Tunica language evolution: From 1880 to 2020

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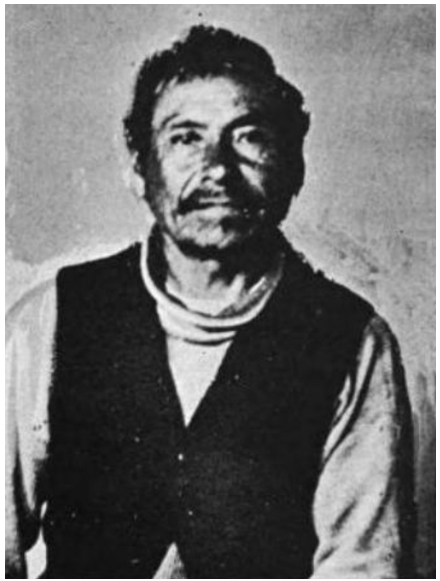
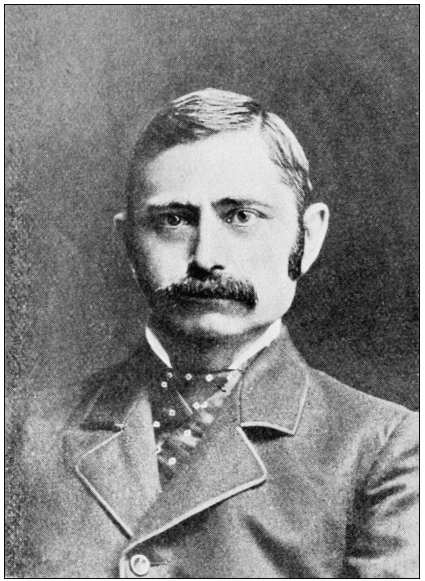
Albert Gatschet and William Ely Johnson, 1886

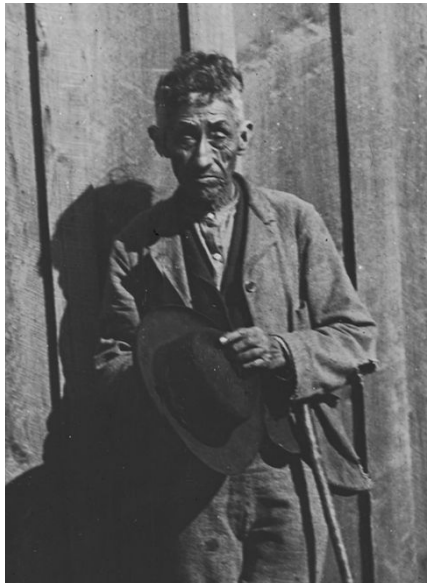
- Field notes with texts (1886, 259p)
- vocabulary slips (ca. 1,700 cards)
- Comparative vocabulary (~10p)
- Published article on nominal gender (Gatschet 1889)

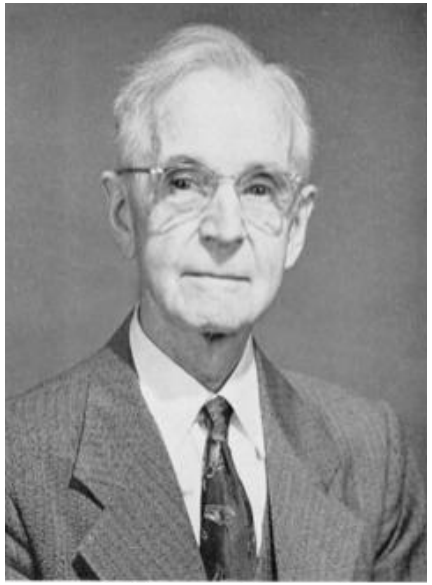




John Swanton, Volsin Chiki and William Ely Johnson 1907-1910

- Typed and translated copy of Gatschet's texts (1907, 27p)
- Additional interlinear texts (1910, 9p)
- Typed and annotated Gatschet's vocabulary slips
- Published grammar sketch (Swanton 1921, 39p)
- Published comparative work (Swanton 1919, 49p)





Mary Haas and Sesostrie Youchigant, 1933-1938

- 13 books of fieldnotes (1933-1938, >1,500p)
- Unpublished grammar ms (1939, 665p)
- Published texts (Haas 1950, 173p)
- Published dictionary (Haas 1953, 175p)
- Published grammar (Haas 1941, 143p)
- Published sketch grammar (Haas 1946, 30p)
- Recordings

