

THE TUNICA LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION PROJECT: METHODS, CHALLENGES, AND DATA CONFLICT IN LANGUAGE RECREATION

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The Tunica Project

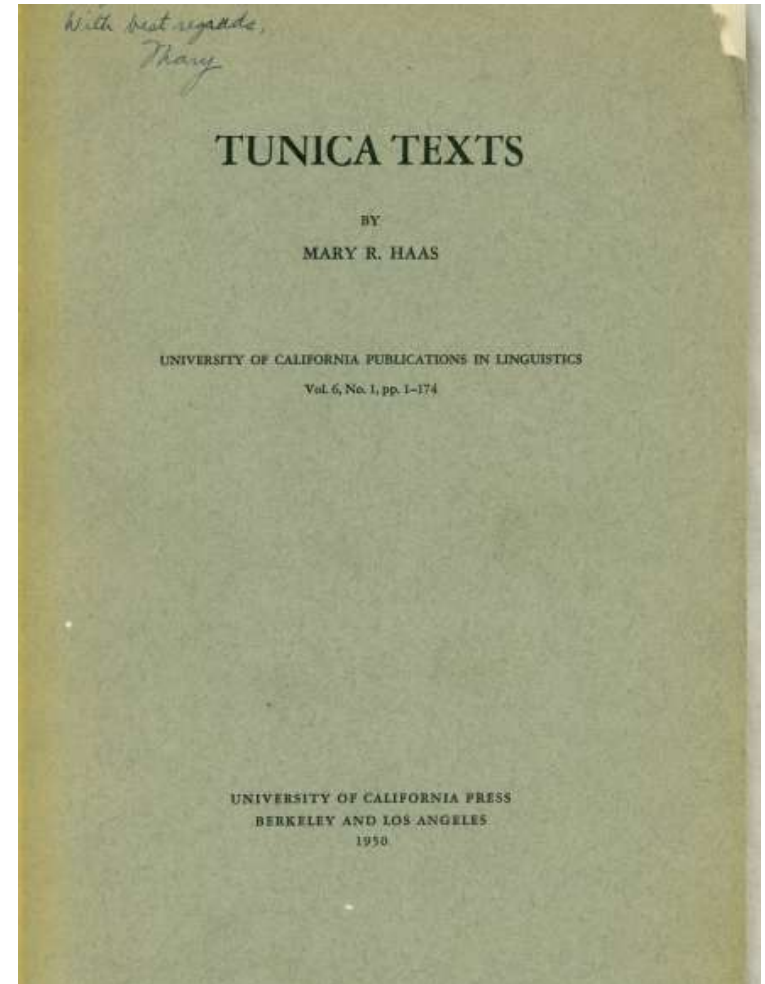


The Data: an Overview

- Grammar (1941)
- Dictionary (1953)
- Texts (1950)
- Gatschet's field notes (259 pgs.)
- Articles by Gatschet and Haas
- Swanton grammar
- Gatschet/Swanton vocab cards

Haas Materials

- Grammar, dictionary, texts
- Trained linguist
- Most complete account we have of the language
- Had access to the earlier materials



Sample

B. Second Telling

a. ta'yoroniku, kat'u'năhč, to'nima'honsa'hŭku, ?uhk'o'ni-
se'măn, na'muri'kin?usa'kukata'nì. h-hč, ?ušto'hk?oke'nì. h-hč,
wa'čîn, ?uha'l?uhke'nì. sa'hŭku, wa'č?uwana'nì. h-hč, ta'ruk'o's-
?unihke'nì. h-hč, ta'rula'puyako's?unăhč, ?aka'h?unihke'nì, ta'r-
kuki'čùn. ?aka'h?unăhč, ?awa'č?unihke'nì. ta'ruk'o'să, ?ape'k-
?unăhč, ?u'ruhk?unta'nì. h-hč, ?ape'kahk?u'ranăhč, ?a'm?iltă,
?ara'p?unihke'nì. ?ara'p?unăhč, ?uhk'o'nise'măn, ya'katăhč, ?un-
wa'nan?onta'nì. h-hč, ?uha'yisa'hkŭn, ya'n?uhke'nì. "a'suma'n-
kupi'ratihč, ha'tikăn, ya'kapo'?it?ihč, la'pŭhč," si'niko'nì. h-hč,
si'rišma'r?am?onta'nì.

