immediate Salishan neighbors. Their population at the time of first contact in 1792, already diminished by a smallpox epidemic, is estimated at 774 – far below the estimated 11,835 Puget Sound Salish, 3,208 Klallam, and 2,880 Upper Chehalis. Of the tribes of the region only the non-Salishan Chimakum<sup>2</sup> to the north are estimated to have had a smaller population at but 260 (Boyd 1999:264-65).

The Puget Sound Salish language, of the Puget Sound basin east of Hood Canal, was the dominant language of the region simply by virtue of its large number of speakers. Its dialects, each spoken by a tribal group in a distinct watershed, fell into two major groups: the northern comprised Snohomish,

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<sup>2</sup> In addition to the spelling Chimakum, the name for these people and their language also has the spellings Chimacum, Chemakum and Tsemakum.

Skagit and Sauk-Suiattle while the southern included Skykomish, Snoqualmie, Suquamish, Duwamish, Puyallup, Steilacoom, Nisqually and Sahewamish (see Bates et al. 1994:vii-ix). The dividing line between the dialect groups was approximately today's Snohomish-King county line (Hess 1976:xii).

Initially Puget Sound Salish was called *Nisqually* (or *Niskwalli*). At times the southern dialects have been termed *Nisqually* or *Puyallup* and the northern, *Skagit*. Later the language became known as Puget Sound Salish, which was then shortened to Puget Salish (with the disadvantage of seeming to be named after a British explorer rather than the geography). Northern Puget Sound Salish is today also called *Lushootseed* while Southern Puget Sound Salish is also referred to as *Whulshootseed*.

The Twana, Klallam and Chimakum signed a treaty with the United States government in 1855<sup>3</sup> and, following its ratification in 1859, a reservation was established for them all at the mouth of the Skokomish River. While most of the Twana moved onto the reservation, very few Klallam and Chimakum did. In time, all of the Indians of the early reservation became known as the Skokomish Tribe, regardless of their origin. Today, the reservation is home to more than 500 of the 807 enrolled members of the Skokomish Indian Tribe (Skokomish Culture and Art Committee 2002:77)

### 3 DLB and Twana

The first written characterization of the Twana language as hard to learn appears in the work of a Congregationalist missionary. The Reverend Myron Eells arrived on the Skokomish Reservation in 1874 and there heard the DLB.<sup>4</sup>

**EELLS:**<sup>5</sup> [Twana] is generally considered a difficult language to learn . . . (Eells n.d.:61)

The Twana language . . . is said to be [a] difficult [one] to learn . . . (Eells 1886:34)

One of those attending Eells' Sunday school classes was Henry Allen (Elmendorf 1960:6). Allen (ca. 1865-1956) was a Skokomish Twana who moved onto the reservation when he was three years old (US Census 1880). He too heard the DLB expressed.

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<sup>3</sup> Western Washington treaty dates are often confused by latter-day researchers. While Drachman (1969:3) correctly identifies 1855 as the year the Treaty of Point No Point was signed, Elmendorf (1958:4) incorrectly gives the date as 1858, and Nordquist and Nordquist (1983:vii) list 1856.

<sup>4</sup> Even though his "specific purpose at Skokomish was . . . the religious salvation of the Indian" (Castile 1985:xix), Eells was interested in more than religion and conversion. He authored no fewer than 85 publications, many on the ethnography of the region, including valuable articles in the *American Antiquarian and Oriental Journal* and the *American Anthropologist*.

<sup>5</sup> Because it is important to know whose voice is represented in a given statement concerning the DLB, we identify the source of the claim or observation at the start of the quote.

**H. ALLEN:** “I [have heard] Puget Sound people say to Twana people, ‘Oh, your language is hard to learn.’” (Elmendorf 1960:282)

Anthropologist William Elmendorf conducted field work with three elderly males on and near the Skokomish Reservation periodically from 1934 to 1940. His principal native consultants were Henry Allen and his brother Frank (ca. 1858-1945). Although neither of the Allens was born before the treaty, Elmendorf’s goal was to produce an ethnography of the precontact Twana (Elmendorf 1958:17).

**ELMENDORF:** Twana was regarded by speakers of neighboring languages as a difficult idiom to master, as Eells also attests (1886) for the early reservation period. ... [It was] a linguistic situation, somewhat peculiar in the general area, where one language was signaled out as too difficult to learn. ... [The Twana were] a group whose own language was reputed too hard to learn. (Elmendorf 1960:281, 283)

The first linguist to mention the Twana DLB was Gaberell Drachman, a University of Chicago student, who conducted fieldwork on the Skokomish Reservation during the summers of 1963-65.

**DRACHMAN:** ‘Everyone [from outside] said it was too hard’ [to learn Twana] (informant comment). (Drachman 1969:12)

### **3.1 Corollary belief**

Saying that Twana was a difficult language to learn presupposes that other languages were simpler. Both Eells and Henry Allen heard that the southern dialects of the neighboring Puget Sound Salish language were easier to learn than Twana.

**EELLS:** The Nisqually [language] is said to be much easier ... to learn ... (Eells 1886:34)

**H. ALLEN:** The Puget Sound language ... is said to be “easy to learn, for ... an Indian.” ... And it is not hard for us to learn another [Coast Salish] language, but it is hard for those people to learn our language. (Elmendorf 1960:278, 281)

Allen’s daughter, Shirley Allen Weidman (1923-99), added that white residents of the area unfavorably compared learning Twana to learning the southern Puget Sound Salish dialects.

**WEIDMAN:** They [the whites] say the Skokomish language is so hard . . . [compared to the] Puyallup [dialect] . . . (Lund n.d.)

### **3.2 Limitation on claim**

The DLB did not apply to every language learner. There has been no suggestion that the claimed difficulty in learning ever applied to first language learners. First language and second language learners were distinguished within the ethnolinguistics of the area, which explained why children were able to learn a language so much more quickly and effortlessly than older learners.

In the Twana world view, which was similar to those of other Coast Salish peoples of the region, a soul is reborn as a baby in the same community in which it had previously lived. This belief in a patterned reincarnation holds that an infant is not saddled with the task of learning a language for the first time but rather has an innate knowledge of that language gained from past life – it has only to remember the language of its village to (again) become a fluent speaker (see N. Thompson 1985:91-106). Thus, regarding first-language acquisition, the Southern Coast Salish<sup>6</sup> had no reason to think one language was any more difficult than another. Because first language learners, no matter what their language, were thought by the Twana to be relearning their former first language, the Twana would have agreed with linguists today who claim that for infants all languages present equal challenges. In this region, rife with distant marriages, opinions on comparative complexity in language learning were restricted to the acquisition of a second language.

### **3.3 Supporting observations**

In this section we will review that part of the literature and archival record that consists of observations provided as support for the DLB and the academic hypotheses that developed from them. These claims fall into five categories: Twana wasn't learned by individuals from other tribes, Twana wasn't learned by whites, Twana had longer word length than neighboring languages, Twana had a more difficult phonology and, while others didn't learn the Twana language, Twana speakers did learn the neighboring languages.

#### **3.3.1 Limited learning**

The observation that few individuals from other tribes learned Twana as a second language was first expressed in print by Eells.

**EELLS:** [Twana] is spoken very little by Indians of any other tribe . . . (Eells n.d.:61)

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<sup>6</sup> We use *Southern Coast Salish* in the manner of Suttles (1977) and Suttles and Lane (1990) to encompass the Twana of Hood Canal and the Puget Sound Salish of Puget Sound.

This claim was later echoed by a Puget Sound Salish individual who viewed it as a reason why the Twana were more bilingual than others in the region.

Jerry Meeker (1862-1955) was born to a woman from Minter on Glen Cove and a Skykomish man from Gold Bar. His mother spoke a southern dialect of Puget Sound Salish while his father spoke a northern dialect. Meeker's mother had "remained at her place among the Stilkum" (Steilacoom) after the death of her first husband (Meeker n.d.). Meeker had a number of Southern Puget Sound Salish relatives that he visited on the Skokomish Reservation. One of them was John Hawk. One of Meeker's visits with Hawk was documented when they sang a gambling song for an ethnomusicologist (Rhodes 1950). Hawk's grandmother had married into the Duhlelap Twana and lived on the Skokomish Reservation, and his sister was married to Henry Allen.

Meeker [was] *kasé* ['uncle'] to Hawks [sic] because Hawks' [sic] grandmother was *ska* ['older sibling or cousin'] to Meeker's mother. But neither of them knows whether the two women were first, second or third cousins. They do know they were "close". (Smith 1940:178)

Thus, Meeker had firsthand knowledge that his relations and other Southern Puget Sound Salish on the Skokomish Reservation didn't learn Twana.

**MEEKER:** The Sound People did not speak the language of the Hood Canal people [even though] a lot of them married and moved into the lower Canal of Skokomish, etc. (Meeker n.d.)

Based on his work with the Allen brothers, Elmendorf stated that individuals who were not born Twana did not attempt to learn the Twana language.

**ELMENDORF:** Few non-Twana cared to learn the Twana language. ... [There was a] virtual avoidance of the language by neighboring peoples ... [an] unwillingness of these outsiders to [learn it]. (Elmendorf 1960:281-83)

Drachman reports that much the same view was held by his linguistic consultants on the Skokomish Reservation as was expressed by Meeker and Elmendorf. He concurs that the Twana were forced by circumstances to learn the language of their neighbors.

**DRACHMAN:** It is interesting to note that 'No one from outside ever learned Twana.' (Drachman 1969:12)

Barbara Lane is a legal anthropologist who, in her work on traditional Skokomish fisheries, drew heavily on the work of Elmendorf, accepting his appraisal of a limited distribution of Twana.

**LANE:** The Twana-speaking people [lived on] Hood Canal [and the] Twana [language] . . . was not spoken elsewhere . . . (Lane 1973:1-2)

### **3.3.2 White people can't learn**

Claims used to affirm the validity of the DLB included observations about white people either not being able to learn the Twana language or being able to learn Puget Sound Salish more easily.

**EELLS:** Nor do I know of any white persons who have learned [Twana]. (Eells n.d.:61)

“Like all ethnographers Eells was part of what he sought to describe” (Elmendorf 1985:451). Eells was indeed not an impartial observer of the DLB, for he very much wanted to learn the language of the Twana in order to convert them more easily to Christianity. But when he brought up his desire to learn the language with reservation residents, he was cautioned against it and advised to learn Puget Sound Salish instead.

**EELLS:** The Twana language . . . is said to be so difficult to learn that no intelligent Indian advised me to learn it. The Nisqually [language] is said to be much easier, and one educated Indian advised me to learn it . . . (Eells 1886:34)

**H. ALLEN:** The [Puget Sound Salish] language is said to be “easy to learn, for . . . a white man . . .” (Elmendorf 1960:278)

Shirley Allen Weidman was a monolingual speaker of English but she too had heard that Twana was a difficult language for English speakers and that they had an easier time with Puget Sound Salish.

**WEIDMAN:** They [white people] say the Skokomish language is so hard . . . (Lund n.d.)

### **3.3.2 A more difficult phonology**

Reasons were given for Twana being more difficult to learn than neighboring Puget Sound Salish. In the late twentieth century, Allen's daughter Shirley Weidman reported earlier opinions concerning Twana being difficult and offered her own explanation of why – mirroring statements about the Twana language set down over a century earlier.

**WEIDMAN:** They say the Skokomish language is so hard because they talk from way down. Some words is a lot different than . . . the Puyallup [dialect group which] is

more like [English], everything is just easy to say, easy to grasp with your ears. (Lund n.d.)

