Yana Morphology: a Thumbnail sketch

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In most sessions in conferences on special language families, much of the audience already has a general understanding of the basic structure of languages in that family. Yanan, however, has only been studied by a few individuals. This sketch is to summarize what has been written about Yana grammar, and some of our basic views about it, with the aim of providing background to interested readers. This is by no means a complete nor final view of any aspect of Yana grammar, but simply a brief introduction, to give a feel for what Sapir used to call the “genius” of this language. ¹ The examples here are taken from all three of the dialects that appear in the literature: Northern Yana, Central Yana and Yahi.

Phonology. The phonemic system of Yana is complex, typical of Northern California--long and short vowels; plain, aspirated and glottalized stops and affricates; and plain and glottalized resonants. A generalized Yanan phonemic system developed by Ken Whistler is as follows:

```
  [p t k]  [ph th ch kh]
  [p' t' k']
  [s x]
  [m n]
  [m n]  [i u]
  [w l r y h e o]
  [w l y]
```

Syllable weight is important in the prediction of stress and some vowel length. Syllable weight also determines some of the grammar: the absolutive suffix -na is primarily used in heavy syllables with vocalic ending (i.e., a long vowel or diphthong), or in syllables ending in resonant l, m, n, or glottalized nasal.

Yana is celebrated for differences between male and female speech patterns: men speaking to men had one style, and any combination of speaker/hearer that had at least one female participant was characterized by another style which involved the devoicing of final vowels and consonants, and aspiration of plain stops. The absolutive suffix -na is missing in the female speech style. (Sapir, 1929.)
**Verb structure.** Yana is verb initial. A typical sentence would have the order *Verb Article Noun* (see more on articles, below). Yanan verbs contain most of the morphological complexity. The verb structure can be roughly summarized as follows:

\[
\text{Primary - secondary stem} \hspace{1cm} \{\text{deriv. suffixes, \text{incorp. nouns}}\} \hspace{1cm} \{\text{aspect, evidentials, mode, tense}\} \hspace{1cm} \{\text{person-number}\} \hspace{1cm} \text{clitics}
\]

\[
\text{verb theme} \hspace{7cm} \text{inflection}
\]

Yana is analyzed by Sapir as being entirely a suffixing languages. In Sapir 1922, he lists a set of "verb suffixes" alphabetically, and notes that the total number of Yana derivational suffixes is larger than that of initial stems. Since most definitions of stems vs. affixes claim that stems are an open class, and affixes are relatively small in number (i.e. a closed class), the whole notion of Yana derivational suffixes needs closer examination. Derivation in general is the most complex and interesting aspect of Yana grammar. There is much left to do.

**Instrumental stems.** One reason why Sapir's class of "derivational suffixes" is so large is because he lumped many different sorts of morphemes together under that title, including *secondary stems*. Many verbs have themes consisting of two stems: primary and secondary. Primary stems are analyzed as consisting of two types: *free stems*, which may take inflection without further derivational elements; and *bound stems*, which must take a secondary stem or derivational suffix. Many primary bound stems are instrumental in nature, much like instrumental prefixes that occur in some other Hokan (and non-Hokan) languages. Below are some of the Northern Yana instrumental primary stems:

- *lai*—'hard round object lies'
- *lui*—hit with rock, hard round object
- *pō*—'handle hard round object, hit with fist'
- *pi*—rocks lie
- *mr*—'wood lies'
- *me*—handle wood
- *mū*—hit with stick
- *bo*—'do with long object, stick'
- *cu*—tree stands, to spear, use digging stick; hair moves
  (more generally, 'long object moves or is handled')
\( p^he \) - flat object lies

A couple of full verb themes serve to exemplify the use of these instrumental stems:

\( no-k\,a\,w \) - [do with long object] - [cut, break] to cut, or break off (using a stick, knife, etc.)

\( po-tan \) - [hit with round, hard object] - [crack, mash] to pound out (nuts) with rock

Frequently, the primary stem is very abstract, and most of the verb content is held in the secondary element instead. Notice that in some cases, there is very little difference between an analysis of Yana verbs as consisting of a primary stem followed by a secondary stem, and an analysis of the same theme as consisting of a prefix followed by a stem. Stress doesn't help in our choice of analyses, for stress has nothing to do with stem morphology, but instead is a function of syllabicity. In any case, there is no great difference in the nature of the morphemes that are described as instrumental stems in Yana and those that are defined as instrumental prefixes in other California languages. In later work, Sapir stopped categorizing stems with derivational suffixes. For example, in Stanley Newman's classnotes taken during a class Sapir taught on Yana (Newman, ms.), Sapir defined a verb theme as consisting either of stem + secondary suffixes or stem + stem.