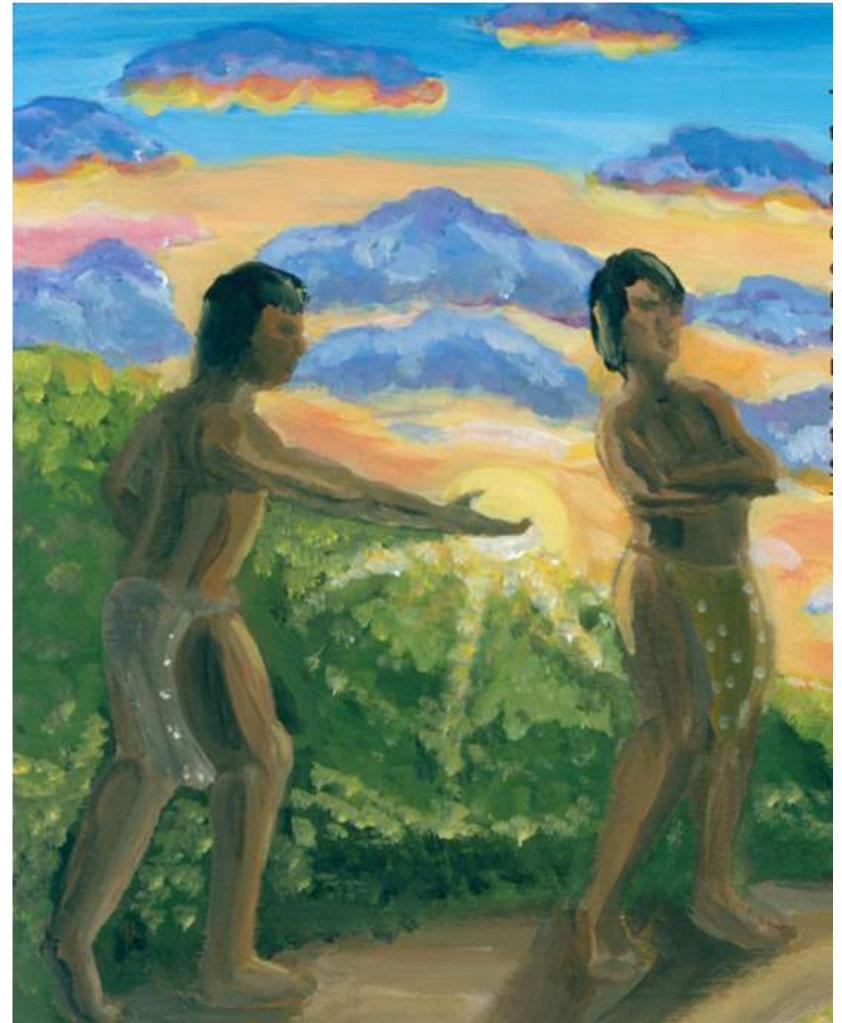
Problems

- From a semi-speaker
 - ▣ “Indeed, I often had the feeling that the Tunica grooves in Youchigant’s memory might be compared to the grooves in a phonograph record; for he could repeat what he had heard but was unable to make up new expressions of his own accord” (Haas 1941:10)



Problems

- Narrative data only
 - ▣ Greetings, colloquialisms, discourse
 - ▣ Mostly third person singular masculine forms
 - ▣ Register and genre
 - Nothing to compare/contrast



Problems

□ Descriptive holes

■ Undiscussed constructions

- If you can relativize anything besides a subject
- If you can have a definite article and an agentive
- Multiple wh-questions