Her comment about Twana being spoken “way down” may indicate that she thought that postvelars were more prevalent in Twana. This contrast is seen in the words for ‘inner cedar bark’, Twana *qʷélo* and Puget Sound Salish *ságʷac* (Louisa Pulsifer in N. Thompson n.d. a). Postvelars, particularly those which are glottalized, are often brought up as being particularly difficult for English speakers. She then claims that Southern Puget Sound Salish is simpler than Twana. However, what she may be referring to is that there are more complex consonant clusters in Twana than in Puget Sound Salish. Or it might relate to something her father said about Twana word length being greater and sentential flow being slower (see 3.4.2).

### 3.3.4 Disproportionate bilingualism

The final observation in support of the DLB was that while individuals from other tribes were not learning Twana, the Twana were, for the most part, learning the other languages.

Skokomish reservation visitor Jerry Meeker observed that, between the Twana and Puget Sound Salish, the Twana were much more bilingual.

**MEEKER:** The Skokomish were very much bi-lingual – speaking the language of the Sound Indians and their own language but the Sound People did not speak the language of the Hood Canal people. (Meeker n.d.)

Both Drachman and Henry Allen comment on the knowledge of Puget Sound Salish by the Twana.

**DRACHMAN:** It is clear from present-day informants that [in the 1880’s] “everyone knew the Nisqually language”... (Drachman 1969:12)

**H. ALLEN:** Nearly every one of the Twana understood Puget Sound language ... (Elmendorf n.d. a)

Elmendorf said this precontact bilingualism included not only Puget Sound Salish but also two other Salish languages, the Satsop dialect and Klallam.

**ELMENDORF:** Almost all of the Twana, at least of the Skokomish, were aboriginally bilingual, speaking or understanding in addition to their own tongue the Puget Sound language in the form current with minor variations from the Sahewamish of the southwest sound north to the Suquamish. ...



The Twana [had a] polyglot command of a number of languages ... A number of Skokomish spoke the dialect of the Satsop, with whom trade contacts were frequent and intermarriage not uncommon. A greater number spoke Klallam, and relations with this people were certainly more intense than with the Satsop, at least by the middle of the nineteenth century. The almost universal prevalence of the Puget Sound language has been pointed out. ...

Upper-class marriage involved bringing in wives from other, often distant, communities . . . Upper-class Skokomish [Twana] were thus frequently raised by mothers native to Satsop, Chehalis, or Klallam communities. Under these conditions linguistic acculturation took the form of polyglot Twana command of several languages . . . (Elmendorf 1960:282-3, 304)

After Elmendorf states that Twana bilingualism was a feature of precontact society, he goes on to say it was present during the postcontact period up to and including the time of the treaty and initial reservation settlement.

Even before the middle 1800's most Twana were familiar with the southern form of Puget Sound speech. ... Ability to speak or understand more than one native language was ... general in the period (mid-nineteenth century) before my informants' generation. (Elmendorf 1960:278-79)

Drachman said that this learning of neighboring languages meant that it was usual for the Twana to be multilingual, knowing up to three languages in addition to Twana.

**DRACHMAN:** There were probably few Twana who remained mono-lingual. ... Twana speakers [learned] at least one, perhaps two or even three 'foreign' languages . . . Multi-lingualism [was] thus the norm . . . (Drachman 1969:12)

### **3.4 Argument for cause of bi- and multi-lingualism**

The Skokomish Tribe today takes the view that Twana knowledge of other languages was the result of widespread cultural practices in the region.

Many Twana spoke more than one language ... because of alliances with other tribes based on marriage, friendship and trade. (Skokomish Culture and Art Committee 2002:65)

However, why would these conditions make the Twana more bilingual and multilingual than their neighbors who also engaged in exogamy and were in the same trade networks?

### 3.4.1 Large Puget Sound Salish presence

Jerry Meeker added to his statement on bilingualism (see 3.3.5) the suggestion that the bilingualism among the Twana was the result of the large movement of Puget Sound Salish to Hood Canal.

**MEEKER:** A lot of them [the Sound People] married and moved into the lower Canal of Skokomish, etc. (Meeker n.d.)

### 3.4.2 Twana closer to or actually the proto-language

Learning Twana was said to have been more difficult than learning other languages of the area because it had longer words. Henry Allen maintained that Twana is the most conservative of the Coast Salish languages and equates to the proto-language of the area. In his view, the related languages derived from Twana through word-shortening processes. The result is that Twana has greater word length and a slower conversational tempo than the derived languages. Henry Allen reasoned that, because the other Coast Salish languages had “whittled down” their words, their speakers had a hard time learning Twana while it was easier for the Twana to learn the other languages.

**H. ALLEN:** The languages around here are like Twana [i.e. Salish]. Those languages have words that sound as if they came from our language, so I think that Twana is the real language and the others have changed away from it. The *pənálxəç* are a Cowichan people on the islands off Cowichan Bay. They call a painted bluff *xá·los*, and in Twana *xə́l'os* means painted face. Nooksack is *dux<sup>w</sup>sa'á'q*; in Twana that means a place to gather ferns, *sa'á'q* is fern root. And Twana has longer words than the other languages. Look at words like Twana *p'uwáy* for halibut, Klallam *p'áwi*; Twana *h<sup>w</sup>áqa* for no, Puyallup *h<sup>w</sup>é'*. Those words sound like whittled-down Twana. The Twana is a slower language than Puget Sound [Salish] talk; I think it has kept its words better. And it is not hard for us to learn another language, but it is hard for those people to learn our language. So I think maybe their languages all came from Twana. (Elmendorf 1960:281)<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Elmendorf (1960:281) attaches a note to Allen's “notion of [Coast Salish] development [from Twana]” saying that it “is probably not aboriginal.”

### 3.4.3 Direct result of the DLB

Elmendorf reasons that the DLB motivated the neighbors of the Twana to shy away from learning the Twana language even though it was common for the inhabitants of the area to learn other languages. Elmendorf further reasons that knowledge of the DLB dictated a responsive behavior on the part of the Twana. Because they knew their neighbors believed their language to be harder to learn and therefore did not want to attempt to learn it, the Twana are said to have compensated by becoming more bilingual and multilingual than others in the region. Elmendorf claims that the DLB along with the preferred marriage pattern for the region (exogamy with patrilocal residence) caused an imbalance, with the Twana being more bilingual than their neighbors and the neighbors not learning Twana because they didn't have to.

In an area where individuals speaking three or four languages were numerous, and where bilinguality was very common, few non-Twana cared to learn the Twana language. ... This virtual avoidance of the [Twana] language by neighboring peoples in no way interfered with friendly and intimate contacts between them and the Twana. The reaction on the Twana side was an enhanced inclination to learn the languages of other peoples. ... The bilinguality of most Twana and the polylinguality of many not only made it more or less unnecessary for outsiders to learn their language, but was probably caused or enhanced by the unwillingness of these outsiders to do so. Twana polylinguality evidently represents a satisfactory adjustment to a linguistic situation ... Thorough-going relations with speakers of other languages, involving marriage, social and religious ceremonies, and trade, were not peculiar to the Twana among peoples of this area. But such contacts had the obvious effect of bringing about polyglot command of a number of languages within a group whose own language was reputed too hard to learn. (Elmendorf 1960:282-83)

Drachman concurred with Elmendorf that linguistic circumstances forced the Twana to learn other languages.

It is not difficult to see that cultural and linguistic factors conspired to force Twana speakers to learn at least one, perhaps two or even three 'foreign' languages ... (Drachman 1969:12)

One cause of the imbalance in bilingualism had to do with children. Elmendorf argues that, while the children of Twana women who married into other speech communities did not learn Twana, all children living in the Hood Canal drainage learned two languages.

Twana bilinguality was certainly most marked among upper-class persons, and it was precisely these who enjoyed the widest and most intimate contacts with non-Twana communities. Wives of upper-class Twana men were very often native to communities outside the Twana speech community, and in such cases children *always* grew up speaking their mothers' as well as their fathers' tongue. (Elmendorf 1960:282; emphasis added)

#### 4 Was Twana linguistically harder to learn?

In this section and the one that follows, we will examine the validity of the preceding claims and observations, particularly in areas where there is quantifiable data.

CLAIM #1 – PUGET SOUND SALISH WAS EASIER TO LEARN (3.1):

- Twana has longer, fuller cognates (3.4.2); Twana was spoken more slowly (3.4.2).
- Twana is more difficult to articulate and comprehend (3.3.3).

##### 4.1 Are Twana cognate words longer?

Henry Allen stated that word length of cognates was a factor in why Twana was more difficult to learn for speakers of other Coast Salish languages than their languages were for the Twana to learn. While we acknowledge that the sheer length of words impacts the flow of sentences, the observation he is making about cognate length is that it was easier for the Twana to drop out segments (some of which are predictable) from Twana words to realize a target language word than for their counterparts to remember word by word which segments have to be inserted into their forms to produce the Twana words.

By and large, most Twana forms are more or less equal in length to their cognates in Puget Sound Salish. But there are a number of cognates, such as those in Table 1,<sup>8</sup> that do support Allen's claim that words in Puget Sound Salish are missing segments found in Twana. The example of 'scrape a canoe' is probably of the type that Allen had in mind. The initial *bə-* syllable is only found in Twana while the root *\*saχ* is widespread. Similarly, Twana is the only Coast Salish language to have a second syllable vowel in CS *\*k<sup>w</sup>utχ* 'halibut' (Kuipers 2002:141). Another example of this apparent vowel retention is seen in the PS form for *\*s-pəlq* 'penis' (Kuipers 2002:73). Kuipers states that the suffix isn't *-q* but rather *-aq* 'sexual organ'. Twana, with *spələq*, appears to be the only surviving language with the full suffix. This suggests that Allen might have been onto something; certain Twana words are closer to the original forms.

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<sup>8</sup> The comparative examples used in Tables 1 and 2 are based on Curtis (1913:182-95), with fine tuning from N. Thompson (1979).

<i>English</i>	<i>Twana</i>	<i>Puget Sound Salish</i>
two	<i>əsáli</i>	<i>sáli</i>
four	<i>búsas</i>	<i>bus</i>
hair seal	<i>ásax<sup>w</sup></i>	<i>ásax<sup>w</sup></i> (So.); <i>ásx<sup>w</sup></i> (Skagit)
ten	<i>upədačs</i>	<i>padac</i>
lake	<i>q<sup>w</sup>ələʔat</i>	<i>q<sup>w</sup>əlut</i> (Suquamish)
scrape a canoe	<i>bəsaχatəb</i>	<i>saχad</i>
halibut	<i>sču'taχ</i>	<i>sčutχ</i>
strong/man	<i>stubiš</i>	<i>stubš</i>

**Table 1:** Longer cognates in Twana than Puget Sound Salish

But there are also examples of words, such as those in Table 2, where the Twana form is shorter than the equivalent Puget Sound Salish form.

<i>English</i>	<i>Twana</i>	<i>Puget Sound Salish</i>
ax	<i>qəbəd</i>	<i>qəbətəd</i> (So.)
snail, slug	<i>sq'áχad</i>	<i>q'iyáχ3d</i>
osprey	<i>c'ix<sup>w</sup></i>	<i>c'ix<sup>w</sup>c'ix<sup>w</sup></i>

**Table 2:** Shorter cognates in Twana than Puget Sound Salish

Twana is the only Salish language to have a cognate for ‘osprey’ without reduplication.

Not unexpectedly, some Twana words are longer than the cognates in Puget Sound Salish, most are the same length and some are even shorter. Although no daughter language is ever the same as a proto-language, Allen’s observation about asymmetrical difficulty may have been accurate because it is often the case among more or less closely related languages, such as Portuguese and Spanish, that one language is harder for the speakers of the other to understand.