From 1886 to 1933

Lexical differences

háhpuši f. ashes. In G-S trans. as "cinders, ashes, dust"; Y uses hálihάhpuši and hálitípusa for "dust."

háhta tr. G-S to open . . . (a door). Not known to Y who uses ʔépa.

háhtaka m. G-S linden (Fr. tilleul). Not known to Y.

kéška trsimp. G-S to get sprained. Y uses kéška..c.

kéška..c. trsimp. to get sprained

kúhu intr. or trsimp. to cough. Also given as ʔúhu; Y alternated between kúhu and ʔúhu in this mng., but ʔúhu occurs in G-S.

čípu g.? maypop, i.e., passionflower (Passiflora)
číputʔɛ g.? pomegranate: "big maypop." Occ. trans. as "magnolia" in G-S trans. as "pomegranate."

hámi c. common brant
hámitó(hku) c. G bustard (mng. queried in ms.)
hámitʔɛ c. G spoonbill (mng. queried in ms.)

Note: According to S, neither his own inf. or G's former inf. recognized hámitó(hku) and hámitʔɛ; Y likewise failed to recognize them. However, since Y uses the basic form hámi (evidently not known to the G-S infs.), the diminutive and augmentative derivatives given by G are probably all right even though he is uncertain as to their proper mngs.

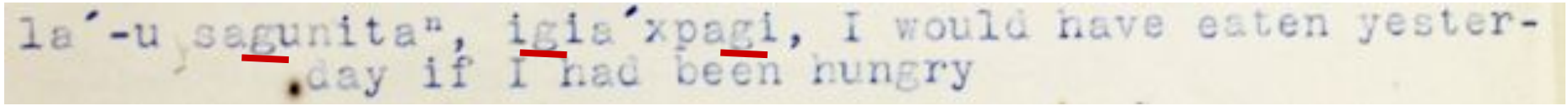
Phonetics and Phonology

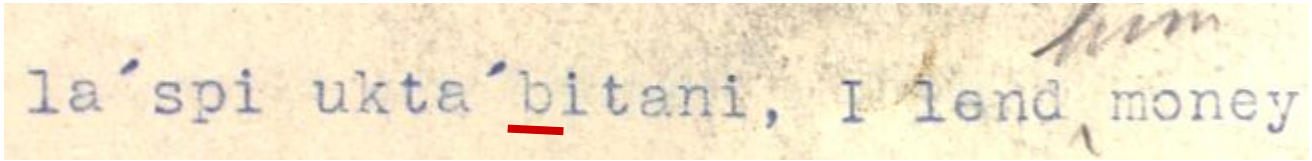
Transcription differences between G/S and Haas:

1. Consistently different spelling/forms
    - G/S: e.g., *nixsara* vs. H *nisara* ‘young person’
    - G/S e.g., *hati* vs. H *hatika* ‘again’; G/S *ka(n)* vs. H *kanahku* ‘what’
    - G/S /o/ vs. H /o/ and /ɔ/: *lapoho* vs. *lapʼɔhɔ* ‘not good’
    - G/S *taxk* vs. H *tarku* ‘the woods’

Phonetics and Phonology

2. Plosive voice assimilation?





hinaxkuta	ra´pu	ma´nku	pi´raxkanda,
so	the days	4	they complete

Phonetics and Phonology

3. *-hk-* (cf. Heaton 2017)
Haas 1941: /hk/ is lost before a continuant; /k/ is lost between /h/ and an oral stop

<u>Haas</u>
u-sa-t’ɛ
3MS-dog-big
‘his horse’

uh-pɛka-ɔnta
3MS-hit-3PL.COMPL
‘they hit him’

<u>G/S</u>
tik-sa-sin
3FS-dog-FPL
‘her dogs’

uk-po-wixki
3MS-see-2MS.COMPL
‘you saw him’

Morphology and word class

Involuntary actions:

Transimpersonal	Intransitive	Meaning
i-**hɛha**-kati	**hɛha**kani	‘I am breathing’
ihk-**uhu**-kati	**uhu**-kani	‘I am coughing’
ihk-**owi**-kati	**owi**-kani	‘I am sweating’
u-**lehu**-kati	**lehu**-ku	‘He is panting’

