RECLAIMING STORY, SENSE OF PLACE AND DEEP HISTORY WITH THE HELP OF DIGITAL MEDIA

Marianne Ignace, Simon Fraser University
Aboriginal Lecture Series Part III
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Me7 Sucwentem re stet’x7ems-kucw: Wenécwem yiri7 re skukwstsetselp!
**A BASIC GUIDE TO NAMES**

Listed below are the First Nations Peoples as they are generally known today with a phonetic guide for a common pronunciation. Note that some phonetic pronunciations may differ from the people's own pronunciation. Pronunciation varies between speaking communities. The best way to learn Tłı̨chǫ names is to learn the traditional in the presence of someone more familiar. Also included is a list of names formerly used by these groups and the language families to which they belong.

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<th>How Born Called</th>
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**Notes:**

- Adapted from Lindy Ovadia's *First Nations of British Columbia* by the permission of the publisher (Wheaton Press).
- Adapted from Ewen Goudie's *A Guide to the Geology of the Northwest Territories* for the *Geological Survey of Canada*.
- Adapted from Peter Goodchild's *Canada's Natural Resources* for the *National Film Board of Canada*.

PACIFIC OCEAN
A Critical Time

Source: FPHLCC 2010
Secwepemcitsin (The Shuswap Language)

- 8,000 people, 17 communities, less than 75 fluent first language fluent speakers, some silent speakers, semi-fluent speakers

- School programs of varying intensity (FN as second language programs, but also immersion program at Chief Atahm School

- Adult learners – most of them beginners, few advanced second language learners

- Skeetchestn: about 8 fluent speakers left now - all in their 70s-90s. Some “silent speakers” and semi-fluent speakers.

- Secwepemcitsin is used in very limited functions in the community: greetings, prayers at community gatherings, a few words in dialogue; even elders do not use Secwepemcitsin much with one another.

- Urgent task: produce critical mass of fluent and proficient adults

- Produce materials that provide beyond-basic learning tools and content and attract learners.
Imagining Tllli7sa: Re-Constructing Secwepemc Narrative
Background


- Marianne Ignace’s ethnographic and linguistic research in Secwepemc communities since 1984


- Took the book on the road – 2012-15: workshops on Secwepemc story, land and law in our communities

- Exploring the land – finding and understanding transformer sites
Skeetchestn

- One of 16 (17?) communities in the Secwepemc nation
- We are fortunate to still have several active speakers
- Language documentation for past 7 years: dictionary work, stories, protocols, etc.
On the land...
Story connected to resource issues: Ajax Mine
Secwepemc stories


- M. Ignace – recordings of 25+ narratives (1985 to present) - coyote stories, other local oral traditions, Tlli7sa and his brothers.

- R. Ignace (2008): oral histories and interviews carried out in Secwepemctsin

- Bouchard and Kennedy (1979)

- Community recordings (see also K. Michel and
Earlier Ethnographic work and “recordings” of Secwepemc stories

- George M. Dawson: Geological Survey of Canada
- Field seasons in Secwepemc territory 1877, 1888, 1889, 1890s – “hobby ethnography”
- 250 place names
- “Notes on the Shuswap People” (1891) contains some English story plots (Coyote, Qweq’wile, stories connected to particular places)
Boas’ Indian Legends from the North Pacific Coast (1895, transl. English 2002) Recorded with an anonymous storyteller through the medium of Chinook Jargon includes a detailed rendering of the Tllì7sa story and a few short Coyote stories and animal stories.
Most importantly: James Teit: settler, husband, ethnographer, “secretary” to the Indian Rights Movement – under the auspices of Boas’ Jesup North Pacific Expedition he produced a detailed ethnography, *The Shuswap* (1909) based on research between 1900 and 1904. Also ethnographies on neighbouring Interior Salish peoples (1900, 1906, 1930) and collections of oral traditions (1898, 1912).
The Problem

- Dawson’s, Boas and Teit’s renditions of Secwepemc stsptekwll are not in Secwepemctsín. Some are short summaries, some are detailed English renditions.
- No verbatim texts in Secwepemctsín from this period.
- Many of the stsptekwll in Dawson’s, Boas’ and Teit’s collections not recorded by Kuipers, Bouchard and Kennedy, Ignace etc....
Drawing out Language, drawing out knowledge, drawing out law

- Not “translating” the stsptekwll, but re-imagining what takes place, and unpacking meanings
- Ordering events in time and space
- Paying attention to good style (evidentials, use of passive and subordination, good choice of words, “rhythmicity” of language
- Ethnobotanical and ethnozoological knowledge
- Place names – connecting names to places, transcribing and translating place names and place naming
- Historical detail (minerals, weapons, implements etc.)
why story writing?

