

Texts in the Indigenous Languages of the Americas: Uto-Aztecan Narratives

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INTRODUCTION

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The Uto-Aztecan linguistic stock is one of the largest language families in the Americas in terms of its geographical extension and the number of languages it encompasses (fig. 1). The narratives gathered here make up a representative sample, including languages from both the United States and Mexico, selected in an effort to represent as many of the eight established subgroupings as possible (fig. 2) and to include narratives that reflect the work of both outsider linguists and community members. This volume presents texts from the languages that are the most threatened (Kawaiisu, Northern Paiute, and Tübatulabal) and others that currently lack first-language speakers (Cupeño and Serrano), as well as from those that are more viable (e.g., Nahuatl).

The study of the history of the Uto-Aztecan language family goes back more than a century to Sapir (1913), considered the first published work to connect the northernmost and southernmost extremes of the family to the same genetic unit. Intensive research has continued unbroken since—a measure of both the complexity of the family and the need for more thorough documentation of the individual languages. Such scholarship has included traditional comparative reconstruction (Miller 1967, 1984; Stubbs 2011), grammatical comparison (Langacker 1977; Haugen 2008), and overviews of the state of the art in Uto-Aztecan study (Lastra de Suárez 1975; Haugen 2013).

As suggested by the family tree in Figure 2 (adapted from Merrill 2013:70–71), the family consists of eight main subgroupings (plus the little-known and extinct Tubar) with a primary division between Northern and Southern Uto-Aztecan. The Northern branch remains controversial, however, as to whether it constitutes a true subgroup or is, rather, a set of four parallel subgroups (or something in between), as suggested by lexical correspondence (cf. Miller 1984; Cortina-Borja and Valiñas 1989). In a recent study (Haugen, Everdell, and Kuperman 2020), the authors apply the metric of “relative cognate density” and find, in agreement with Miller (1984), no clear evidence in support of a Northern branch. The internal unity of three Southern subgroupings (Tepiman, Corachol, Aztecan) and two Northern ones (Numic, Takic) enjoys relatively wide acceptance, as do Tübatulabal and Hopi as singletons.¹ The internal structure of the Taracahitian subgroup is also not entirely set in stone (Dakin 2002;

¹ We consider a singleton to be a language that is not otherwise part of a subgroup at some level.

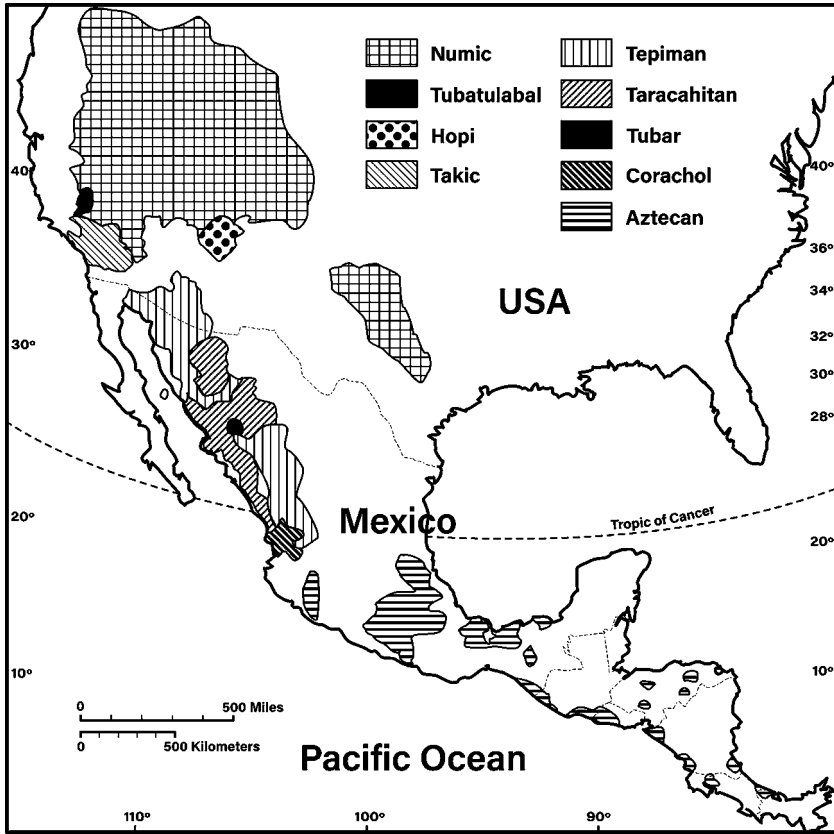


FIG. 1.—Distribution of the Uto-Aztecan languages (from Merrill 2013).