#### 4.2 Was Twana harder to pronounce and process?

A comparison of a number of cognates in Table 3 supports Weidman’s claim that words in Twana are harder to articulate than in Puget Sound Salish.<sup>9</sup> There are, however, counterexamples where the corresponding Puget Sound Salish form has more consonant clusters, e.g. Twana *č'ič'ic* ‘mosquito’ but Puget Sound Salish *č'ic'ic'qs*.

<sup>9</sup> Comparative examples used here are based on Curtis (1913:182-195), N. Thompson (1979b) and Kuipers (2002).

<i>English</i>	<i>Twana</i>	<i>Puget Sound Salish</i>
cat	<i>pišpš</i>	<i>pišpiš</i>
ten	<i>ópədičs</i>	<i>pádəc</i>
hemlock tree	<i>susk<sup>w</sup>pi</i>	<i>sk<sup>w</sup>upac</i>
step-father	<i>ščlbəɖəb</i>	<i>čəlbəɖəb</i>

**Table 3:** More consonant clusters in Twana than Puget Sound Salish

One measure of difficulty suggests that the Twana should have found it harder to learn Puget Sound Salish than the converse because of the nature of its phonetic inventory. Puget Sound Salish developed from Proto-Coast Salish a voiced obstruent series which corresponds to glides in Twana, although *y* and *w* are still found in Puget Sound Salish. Just as the speakers of Spanish have trouble with some of the consonants in Portuguese that are not found in Spanish, one could imagine Twana speakers having trouble with the Puget Sound Salish *j*, *ʃ*, *g* and *g<sup>w</sup>*.

## 5 Was the learning of Twana as restricted as claimed?

### CLAIM #2 – RESTRICTED LEARNING (3.3.1):

- No one from the outside ever learned Twana (3.3.1). Few non-Twana learned Twana (3.3.1-2). Exceptions included outsiders, usually women, married into or otherwise residing with a Twana group (5).
- Twana was not spoken beyond the Hood Canal drainage (3.3.1); the children of Twana-speaking women living elsewhere seldom learned Twana (3.4.2).
- No white persons learned it (3.3.2).

One of the entailments of the DLB is that few non-Twana learned Twana. The most restrictive assessment of the learning of Twana by outsiders comes from Drachman (1969:12) and Lane (1973:1-2) who report that no one from outside of the Hood Canal area ever learned it. Eells' assessment is somewhat less restrictive. He says that no white person had ever learned Twana. Elmendorf (1960:281) specifies that the exceptions to outsiders not learning it in pre-reservation times were typically individuals who had come to live among the Twana: "Those who did were for the most part outsiders, usually women, married into or for other reasons residing with some Twana group."

There are cases where a wife learned the language spoken by her husband if it sounded totally foreign to her. One family who lived briefly on the Skokomish Reservation provides such an example. Sickman (½ [Upper] Chehalis and ½ Wynoochie born ca. 1832), one of a number of Upper Chehalis Indians who moved onto the Skokomish Reservation in 1880, arrived with a large family: three wives, five children, a niece and a nephew (U.S. Census 1880). He and his family later moved to the Chehalis Reservation at Oakville.

Syk'amen (“light,” sickman) had three wives ... After Syk'amen died, the youngest wife (Satsop and Puyallup) married a sailor from Chile and learned Spanish. They lived and died in Oakville. (Peter Heck in Adamson 1999:32)

On the census her name was listed as *Na'-mīt-hu* or Katie (born ca. 1842). None of the family spoke English. After Sickman's death, his youngest wife learned a language that would have been considered by Coast Salish speakers as harder to learn than other Coast Salish languages.

### 5.1 Learning by resident non-Twana women

As Elmendorf asserts, at least some non-Twana women who married Twana men and moved to Hood Canal learned to speak Twana. An example of this type is Mary Adams, who was one-quarter Squaxin, one-quarter Twana and one-half Samish (1880 US Census); her mother was a Samish and her father a Squaxin with a Twana parent. Mary Adams (born ca. 1871) was married to a Hoodport Twana man and lived on the Skokomish Reservation.

Evidence of her language use comes from song lyrics she used to accompany her storytelling. Elmendorf would predict that she would sing in Puget Sound Salish, the language of her father, and never in Twana. In reality however, she did sing in Twana. Her telling of Robin's Story ends with a rendition of the song he sings each spring:

Twana lyrics:	tsis• tsis tsitcōwac
English translation:	My wife. (Adamson 1934:369)

The Hoodport Twana word for wife, *tcōwac* (*čówaš*, in more modern transcription), is clearly present and not the Puget Sound Salish form, *čug<sup>w</sup>aš*.

Another example of a woman from the outside who learned Twana after moving to Hood Canal is a Dungeness Klallam woman who was married to a Skokomish Twana.

Now those two families are *q<sup>w</sup>əlq<sup>w</sup>élax<sup>w</sup>* (related by marriage) to each other now. ... They're all brothers and sisters now. And when they go, the boy's family take[s] the girl with them. She's a Skokomish woman now.

[The bride] stayed at Skokomish for years, till [her husband] died, then went back to her people. She talked Skokomish just as good as anyone. (Frank Allen in Elmendorf 1993:112-13)

Interestingly, this woman was Frank and Henry Allen's mother, Mary Allen. She was born c. 1840 (US Census 1880), so the wedding probably took place c. 1852-57 (although Elmendorf (1993) dates it as c. 1845-50).

## 5.2 Learning by resident non-Twana men

By saying that resident outsiders who learned the language were “usually women”, Elmendorf (1960:281) allows that some of them were males.

One such incomer was John Palmer who belonged to his father’s Chimakum tribe while his mother was Suquamish (a Puget Sound Salish tribe along northeast Twana territory). Palmer’s wife Mary (born ca. 1853) had (given the census takers’ habit of listing father’s blood degree first) a Suquamish father and a Twana mother (US Census 1880). Palmer moved to the Skokomish Reservation and learned Twana.

*John Palmer* was born near Port Townsend, about 1847, and belonged to the now extinct tribe of the Chemakums. His father and many of his relations died when he was quite young . . . When about two years old he went to live with [a] family with whom he went to San Francisco, where he remained for a year or two. Most of the time until 1863 or 1864 he spent on a sailing vessel near the mouth of the Amour river, where he learned to speak Russian. The captain’s wife took quite an interest in him, and taught him to read in English.

He returned to Puget Sound and served [in the employ of the] Government as interpreter at Neah Bay until about 1868, when he went to the Skokomish Reservation, where he was interpreter and sub-chief most of the time until his death February 2, 1881. He understood four Indian languages, besides English and Russian, namely Nisqually [language], Clallam, Twana, and Chinook Jargon. (Eells 1985:357-59)<sup>10</sup>

Palmer learned the language of the Skokomish Reservation so well that he was Eells’ interpreter for the Twana language as he assembled his first publication which included listings of vocabulary (Eells 1877:58).

At Skokomish, Palmer was looked upon as a Twana (Eells 1985:421). Unlike her husband, Mary Palmer did not speak English (US Census 1880). She moved onto the Skokomish Reservation when she was nine years old, with her younger sister (ibid.). Her maternal grandparents may have been on the reservation but, unfortunately, we can not be sure that Mary spoke Twana, the language of her mother, but it is likely.

## 5.3 Learning by non-resident descendant

Drachman and Lane claim Twana was never learned by children outside of the Hood Canal drainage. Elmendorf allows that it rarely happened and then only under restricted circumstances.

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<sup>10</sup> Clearly, Eells’ usage here of *understood* includes production as well as comprehension.



Children of Twana-speaking women resident with non-Twana tribes are said to have seldom spoken their mothers' language. (Elmendorf 1960:281-2)

While there is no data bearing on whether it was atypical, the following case study describes a child raised away from Hood Canal who did learn Twana.

There were two southern Puget Sound Salish villages located on North Bay at the head of Case Inlet, a four mile walk over "a well defined path" (Smith 1940:14) from the head of Hood Canal. The people of these villages were referred to as the Squaxin. The Squaxin were part of the Sahewamish, who occupied the southern Sound from Budd Inlet to Shelton Inlet. Because the reservation for all the Sahewamish is called Squaxin Island, the name Squaxin has often been misapplied to other early Sahewamish from Shelton and other locations on southern Puget Sound.

One of the Squaxin villages was located at the mouth of the creek emptying Mason Lake, at the south end of what is now the town of Allyn (Smith 1940:14). In 1854 two Sherwood brothers from Vermont built a lumber mill there. In the nearby village there were three daughters in the family of a Squaxin woman (born c. 1833) and her Twana husband, Cush (*kúš*). The first daughter married one of the newcomers, Joseph Sherwood, and they had a son, Adam. Susie Cush (born ca. 1833) married the other brother, Sam Sherwood, and they had a son, Kimball, ca. 1868. Following the death of Adam's mother, Joseph married the other sister, Mary (born ca. 1847), and ca. 1870 they had a son, Peter. Joseph Sherwood was killed in a logging accident in 1873. Susie and her three children and her mother moved to the Skokomish Reservation ca. 1875 and Mary and her two children followed a year later. Adam stayed behind with his grandfather at the mouth of Sherwood Creek.

Adam Sherwood, who was part Twana, was living with the Squaxon Indians at North Bay (Case Inlet). ... Adam had been raised and trained by his grandfather *kúš*, a great doctor, and he got doctor power . . . There were very few Squaxon left [in Allyn] at the time. (Henry Allen in Elmendorf 1993:191)

Sometime between 1908 and 1918, according to Elmendorf, Kimball Sherwood (who would later be Henry Allen's father-in-law) was living with his cousin Adam in Allyn. The two of them went to a gathering at Port Madison (the reservation for the Suquamish). There Adam was called upon to use his skills as a doctor.

About twenty or thirty years ago Adam Sherwood ... and Kimball Sherwood, his cousin, were both living [at Allyn]. Well, the Sherwood boys went up to Port Madison ... and someone there said ... that a young Suquamish woman there was sick ... So Adam came and looked the woman over and diagnosed [her problem]. (ibid.)

Adam Sherwood was “Squaxon, part Twana” (Elmendorf 1993:296). He did not live on the Skokomish Reservation where most of the rest of his family lived. Instead, he was raised at Allyn by his grandfather who was a Twana. Although this made Adam Sherwood a Squaxin, he spoke Twana. As he began his effort to cure the stricken woman, he explained to the audience that had gathered what he was going to do in Twana, not Puget Sound Salish.

So Adam said in Twana, “*łasyəʔáyčəd* (I’m going to make an imitation, an image of it).” (Henry Allen in Elmendorf 1993:191)

#### 5.4 Learning by child moving to Skokomish

Louisa Jones Charley Pulsifer, both Drachman’s and N. Thompson’s principal informant, did not learn Twana as her first language. Although she was born on the Skokomish Reservation in December 1886, her first language was Klallam, from her father’s maternal side. When she was three and a half years old she started to pick up the Twana language. She began by learning the names for animals, such as the words for the kinds of clams and the word for ‘dog’. The Reverend Eells expressed his surprise at how quickly she learned Twana through interaction with reservation residents while he himself could not (N. Thompson n.d. a).

#### 5.5 An areal mechanism to facilitate bilingualism

Many cultures of the region had a practice which placed a young girl, prior to her first menstruation, in a mentorship program for marriage into another language group. One of the advantages of this was that it allowed a prepubescent girl to learn the foreign language at an age before the language learning ability wanes. Part of the regime was to place the girl in a position where she would learn through total emersion. The following account provided here shows the regional nature of this practice. Here the prospective husband, Charley Jones, was an Upper Skagit through his father, John Jones (*sʔáliwas*). His maternal grandparents were Klallam, Sahewamish and Skokomish Twana. Charley was living in a Klallam community at the time, probably Little Boston. The prospective bride was Lucy Bob, born ca. 1865. Her mother, *qʼustánʔə*, was a Cowichan from Duncan, BC.