● The elders in the group all went to Residential School. None of them were able to train as storytellers.
● Only 3 of them previously trained in writing Secwepemcitsin, but they very quickly took to reading it; we collaboratively wrote and edited the script using a digital projector and laptop.
● The work brought the story back to life, but it also engaged the elders in language, stories and sharing.
The Tlili7sa Epic

- Tlili7sa – Tellits’e7 “shape-shifter (Sharon Hargus: Tìi?se (Ts’eyk’ene) = dog)

- One of a series of “transformer myths” in the Interior, that also includes Qweq’wile (aka Tsuntiye), the Qoa’qLqaL,

- Versions from Boas (1895, 2002), Dawson (1891), fragments from Ike Willard, Louisa Basil

- Also late 19th century/early 20th century narratives: bringing Tlili7sa back!
1. Tlē'esa

There was once a young woman who had four sons. The eldest was called Tlē'esa. The young men wanted to wander throughout the world, so their mother threw a magic substance over them in order to make them strong. She hit the three youngest but missed the eldest and he was at once changed into a dog. Then she foretold everything that would happen to them.

3. Tlēē’sa and His Brothers.

(Fraser River and North Thompson Divisions.)

Tlēē’sa was the eldest of four brothers who lived with their aunt somewhere near Kamloops. With them also lived a small boy called Kwelaʔlílst, who was a grandson of their aunt. The latter was called “mother” by them all, and was a woman of profound wisdom. She often bemoaned the fact that there were so many evil beings and cannibals in the country, thus rendering it hard for the Indians to live, and preventing them from increasing. Many of the present-day animals were at that time human beings with animal characteristics; and all of them were cannibals, who used many devices to entrap and slay the unwary. Tlēē’sa pondered deeply and long...
The Script


- Linguistic outcomes: Use of evidentials (-ekwe = hearsay, -enke = physical evidence, “zero” = experienced). –enke is obligatory, -ekwe general at beginning of episodes & paragraphs

- New words and precise meanings of words

- Use of passive in focusing and expressing point of view
Le q'7'éses m-w7écwes-ekwe tkmúšmes te tutuwiwt ne Tskwikwuy, ne qwemtsins re xyum te pésellkwe.
Long time ago, so they say, there were four young men who lived at Tskwikwuy at the shore of the big lake (Shuswap Lake).

M-tyémes-ekwe met re túnés ell ri7 tkwilc-ekwe.
They lived with their aunt who was an Indian Doctor, they say.

Tri7 lu7 cw7it re t'célélemc m-w7écwes-ekwe ne t'micw te m-ts7illenst.ses re qelmúcw.
And they say that there were many “people eaters” on the land who used to eat people.

M-qwenmíntem te k'uy' es re tutuwiwt es q'éwens re t'célélemc, m-yews-ekwe re t'sícwneňtem te melámens es kectém tek txexetén.
Their aunt wanted the young men to vanquish the people-eaters, so she spilled medicine on them to give them powers.

M-t.sícwné̓ntmes re sc7ítemc m-yews-ekwe re st'kwełcwilcs, xwent ri7 es sxenwé̓ns es nékelcs tek sqélémcw e yews tek sqéxe.
When the oldest one had medicine spilled on him, he became an Indian Doctor, and he could change himself between a man and a dog.
Marking out the Journey
Visiting places
Choice of word and context: archaeological, historical linguistic, paleoclimatic and DNA data point to the Tlli7sa epic being connected to events some 5,000-4,500 years ago.