■ Forms only attested once or twice

- Uru- hk- 'uta- 'u'uwa- ani
 whoop-stem-3ms.caus-3ms.go.repet.-quot
 “he keeps whooping as he goes, it is said”

Problems

- ▣ Observations vs. rules

- Motivations for auxiliary conjugations vs. non-aux conjugations

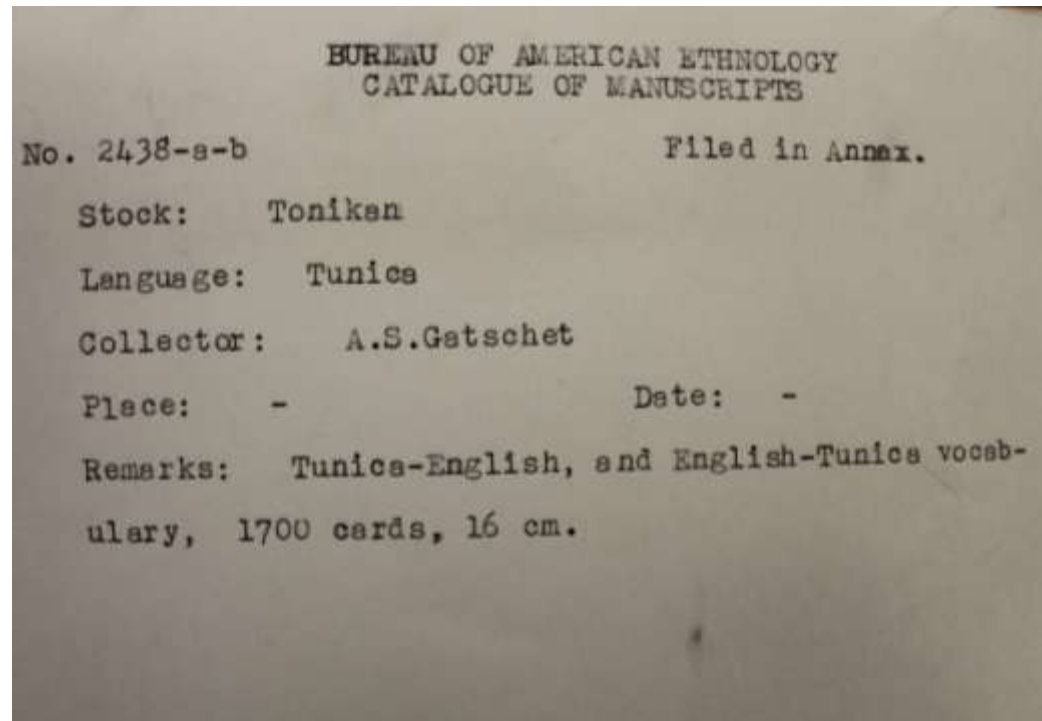
Hinyatich hara-**ti-** hch hipu- '**aki-** ani
then sing-**3FS**-while dance-**3FS.aux**-QUOT

“Now while she sang, she danced, it is said.”

- Little evidence for certain morphemes/constructions being more productive than others
 - Ex. –n vs. –ki (vs. –hchan) imperative postfixes

Gatschet/Swanton material

- By Gatschet, edited by Swanton
- William Ely Johnson, Volsine Chiki
- Seems to be elicitation and text data
- 600 Cards
- 1100 sentences



Methods

- Transcribe sentences into MS Word
- Flag examples that look helpful
- Parse using what we know from Haas's description
- Look for structural similarities



to'ni mi'ta pan u-a'ku, the man who passes there
yu'ka ya'na-le'pi witaka'ni, go to speak the discourse!
ana'tchia", I will be there (to do that); (command)

lit. I will go (?) [a woman] dying (V.)

lupik a'ra(f.), (great mortality, "dying continually going on")
ta'waran i'tachi ya'tara pa, they go hunting on!
kat amu'xki, where he went had gone. (to kill deer.)