My grandmother was *skəwəčəd* [Cowichan]. She’s [half] *skəwəčəd* [through her father] and then they say she’s half Seattle [(Suiattle) and Saanich through her mother]. ... She sold my mom to my dad when she was a little girl, past her ten [year birthday], and my dad gave her the money she wanted.

And then my dad told Aunt Jenny: “You take her and you raise her for me. When she gets old enough, then I’ll marry her.” Aunt Jones raised her until she was a woman.

Jenny [*c'iʔúxc'a*] was first cousin to my dad. She was living with Dexter. He's from *c'ic'amus* [Hadlock] ... but he came to Little Boston and he lived with Aunt Jenny. She raised my mom [there] until she was a woman. (Louisa Pulsifer in N. Thompson n.d. a)

Charley and Lucy Jones were married in Port Gamble by Rev. J.B Boulet on May 28, 1883.

An example of a girl who underwent this training on Hood Canal was Phoebe Watson Charley Moses (*wadšəb*). Phoebe began her life about 1847 in a Satsop village at what is now Elma. She came to Hood Canal as a young girl after marrying a Duhlelap Twana doctor named Tenas Charley, who had spotted her at a gathering. The following is part of her story as she related it in 1926.

My mother's father [Old Watson] belong[s] to Satsop. My father's belongs to [Wynoochee]. ...

[When I was a] young woman [under 11 years old, he] want to buy me[, a] Skokomish old man[.] In the Indian way [of the] old timers[. Well] I was [sold when he] put up money, horses, everything [that] come to [\$]1,000. Grandmother let me go. That was [the] Indian way. After that, I stay[ed at] Skokomish, never see [my] people [for] two year[s]. (Phoebe Moses in Adamson n.d.)

Phoebe and Tenas Charley moved from the Duhlelap community (near modern Belfair) to the reservation in 1858 (U.S. Census 1880).

With this mechanism, the DLB would have had no influence with respect to language learning for young females moving into the Hood Canal watershed. It was recognized that any second language learning before puberty was fairly easy and that fact was taken advantage of.

After arriving in a Twana village, the girl would have either begun learning about Twana culture along with other children of the village or she would have been given private instruction along the same lines. This instruction would have been in the Twana language (see Elmendorf 1960:431).

All children up to seven or eight, and in some families up to adolescence, were brought into the house every evening and required to listen to verbal instructions on deportment and ethical matters, interspersed with myth narration. ... The instructional talks seem to have been set lectures ... (Elmendorf 1960:430-31)

## **5.6 Learning through serial exogamous monogamy**

Among the Southern Puget Sound Salish and the Twana there was another marriage pattern in addition to the upper-class ideal. This traditional

pattern fostered multilingualism and made it possible for certain individuals to serve as interpreters, translators, messengers and envoys.

Men would sometimes leave their villages to live with several distant groups in succession. In each foreign village they took a wife and moved to another village at her death or left her in order that they might move on. . . . The men themselves almost invariably returned to their own village as they grew older. During residence in other language or dialect groups they had to learn to speak and understand these and when they returned they were looked up to because of their linguistic knowledge. It was not unusual for villages to number such an individual among their members. Through him trade, potlatch and other conversations could be conducted. He had a definite role but little social authority. (Smith 1940:170)

Frank Allen fits this profile. He was sent away to a different language community as a youth in order to gain another language. He later married at and lived in a number of different language communities including the Jamestown Klallam.<sup>11</sup>

Fluent in both the Twana and Klallam languages, [Frank] also had an adequate command of Puget Salish . . . and, in his earlier years, of Lower Chehalis. . . . He had lived as a boy for a few years with a Skokomish aunt among the Lower Chehalis in the Grays Harbor region. He also continued intimate contacts with his maternal Klallam relatives . . . He married and was for a time resident among the Suquamish and Lummi. He seems to have returned to the Skokomish Reservation and settled on his allotment there a short time after World War I. (Elmendorf 1993:xxxiii-iv)

This training led Frank Allen, when he was over 20 years old, to be hired in 1878 as a potlatch envoy, traveling to the Washington Coast to extend invitations to wealthy individuals at Tahola, Oyhut and Copalis (Elmendorf 1993:29-30). Because the people of Tahola spoke Quinault, a language different from Lower Chehalis, Allen had to use an interpreter from Chinous Creek for conducting business there.

Another serial monogamist is documented to have lived on the Skokomish Reservation, although just when he was there is not explicit.

The history of one such wanderer records Snoqualmie, Muckleshoot, Cowlitz and Skokomish wives through whom

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<sup>11</sup> Frank Allen was married to Theresa Jack on the Lummi Reservation and then moved on by the middle of 1914; he is enumerated as an off-reservation Lummi on the Census June 1914, Lummi Reservation, Tulalip Agency Wash.

his Puyallup relatives count relationships in those places.  
Other men went south and to the coastal groups. (Smith  
1940:170)

Like John Palmer, Smith's Puyallup wanderer would have learned the Twana language during his residence at Skokomish.

### **5.7 Learning by whites living in proximity**

The first white individual to consider in relation to learning Twana is The Reverend Eells who claimed no white man had ever learned it. After giving up trying to learn to speak Twana, Eells contented himself, for the most part, with learning the regional trade language, Chinook Jargon, but he did manage to learn at least one song in Twana, according to Louisa Pulsifer.

He talks Chinook [Jargon] to the Indians. He sings in Chinook [Jargon]. I remember just only one song, Myron Eells' Skokomish song. He talks in Skokomish when he sings it.  
(Louisa Pulsifer in N. Thompson n.d. a)

And Eells also managed to pick up some ability in listening comprehension. In commenting on his ability to record Twana, he summarized his learning of the local language by saying: "I ... could understand the Twana language a very little, and this knowledge greatly helped me" (Eells 1886:250).

Eells was not alone in failing to learn any Indian language fully and Twana, according to him, wasn't learned any less by whites than other languages.

Very few whites, even when married to Indian women, have learned to talk any Indian language except [Chinook Jargon].  
(ibid., 33-34)

Eells said that this was the reason he chose not to try to learn Puget Sound Salish, after having been warned off learning Twana.

However, at least one non-Indian learned the Twana language. Edward Justus Dalby Sr. came to Hood Canal in the 1890s when he was six years old. Like Henry Allen, Dalby worked with Edward Curtis.

In 1904, Ed Dalby Sr., who had just graduated from the University of Washington, attracted the attention of Ed Curtis, the well-known photographer, who journeyed to Seattle and further west, to Hood Canal, as my grandfather's guest. There he visited with the local tribesmen with Ed Dalby as his translator, using both the native language and Chinook [Jargon]. Curtis was impressed enough to invite young Dalby on an expedition with him, visiting various tribes along the

way throughout the Pacific Northwest and all the way to North Dakota. (Johnson 2000:i)

By talking with members of the Skokomish Tribe and recording their language, Dalby became a speaker of Twana.

[H]e counted among his friends and acquaintances many of the local tribesmen. Through his association with those natives, he learned to speak the Skokomish language, as well as Chinook [Jargon]. (ibid.)

Dalby's family has a collection of Twana stories and vocabulary which Dalby recorded in the early 1900s from older Skokomish. Dalby may have had a hand in recording the Twana vocabulary that appears in Curtis (1913).

In 1975, when few Skokomish were fluent in their traditional language, the non-Indian husband of a daughter of Henry Allen's, Lucinda Kenyon, knew the Twana words for the various species of mammals, birds and fish (N. Thompson n.d. a). His knowledge at least partially duplicates the vocabulary Louisa Pulsifer gained in her first step in learning Twana.

As Eells pointed out, Twana wasn't the only language of the region that proved to be hard to learn for English speakers.

The original name [of the tribe] was reduced to S'Klallam, meaning "strong people," at the signing of the Point No Point Treaty. The full name was too difficult for the nonnative settlers to pronounce. Tribal members' names were changed to Euro-American names for the same reason.

The S'Klallam language is in common [i.e. related] with other coastal Salish language families as are some of their beliefs and practices. (North Central ESD 2005)

## **6 Bilingual compensation**

It was claimed that the Twana were almost all bilingual in precontact times (especially in regard to Puget Sound Salish). Their being bilingual was said to be compensation for their neighbors' not wanting to learn Twana as a result of the DLB. The bilingualism claim was supported by four types of observations.

### **CLAIM #3 – BILINGUAL COMPENSATION (3.4.3):**

- Bilingualism was inevitable; the children of women married into Hood Canal were always bilingual (3.4.2); mixed language marriages always led to bilingualism (3.3.4).

- Most Twana were bilingual and many were polylingual (3.3); multilingualism was the norm (3.4); probably few Twana were monolingual (3.4).
- Almost all of the Twana (or at least of the Skokomish) were bilingual, speaking or understanding Puget Sound Salish in addition to Twana (3.3); every Twana knew Puget Sound Salish (3.4); nearly every Twana understood Puget Sound Salish (3.2).
- Near total bilingualism was a pre-reservation condition (3.3.4).

## 6.1 Did mixed language marriage always lead to bilingualism?

Some wholly bilingual communities have been reported in the region. The general rule stated is for husbands to have learned the language of their incoming wives from eastern Washington. This came about through a “westward movement of the Klickitats from just east of the Cascade Mountains ... accomplished by individuals, mostly women, and not by the tribe in general” (Ruby and Brown 1986:69).

Movement of the Klickitat language (in the Sahaptin family) down the Cowlitz River began when the Taitnapam (the Salish speaking Upper Cowlitz) intermarried with the Klickitat and “assumed their language” (Ruby and Brown 1986:69). Next the Newaukum (a Salish language speaking Lower Cowlitz group) became bilingual owing to their intermarriage with the Taitnapam (Adamson 1999:10).

In another reported case, it is doubtful the term bilingual should have been applied. To the north of the Cowlitz River in inland Salish language speaking Nisqually villages, marriage with Sahaptin speakers from east of the Cascades was also frequent. These communities were called “bilingual foothill villages” also. In these cases, however, it is made clear that it was not individuals who were bilingual but rather the community as a whole. Individuals did not usually learn the language of their spouses. Additionally, among the Nisqually, interlanguage family marriages usually didn’t lead to bilingual children.

Most people did not speak both languages, they spoke one or the other; “bilingual” must be understood as referring to the village as a whole, not to individuals. There are many cases remembered in foothill villages in which husband and wife could barely converse on the most simple subjects; children of such unions spoke either language, but seldom both. (Smith 1940:22)

Smith says Leschi was a possible exception to the rule.

Leschi ... was born and raised in [the Mashell Creek] village ... If he spoke Sahaptin, it is also certain that he spoke Salish. ... So far as actual language knowledge went he was probably

unusual. Most people did not speak both languages ... they spoke one or the other ... (Smith 1940:22)

These cases, where the Southern Puget Sound Salish did not achieve bilingualism, all involved marriages to non-Salish speakers. Other researchers have noted that Elmendorf restricts his claims of bilingualism to Salish languages.

Elmendorf contends that by necessity, virtually all adult Twana were bilingual, speaking their own tongue as well as another Salish language (1960:282). (Bergland 1983)

This leads us to question whether the children of unions between Twana men and non-Salish women, resident on Hood Canal, would have spoken anything other than Twana. If they had, surely Elmendorf (1960:282) would not have restricted his claim about aboriginal bilingualism to Southern Puget Sound Salish “in the form current with minor variations from the Sahewamish of the southwest sound north to the Suquamish.” (We will examine the reasons behind his restriction in Section 8.)

