Esselen-Hokan Relationships

Nancy M. Webb

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I. The recording and studying of the Esselen language, the language spoken by the aboriginal population of California in the Big Sur, Carmel and Monterey region, can be said to be characterized in many respects by meagerness. There never were, in all probability, many speakers of it and these all died out early in the presence of White contact. Therefore, the recorded evidence is scant and difficult of access. Until recently little of this had been published. These were two word lists printed in about 1862; those of La Perouse and of Galiano. Henshaw published a list of words that he collected in 1890. There had been only one published study of Esselen, that by A. L. Kroeber in 1904. This study did not use quite all then available material. Quite recently, however, M. S. Beeler has revived study of Esselen and contributed much to the published material (1977 and 1978). Beeler's work is a major contribution. It makes readily available by description the known sources from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and includes a complete transcription of a text from 1814, a vocabulary from 1792, and parts of other previously unpublished material. These together with the Pinart vocabulary from Heizer in 1952 inspire this present paper.

It is the cross language-relationships, the genetic affinities of Esselen that are the subject addressed here. The question of the genetic classification of Esselen has been only slightly noted by earlier works. Harrington once wrote that Esselen was of the Penutian linguistic group. This statement is undated and gives no evidence or reasons to support it. In 1917 Sapir established Esselen with supporting evidence as a member of the Hokan stock and in 1918 Kroeber presents this as a fact. That is all. Esselen has been generally accepted as Hokan ever since. This paper proposes to examine this hypothesis.

II. For several years I have been assembling phonologically cognate lexeme sets from the hypothesized Hokan languages using evidence from the available published literature. This ever growing corpus now includes some 190 sets each of which is at least half complete with evidence from 15 languages of the first order or their equivalent representing 29 synchronic languages. This corpus is from a master set of some 300 glosses variously complete. Many sets show a cognate lexeme in every language. This evidence is the basis of the present study.

Until the publication by Beeler of the recently discovered material from the Galiano-Valdes 1792 expedition which includes a word-list of 113 glosses, Esselen has been poorly attested in my sets. From this list 42 new etyma were found that fit cognates with other Hokan languages forms and so expanded the corpus.

Now, in total, Esselen is represented in 75 or 39% of the cognate lexeme sets from the basic 190 item corpus. These 75 are examined here. Esselen is compared with each of 13 sister first order languages. The evidence from Jicaque was so little that it is not included.
Cognates for each lexeme in each language were identified and counted. These counts for each family along with the per cent of the corpus of 75 this represents is shown in Table I. These represent phonological cognition. Semantic cognition is not necessarily strict though for the most part they are semantically cognate.

Next the comparison is made using the Gudshinsky list of 207 etyma presumed to represent only culture conditioning free glosses. These totals and per cent each thereof are shown in Table I. In this list Esselen has a form in 51 or 25% of the 207 glosses. These 51 glosses use 68% of the total 75 gloss data used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>corpus list (75 lexemes)</th>
<th>Gudshinsky list (207 lexemes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>% of 75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esselen</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karok</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shasta</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chimariko</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. Pal.</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. Pomoan</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yana</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washoe</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saliten</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chumash</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. Yuman</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seri</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tequistlatec</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtiaba</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

III. Of the 75 lexemes examined 6 glosses showed a cognate in all fourteen languages, while 6 others were represented in all but one language and 6 more in all but two. These same 18 were all part of the 51 gloss Gudshinsky list. This amount of overlapping suggests some validity of the hypothesis of tenacity of 'culture free' vocabulary and, of course, explains somewhat the congruency of results of the two comparisons.

Inspection of the Table suggests several notions relative to the genetic affinities of Esselen with the Hokan stock.

A very limited amount of data were used here. The requirement that a gloss set be represented by at least half of 14 languages, and, of course, Esselen must be one of these languages, restricts the list. Esselen does show a cognate in many more less complete sets but they are not included here. Also the requirement of phonological correspondence of consonant phonemes in a lexeme limits the total number of sets.
altogether. Further, the evidence for Esselen is the smallest of all the California Hokan languages used so far in my work. Nevertheless, with these restrictions 75 glosses were tabulated and almost 70% of these are of the conservative culture free group. These 75, as we have stated, constitute 39% of the 190 items of vocabulary common to the Hokan superstock siblings. An earlier study that I made of Palaihnhan showed it retained 54% Hokan vocabulary. Another study gives Subtiaba 35% Hokan retention.9 This strongly suggests that Esselen was indeed a member of the Hokan group.