~~u-ama, he went to go to him~~

he'x tchu'ima" wiyak, taking that, go!

i'griso i-anaxka" let us go to my home!

witami-wa"ya'wi, he wished to ascend

witama muxki, he ascended

si'tashika'xtcha, they will go away

hayic amix'pi, he has gone up [into the air]

~~a woman dying~~

~~she is most dead (V.)~~

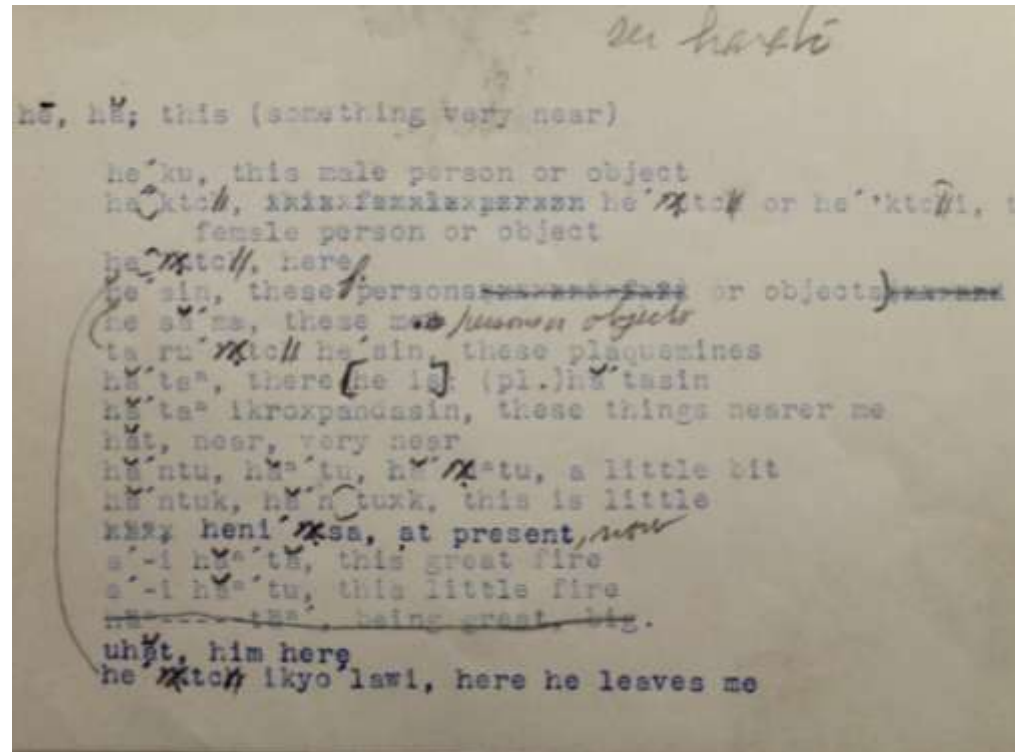
akata, she went in (V.)

akahata, don't come in! (V.)

nix'satci'ic anikaxtea, I am going away.

Why this data is essential

- Non-narrative data
- Paradigms (elicitation)
- Useful sentences
- Corpus is so small we need everything available



Problems

□ Orthography

- Almost never recorded glottal stop
- often omitted glides intervocalically
 - Yuiki=yuwawiki
- $o, \text{ɔ} \rightarrow o$; $\varepsilon, a \rightarrow a$
- Voiced stops: $b \rightarrow p, d \rightarrow t, g \rightarrow k$
- $c \rightarrow \text{š}, tch \rightarrow h\check{c}, dj \rightarrow \check{c}$

Problems

- Competing translations

- ▣ Gatschet vs. Swanton

Ta sa korek(u): the dog barks (G) the dog drinks (S)

ta- sa kora-ku

det.-dog drink-3ms

- ▣ Speakers

Umakati: it will not be good luck for him (V) something he does not like (J), punishment (G)

uhk-maka-ti

3ms-punish-3fs.compl

“she punished him” (?)