## **6.2 Would all or nearly all of the Twana have been bilingual?**

The claim that nearly all the Skokomish Twana spoke Southern Puget Sound Salish simply does not fit with the other aspects of Twana society that Elmendorf presents for the precontact period. First, the Skokomish Twana were a class-divided community. Elmendorf (1960:327, 346) points out that only the upper class were able to marry outside of the Twana speech area; slaves and the lower class lacked “good marriage connections.” Thus, commoners and the lower class had no opportunity or reason to learn a foreign language. We believe that claiming the narrowly focused materials gained from the Allen brothers is evidence about bilingualism and multilingualism among the precontact Twana is a very dubious proposition.

Elmendorf contradicts himself anecdotally by presenting the case that there was a Skokomish Twana who did not know Puget Sound Salish.

The last Skokomish monolingual ... died twenty years ago.  
(Elmendorf 1958:17)

Actually though, Robert Lewis (*laṣqedəb*, ca. 1847-1943), the individual spoken of was actually still alive throughout Elmendorf’s period of extensive field work (the summers of 1939 and 1940) and capable of being interviewed.<sup>12</sup> His father was ½ Klallam and ½ Twana while his mother was ½ Twana and ½ Suquamish.

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<sup>12</sup> In May 1942, Robert Lewis was interviewed when “over 100 years of age” through an interpreter by Edward G. Swendell, Jr., of the U.S. Indian Service, for the purpose of recording “the names and locations” of the usual and accustomed fishing grounds” of the Twana (Lewis 1942).



The 1880 Census confirms Elmendorf's statement that Lewis didn't speak English. The Allen brothers suggested that Elmendorf talk with their "uncle" but he never did. One has to presume in precontact times when English was not around there would have been even more monolingual Twana.

Known Twana genealogies also argue against Elmendorf's claims with regard to upper class marriage patterns and concomitantly against his claims with regard to bilingualism. The provenance of pre-reservation marriage partners for two groups of resident Twana males is shown in Table 4. The Skokomish data (n= 18) is based on Elmendorf (n.d. b) while the Quilcene data (n = 10) is based on the 1880 Census augmented by information in Elmendorf (1993).

<i>Wife's People</i>	<i>Skokomish Twana</i>	<i>Quilcene Twana</i>
Klallam/No. Straits	11 %	40%
Chimakum	---	10%
Northern Puget Sound Salish	16.5%	10%
Twana	33%	10%
Southern Puget Sound Salish	22%	30%
Lower Chehalis/Satsop	16.5%	---

**Table 4:** Provenance of wives of Twana males prior to the reservation

Logically, the children of two Twana parents would have had no reason and probably no chance to be bilingual. If the children didn't hear the foreign language, they wouldn't learn it. Thus, the data in Table 4 would predict that the children in 10% of the Quilcene families would not have been bilingual because their mothers were native speakers of Chimakum. Additionally, the children of 33% of the unions at Skokomish and 10% at Quilcene would not have been bilingual because their mothers were native speakers of Twana.

### **6.3 Was pre-reservation marriage to Southern Puget Sound Salish women at a high rate?**

If the data in Table 4 is indicative of general conditions at the time, Twana males showed no preference for Southern Puget Sound Salish marriage partners over Twana ones. Southern Puget Sound Salish speakers represent just 22% of these marriages for Skokomish Twana males. The proportion was somewhat higher at Quilcene, 30%. This data leads to the conclusion that most Twana did not become bilingual speakers of Southern Puget Sound Salish either in precontact or pre-reservation times.

### **6.4 Lack of motivation to be bilingual for many**

Because upper-class marriage was a "guarantee of high social position" (Elmendorf 1960:362), there was probably some prestige and value associated

with being a bilingual offspring of such a union.<sup>13</sup> There was no prestige factor attributed to Puget Sound Salish during this time period that led to the Twana learning it rather than their own language. Klallam was actually accorded a higher prestige value.

Clallam [was] one of four languages spoken on the Reservation ... [I]t is important to note, from the point of view of possible linguistic borrowing, that the Clallam were the more prestigious. (Drachman 1969:9)

However, in the case of a Twana whose parents did not speak Puget Sound Salish and who married someone from another tribe, for example, a Klallam or a Satsop, there was no incentive to be bilingual in Twana and Puget Sound Salish. Beyond there being no motivation, there was really no opportunity for Twana children of those unions to learn Puget Sound Salish.

#### **6.5 Was there near total fluency in Puget Sound Salish?**

One and a half years after his arrival, Eells had this appraisal of the language situation on the Skokomish Reservation.

They are the native Twana. Quite a number talk the Nisqually language entirely; a large number understand, and it is said that during the last few years more and more individuals are learning to speak it. The great majority, however, talk the Twana language in their conversation among themselves. All except the old persons talk also the Chinook in their intercourse with the whites and some other tribes of Indians, and quite a number understand English. (Eells 1877:98)

What he didn't learn until later was that there was a potpourri of people on the reservation – a great many of the new residents not being Twana but actually Squaxin and Steilacoom. Eells states specifically that the increase in speaking Puget Sound Salish came in “the last few years”, namely the mid-1870s. And at that time Twana was the primary language.

Among those who settled on the Skokomish Reservation several years after the treaty were a considerable number of Puget Sound Salish from the Squaxin villages (see Eells 1985:16, 20); “about one sixth of the people on the reservation originally came from Squaxin, and spoke the Nisqually [language]” (Eells 1886:33). In the earlier historic period the Twana are said to have “been familiar” with or able to “speak or understand” Puget Sound Salish. In Elmendorf's view, this familiarity developed into full bilingualism over the next eighty or so years due to the presence of the non-Twana on the reservation.

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<sup>13</sup> Being bilingual was an asset among the neighboring Upper Chehalis, for example. There a chief “had to be smart, know about all the families in the regions, and speak many languages” (Dan Secena in Adamson 1999:22).

In more recent times almost all native Twana speakers have acquired a command of the Puget Sound language from Sahewamish and Squaxon who have for many years been resident on the Skokomish reservation. (Elmendorf 1960:278)

Puget Salish ... had become widely spoken on the Skokomish Reservation by the 1870s and 1880s. (Elmendorf 1993:xxxv)

The great influx of Southern Puget Sound Salish speakers to Hood Canal came after the establishment of the Skokomish Reservation. This movement reshaped the linguistic map and led to the large distribution of Puget Sound Salish that Eells and Henry Allen saw in the last part of the nineteenth century. There was no widespread speaking of Southern Puget Sound Salish on Hood Canal prior to reservation times.

## **7 Data supporting interlanguage communication**

There is reason to believe that individuals who spoke neighboring Coast Salish languages communicated to some degree without needing to learn each other's languages. The Southern Coast Salish would have needed an elementary means of communication for distant travel, which would often have included talks with in-laws. A limited working proficiency would allow a woman who has married into a different speech community to interact at a basic level with other women in the village during economic activities. This interlanguage speech was not used in formal settings, such as invitations to gatherings and potlatches, where interpreters (or "speakers") were used (see Elmendorf 1993:29-37).

This argues against the need for Twana individuals to learn neighboring languages because of the DLB and against almost all Twana being bilingual or multilingual. In the subsections that follow, we will present direct observations from Coast Salish people of interlanguage communication and observations of how the cultures facilitated its use.

### **7.1 Direct observations of interlanguage communication**

Apparently the differences between Twana and Puget Sound Salish were not so great as to prevent conversation between a person speaking one of them and another person speaking the other. Notwithstanding Drachman's observation, it is clear from the reports of several sources that it was unnecessary for speakers of either Puget Sound Salish or Twana to learn the other language in order to communicate.

While Gibbs's statement is somewhat vague on how much each language group could understand of the other's speech, Eells speaks firsthand of the Twana and the Squaxin Sahewamish being able to communicate with each other, each using their own language.

Although the Squakson tribe, by treaty and language, belong to the Nisqually Indians, yet about thirty of that tribe, since the selection of the Skokomish reservation, have moved to it, and have become incorporated with the Twanas. They did so because their own people for a time were scattered, because of the nearness of the reservation to their old haunts and its advantages, and because of numerous intermarriages between them and the Twanas. *For the most part, they use their own language, but they understand the Twanas, and the Twanas understand them.* Twenty-five others for a time became connected with the Twanas, but because they did not obtain titles to the land on the reservation as soon as they expected, and as soon as they had a right to expect from Government promises, they became discouraged and left. (Eells 1887:5; emphasis added)<sup>14</sup>

Shirley Allen Weidman affirms, again from firsthand observation, that it was not necessary for the speakers of the Twana and Puget Sound Salish languages to be bilingual to make themselves understood. Henry Allen's second wife, Lucy Kimball Allen, was a fluent speaker of Twana (L. Allen 1942). She could, according to her daughter Shirley, use her Twana language with speakers of neighboring languages and be understood and she, in turn, could understand their languages.

I know my mother could go to Puyallup and she'd hear people talk and she'd talk to them. And wherever we went she used to be able to talk to whoever was talking to her. So I don't know how different [the languages all were]. (Weidman in Lund n.d.)

Elmendorf claims Henry Allen was multilingual with regard to Salishan languages, just as he claims many precontact Twana were. His wording, in fact, makes it sound as though Allen became a native speaker of three languages as a young child.

Henry was ... both literate and fluent in the English language, but throughout his life he retained native fluency in Twana, in his mother's Klallam, and in Puget Salish. (Elmendorf 1993:xxxv)

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<sup>14</sup> The remarks of historians Ruby and Brown mirror the statements of Eells concerning mutual intelligibility.

After the Skokomish Reservation was set aside ... about thirty Squaxins went there and became assimilated into the Twana community. Although each spoke their own dialects, the Squaxins and the Twanas could understand each other. (Ruby and Brown 1986:221)

While we do not doubt that he was bilingual in his respective parents' languages, Twana and Klallam, we have reason to believe that Allen was not fluent in Puget Sound Salish. His stepson, Joseph Andrews Sr., reported that Allen could not speak Puget Sound Salish (N. Thompson n.d. b). However, even so, he could understand Puget Sound Salish. He could also sing in Puget Sound Salish. But this did not require creating novel utterances, but rather reproducing a set, memorizable text

Allen became familiar with Puget Sound Salish during his first marriage. Although he was not fluent, he was able to interact with his first wife and other Puget Sound Salish speakers, because of the closeness of their language to his Twana. This level communicative competence, along with his being able to perform songs, apparently was enough to lead Elmendorf to think Allen was fluent. Actually, Allen's limited command is simply another example illustrating the situation that Eells and Weidman described with respect to the Twana understanding but not speaking Puget Sound Salish.

The two languages clearly then were sufficiently similar that they are mutually intelligible to some degree, enough to make interlanguage communication possible in many instances. The speakers of the Twana and Puget Sound Salish dialects, although they could understand each other's forms of speech well enough to interact, could not understand more distantly related Salishan languages or languages of other language families.

#### **7.1.1 Too little too late.**

One researcher claimed that interlanguage communication with Twana was not possible. Drachman offers his "personal opinion, based on observation" that Klallam, Satsop and Puget Sound Salish would not "be intelligible to a monolingual Twana-speaker." He provides the following example of his observations:

My main [Skokomish] informant [Louisa Pulsifer] spoke Nisqually to a Nisqually once in my presence; the Nisqually, however, was unable to understand more than occasional single words of Twana. (Drachman 1969:9)

However, Drachman made his observations at a time when English was the medium of communication and any accommodations for speakers of other Coast Salish language was a practice of the past. This brief lack of communication between a Twana speaker and a Nisqually dialect speaker in the late twentieth century is irrelevant with respect to what was going on precontact.