Stem vowel alternation. Many verb stems have active and passive forms, shown through stem vowel alternation. In the verbs that exhibit this alternation, the passive form has high or low vowels, and the active form has a mid vowel. This is shown in the following diagram:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passive</th>
<th>Active</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a, u, a:</td>
<td>o:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i, i:</td>
<td>e:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Active forms are found in transitive constructions, including causatives; passive forms are found in intransitives, passives and imperatives. Also, transitive verbs with first or second person objects are treated as passives (see below). Examples from Central Yana:
PASSIVE                      ACTIVE
\( \text{pahpachin yauwapa} \)   \( \text{pohpachin \textit{qi}} \)
'having been broken'            'they broke right through'
right through

\( \text{liwaysiwanca} \)          \( \text{te waysi} \)
he sees me                      he sees him

**Local suffixes.** A wealth of derivational suffixes occur in Yana. I will mention here only one set, perhaps the richest set -- the so-called local suffixes. There are several dozen of these locational and directional suffixes; they include location and direction relating to various sorts of reference points (over a creste, across a stream, through a hole, in a circle, down in a hollow, etc.), as well as more general locatives that translate as 'back', 'over', 'across', out, 'down,' etc. There are eight suffixes for the cardinal directions: four for going toward a certain cardinal direction, and four for going away from it. The cardinal directions are especially prominent in texts, being used very commonly for any verb of movement.

There may be more than one locative on a verb. A cursory examination of them in Northern Yana texts shows various combinations of two or more local suffixes. Four tentative position classes have been found, diagrammed below:

stem - plural - loc1 - loc2 - loc3 - loc4

loc1 = -\textit{tu} 'back', -\textit{mwa} 'over', etc.
loc2 = -\textit{wil} 'across', -\textit{kif} 'over crest', -\textit{kim} 'next door', etc.
loc3 = -\textit{mi} 'on side', -\textit{ri} 'down', -\textit{jau} 'out', etc.
loc4 = the cardinal directions

In actuality, order is not completely fixed. There are times when the locative comes before the plural marker:

\( \text{ho-wi-pa-ri} \)   \( \text{burn-all-down} \)
\( \text{ho-wi-ri-pa} \)   \( \text{burn-down-all} \)

Primary and secondary stems may each take their own local suffixes, further strengthening the notion that secondary stems should not be classed with the derivational suffixes. The Yahi example below illustrates this.
**Verb inflection.** Following the derivational elements of the verb, we see the inflectional elements: the aspect and evidential markers, mode, tense, and person-number suffixes. Some of the most common suffixes showing aspect, evidentiality, mode and tense are shown below, according to a preliminary classification by position:

| Position A: | -?anti | 'now' |
| -yau(na) | 'verbal noun'
| -mau(na) | 'participial'
| -ran | 'any'
| -kata | 'prithee'

| Position B: | -rara | 'it seems'
| -htamai | 'perhaps'

| Position C: | -?a | 'causative' (interacts phonologically with the mode and tense markers)

| Position D: | -spba | 'subjunctive'
| -ku | 'dubitative'
| -makar | 'optative'
| -ma(ca) | 'usitative'
| -s(f) | 'present'
| -n(y) | 'remote past'

| Position E: | -kål | 'time adverbial'
| -ra | 'preterite'
| -wara | 'perfective'
| -ko' | 'future'
| -wa | 'passive' (follows first-person plural)

**Person.** Personal suffixes in Yana are the final position set before the clitics. Third person subject is 0. In terms of form, there are four categories of person-marking complexes: (1) subject markers on intransitive verbs; (2) transitives with first or second person subject, third person object; (3) transitives with third person subject and first or second person object; and (4) transitives with first or second person subject, and second or first person object. They are shown below in that order.
(1) Intransitive: 
- *nca* - *?nica* 1sg
- *nut ma* 2sg
- *niki* 1pl
- *nuka* 2pl

(2) Transitives with first or second person subject, third person object:

- *nca* 1sg 3
- *n nut ma* 2sg 3
- *kh in iki* 1pl 3
- *n uka* 2pl 3

(3) Transitives with third person subject, first or second person object: use passive form.