Haugen, Everdell, and Kuperman 2020), and it is notable that Caballero (this volume) does not identify Taracahitian as a subgroup but maintains the independence of Tarahumaran and Cahitan. Between these two groups, we include here Jova, a language that was documented among the Ópatas but is currently extinct (Yetman 2010:71). Further, as pointed out by Dakin (2002 and in personal communication), the maintenance of a General Aztecan grouping may be ripe for refinement into a Western and an Eastern branch, with Pochutec assuming a position within the Western branch. Other groupings have also been proposed (e.g., Numic and Tubatulabal) but are not considered established. Within the Southern Numic branch, Chemehuevi, Southern Paiute, and Ute form a dialect chain sometimes referred to as Colorado River Numic. Figure 2 also provides in bold the primary subgroups and the names of the languages included in this volume.

I. Northern Uto-Aztecan**1. Numic**

- a. Western Numic:
 - i. Western & Eastern Mono, Owens Valley Paiute
 - ii. **Northern Paiute-Bannock**, Paviotso
- b. Central Numic:
 - i. Tümpisa (Panamint) Shoshoni
 - ii. Western, Northern, & Eastern Shoshoni, Comanche
- c. Southern Numic:
 - i. **Kawaiisu**
 - ii. Chemehuevi, Southern Paiute, Ute

2. Tübatulabal**3. Takic**

- a. Serrano-Gabrielino
 - i. Serranan: **Serrano**, Kitanemuk
 - ii. Gabrielino (Gabrielino, Fernandino)
- b. Cupan
 - i. **Cupeño**, Cahuilla
 - ii. Luiseño

4. Hopi

II. Southern Uto-Aztecan**A. Sonoran****5. Tepiman:**

- a. Upper Piman
 - i. Papago, Pima, Nevome
- b. Lower Piman
 - ii. Northern Tepehuan, **Southern Tepehuan (Southeastern Tepehuan)**, Tepecano

6. Taracahitian

- a. **Tarahumaran**
 - i. Eastern Tarahumara, Western Tarahumara, **Southern (Choguita) Raramuri**
 - ii. Guarijío (Highland Guarijío, Lowland Guarijío)
- b. Opatan: Opata, Eudeve, Jova?
- c. **Cahita** (Mayo, **Yaqui/Hiaki**)

6.5?. Tubar

7. Corachol: Cora, Huichol

8. Aztecan

- a. Pochutec
- b. General Aztec: Pipil, **Nahuatl** (Classical Aztec, Tetelcingo, Zacapoaxtla, **Tlaxcala**, and others)

FIG. 2—The Uto-Aztecan languages and their subgroups.

Our hope is that the present collection provides data germane to historical and other issues by shedding light on developments and innovations at the level of grammar and discourse. More important, we hope this modest sample will serve to inspire future collections that include a greater diversity of speech genres to assist with community-centered documentation and revitalization efforts.

Prevalent Features of Uto-Aztecan Languages. Uto-Aztecan languages are morpho-syntactically complex, have a fairly dominant verb-final word order

(except for Tepehuan and Nahuatl) with varying degrees of pragmatic flexibility, and make use of a nominative-accusative alignment pattern for expressing grammatical relations (although Cupeño demonstrates ergative alignment in some areas of the grammar). Widespread family traits include morphological complexity in the verb, remnant noun-class markers in the form of so-called absolutive suffixes, reduplication processes of various stripes, and an auxiliary complex composed of second position clitics as well as particles and/or affixes marking evidentiality. Strongly suppletive verb forms based upon core participant number, the use and development of “secondary” verbs, and different strategies (including nominalization) to encode subordinate clauses are all salient features of Uto-Aztecan grammar. These characteristics are briefly illustrated in what follows.