#### **7.1.2 Self-reporting of interlanguage communication**

Our notions about speakers of one language in the area being able to communicate with those speaking another are bolstered by what the Klallam

told Erna Gunther. They said that they could understand both Northern Puget Sound Salish and Twana but not speak them.

The Klallam themselves recognize their linguistic affiliation with the Lummi and the people of southern Vancouver Island. They also claim that they can understand Swinomish and Skokomish, but are aware that these languages differ dialectically from their own. On account of intertribal marriage and frequent visiting many Klallam can understand and speak Makah and Chemakum, both languages of other stocks.  
(Gunther 1927:181-82)

Elmendorf rejects the notion of mutual intelligibility involving the Twana. However in doing so he counters his own claim that neighboring tribes did not learn Twana because of the DLB.

Gunther's statement that Klallam claim to 'understand Swinomish and Skokomish' must refer to trilingual individuals.  
(Elmendorf 1960:279)

Here Elmendorf is clearly wrong. Gunther and her informants are quite explicit in distinguishing between merely understanding and being bilingual.

How then do we account for Prosch's statement, on the one hand, that the Twana could barely make themselves understood to speakers of other languages and the reports that there was not a real problem in being understood, the one by the other? Given the relative isolation of the Twana, Elmendorf's notion of being "familiar with" (see 6) may hold at least part of the answer. The Twana tended to intermarry into the same outside communities generation after generation. Those Puget Sound Salish speakers who were "familiar with" Twana, perhaps because they had a Twana parent or grandparent, could figure out how to make sense of simple Twana sentences. Where they didn't intermarry, familiarity with the language would be nil and at hearing Twana such Puget Sound Salish would throw up their hands, as reported in the Prosch statement.

## **7.2 Clues that speech was altered for intelligibility**

Eells employed translators for his Sunday sermons on the Skokomish Reservation. These individuals translated Chinook Jargon into Puget Sound Salish or Twana. One interesting translator was likely a Twana who had learned Puget Sound Salish imperfectly as an adult.

The first interpreter I had was good at heart, but he used the Nisqually language. While most of them understood it, yet this person had learned it after he was grown, and spoke it, the

Indians said, much like a Dutchman does our language. (Eells 1886:34-35)

Eells was probably witnessing a Twana attempting to make himself understood to a larger audience by fitting certain Puget Sound Salish vocabulary into Twana syntax. Because the differences between Southern Puget Sound Salish languages were “attributed to a difference in the ‘words’ (Smith 1940:20), it may have seemed logical to Twana speakers to replace their own words with Puget Sound Salish equivalents in an attempt to be understood.

Interlanguage communication in general, including Eells’s translator’s endeavors, may have been facilitated by speakers substituting nouns from the addressee’s language into sentences of the speaker’s own language. According to Weidman (Lund n.d.), people knew the corresponding nouns in the other languages. Manipulation of nouns by a speaker based on the addressee’s language is confirmed by a separate source.

Quilcene Twana Lee Cush noted that younger boys on the Skokomish Reservation were cautioned by elders before making trips to other reservations as to which nouns in Twana must not be used when speaking there because they were homophonous with words in the other language for genitalia or other restricted subjects. One example provided was the avoidance of using Twana *pəq* ‘white’ when visiting the Upper Chehalis because they worried it would sound too much like their word for ‘penis’, namely *spəlq*. (N. Thompson n.d. a).

### 7.3 Apples and oranges?

Elmendorf uses “loose” rather than technical meanings of the terms *bilingual* and *multilingual*.

Almost all of the Twana, at least of the Skokomish, were aboriginally bilingual, *speaking or understanding* in addition to their own tongue the Puget Sound language ... (Elmendorf 1960:282; emphasis added)

His definition of *bilingual* allows for fluency in one and only an ability to understand the other. Thus, in using *bilingual*, he is not necessarily speaking of someone with “an effective control of two native languages.” Further, when he uses *multilingual*, he is speaking “of someone who has some [level of command] command of more than two languages” (Matthews 1997:38, 235) but is not necessarily able to produce novel utterances in more than one.

What Elmendorf is really saying is that, as a general rule, Twana speakers could understand Puget Sound Salish but not speak it. This meshes with Eells’ observations over a half century earlier.

About one sixth of the people on the reservation had originally come from Squaxin, and spoke the Nisqually [language.] ... While nearly all the Twana Indians understood it, as, in fact,

nearly all the Indians on the upper sound do, yet it was spoken by very few on the reservation. (Eells 1886:33-35)

What Eells and Elmendorf are both pointing to is that Twana speakers were not speakers of Puget Sound Salish but they had an easier time understanding Puget Sound Salish than Puget Sound Salish speakers had in understanding Twana. This was not bilingualism but rather interlanguage communication. And it was asymmetrical, as is apparently usually the case among more or less closely related tongues like, for example, Portuguese and Spanish.

Apparently the reverse was also true at times, that Puget Sound Salish speakers were able to make some headway at speaking Twana but not truly understanding everything. George Gibbs was an early observer of the southern Coast Salish, from the period surrounding the treaty signings. He wrote the first dictionary of Puget Sound Salish. The following statement appears to stem from either Gibbs's direct observation or from his discussions with speakers of Puget Sound Salish.

[The Twana] language constitutes a distinctive one, differing so far from that of the Niskwalli as not to be generally understood. (Gibbs 1877:178)

Historian Thomas Prosch grew up in the town of Steilacoom as the son of a newspaper publisher. He interprets Gibbs's statement in the same way we do, that interlanguage communication, while not easy, was possible.

Gibbs ... makes it plain that the connection between these Indians was quite insignificant. The Hood's Canal Indians had a language so different that they could hardly make themselves understood by the Indians elsewhere ... (Prosch 1907:307)

This statement also makes it clear that extensive bilingualism among Twana individuals in the late 1850s is a myth, for if they were bilingual they wouldn't have been speaking Twana to the Puget Sound Salish; they would have been speaking Puget Sound Salish.

## **8 Source of the Twana DLB**

Because Puget Sound Salish and Twana are closely related, it would not have taken long for speakers of either to learn the other. Thus, it is surprising that speakers of the former language singled out the latter as hard to learn. If the Twana language was not as difficult as the DLB states, why did the DLB develop concerning Twana? To determine the reason, we must first examine how the Southern Coast Salish classified languages.



## 8.1 Southern Coast Salish view of Coast Salishan

The Twana and Puget Sound Salish had a rings-in-a-pool concept of language relationships. The innermost ring was an individual's own language. The more closely related languages were in the next rows of rings while the outermost rings contained the most foreign languages. A story concerning when the world changed, when the ancestors of today's Indians were placed in these lands, outlines some of the relationships between languages.

There's a legend about the Chimakum people. There was a well on one of the San Juan Islands. A monster, a bad animal got into the well. People would go to drink water and he'd snatch them. They got afraid. After a while dúk<sup>w</sup> íbał [the Changer] came and caught him, and it was octopus. He [the Changer] cut off his legs and threw one leg to [Lower] Chehalis, one to Nisqually, one to Puyallup (or maybe it was k<sup>w</sup> ayéq [Upper Chehalis]), one to Snohomish, one to Skagit, one to Lummi, one to Klallam, and one to Twana. He threw the body to čóbqəb [Chimakum]. The eight legs speak more or less alike, realize their languages are similar. But nobody can understand Chimakum at all. (Elmendorf n.d. a; Elmendorf 1993:144-45)

### 8.1.1 The inner circles

This story of languages being created from a monster distinguishes Lower Chehalis and Upper Chehalis as separate languages and does the same with Lummi and Klallam, both distinctions corresponding to views held by linguists. But the story holds Nisqually, Puyallup, Snohomish and Skagit to be four different languages as well, rather than dialects of Puget Sound Salish, as linguists categorize them.

The following statements describe how the Southern Puget Sound Salish envisioned the middle and inner rings, with peoples again equated with languages:

According to the local point of view, peoples of the entire Puget Sound drainage down to and including the Skagit River, plus the Skokomish, [Lower] Chehalis, Upper [Chehalis] and, possibly, Lower Cowlitz countries belonged to the same group. (Smith 1940:151)

The peoples of the island and coastal region east of Vancouver Island and north to the international boundary, although practically unknown to the upper Sound before the stimulation of white commerce, were nevertheless included within the

same group when they were thought of at all. The languages of this group were not intelligible one to the other ... (ibid., 3)

The Southern Puget Sound Salish view of the Coast Salishan languages seems to match the classification proposed by Kinkade (1976) as to the relationship between Twana and Puget Sound Salish. However, it does not agree with Kinkade's view that Upper Chehalis is more distantly related to them than Klallam is.

The inner rings represent a grouping by the Puget Sound Salish of their language with Twana but not with Klallam.

All the Indians of the large section of land . . . between the Cascades and the Olympics from the headwaters of the Sound to Skagit Bay, including Hood Canal but not including Clallam, were held to be one people. (ibid.)

This appraisal matches the hint elsewhere by the same author that Twana was regarded as a dialect of Puget Sound Salish by the Southern Puget Sound Salish.

In the Puyallup-Nisqually dialect [group] the word [dx<sup>w</sup>lélap] means butte or rump but informants thought it might mean something else in the dialects of either the Twana or Snohomish. (ibid., 17)

Even so, Smith (ibid., 20) confirms that speakers of the Southern Puget Sound Salish dialects did not view Twana as mutually intelligible with their language.

### **8.1.2 Klallam**

The Twana and likely the Puget Sound Salish, as well, felt that Klallam was a difficult language to learn. Shirley Weidman, who learned some Klallam but more Twana while she was growing up on the Skokomish Reservation, Weidman complained in 1999 that "Klallam was so hard to learn" (N. Thompson n.d. b).<sup>15</sup> The sound inventories of the three Salishan languages are quite similar, with Twana having the smallest number of consonants. Puget Sound Salish has certain voiced consonants absent from the other two while Klallam sounds quite different from Twana and Puget Sound Salish because it has nasals and glottalized nasals in normal speech forms which are found in the others only in special register vocabularies. Weidman's half-brother Joe Andrews Sr. joked that it sounds to a Twana speaker as if the Klallam are talking through their noses (ibid.). The Puget Sound Salish viewed the Klallam as further removed from them than the Twana, both culturally and linguistically. The Twana were held to be the same people as they were, but the Klallam were

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<sup>15</sup> For Henry Allen, differences in languages were most often viewed in terms of unshared vocabulary (see 3.1). When his children spoke of Klallam being different from Twana, their emphasis was on the phonology.

specifically excluded (Smith 1940:3). Thus, Puget Sound Salish speakers too must have considered Klallam a more difficult language for them to learn than Twana. They also would have felt the same regarding Upper Chehalis and Lower Chehalis. But, even though both the Puget Sound Salish and Twana would have felt that it was a difficult language to learn, nothing we could call a DLB grew up around Klallam.

### 8.1.3 Linguist estimations of Salish closeness

Several linguists have weighed in over the years on the best way to classify the Coastal Salish languages. Swadesh (1950) has a Coast Division containing five branches. Klallam and Lummi are in one, Upper Chehalis, Quinault and Lower Chehalis are in another, and Puget Sound Salish and Twana are each the sole language in another two. L. Thompson (1970:73) elevates the branch with Upper Chehalis, Quinault and Lower Chehalis to equal status with the Coast Division. Meanwhile, he does away with the remaining subgroupings within the Coast Division because he regards those languages as “a long ... continuum.” A continuum is an area of neighboring dialects that exhibit no clear-cut lines to differentiate one language from another. This contrasts with Drachman’s view that there was a bold line between Twana and Puget Sound Salish. Kinkade (1976:1990) preserves the higher level structure proposed by L. Thompson but recognizes subdivisions within the Coast Division. Significantly, he combines Puget Sound Salish and Twana in a single branch.<sup>16</sup>

The degree of difference between pairs of Coast Salishan languages has been compared to differences between pairs of Indo-European languages. These comparisons may suggest what degree of mutual intelligibility was possible among certain sets of Coast Salish languages.

