



Untangling the Huron and the Iroquois

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Source: *International Journal of American Linguistics*, Oct., 1985, Vol. 51, No. 4 (Oct., 1985), pp. 504-507

Published by: The University of Chicago Press

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1265321>

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boni-rú, oʔ-póni-tu 'ser hermano menor' (common)
bahí-boca, a-pahí-poca 'hincarse' (common)
bukú-la, u-pugú-la 'res' (common)
kusé, iʔ-gúse 'ser cacique' (inverse)
péwa, i-béwa 'fumar' (inverse)
pá, i-bá 'echar' (inverse)
moʔi, oʔ-moʔi 'meterse varios' (ambiguous)
móʔ, hí-mo 'subir' (ambiguous)
cú, iʔ-cú 'sopear' (inert)
colí, iʔ-cólí 'maíz negro' (inert)

It is remarkable that Lionnet was able to isolate the regular patterns and correctly reconstruct the history without the aid of comparative material, because there are many more details, exceptions, and irregular forms which I have not given here. The exceptions and irregularities are probably an indication that the patterns are giving way, hardly surprising since what was once a very regular reduplication pattern has now been rendered opaque.

(Tarahumara forms are from Lionnet 1968 and 1972. I have made some changes in his transcription: /c/ is used in place of "ch," /h/ in place of "j," and /l/, a retroflex consonant, in place of initial "l," medial "r." Guarijío forms are from field trips I made in 1976–77 and 1978.)

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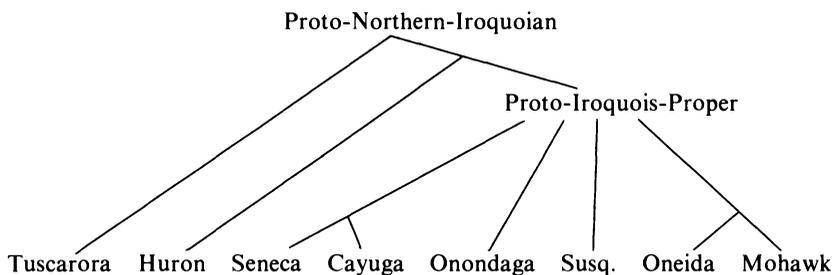
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UNTANGLING THE HURON AND THE IROQUOIS

For over 350 years it has been assumed that the Huron¹ separated from the Iroquois proper—Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Susquehannock, Oneida, and Mohawk—well before these separated from each other. Huron failed to share in numerous innovations common to the Iroquois and is roughly equidistant from each lexically.

¹ No longer spoken, Huron is richly documented in seventeenth-century missionary sources, a dictionary compiled in 1623–24 by Gabriel Sagard-Theodat (Sagard 1632), here keyed by HS, and a later grammar by Pierre Joseph Marie Chaumonot (Wilkie 1831), here keyed by HCh. Differences both between and within single manuscripts seem to represent variation, but whether within individual speakers or communities, or between geo-



Several facts blur this picture, however. Certain dialect differences found within Huron also appear within individual Iroquois languages. Does this indicate that early dialect distinctions can outlive crosscutting language splits?

Documenting Huron in 1623, Sagard noted the shift $t > k / _y$; Chaumonot, writing half a century later, does not show the innovation: HS *sakieien* 'assieds-toy', HCh *atient* 'to sit down' (**sat_yɛ*: 'sit down!' [*-*at_yɛ*: 'sit']); HS *inkieke* 'a midiy', HCh *entiek* 'noon' (**ɛ̃t_ye²-ke* 'at noon'); HS *teaquierha* 'ie ne fais rien' (**tekat_yérha*? 'I do not do' [*-*at_yer*- 'do']), HCh *a_yatieron* 'I would do' (**a_ykat_yérq*).

The same shift of t to k before y appears as a dialectal variant in several of the modern Iroquois languages. Some speakers of modern Cayuga systematically use k before y , where others use t : *sak_yɛ̃* / *sat_yɛ̃*: 'sit down', *ná_yke_y* / *ná_yte_y*? 'I would do it', *thɛ_y? tha_yte_yɛ̃_y-ha_y* / *tha_yte_yɛ̃_y-ha_y*? 'I don't do it'. The Akwesasne dialect of Mohawk shows the same innovation: *sákyɔ* (vs. Caughnawaga and Six Nations *sát_yɔ*) 'sit down', *ɛ̃k_ye* (vs. *ɛ̃t_ye*) 'noon', *ná_ykyere_y*? (vs. *ná_yte_yere_y*?) 'I would do it'.