The degree of relationship of Esselen with each sister language individually appears to be quite high when considering the Esselen retained vocabulary only. Esselen and Yana seem to share many items, 83% of the 75 gloss list. Esselen shares retained forms with other siblings in the north of California at least as closely as with its near neighbors to the south, Salinen and Chumash. The retention with distant Karok is notable. Central American Hokan languages are more remotely related. Certain words shared, however, with distant Subtiaba, see 'body/flesh, to drink and sister' below, are interesting in their similarity.

IV. The following are several examples of the lexeme sets which will illustrate the nature of material considered. The regular phonological correspondence of several consonant phonemes that can be postulated for a Proto Hokan parent is evident. The following suggest themselves.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>p</strong></th>
<th>see 'intestine, sinew'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td>'snow, land/earth'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k</td>
<td>'sister, ear'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q</td>
<td>'two, water'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s</td>
<td>'ear, body/flesh'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s</td>
<td>'to drink, water, sister, sugarpine'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>'two, water, wood/stick, blood'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>'to eat, land/earth, sinew, ear'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l</td>
<td>'hand'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w</td>
<td>'sugarpine'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>'intestine'</th>
<th>'sinew'</th>
<th>'to eat'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Esselen</td>
<td>yp i m i (root, B.) ama</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P Pal.</td>
<td>pijk ol jppi W am</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. P.</td>
<td>p jun i m m m' ? m'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shasta</td>
<td>?i p xay i m i 1 ?ima (eating basket)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chimu</td>
<td>hi p xa hana</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karok</td>
<td>fa n ?ip a m ? av</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yana</td>
<td>pac zu wa b a ma ma (food)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washoe</td>
<td>pac il mo ba mat/ i dew em lu (food)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sal.</td>
<td>p' xa t p i anale</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chum</td>
<td>pichas (Hinshaw) -p i l'il an sin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P Yuman</td>
<td>va xa x pu (bow)/ -ma -ma-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seri</td>
<td>hap xica (feces) pa m</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teq.</td>
<td>pu k'ai l i p a me (root) -'oma (food)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub.</td>
<td>amba (feces) u n yu ima (maize C.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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'land/earth'  'snow'  'blood'

Esselen  ma t·a (Pinart)  mat zeixo -ax ana (Pinart)
P P.  -am     t'w s (sand)  x s ti (red)
P P.  ?ama ŭ  mit a c· (sand)  cés (Pne, Ph)
Shasta  ma  ŭ  t'a c·u (sand)  ?a·x ta'
Chim.  âma    hi ta k (rain)  sít so
Karok  am*  tá h  ?a·x (red)
Yana  ma  pa  zá w ad'duwi
Washoe  ama tu- te he  âšan
Sal.  em- (world)  ts'a hel -aka tu (Pinart)
Chum.  ama t  xas (sand). ax u
P Yuman  ma ŭ  m ta? -xWá ŭ
Seri  ?an t' ?av a t (Sapir)
Teq.  ama c'  ibi ma c' (sand) awas (Sapir)
Sub.  u·m ba  eedi (Sapir)

'hand'  'two'  'sister'

Esselen  t a l·an ux (B.)  xu1·ax  s ug (younger)
P P.  ? ta puk (Ac. arm)  ḥj·q  š ek (mos. sis)
P P.  ?-ta ná.  ?a qh o·c  š ek i (mos. sis)
Shasta  ?a p ka  xú k kWa  ?âccuk' (younger)
Chim.  ?i t ra.  xu ku /qâqi -xasa'i (older)
Karok  a t ru. p  ?áxa k ĉi·s (younger)
Yana  da l- ux  si
Washoe  du 1- (do by hand)  ?é šiq  c'ug (younger)
Sal.  t'a nek  xâ k ci  ca 'au (girl)
Chum.  tače puko (Pin.)  kak' cu
P Yuman  tu 1 (finger)  ?i ško m šay' (daughter)
Seri  ?a no? (arm)  xav âk -sì
Teq.  -ma  ke' si  š'a pi (older)
Sub.  n'au  ax ku (four)  s eka
Sub.
'water'  
Esselen a z an·ax (Beeler)  
P P. a S  
Shasta ?i cca akka (well)  
Chim. ?a ka  
Yana xa  
Washoe ?a · s  
Sal. c xa'  
Chum.  
P Yuman ?a xa  
Seri ?a x  
Teq. a · xa  
Sub. ia ha (Lehmann)  

