ENGLISH-MUTSUN

MUTSUN-ENGLISH

DICTIONARY

Based on the work of
Felipe Arroyo de la Cuesta
and the dictionary of J. Alden Mason
Edited by Natasha Warner

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Arroyo was inconsistent in his use of x and h, with h sometimes representing no sound at all (a "silent" letter). Harrington and Okrand found no phonemic distinction between x and h, and found that this fricative was more glottal than velar (although it is probably strongly influenced by what follows), although it is considered to be more velar in the neighboring language Rumsen. In this dictionary, I have changed all of the occurrences of "x" in Mason's dictionary to "h," following Okrand and Harrington's conclusion that there is no distinction between the two. The result is that in some words which appear here with an "h," the "h" should probably not be there. Okrand finds that the maximal syllable of Mutsun is CVC, so that there are no clusters of more than two consonants, and two consonant clusters can only occur word-medially. There are many words in Mason's dictionary which violate these constraints, having consonant clusters at the ends or beginnings of words, or clusters of three and even four consonants in the middle of words. If one of the consonants in such clusters is an "h," it should probably be omitted. However, the dialect Arroyo collected his data on may have allowed longer clusters, and I hesitate to change his transcriptions.

I have transcribed all long segments as double letters, because they are easier to type than the following raised dot which Mason and Okrand both use. (Mason's "l" followed by a dot was really a palatalized lateral, not a long lateral. Okrand traces this confusion to Arroyo's use of "ll" for the Spanish palatal lateral.)

For several palatalized segments, Mason uses a two letter sequence where Harrington and Okrand conclude that there is just one segment, such as Mason's "si" and "ti" for the palatalized alveolar fricative and stop, respectively. This creates a problem for normalizing the orthography of all the authors, since it is not always possible to tell whether "ti" in Mason's dictionary is really the alveolar stop followed by the vowel "i" (/ti/ in Okrand's transcription) or the palatalized alveolar stop (/t^y/ in Okrand's system). /tia/ would sound different from /t^{y}a/, so this choice does have an effect. I have changed Mason's "si" to "s^y," "ti" to "t^y," and "ny" to "n^y" wherever the syllable structure allows for the single segment interpretation. That is, if a word has "si" followed by two consonants, or by one consonant at the end of the word, this could not possibly be /s^y/, because it would result in too large a cluster of consonants. For /t^y/, Okrand found that there were several additional constraints on its distribution: he found that it cannot occur word-initially, that it occurs word-finally in only one word, and that when it occurs between vowels, it must either be long (tt^y) or the vowels surrounding it must be long. I replaced Mason's "ti" with "t^y" only if it did not violate any of these constraints, which resulted in a very small number of words with "t^y." (I am not sure this is entirely correct. Comparison with Harrington's notes might clarify many of these cases.) Furthermore, Okrand supplies a list of which consonants can follow or be followed by which other consonants in clusters. If Okrand found no examples of a palatalized consonant (s^y, for example) being followed by a particular consonant, I assumed that Mason's "si" followed by that consonant must be an actual /si/ sequence, not the palatalized consonant. Thus, in all cases, I assumed that Mason's two letter sequences were palatalized single segments unless there was some constraint preventing that interpretation.

The orthography used here is easier to type (or word process) than those used by most of the previous authors, in that it requires no dots under or after segments. It does require superscripts. Okrand finds that sequences of /ly, ty, ny/ exist and are distinct from the single segments /l^y, t^y, n^y/, although not all of the evidence is clear. I preserved the use of superscripts in order not to neutralize any potential distinction between the single palatalized segments and the two segment sequences.

English definitions

Mason's dictionary uses many archaic or very unfamiliar words for the English meanings of Mutsun words. Since it was translated from Spanish more than eighty years

One should be careful about what part of speech a word is listed as, because the words are often not the part of speech one would expect from the English meaning.

Some grammatical particles are also included in Mason's dictionary, often categorized as adverbs. I have kept these in ᴜie dictionary, but it would be better to look these up in Okrand's grammar of Mutsun than to rely on the translations in the dictionary, as it is difficult explain the usage of grammatical particles in a brief translation. This is particularly true of the pronouns.

Summary

This dictionary is very incomplete, and I am sure it has many errors in it. The meanings of many words are unclear, as is obvious from the number of clearly different stems glossed only as "bird" or "herb." I hope that as people continue to work with the Harrington field notes and other materials, some of these meanings will be cleared up. However, some of the information is probably lost. There are also many other errors in this dictionary, which I hope I can correct in a later version. Suggestions for improvements are welcome. However, I hope that this version can be helpful to people who are trying to bring the Mutsun language back to life. This dictionary is for you, Quirina, and for all of the people who will learn Mutsun in the future.

References

Mason, J. Alden. 1916. The Mutsun dialect of Costanoan based on the vocabulary of De La Cuesta. *University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology* 11(7):399-472.

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