Morphological complexity in the verb, demonstrated by examples (1) and (2), includes participant agreement, directional marking, a variety of TAM values (often fused with other inflectional features), voice marking, and processes of incorporation. (See Canger 2017 for a thorough discussion of polysynthesis in Tacuapan Nahuatl.)

Cupeño

- (1) Suunvishpemyingiywenivey
 suunvish-pem-yi-ngiy-weni-ve-y
 suffer-3PL.SBJ-THEME-away-PAST.IMPFV-REALIS.SUB-OBJ
 ‘those who have gone to suffer’

(Hill 2005:417, ex. 21)

Tlaxcalan Nahuatl

- (2) Ōmonēnkamatsotsopōts.
 o-mo-ne-n-kama-co~copo-c
 ANT-REFL-bad-mouth-EMPH~have.prickers:PFV
 ‘His poor mouth was just full of prickers.’

(J. H. Hill, this volume:S176, (39))

Noun formants, known to Uto-Aztecanists as “absolutive” suffixes (abbreviated NCM ‘noun class suffix’), are another characteristic property of languages in the family. These appear mainly in citation (noncombining) singular forms of nouns, as in the Tlaxcalan Nahuatl examples below. The bare nominal root (without the suffix) also appears in compounds, in possessor-possesum relations, or with postpositions.

Tlaxcalan Nahuatl

- (3) *koyōtl* *koyōmeh*
koyo-tl *koyo-meh*
 coyote-NCM coyote-PL
 ‘coyote’ ‘coyotes’

(J. H. Hill, this volume:S171, (4), (7))

Reduplication is a widespread morpho-phonological process across the Uto-Aztecan family (Haugen 2005, 2008) and marks plurality on nouns (4), intensity on modifiers (5), and iterativity or the distributive aspect on verbs (6). In Southeastern Tepehuan, the reduplication is partial (copying the first syllable) (4), while in Cupeño (5) and Yaqui (6), as well as other Uto-Aztecan languages, there is full reduplication. Some languages in the family demonstrate both types.

Southeastern Tepehuan

- (4) mi akki'n nat jur, am sap mi' ba daraa gu u'ub gui' na bhammi ka'n . . .

mi	ak-ki'n	na=t	jur	am	sap
MED.ADV	river-with	SBRD=3SG.SBJ.PFV	get.down	LOC	REP
mi'	ba-daraa	gu	u'~ub	gui'	na
MED.ADV	COMPL-sit.PL	ART	PL~woman	DIST	SBRD
bhammi	ka-'n				
up	STV-3SG.POSS				

'when he went down to the river the women (who threw water at him) were sitting there, the ones who'

(García Salido, Arellano Mijarez, and Everdell, this volume:S164, (22))

Cupeño

- (5) Kanaasta ku'ut aaay'anish pemyawneq, saval xwavixwavi'aw ku'ut pemqal.

kaná-sta	ku?ut	ay?ani-š	pəm-yáw-nəq	savá-l
basket	QUOT	big-NCM	3PL:PST-carry-come	grass-NCM
x ^w avi~x ^w ávi-?aw	ku?ut	pəm-qál		
RDP~green-LOC	QUOT	3PL:PST-stay		

'They say they brought a great big basket, they sat on the green grass.'

(J. H. Hill, this volume:S115, (51))

Yaqui

- (6) ne joboi jijibuatau jia tebe jeu u'u ili taabu u gotawi

ne	joboi	ji-ji-bwa-ta	a-u	jia	tea	bea
1SG:NOM	full	PL~thing-eat-ACC	3SG:OBL-DIR	say	REP	DM
u'u	ili	taabu-Ø	u-e	goi-ta-wi		
DET	little	rabbit-NOM	DET-OBL	coyote-ACC-DIR		

'“I am full from so much eating,” the little rabbit told the coyote.'