'to drink'  
esseene  
-tuk susu (Pinart)  
-tuxus (Beeler)  
-q'ocin-  
-icci-  
-isá· k  
-su mah (detect sound)  
-t i v  
-imal?ku  
-ise w  
-t is k'ol  
du? u?  
-ś malyk  
-?as ša  

'ear'  
-tuxus (Beeler)  
-ś ma k  
-ši ma nca  
-?isa· k  

'body/flesh'  
Esselen y si (mouth, B.)  
P P. -i s+p  
Shasta ?i s? ba  
Chim ?i si  
Karok ?i s  
Yana ?ihsi (man)  
Washoe i·s  
Sal. se po (doe)  
Chum. šiw (elk)  
P Yuman  
Seri -pxa ši  
Teq. šik  
Sub. i·su  

'wood/stick'  
y·xay (pine, B.)  
-a hu a S wu  
-ś e·wa (bark, Pn)  
-xosu (pine)  
-a hu p  
-a xa (tree)  
-a ha t' (tree)  
-a ni (tree)  
-a xa- (tree)  

'sugarpine'  
z u m· ir (cypress, B.)  
-a S wu  
-s e·wa (bark, Pn)  
-a tsa wu p  
-c au ši  
-s a wa (fir)  
-s šo'  
-s šo (tobacco)  
-aas  
-š ti'ka (tree)  
isı  

V. This brief examination of some Hokan data would seem to confirm Sapir’s suggestion for the inclusion of Esselen with the Hokan superfamily of languages. The affinities of Esselen with the Penutian group need to be examined, however. Included in the Beeler 1979 paper beside the Galiano Esselen vocabulary are Rumsen forms for most of the words. Comparing these with the Esselen by simple inspection yields few similars. Rumsen shows ‘zummir’ for ‘cypress’ and this is exactly like the Esselen form. Who borrowed from whom? Much further study is obviously called for.
Notes
1. see Beeler, M. S., 1977.
2. see Heizer, R. F., 1955.
3. see Kroeber, A. L., 1904.
4. see Beeler, M. S., 1978.
5. ibid.
6. see Heizer, R. F., 1952.
7. see Sapir, E., 1917.
9. see Webb, N. M., unpub. mss.
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Number 7

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

1979 HOKAN LANGUAGES WORKSHOP

James E. Redden, Editor

Copies of the 1979 volume are still available from the Department of Linguistics, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL 62901. The volumes for the 1971 and 1975 workshops, which appeared in the BNL-L series, University of Illinois, are now out of print, but copies may be obtained by writing to the BNL Project for the Study of Languages and Linguistics, 1511 N. Kent-McElroy, Arlington, VA 22203.

Held at

University of California, Los Angeles

June 26-28, 1979

The 1980 Hakan Languages Workshop was held jointly with the Panhla Conference at the University of California, Berkeley, June 30 to July 7, 1980. The proceedings of the 1980 workshop will appear in Occasional Papers on Linguistics by late 1981 or early 1982. Copies may be ordered from the Department of Linguistics, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL 62901.

James E. Redden
Carbondale, June 1980

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Carbondale, Illinois

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PREFACE

Unfortunately, everyone who presented a paper at the 1979 Hokan Languages Workshop was not able to prepare a final version for inclusion in this volume. All the papers in this volume were presented in an earlier version at the 1979 workshop. The papers are arranged in the order that they appeared on the program at the workshop.

The participants of the 1979 Hokan Languages Workshop gratefully acknowledge all the work done by Lynn Gordon, Heather K. Hardy, and others in the Department of Linguistics at the University of California at Los Angeles, which made the workshop run so smoothly and enjoyable.

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James E. Redden
Carbondale, June 1980
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