For a long time, Klallam and Northern Straits Salish (including the Lummi dialect) were thought by linguists to be the same language, Straits Salish. In Table 5 there are two estimations of how close the languages are, one has them as dialects and the other, matching current thought, as distinct languages. In the latter, Klallam is said to be about as different from Northern Straits Salish as Portuguese is from Spanish. There is said to be no mutual intelligibility between Klallam and Northern Straits.

Mrs. Elsie Claxton [b. 1911 or 1912] ... is reputed to be the most knowledgeable speaker of "old time Saanich." ... Mrs. Claxton knows the Cowichan language and understands the other dialects of North Straits, Lummi, Songish, and Sooke. Lummi seems to her to be closer to Saanich than the other two. She is unable to understand Lushootseed or Klallam. ...

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<sup>16</sup> Suttles (1977:22) holds that the ten Coast Salish languages of the Strait of Georgia and greater Puget Sound basin are “as diverse as English, German, and Swedish – clearly related but certainly not mutually intelligible.” However, this view is at odds with the notion of them forming a language continuum, as presented by L. Thompson (1970). And it would seem to be incorrect, at least with regard to the Puget Sound Salish dialects and Twana.

It has been suggested that Straits, including Klallam, is all one language. But, in fact, Klallam and Saanich are not mutually intelligible. Native speakers of Saanich were unable to understand clear tape recordings of Klallam discourse ... (Montler 1986)

<i>Coast Salish</i>	<i>Indo-European</i>	<i>Source</i>
No. Puget Sd. Salish & So. Puget Sd. Salish	British English & American English	Suttles (1977:22)
Twana & Puget Sound Salish	French & Italian	Elmendorf per Lane (1973:2)
Klallam & No. Straits Salish	Portuguese & Spanish	Thom Hess (p. c. 1973)
	English & Scots	Suttles (1977:22)

**Table 5:** Comparison of Coast Salish distances with Indo-European distances<sup>17</sup>

The equation of the distance between Klallam and Northern Straits as being the same as between Portuguese and Spanish is the same as is given for a pair of Interior Salishan languages between which the mutual understanding is said to be only sporadic.

[S]ometimes [a speaker of Kalispel] can and sometimes can't understand native speakers from the Coeur d'Alene Tribe. The Coeur d'Alenes have a separate Salish language, as distinct from Kalispel as Portuguese is from Spanish ... (Raymond Brinkman in Craig 2004)

In Table 2, the order of difference between the Twana and Puget Sound Salish is said to compare to that between Italian and French. By examining communication between speakers of the various Romance languages we can get a picture that includes the analogs of the Twana and Puget Sound Salish.

Generally speaking, the relative difficulty to which second language learners refer is the perceived difference between the new language and their first language. Portuguese speakers, for example, seem to have no problems in understanding Spanish speakers. For them, Spanish is a simpler version of their own language. Spanish speakers, however, generally only understand about half of what Portuguese speakers say. An Italian, hearing a conversation between a Portuguese speaker and a Spanish speaker might be able to figure out what the conversation is about but not be able to understand most of the details. The Italian speaker would have even more trouble understanding what a speaker of French is saying. Catalan shares features of Spanish and French, but is not understood fully by speakers of either of those languages. The relative ease with

<sup>17</sup> At their best, the comparisons are based on calculations of the number of shared cognates (i.e. lexicostatistics).

which speakers of one Romance language understand those speaking another is based on a large though incomplete convergence in phonology (e.g. Portuguese has an inventory that includes sounds which Spanish speakers have some trouble with), syntax (e.g. Portuguese grammar also gives Spanish speakers a bit of trouble) and vocabulary (e.g. French shares less vocabulary with the other three languages than they do with each other).

There are parallels between the Coast Salishan languages and the Romance languages with respect to mutual intelligibility. Lummi has a role like that of Spanish while Klallam corresponds to Portuguese. Puget Sound Salish fills the place of Catalan, while Twana is the analog of French. Speakers of any of these languages generally would have understood speakers of the others along a scale of somewhat to fairly well.

There is anecdotal evidence from the Romance languages that knowing two of the related languages makes it easier to learn a third.

The people living in Catalunya like me (barcelona and so [forth]), speak Catalan, and with [knowing] the mix of catalan and spanish, we are able to understand french, italian, portuguese and a little bit of romanian.<sup>18</sup>

This same ‘triangulation’ used to understand a third language was no doubt also found among bilingual speakers of Coast Salish languages in western Washington.

## **8.2. The outer circle**

In the outermost ring were languages which truly seemed foreign. These were the non-Salishan languages, Chimakum to the north, Makah to the northwest, and Yakima to the east. In between were circles containing the other Salishan languages. Henry Allen expressed this three-way distinction, starting with the outer circles and working inward, when he said, “Chemakum, Makah, Yakima are different, but the other languages around here are like Twana” (Elmendorf 1960:281).

### **8.2.1 Chimakum as the earlier target of the DLB**

The speakers of the Southern Puget Sound Salish dialects regarded Twana as very similar to their own forms of speech. However, they also realized that their forms of speech were more similar to each other than any of them was to Twana. If there was no meaningful difference between the two languages in terms of word length (as we have shown in 4.1), then there must have been another factor which led Southern Puget Sound Salish speakers to claim Twana was harder to learn, for both Indians and white persons alike. It is therefore

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<sup>18</sup> This quote comes from the Girlz Gaming House website:  
[www.girlzgaminghouse.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=783&Itemid=14](http://www.girlzgaminghouse.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=783&Itemid=14).

intriguing that prior to its virtual extinction there was a DLB concerning the Chimakum language.

Chimakum was noted by linguists as unique (Swanton 1953:417). And the neighboring Coast Salish found it to be strange to them too. The story of the creation of peoples with different languages from a monster explicitly distinguishes Chimakum as not Salishan. Based on their classification of languages in the region, Puget Sound Salish and Twana speakers would have found Chimakum to be the hardest of the neighboring languages to learn.

A comparison ... shows that the Twana and Nisqually agree on many points, and the Klallam is similar to them in some, but the Chemakum, except in a few instances, is different from the others ... (Eells 1889:646)

For the Southern Coast Salish, listening to Chimakum was not like listening to another Salishan language where cognates could be recognized. "One of the most distinctive features cited for the Chemakum by their neighbors was the unintelligibility of their language" (Collins 1949:147). As the Coast Salish legend said, "nobody can understand Chemakum at all."

[The Chemakum] talked so funny . . . Not one word like Twana or Klallam or anything else. (Henry Allen in Elmendorf 1993:144)

Nobody here spoke Chemakum. It was a funny language, different from the others. (Frank Allen in Elmendorf 1960:283)

Puget Sound Salish speakers echoed the views of the Skokomish. One Southern Puget Sound Salish branded the Chimakum language "entirely different" (Smith 1940:20). Others Indians "say 'they speak like birds,' a phrase commonly used in regard to language absolutely foreign" (Gibbs 1877:177).

Apparently Twana and Puget Sound Salish speakers on the Skokomish Reservation did not even attempt to learn Chimakum. Frank Allen said he knew only one Chimakum word, that for 'man', while his brother Henry knew the words for 'come' and 'no' (Elmendorf 1993:144).

[T]he Tsemakum is literally an unknown tongue to the rest; not an individual, it is said, out of the tribe being acquainted with it, a circumstance very unusual among the Indians. (Gibbs 1877:177)

[T]he Chimakum ... language differs materially from either that of the Clallams or the Nisqually, and is not understood by any of their neighbors. In fact, they have maintained it a State secret. (Gibbs 1854:37)

Thus, the statement that Twana was hard to learn was not a broad statement comparing it to all other languages in the world, for Chimakum was thought to be much harder to master.

### **8.2.2 Interlanguage families**

For an adult, knowing even one language may help in learning another that is closely related to it and we suspect the same is probably true when a child is learning two related first languages at the same time. When parents spoke languages that weren't in the same family, however, the child had no such advantage. And, it appears, there was a low incidence of bilingualism among children of those families.

As we noted earlier (6.2), Smith (1940:22) states that the children of a Puget Sound Salish and Sahaptin union in the upper Nisqually River drainage rarely learned both languages. The comparable marriage among the Twana would have been with a Chimakum. Elmendorf (1960) states that Twana children of two Coast Salish language unions always learned both languages. However, according to Frank Allen, when the incoming wife was Chimakum the children did not learn her language.

Thus, whether the children in the region learned both languages or learned only one was usually determined by the distance between the parents' languages. When the languages were both Coast Salish, the Twana children usually learned both. When the foreign language was from the outer circle, the child was generally monolingual.<sup>19</sup>

### **8.2.3 The demise of Chimakum**

Like the Twana, the Chimakum were not very numerous in precontact times. The high estimate, that of Mooney (1928), numbers them at but 400. But unlike the Twana language, the Chimakum language started undergoing language replacement as their numbers shrank following intertribal warfare and contact. The following quotes document the chronology of the death of the language.

Gibbs (1877:177-178) confirms [a] lack of knowledge of the language by non-Chimakum for the period around 1850-1860. (Elmendorf 1960:283)

The Chimakums ... were not very numerous ... Dr. Gibbs 1852 states their number to have been ninety ... Dr. Gibbs says that they had been engaged in wars with the Makah, Clallam,

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<sup>19</sup> Carolyn Kessler is cited by Edith Moravcsik (1972; in *Working Papers on Language Universals* 8, Stanford University) as having developed a hypothesis about language learning and language distance. Kessler suggests that "the sequence and rate of acquisition of linguistic structures in two languages learned by the same person is in relation to the degree of their similarity ..."

Twana, Snohomish and Duwamish [actually Suquamish] Indians, by whom their power was broken. (Eells 1887:5-6)

The Chemakum had effectively disappeared from the aboriginal scene as a people before 1860. (Elmendorf 1960:296)

By the early twentieth century the Chemakum had disappeared as a separate people, their language was no longer spoken, and their descendants had become absorbed by the Clallam, the Twana, and the larger non-Indian society. ... The Chemakum remnant seems, during the second half of the nineteenth century, to have largely married into other Indian communities [e.g. the Clallam and Twana] ... These intermarriages were apparently accompanied by loss of language and of ethnic identity. (Elmendorf 1990:438-39)

The following passage shows that circa 1877 the Twana no longer had much or any contact with the Chemikum.

There are no civilized tribes of Indians with whom they [the Twana] have any contact. There are a number of tribes of half-civilized Indians, with whom they are in contact more or less, chiefly the Squaxons, Nisqually, Clallams, Snohomish, Lummi, and Chehalis tribes. (Eells 1877:62)

Now [circa 1887] virtually extinct, there being only seven left, who are not legally married to white men or into other tribes. Of these there is only one complete family, and it has connected itself with the Clallam Indians at Port Gamble. With the exception of one or two very old ones they now commonly use the Clallam language. They say that their diminution was caused by the small-pox, but probably war had something also to do with it ... (Eells 1887:6)

In 1890, Boas was able to find only three individuals who could speak their language, and then but imperfectly. (Swanton 1953:417)

Given that it is human nature for societies to have another language they can point to as being the hardest to learn, it is hardly surprising that Puget Sound Salish speakers transferred their DLB from Chimakum to Twana. Note that the preceding descriptions of the demise of the Chimakum people and their language show each was fairly well gone by the time the DLB began to be recorded for Twana.



