

The Sleigh Misadventure: An ʔayʔajuθəm Childhood Memory from Joanne Francis

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Abstract: In this paper, we present a fully transcribed, translated, and glossed childhood story told by the late Joanne Francis in ʔayʔajuθəm (a.k.a. Comox Sliammon; ISO-639-3: coo), a Central Salish language spoken along the northern Strait of Georgia. The narrative was recorded in October 2018 and adds to the growing body of textual material in the language.

Keywords: Salish, Central Salish, Comox-Sliammon (ʔayʔajuθəm), narrative, stories

1 In Memory of Joanne Francis (1956–2022)

*And that’s what she said to me: “I’m quite surprised you still know our language.”
I said: “Yeah, my grandmother told me not to forget.”
— Joanne Francis (August 08, 2018)*

This paper presents a short childhood memory told by the late Joanne Francis (1956–2022), a speaker of the Homalco dialect of ʔayʔajuθəm (a.k.a. Comox-Sliammon; ISO-639-3: coo). Joanne grew up hearing her grandmother and grandfather speaking ʔayʔajuθəm in Church House (ʔop), and she credited them for teaching her the language. She spoke especially fondly of her grandmother, who taught her how to cook and make bread (including bannock and yeast bread). Joanne carried the teachings of her grandparents through her life and continued to use the language every day with her husband, Art (as well as when speaking to her cats). In fact, when we would visit her at her house, Joanne would often offer us tea and bread, and patiently teach us about her language. Joanne was, above all else, generous and kind. We are grateful for the impact that she had on our lives and for everything that she taught us. Joanne’s grandmother told her not to forget her language, and she never did.

2 The Sleigh Misadventure

In the following narrative, which was recorded by Marianne Huijsmans in Vancouver, BC on Oct. 09, 2018, Joanne recounts a sleigh accident that happened in her childhood. In Section 2.1, we provide a transcription of the original ʔayʔajuθəm story, as told by Joanne. A literal English translation follows in Section 2.2. Finally, Section 2.3 concludes the paper with a fully glossed interlinear version of the narrative.

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- (11) *x^wač ʔot maʔtən tə ʔaʔəm.*
 x^wa=č=ʔut maʔ-t=an tə=ʔaʔ-əm
 NEG=1SG.SBJ=EXCL get-CTR=1SG.SBJV DET=garbage-MD
 ‘I didn’t pick up the garbage.’⁵
- (12) *q^wolčən ʔəq, maʔtən bucket, nəpmenʔos tə ʔaʔəm.*
 q^wəl=čən ʔəq maʔ-t-an bucket [šə=]nəpmin-ʔu-s
 come=1SG.SBJ outside get-CTR-1SG.ERG bucket [DET=]container-PST-3POSS
 tə=ʔaʔ-əm
 DET=garbage-MD
 ‘I came out, I got the bucket, the container that had the garbage in it.’⁶
- (13) *q^wol ʔəq nəʔ ʔayεʔ.*
 q^wəl ʔəq niʔ [ʔə=tə=]ʔayaʔ
 come outside be.there [OBL=DET=]house
 ‘They came out of the house there.’
- (14) *»tatamčx^w?« , nəθəs.*
 ta~tam=čx^w ni-θ=as
 PROG~do.what=2SG.SBJ say-CTR+1SG.OBJ=3ERG
 ‘»What are you doing«, they said to me.’
- (15) *»q^waq^wnəx^wolč θ ʔayεʔ.«*
 q^waq^w-nəx^w-ul=č [tə=]θ=ʔayaʔ
 bump-NTR-PST=1SG.SBJ [DET=]2SG.POSS=house
 ‘»I bumped into your house.«’⁷
- (16) *»k^wu q^watχ^waθotolč.«*
 k^wu q^watχ^w-a-θut-ul=č
 CLDEM slide-LV-CTR+RFLX-PST=1SG.SBJ
 ‘»I was sledding.«’⁸
- (17) *»hoč ʔaʔaʔaʔmoʔ q^waq^wux^wən θ ʔayεʔ.«*
 ho=č ʔa~ʔaʔ-aʔm-ul q^waq^w-əx^w-an [tə=]θ=ʔayaʔ
 go=1SG.SBJ PROG~garbage-MD-PST bump-NTR-1SG.ERG [DET=]2SG.POSS=house
 ‘»I was just getting rid of the garbage and I bumped into your house.«’⁹

⁵ There is an understood part following this utterance where Joanne goes back into her grandmother’s house and comes back out.

⁶ The form for ‘container’ we are more familiar with is *nəpʔamen*.

⁷ The usual form for ‘bump into’ with the non-control transitivizer and a third-person object is *q^waq^wəx^w* (see 9, 17), but here Joanne uses *q^waq^wnəx^w*. We don’t know whether this is significant. Older forms of the non-control transitivizer with a third-person object, as found in Boas (1886), do have the initial /n/.

⁸ The initial element sounds like the clausal demonstrative *k^wu* but doesn’t attract the subject clitic as expected.

⁹ The glottal stop preceding the /m/ in the middle of *ʔaʔaʔaʔmoʔ* is not part of the middle but is glottalization associated with the following past tense suffix /-ul/.

References

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