- *wa-nica* 3 1sg
- *wa-n nut ma* 3 2sg
- *khj-wa-niki* 3 1pl
- *wa-n uka* 3 2pl

(4) Transitives with first or second person subject, second or first person object: use passive form, no -n.

- *wa-?ma* 1sg 2sg
- *wa-m ka* 1sg 2pl
- *wa-ca* 2sg 1sg
- *khj-wa-ki* 2sg 1pl
- *khj-wa-?ma* 1pl 2sg
- *khj-wa-?ka* 1pl 2pl
- *wa-wica* 2pl 1sg
- *khj-wa-wi ki* 2pl 1pl

Clitics. Following the person marking complexes on verbs we find various clitics -- interrogative elements, quotatives and some others.

The noun phrase. The typical noun phrase consists of what has been termed an article plus a noun. The structure of the article is shown as follows:
For women, 'thus, there, here' is indicated by devoicing of the final vowel of the article.

Examples of attested forms showing various combinations of the above morphemes: \( k^h, ki, ai, aik^h, aiki, aice, aicek^h, aikice, ci (\cdot ce + i), kici, aici, \)
\( aikici, cu (\cdot ce + u), kicu, acu, aikicu, aica (\cdot ai + ce + a), aikica, aic^h \)
\( (- ai + c + ai\text{-voice}), aike (\cdot ai+ki+ye), etc. \) The articles translate variously as the', 'this', 'that', 'his', 'her', 'to', 'at', 'at the', 'in the', 'me', 'you', etc.

We will not discuss nouns here, but while they have relatively simple morphology compared to verbs, they are still quite interesting in their own right. There are lots of compound nouns, and nouns carry various formative suffixes. Nouns and verbs interact in various ways. In texts, a large percentage of noun phrases are nominalizations from verbs. Person markers are attached to nouns as part of the possessive construction; nouns also sometimes carry tense and modal elements, such as -\( xa \) 'preterite' to indicate 'former or deceased'. Nouns can also be used as verb stems, as in Yahi

\( paiwak i-k ara-\( ?ai?-thi \)
foreshaft-pritheen-imperative-quotative
"Go get foreshaft-sticks', he said."

**Concluding remarks.** This rough view of Yana morphology leaves many aspects of the grammar out. It has been intended merely to give a general background understanding of Yana as an introduction to the reader, as preparation for further readings or research in this field. Most of the available readings on Yanaan linguistics are listed in the bibliography.
The writing system used here was developed by Ken Whistler in keeping with modern orthographic usage. He also did a great deal of the basic work to help the group understand Yana morphology. It was the work of everyone in the seminar that led to this paper—besides Ken Whistler, that includes research assistant Jean Perry, and participants Natasha Beery, Katherine Klar, Scott Dillard, Orin Gensler, Victor Golla, Herb Luthin, Mike Nichols, and Richard Rhodes.

Each of the categories in curly brackets actually consists of several classes of morphemes which may readily co-occur.
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Occasional Papers On Linguistics

Papers from the 1987 Hokan-Penutian Languages Workshop and Friends of Uto-Aztecan Workshop, Held at University of Utah, Salt Lake City, June 18-21, 1987.

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PREFACE

For the first time, The Hokan-Penutian Languages Workshop and the Friends of Uto-Aztecan Working Conference met together as a single conference, at the University of Utah, Salt Lake City, June 18-21, 1987. In the past, the conferences usually met back to back; the Uto-Aztecan meeting usually ended one or two days before the Hokan-Penutian meeting began, which gave people just enough time to travel from one location to the other. Since a number of people attend both meetings, it is hoped that these joint meetings can occur more often.

All the papers except the last one were given in a slightly different form at the meeting in Salt Lake City. The last paper was given at the 1986 Hokan-Penutian meeting, which met as a section the Haas Festival at Santa Cruz. The papers are given in the order they appeared at the meeting at the University of Utah.

The participants of the conference gratefully acknowledge all the work done by Professor Wick R. Miller, other faculty members, and the students at the University of Utah, which made the conference run so smoothly and enjoyably.

The 1988 Hokan-Penutian Languages Workshop will meet at the University of Oregon, Eugene, June 16-18, 1988.

James E. Fedden, Editor
Carbondale, March 1988
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