## 9      **The transfer of the DLB to Twana**

With Chimakum no longer a healthy language, the DLB probably sat dormant for a number of years. The reappraisal of Twana came only after a number of Southern Puget Sound Salish speakers relocated on the Skokomish Reservation.

As we have seen with Adam Cush and Mary Adams, Squaxin Sahewamish did learn Twana. Frequent intermarriage meant that the Squaxin were familiar with the Twana language. So it seems unlikely that the Squaxin who moved to the Skokomish Reservation would suddenly decide that Twana was difficult to learn. There was a more likely group of Southern Puget Sound Salish speakers who moved to the reservation about the same time. They were Steilacoom, often confused with their larger neighbors, the Puyallup and Nisqually who received their own reservations.

Since the establishment of reservations, it has become usual to label the [Southern Puget Sound Salish] language as either Puyallup or Nisqually according to the river drainage upon which the respective reservations were located. (Smith 1940:20)

The following are a few examples of Steilacoom moving to the Skokomish Reservation. Mowitch Man came in 1858 and married two sisters in the Adams family. John Robinson, part Steilacoom and part Squaxin, came the same year and married a Skokomish woman. John's Squaxin mother came the same year as well and his brother Hank came three years later. Still other Steilacoom came after 1880. It is not hard to imagine Henry Allen and Myron Eells hearing the DLB from just a few individuals with connections to Allen.

The Steilacoom on the Skokomish Reservation would have recognized that it was harder for them to learn Twana than to learn Snohomish, for example. They would tell Twana speakers that their language was hard to learn, not comparing it with other more distant Salishan languages or unrelated languages but to other dialects spoken in the Puget Sound watershed. Such statements by the Steilacoom were later misunderstood to be pronouncements on the absolute difficulty of the Twana language. This misunderstanding in turn is one of the factors in the genesis of the Twana DLB.

In their statements, these related outsiders were contrasting Twana with the languages now recognized as dialects of Puget Sound Salish. Clearly, Twana was not considered as hard to learn as more distantly related Coast Salishan languages such as Klallam. Rather than Twana, it was a language deemed to be very foreign to both the Puget Sound Salish and Twana that had previously been saddled with the DLB. The Chimakum, in fact, may have been proud their language carried that designation.

The reassignment of the DLB to Twana from Chimakum did not take place during precontact times. Rather, the DLB was only applied to the Twana language by the Steilacoom on the Skokomish Reservation after the virtual

extinction of the Chimakum language. That the corollary to the DLB involves only the Southern Puget Sound Salish language is further evidence of its origin.

**10      New beliefs concerning Southern Coast Salish languages**

The fact that the Twana language was linguistically close to Puget Sound Salish but had far fewer speakers in a far smaller area continues to fuel speculation. One instance of this speculation has been to regard Puget Sound Salish as synonymous with Proto-Coast Salish.

In the side by side comparison below, the altered version elevates the status of the Puget Sound Salish language. A newly coined “Coast Salish Nation” designation is applied to its speakers and their territory is expanded to include all of the Coast Salish territory, if not the entire Salishan territory.<sup>20</sup>

Original	Altered
The Native Americans of Puget Sound have been known as Puget Salish and Southern Coast Salish ... Lushootseed comes from two words, one meaning "salt water" and the other meaning "language," and refers to the common language, made up of many local dialects, that was spoken throughout the region. Lushootseed territories covered a large part of what is now western Washington ...	The Coast Salish Nation, or Lushootseed, which refers to refers to the common language made up of many local dialects that was spoken throughout the region, occupied the land and waterways of what is now southwestern British Columbia and the northwestern United States. Lushootseed comes from two words, one meaning "salt water" and the other meaning "language."

This disturbing development among historians and other non-linguists sweeps away all distinctions among Puget Sound Salish, Twana, Klallam and the other languages of the area, claiming that the Coast Salish of western Washington spoke but one language, called Coast Salish or Lushootseed.

The Coast Salish peoples who made their homes along the watershed of ... Hood Canal called themselves Tuanook (also [spelled] Twana [or] Twanoh ... and spoke the Central or Coast Salish or Salishan language common to Western Washington. ... The indigenous people who resided along the shores of upper Puget Sound ... spoke Lushootseed, of the Salishan language family. The Coast Salish peoples spoke a common language and traded together. (Wilma 2006)

Recently, some tribes have reported suggestions by Puget Sound Salish individuals that, because their language is easier to learn, Puget Sound Salish

<sup>20</sup> The original text comes from Thrush (n.d.). The revised text is found at Islandwood (n.d.).

should be taught to Samish and Skokomish children. One version of the proposal claims that because the Upper Skagit dialect of Puget Sound Salish is the same as Proto-Coast Salish it would be easy to learn it first and then to learn language specific innovations later. Oddly, this is the opposite of the claim by Henry Allen who was of the opinion that learning the proto-language would be harder.

Thus, language myths concerning language simplicity and language-learning difficulty persist among the Southern Coast Salish. A generalization is suggested to us that language beliefs are just as likely to get new objects when their original objects are no longer available as to be abandoned.

Another new claim is that Twana is actually a Puget Sound Salish dialect.

Twana is also the name of the Puget Salish language dialect spoken by the Skokomish people. (Seattle Art Museum n.d)  
The Twana language, or *tuwaduqutSid*, is a southern Puget Sound dialect of the Salish language family. (Online Highways n.d.)

The following description places Skokomish as a Puget Sound Salish dialect. It is unclear if it is claiming Puget Sound Salish was spoken in the entire Hood Canal watershed or just the eastern half.

Before the settlers, Lushootseed was spoken from south Puget Sound near Olympia north to the Skagit River watershed, and from Hood Canal east to the Cascade Range. ... Northern Lushootseed was used by the Skagit, Samish, Swinomish, Stillaguamish, Sauk-Suiattle and others. Southern Lushootseed was the language of the Muckleshoot, Puyallup, Nisqually, Skokomish, Suquamish, Snoqualmie and others. The Snohomish people spoke a mix of northern and southern dialects. (Fiege 2013)

An older hypothesis about Twana holds that it diverged over a long period of time, perhaps because of isolation.

Certainly the Twana had been in the Hood Canal area for some time, because their language was unintelligible even to other Salish-speaking people. (Bergland 1983)

This hypothesis never found traction because no isolation from neighboring Salish languages was ever confirmed. A more recent hypothesis is that Twana only recently separated from Puget Sound Salish.

The Twana language or Skokomish language belongs to the Salishan family of Native American languages. It is believed by

some elders within the Skokomish community (such as Bruce Subiyay Miller) that the language branched off from Lushootseed (x<sup>w</sup>əlšucid) because of the region-wide tradition of not speaking the name of someone who died for a year after their death. Substitute words were found in their place and often became normalizing in the community, generating differences from one community to the next. Subiyay speculated that this process increased the drift rate between languages and separated Twana firmly from x<sup>w</sup>əlšucid (Lushootseed). (Wikipedia n.d.)

What Miller was referring to are a number of forms in Twana which have been adopted as part of a word-taboo process. In such cases, an older form (one phonologically resembling the name of a recently deceased person who is being honored) is removed from the language and a neologism inserted in its place. The Twana forms in Table 6 represent neologisms rather than expected cognates of the corresponding Puget Sound Salish words.

<i>English</i>	<i>Twana</i>	<i>Puget Sound Salish</i>
eye	<i>dux<sup>w</sup>ʔaʔaysəbəd</i>	<i>qalúb</i>
deer	<i>sʃ<sup>w</sup>iʔšəd</i>	<i>sqég<sup>w</sup>əc</i>
mallard duck	<i>hʃhəbšəd</i>	<i>ʃátʃat</i>
rock	<i>k<sup>w</sup>əlʔilas</i>	<i>čʔaʔ</i>

**Table 6.** Twana word taboo example based on Elmendorf (1951)

Miller's claim has been accepted in a draft intended for educational purposes.

The Skokomish are Twana speaking people who occupied the Hood Canal area. Twana is a branch of the Southern Coast Salish or Lushootseed language. (De Danaan n.d.)

Now that Twana has virtually disappeared, Puget Sound Salish seems to be picking up the mantle of being a difficult language to learn. The following is a recent on-line posting by a linguist.

Lushootseed is about as different from English as it is logically possible for a language to be. ([Tarpent] n.d.)

This pronouncement comes from a reporter doing a story about Whulshootseed on the Muckleshoot Reservation.

With its clicking and consonants with popping sounds, is so vastly different from English ... Whulshootseed [is] not an easy language to learn. (Lacitis 2005)

One educational source presents interlanguage communication as a fact, although, Chimakum obviously should not be in the list.

The [greater] Puget Sound region is home to many distinct Native groups who speak variations of Salish languages, the Twana language, Chimakuan [sic], Nooksack and Klallam languages. These languages were not “mutually intelligible” (understood one to the other), but in some cases there were enough similarities to communicate effectively. (Seattle Art Museum. n.d)

Another writer states that bi- and multi-lingualism was a regional feature of the neighboring Coast Salish tribes.

The three tribes with Kitsap [Peninsula] roots [namely Twana, S’Klallam and Suquamish] spoke different languages but had close ties, understood and even spoke each other’s tongues. (McCormick 2006)

What we are seeing in these recent statements is the polar opposite of the DLB. These claims, that Twana is nothing more than a dialect of Puget Sound Salish or just Puget Sound Salish with a number of new words substituted in, support a historically ironic belief that the Twana language would have been easy to learn for Puget Sound Salish speakers. It is interesting that such a notion, concentrating as it does on words, completely overlooks the significant grammatical difference between Twana, a VOS language, and Puget Sound Salish, a VSO language. And, in this conception, the Twana are not singled out as being any different from Klallam or Puget Sound Salish in terms of learning their neighbors’ languages.

## **11 Conclusions**

We do not feel that it was a mistake for researchers to record these sentiments by speakers of neighboring Coast Salishan languages about Twana being a difficult language to learn. However, it was a mistake not to ask the follow up question, “Compared to what?” Other mistakes were made in backdating the claim to make it seem to apply to precontact times and relate to a number of ongoing cultural factors. The attendant chain of related assertions (that the Twana, knowing their neighbors would have a hard time learning Twana, became more bilingual and multilingual, and the neighbors in turn knew they didn’t have to learn Twana) were also in error. Although the chain of reasoning was logical, it started from false premises. Further, it did not accurately describe the precontact period. The Twana do not appear to have been either more or less likely to speak other languages than their neighbors were either precontact or postcontact. It is also apparent that speakers of

neighboring languages in general did not fail to learn Twana because it was difficult. They learned it when they needed to. One reason the Twana language was not learned more was that the population of the Twana was relatively small and therefore did not offer many opportunities for marrying in. However, in individual case studies, we find a consistent pattern of individuals who moved to Hood Canal from elsewhere acquiring the Twana language.

The precontact Twana were no more multilingual than their neighbors. And in general the Twana did not have to be fluent in Puget Sound Salish (or vice versa) due to the degree of mutual intelligibility between the two languages which served for most cases of intertribal interaction. Interpreters were utilized for situations in which mutual intelligibility wasn't sufficiently precise. Members of the Twana and the Puget Sound Salish speech communities had no incentive to learn the other's language unless they found themselves resident in the other's speech community.

The DLB stems from an earlier folk belief among the Puget Sound Salish concerning the Chimakum. After the virtual death of the Chimakum language, Puget Sound Salish speakers on the Skokomish Reservation began to associate the belief with the Twana language although it was far less foreign than Chimakum. A question remaining to be answered is whether the DLB had a role in hurrying along the death of these two languages, Chimakum and Twana, which had considerably fewer speakers than their neighboring languages.

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