(Guerrero, this volume:S135, (13))

Uto-Aztecan languages are also known for having a well-developed system of sentence-second clitics. In many languages these combine to form an auxiliary complex (Steele 1979). Sentence-second enclitics are phonologically

bound to an initial constituent, such as a full noun phrase, pronoun (7), demonstrative, or particle (8).

Cupeño

- (7) “Emqwep ne’ey nitatushni.”
 əm=qʷə=p nəʔə-y ni-tátušni
 2PL.PRO=POT=2:ERG 1SG.PRO-OBJ 1SG.OBJ-fool:TR:POT
 ‘“You all might fool me.”’

(J. H. Hill, this volume:S115, (55))

Northern Paiute

- (8) kai=ha=sakwa=ni i=naka-wai kati-chai mii.
 NEG=Q=MOD=I you=ear-LOC sit-around QUOT
 ‘“Couldn’t I just sit in your ear?” (Porcupine) said.’

(Thornes 2003:476)

In (7) the clitic string is bound to a (sentence-first) pronoun, while in (8) it is bound to the negative particle. The auxiliary complex may even appear formed solely by means of a string of clitics, as in (9).

O’odham

- (9) attspki
 at=t=s=p=ki
 MOD=TNS=QUOT=MOD=EVID
 ‘I guess they say we must have . . .’

(Jane Hill, pc)

The second position auxiliary complex consists of a combination of person indices and various aspectual, modal, and evidential markers.

In a cross-family survey, Thornes (2018) finds support for the reconstruction of a three-way system of evidentiality for Uto-Aztecan that includes the encoding of reported, inferred, and unmarked direct evidence for the family (10)–(11).

Choguita Rarámuri

- (10) i’kíra rá:m pa ’étʃi . . . tʃa’βótʃĩ̀ βa
 i’kí-la ru-’wá=mi pa’ ’étʃi tʃa’bôtʃĩ̀ ba
 happen-REP say-MID=DEM ECL DEM mestizo ECL
 ‘It is said that’s what happened with that mestizo’

(Caballero, Fuentes Holguin, and Fuentes Loya, this volume:S154 (20))

Serrano

- (11) Punuktχ nimiy.
 pu-nuk=tχ nimi-y
 3SG-alone=INFR:3SG walk-IND
 ‘She must have walked around by herself.’

(K. C. Hill, this volume:S86, (25))

Also characteristic of Uto-Aztecán, sets of so-called suppletive verb forms are found that are sensitive to the number of core participants (“subject” for intransitive verbs and “object” for transitives). Most suppletive verbs have singular versus plural forms, as with Hiaki ‘die’ and ‘kill’ (table 1).

Northern Paiute and other Numic languages demonstrate three-way suppletion in posture verbs (table 2).

There have been various approaches, both synchronic and diachronic in scope, to this pattern of verb suppletion in Uto-Aztecán and elsewhere (see Mithun and Chafe 1999; Harley, Tubino-Blanco, and Haugen 2009; Haugen and Everdell 2015; and Toosarvandani 2016).

A construction type that uses “secondary” verbs (Crapo 1970) is found across the family as well, forming complex predicates. Examples (17) and (18) from Northern Paiute and Southeastern Tepehuan illustrate this phenomenon.

Northern Paiute

- (17) oono tiwau umi na-**tiničui-pokwa**-ʔyakwi
Then also 3.PL RECIP-tell.stories-lie:PL-HAB

‘And then, too, they would lie around telling stories.’

(Thornes 2011:32)

Southeastern Tepehuan

- (18) sap gu ba muu ji mi’ pui’ xi bo’kat mukxikam, gɛ na gu . . .
sap gu ba-muu ji mi’ pui’
REP ART COMPL-die:PFV FOC MED.ADV SENS

xi-bo’-ka-t **muk-xi-kam** gɛ’ na=gu’
IMP-lay.down-STV-IPFV die-RES-origin AFFIRM SBDR=ADV

‘so he died lying there, died there, yes because . . .’