Words for “knife”: sek’wmín
cw’tékst
tsecrépe7ten
tsectstép
txtetq’

Swellwéll - mica

Photo: Mike Rousseau
The Start of the Story: Tskwik’uy on Shuswap Lake
Sq’asca – Hoffman’s Bluff
Pellts’egtin
Tk’emlúl’pe
Xwextét’i
Cetitcten’
Sk’emqin
Pesmémenc
Xwexwtet’éqs
Cwiwescen
Tq’wmnélst
Sqwlew7ul’ecw
Tsmeltám’
Qets’wéw’ye
Qwiqwiwyqwiyt – High Bar Canyon

Photo courtesy of Steve Allen
The outcomes


- Linguistic outcomes:
  - New words
  - Use of Evidentials (-ekwe, -enke)
    - -ekwe as marking “so they say” (indirect or inferential) evidence only marked at the beginning of episodes, -enke is obligatory
  - Use of passive in focusing
The use of passive in marking switch-reference

Le q’7éses m·w7écwes-ekwe tkmúsmes te tutuwiwt ne Tskwik’wuy, ne q’wemtsins re xyum te pésellkwe. **Active = set stage/proposition**

Long time ago, so they say, there were four young men who lived at Tskwik wuy at the shore of the big lake (Shuswap Lake).

*M·tsyémes-ekwe met re tum’es ell ri7 t’kwilc·ekwe.*

They lived with their aunt who was an Indian Doctor, they say.

*T’ri7 lu7 cw7it re ts’ecélemc m·w7écwes-ekwe ne tmicw te m-ts7íllenst.ses re qelmúcw.*

And they say that there were many “people eaters” on the land who used to eat people.

*M·qwenmíntem te tum’es re tutuwiwt es q’élwens re ts’ecélemc, m·yews-ekwe re t.sícwnen’tem te melamens es kectém tek txexetén.*

Their aunt wanted the young men to vanquish the people-eaters, so she spilled medicine on them to give them powers. **– passive**

*M·t.sícwnén’tmes re sc7ítemc m·yews-ekwe re st’kwel’cwilcs, xwent ri7 es sxenwén s es nék’elcs tek sqélemcw e yews tek sqéxe. When the oldest one had medicine spilled on him, he became an Indian Doctor, and he could change himself between a man and a dog. – passive – end of paragraph!*
Use of Evidentials:

- Secwepemctsin has 3 evidentials. Their use is somewhat obligatory:

- “zero”-marked = experienced information. Example: tscentes re tsitcws ren u7q’wi (I saw her do it)

- -enke marks information according to physical evidence. Example: tscentes-enke re tsitcws ren u7q’wi. (I see that the roof is new, windows are painted, etc.

- -ekwe marks information according to “hear-say”. Example: tscentes-ekwe re tsitcws ren u7q’wi (somebody says she fixed her house)

- In running narratives, -enke and experienced knowledge is ALWAYS marked; -ekwe is usually only marked at the beginning of a verbal paragraph, and before reference is switched.
Indigenous Language Interactive Apps

Successes so Far

- 9 courses under development
- 2 pilot courses in the field
- Platform is completed and available on desktop (web) - based language tutor platform, but also for iPads and iPhones, running iOS (Apple devices)
- Over 50+ collaborators from Indigenous partner communities are busy working on course content development
Why Apps?

- All Indigenous languages in British Columbia are critically endangered
- Growing interest among Indigenous youth and adults to learn or re-learn their ancestral language
- With very few speakers remaining, it’s difficult for learners to connect with speakers
- Increasing digital literacy and advances in mobile, interactive technology creates new opportunities for language learners
This Secwepemc app tells the epic journey of Tlii7sa and his brothers across B.C.’s interior, encountering cannibals, a bear, and a poisonous tobacco tree.
The TIIi7sa Story App

- 18 Episodes with text, illustrations and audio
- In storybook mode with recorded audio in Secwepemctsin (English text version can be turned on or off)
- Lessons on place-names that occur in the story – Overview of the structure of Secwepemc place naming, Google Map view of locations, photos, names with audio-files, breakdown of meaning.
- Episode by episode lessons: vocabulary (flashcards with audio and images), grammar notes, a linguistic gloss (J. Lyon), and notes on ethnobiology, interesting cultural context, etc.
Apps and Well-Being

- The process of app development has engaged elders in use of language, connecting back to land, getting empowered.
- We see apps as a learning tool, but the ultimate goal is to connect younger generations with land, language and place.