*Find both in G/S

From 1939 to 2010

Kuhpani Yoyani Luhchi Yoroni

The Tunica Language Working Group

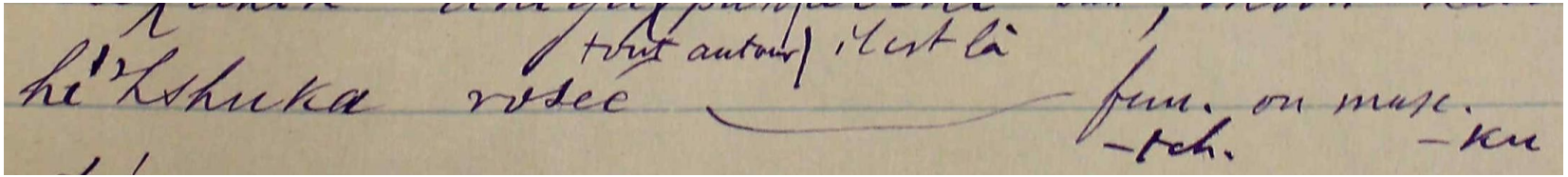
- Collaboration between the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe and Tulane University
- Formalized in 2010
  - Tunica-Biloxi Language and Culture Revitalization Program: two teachers, a linguist, and five apprentices
  - Tulane: one professor and a group of grad students and Tulane linguistics alumni
- Goal: Revitalize the Tunica language
  - Teach Tunica to both children and adults
  - Make Tunica a language of intergenerational transmission

Problems & Solutions

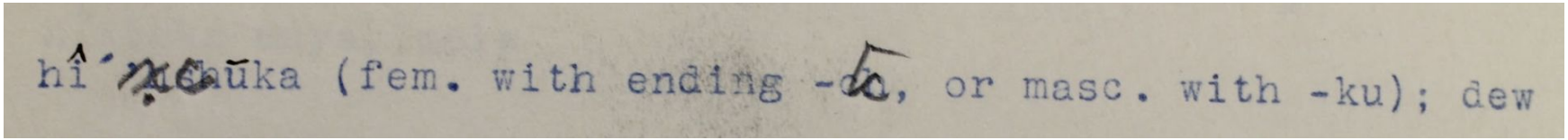
- Problems
  - Lacunae in documentation
  - Contradictory data in the documentation
  - Relatively small lexicon (~2500 entries)
- Solutions
  - Fill in lacunae
  - Standardize contradictions
  - Expand the lexicon
- Principles
  - Accuracy
  - Transparency

Lacuna: Grammatical gender

Gender uncertainty in Gatschet's materials



Swanton's typed card



And Haas's interpretation

híšuka f.? (also given as m.) G-S dew. Not known to Y who usually uses láwutámuhkini.

Lacuna: Grammatical gender

Sample words of unknown gender in Haas:

móhtoli g.? mattress

ʻ-luʻ g.? poss. n. tongue (body-part); language

líhčahta g.? sap (e.g., of a tree)

láwu g.? night

Grammatical Gender

Solution: Extrapolate from the paradigm (cf. Heaton and Anderson 2017)

SUMMARY OF TUNICA GENDER CLITIC DISTRIBUTION ACROSS ALL ANIMACY CATEGORIES

	Singular	Dual	Plural	Collective
Feminine (biologically or lexically)	*=hchi*	*=sinima*	*=sinima*	*=hchi*
Masculine (biologically); mixed humans; humans of unspecified gender	*=ku*	*='unima*	*=sɛma*	*=ku*
Inanimates; masculine (lexically); mixed animates; animates of unspecified gender	*=ku*	*='unima*	*=sinima*	*=hchi*

Transparency

Primarily, writing and using morphologically complete forms:

Modern Tunica:		Haas:
ashu**hki**tɛpan	vs.	ashutɛpan
ta**ha**hka	vs.	tahka
pita**hk**sina	vs.	pitasina (homophonous with completive)
pit**ah**ɛta	vs.	pitɛta
wi**hk**wana	vs.	wiwana

Glottal stop

G/S only sporadically recorded glottal stop.

Haas documents Tunica as having a word-initial phonemic glottal stop. However, this is suspicious:

1. If so, no Tunica word begins with a vowel (no minimal pairs)
2. There are no diagnostics that can identify initial glottal stop
3. Almost all of the data can be accounted for via hiatus resolution (complicated by stress)

Solution: We do not consider initial glottal stop phonemic, and only write it when it is word-internal (*hɛ'ɛsh, sat'ɛ*) or resolving hiatus (*erus'aha, u'uwa*)

Stress

Stress in Tunica is lexical, although primary stress is generally on the first syllable of the root.