(García Salido, Arellano Mijarez, and Everdell, this volume:S165, (30))

Although the construction in (17) is considered in many Uto-Aztecán language descriptions to be a form of verb-verb compounding, Thornes (2011) argues that it best fits the profile of an asymmetrical serial verb construction

TABLE 1
SUPPLETION OF “DIE” AND “KILL” IN HIAKI

	DIE	KILL
Singular	muuke	meʔa
Plural	koko	sua

(Haugen and Everdell 2015)

TABLE 2
THREE-WAY SUPPLETION OF NORTHERN PAIUTE POSTURE VERBS

	SIT	STAND	LIE
Singular	<i>kati</i>	<i>wini</i>	<i>hapi</i>
Dual	<i>yigwi</i>	<i>wami</i>	<i>kwapi</i>
Plural	<i>aataʔa</i>	<i>kono</i>	<i>pokwa / wakwapi</i>

(Thomes 2003:316)

(Aikhenvald and Dixon 2006). The complex predicate in Southeastern Tepehuan (18) represents a different stage in the development of the construction, given that each verb carries finite features of its own.

In terms of syntax, Uto-Aztecan, like many other languages (and language families) of the Americas, makes widespread use of clausal nominalization for different subordinate clause types. Nominalization is used to form complement, relative, and adverbial clauses. For complements Cupenõ marks the verb with a subordinating irrealis suffix (19), while Serrano shows a subordinator suffix on the dependent verb (20). An example of a subject relative clause is presented in Hiaki (21), while an example of an object relative clause is illustrated in Northern Paiute (22). Lastly, an adverbial clause is shown for Kawaiisu (23).

Complement clause, Cupenõ

- (19) *mu=juʔut pem-yax pe-meqa-pi*
 AND=REP 3PL-say 3SG-kill-SUB.IRR
 ‘and it is said they said for him to kill it’

(Hill 2005:420, ex. 29)

Complement clause, Serrano

- (20) *K^{wi}in ra:k^{wi}iniaʔn moʔč yaŋk qayk^{wi}in amaʔ wi:ʔwⁱn ak^weikçi.*
k^{wi}in ra:k^{wi}-niaʔn moʔč yaŋk qay=k^{wi}in
 QUOT:3SG>3SG eat_{INTR}-CAUS again but NEG=QUOT:3SG>3SG
wi:ʔwⁱn a-k^we-ik-çi
 want 3SG-eat_{TR}-IRR.SBRD-ACC

‘She fed him again, but he didn’t want to eat it.’

(K. C. Hill, this volume:S90, (53))

Subject relative clause, Hiaki

- (21) *Hunuuʔu intoko Kuka teame*
Hunuuʔu=intoko Kuka tea-me
 that.one=and Kuka name-SBJ.REL
 ‘That one, who was named Kuka,’

(Leyva et al., this volume:S127, (8))

Object relative clause, Northern Paiute

- (22) *yau chaisi e naniana nabo;*
ya-u čaisi i=na-nia-na na-bo
 here-FOC then your=MID-call-PTCP MID-write
 ‘I see your name here written.’

(Lewis and Thornes, this volume:S24, (11))

Adverbial clause, Kawaiisu

- (23) *Neezhigai karüpün iva'n.*
neezh-igai karü-p=ün iva'n
 girl-when abide-PFV=1SG:SBJ here
 ‘When I was a girl I stayed here.’

(Grant and Ahlers, this volume:S30, (16))

Chapters in Comrie and Estrada-Fernández (2012) cover the details of many Uto-Aztecan languages, and additional work on the role and development of nominalization in the family can be found in Chamoreau and Estrada-Fernández (2016).

An exception to this pattern is Southeastern Tepehuan (García Salido 2014b, 2020). Example (24) shows a clause subordinated by means of the particle *na*, which bears second-position clitics. Example (25) shows two headless relative clauses that are marked by the particles in bold. This feature could represent a sign of its long-term, and likely intensive, contact with neighboring non-Uto-Aztecan (and non-nominalizing) languages through grammatical borrowing.