Problems

- Anything that isn't in Haas is difficult to reliably identify
- Sometimes conflicts with Haas's account

H

G/S

i- yahpa vs. **ihk**- yahpa

1s.inal-hungry **1s.al**-hungry

“I am hungry”



Problems

- Limited knowledge of Tunica

- Yukapa tati: she fell as she came (went, S)

yuka-pata-ti

arrive- fall- 3fs.compl

- Speaker competence

- Tunica, Biloxi, Choctaw, French

- “it was Youchigant’s opinion that Johnson’s principle language was Biloxi (his mother’s language) and that his command of Tunica left much to be desired” (Haas 1953:179)

Merits

- Another native speaker reviewed the information
- Translations were altered, not the Tunica
- Types of mistakes that WERE NOT made:
 - ▣ Paradigmatic
 - ▣ Word order
 - ▣ Morpheme/stem relations



Discoveries

- Narrative structure most obviously defined by *–ani* (quotative) and *hinyatihch* (however, then, so)
- *-ki* more productive imperative marker
- Reduplication probably was a productive process
 - **Pa**pat'a'axkini: I fall many times
 - Shihtika **ya**yaku: (they) fasted many times
 - **Ku**kuchakati: she was crushing repeatedly

Discoveries

- Active system of agreement along stative/non-stative lines

Subj./Obj. TV: Uhk-po-ni ihk-po-wi
 3MS-see-1 S.compl. 1 S-see-3MS.compl.
 ‘I saw him’ ‘he saw me’

Subj. IV: Pata-ni pata-wi
 fall-1 S.compl. fall-3MS.compl.
 ‘I fell’ ‘he fell’

Subj StatV: uhk-yahpa ihk-yahpa
 3MS-be.hungry 1 S-be.hungry
 ‘he is hungry’ ‘I am hungry’

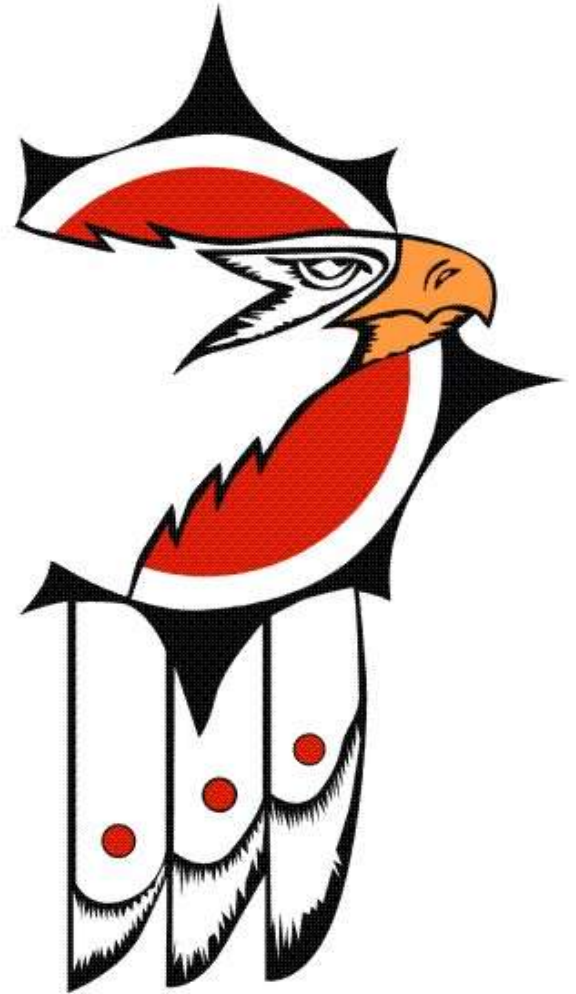
Applications in Revitalization

- Select discoveries are incorporated into the new language, and the general understanding we have of the language from this exercise will better inform how the language redevelops
- “Language Recreation”
 - ▣ need the ability to create, not just describe
 - ▣ if we don’t understand it fully, we can’t teach them effectively to use it

Tikahch.

**TUNICA BILOXI TRIBE
OF
LOUISIANA**

**Cherishing Our Past
Building For Our Future**



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