Stress in Tunica, as documented in Haas, affects a number of (morpho)phonological processes.

> ➜ However, our learners have a strong tendency to use English stress, and therefore the environments for these processes cease to exist.

Solution: Model Tunica stress, but reformulate the processes to be based on something other than stress.

Transparency: *ta-* vs. *ta-*

- attempts to avoid ambiguity
  - *ta-* (articular prefix) and *ta-* (agentive prefix)
  - According to Haas, the only phonological difference is that articular *ta-* shortens to *t-* in front of glottal-initial (now vowel-initial) roots.
    - Both morphemes pull stress to themselves.

Example:

tahipu ‘the dance’ < *ta-* (articular) + hara ‘dance’
tahipu ‘the dancer’ < *ta-* (agentive) + hara ‘to dance’

Solution: Create differential stress. Agentive *ta-* will pull stress to itself. Articular *ta-* will leave primary stress on the first syllable of the root.

Derivational pathways

We needed a way to make transitive verbs from stative and (trans)impersonal verbs, BUT there is no documentation of such a process.

<u>Solution:</u>

(Trans)impersonal	➜	*regular transitive*
ihk-roku-ti	➜	ihk-roku-**wi**
1SG-sting-3FS.COMPL		1SG-sting-**3MS.COMPL**
‘I got stung’		‘It stung me’
Stative	➜	*causative transitive*
ihk-yashi	➜	ihk-yashi-**uta**
1SG-angry		1SG-angry-**3MS.COMPL.CAUS**
‘I am angry’		‘He angered me’

Neologisms

1. Compounding
   a. Ex. *tihpulashi* + *tashihpi* ‘astronaut’, lit. ‘star traveler’
2. Differentiation between stylistic variations of morphemes
   a. Ex. *-shi*, *-sh* ‘to, at’ > *-shi* ‘at’, and *-sh* ‘to’
3. Consonantal metathesis:

supa ‘rude’ < *pusa* ‘polite’
p’ɛsha ‘be sad’ < *sh’ɛpa* ‘be happy’
kowu ‘take off hat’ < *wohku* ‘put on hat’

‘Where’ phrases and positionals

Tunica lacks a copula. Ex. *Sa*. ‘It is a dog’

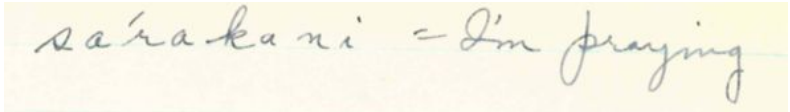
However, ‘where’ phrases require a verb, which is typically a durative and/or a positional, which are complicated and not taught early on to new learners:

Kata ihk-sa **una**?
Where 1SG-dog **3MS.SIT**
‘Where is my dog (sitting position)?’

Now:
Kata ihk-sa?
Where 1SG-dog
‘Where is my dog?’

Effects of pedagogy on verbal inflection

Habitual and completive forms get taught early, due to regularity. Haas sometimes glosses habituals as present progressive:



sara-kani
pray-1S.HAB

Auxiliary forms are very common in the texts, but are not taught until well after the habitual and completive.

In the texts, ***kali*** (to stand) appears in the texts with either with a positional suffix or with a completive suffix, but the positional auxiliary is greatly preferred, especially when the standing is not an action but a stand (standing up vs. standing)

Effects of pedagogy on verbal inflection

Examples of **kali** in the Haas documentation:

hakalikati	eksha	kal’ura
ha-kali-kati	eksha	kali-ura
vertical-stand-3FS.HAB	pine-tree	stand-3MS.LIE
‘she stood up’	‘the pine tree is standing’	

Although auxiliary verbs are frequent in the texts, especially where there is no action taking place, new Tunica speakers use the habitual or completive instead.

Example:

Johnku	kaliku
John-3MS	kali-ku
John	stand-3MS.HAB
‘John is standing’	

Concluding remarks

While we have worked for nearly a decade from the documentary sources, we have reached a moment where Tunica is transitioning from preserved system to a spoken language again.

Still working through and returning to original documentation.

We believe that the best path to successful revitalization in this context is to give learners agency and input in shaping what the language will be.

Sharing is important!

Tikahch!

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