Complement clause, Southeastern Tepehuan

- (24) *sap ba' pui chi'nda am gui', nam bhai' ba jim*
sap ba' pui chi'nda-am gui' na=m
 REP SEQ SENS say-3PL.SBJ DIST SBRD=3PL.SBJ
bhai' ba-jim
 towards.here COMPL-go:PRS

‘and they told him that they will come (to the *mitote*)’

(García Salido, Arellano Mijarez, and Everdell, this volume:S162, (11))

Headless relative clause, Southeastern Tepehuan

- (25) *palhíp sap ba'n ya'ni ja'p pai' nat ji'x bha toi' nat ji'x ai*
*palhíp sap ba'n ya'-ni ja'p **pai'***
 little REP wet there-PREC PTC where
***na=t-ji'x** bha-toi'*
 SBRD=3SG.SBJ:PFV-how.many towards.here-throw
***na=t-ji'x** ai*
 SBRD=3SG.SBJ:PFV-how.many arrive:PFV

‘He was a little bit wet there, where they threw water at him, where water got him’

(García Salido, Arellano Mijarez, and Everdell, this volume:S163, (19))

Both conservative features and innovative changes resulting from contact with non-Uto-Aztecan languages demonstrate interesting patterns of language change and grammaticalization. By providing a wider context for such patterns, the analysis of narrative texts such as those provided here are meant to support further studies in comparative discourse properties and their diachronic sources.

Presentation of the texts. This volume includes the contributions of ten Uto-Aztecan languages, one text for each language, with the exception of Northern Paiute and Tübatulabal, for which there are two. We also include two texts from a language that belongs to the Cahitan branch (Hiaki/Yaqui), located just on the border between the United States and Mexico. The reason for including Hiaki and Yaqui is that the former is primarily restricted to ceremonial use or conversations between tribal elders in Southern Arizona, while the second is more vital in the Sonoran communities. Thus it provides a clear example of the social differences that occur within the same language and that affect its use.

The narratives included here exhibit a distribution and selection of languages from all major subgroups of Uto-Aztecan with the exception of Corachol and Hopi, providing a legacy of material for future exploration. We present the texts geographically, from north to south, beginning with Northern Paiute, with just a few hundred speakers, and ending with Tlaxcalan Nahuatl, one variety of a language with more than a million speakers. Each narrative is introduced by the contributors, who provide basic information regarding the status of the language, the speakers of the text, and the context of the recording event, as well as any features of the narrative of particular interest.

Orthographic conventions are different for each language and are established based on different criteria; therefore each chapter lays down their practical orthographic conventions before the text is presented.

These twelve texts are introduced in four-tier format. In the first tier, the intonation unit (phonemic or orthographic) is found. The second tier provides the breakdown into separate morphemes. An equal sign (=) marks a clitic boundary, while an en-dash (–) separates affixes. The third tier provides a literal translation for each word and bound morpheme; the abbreviations for this tier are listed at the end of the volume. Lastly, the fourth tier gives a free translation into English. The Yaqui and Raramuri texts also provide a free translation into Spanish for the reasons expressed in their respective introductions.

For systematization purposes throughout the book, we follow these conventions: (a) long pauses are indicated in the first line of the example by three dots; (b) short pauses are indicated in the first line of the example by a comma; (c) elided sounds are indicated in parentheses in the first line of the text and are restored in the analysis; (d) a false start is enclosed in the first line of the text by angle brackets <speech>, and it is not glossed; (e) fragments of songs are indicated by using ♪♪ at the beginning and at the ending of the first line; (f) loanwords are

indicated in the first line of the example in italics; and (g) stage directions such as gestures in the first line of the text are indicated by square brackets.

Dedication. The contributors to this volume would like to acknowledge the inspiration, the mentorship, and the tremendous contributions of our dear friend and colleague Jane Hill, who passed away on November 2, 2018. As befits her influence on Uto-Aztecan studies, Jane contributed two stories, one from each of the Northern and Southern branches of the family. For all that she accomplished and all whom she inspired, with grace and great humor, we would like to show our gratitude to her by dedicating this volume to her memory.