Sagard shows alternations transcribed *ts/tsi* (/ __V), and *ts/tch*; Chaumonot shows only *ts*. These reflect a protosequence **tšy*: HS *atson/atšion* 'entree!', HCh *tson* 'come in' (**katšyɔ* 'enter!'); HS *atsonsta/atčonsta* 'i'esternue' (**ka_ytšyɔhstha*? 'I sneeze'); HCh *tšen* 'place, put ye' (**tšyɛ*). In Seneca and Cayuga, within communities speakers are consistent in using one or the other, e.g.: Seneca *tatsɔh/tatšyɔh* 'come in', *tewake_ytšhɔstha*? / *tewake_ytšhyɔstha*? 'I'm sneezing'; Cayuga *tatsɔh/tatšyɔh* 'come in', *tewak_yetšhɔstha*? / *tewak_yetšhyɔstha*? 'I'm sneezing'. In Oneida, the affricate is palatalized by all speakers, following y deleted in Ontario, remaining in Wisconsin (Lounsbury 1953). In Mohawk, the Caughnawaga (Quebec), Oka (Quebec), and Gibson (Ontario)

graphically defined dialects within the Huron Confederacy, is not clear. I present here only a portion of the data, for exemplification.

I am especially grateful to the following speakers who generously supplied material from their languages: Mary Cross (Caughnawaga Mohawk), Margaret White Edwards (Akwesasne Mohawk), Elton Green (Tuscarora), Marge Henry (Cayuga), Reg Henry (Cayuga, Onondaga), Annette Jacobs (Akwesasne Mohawk), Winnie Jacobs (Oneida), Robert Mt. Pleasant (Tuscarora), Minnie Nelson (Oka Mohawk), Myrtle Peterson (Seneca), Sara Sanatien (Gibson Mohawk), Jimmy Skye (Cayuga), and Mercy Summers (Oneida).

dialects have lost the *y*, and the affricate is alveolar, *tsʰtʰo*, while in all other Mohawk dialects, the palatal affricate and glide remain, *tsyʰtʰo*.

For the Huron reflex of **o*, Chaumonot generally writes *ø* [=u] after *n* and/or before *t*, *s*, or *ʔ* (**n* became *nd* in Huron before oral vowels): HCh *onnontøt* ‘there is a mountain’ (**yonoʔ-tø-t*); *aatandøsti* ‘to be cold’ (**kayaʔtanøsti*); *ødhista aasetøten* ‘a bottle made of metal’ (**ohwistaʔ katsheʔtøʔtø* (*ø* for [w])). Sagard shows much less consistent graphic variation between *o* and *ou*.

Some speakers of Cayuga raise **o* to [u] between *n* or *y* and a following *s*, *ʔ*, or the end of a word: *onoʔts(y)aʔ/onúʔts(y)aʔ* ‘tooth’, *xyóʔkaʔ/xyúʔkaʔ* ‘it will get dark’, *ohnékanos/ohnékanus* ‘water’. Similarly, in a very few words in Seneca, notably those involving the root *-no* ‘cool’, we find: *o·nekanos/o·nekanus* ‘water’. Some speakers of Ontario Oneida show the same raising of the vowel in that word: *ohné·kanos/ohné·kanus*.

Late seventeenth-century Onondaga (Shea 1860) shows some alternation among *o*, *ø*, and *ou* in the same contexts as Huron and Cayuga: Shea *øtarihen* ‘il fait chaud’ (**yøʔtariheʔ* ‘it is cold’), *kenøtgiodagøbach* ‘j’arrache un dent’ (**kenoʔtšyotákwas* ‘I pull a tooth’) (but: *honøzzia* ‘dent’ [**onoʔtšyaʔ* ‘tooth’]). Zeisberger (1887–88; Horsford 1887), writing a century later, recorded no raising.

The Huron transcribed by both Sagard and Chaumonot shows variable loss of **y* initially before pronouns: HS *onan yondot/nan ondotte* ‘il pleut’ (**o·nø yó·nots* ‘now it is raining’), HCh *iondøts* ‘it rains’; HS *ottoret* ‘froid’ (**yothó·reʔ* ‘it is cold’), HCh *øthore* ‘it is cold’. The Western-Iroquoian languages—Seneca, Cayuga, and Onondaga—show this loss systematically: Seneca *otho·weʔ*; Cayuga *othó·weʔ*; Onondaga (Shea) *hotore*, (Zeisberger) *otori*, (Modern) *othó·weʔ*. Mohawk, Oneida, and Tuscarora retain the glide in all verbs: Mohawk *yothó·re*; Oneida *yothó·le*; Tuscarora *yutšáʔtu·*; however, the glide does not appear before nouns.

Several innovations found consistently in Huron are unsettling because they are shared by some of the Iroquois languages but not others, confusing the assumed subgrouping scheme. Two of these involve consonant clusters. First, all transcriptions of Huron consistently show epenthetic *e* between *kk* clusters (**k* is sometimes transcribed as a subscript *iota* and other times omitted entirely by the missionaries): HS *yeein* ‘ie voy’ (**kkø* > **ké·kø* ‘I see’), HCh, *a ee en* ‘I have seen it’ (**wákkø* > **wake·kø*). The Western-Iroquoian languages—Seneca and Cayuga—show the same epenthesis: Seneca *ke·køh* ‘I see it’, *ake·kø·h* ‘I have seen it’, *oʔke·køʔ* ‘I see/saw it’; Cayuga *ké·køh* ‘I see it’, *aké·kø* ‘I have seen it’, *aké·køʔ* ‘I saw it’. Seventeenth-century Onondaga (Shea 1860) sometimes shows epenthesis: *kegara* ‘mon œuil’, *kegarrio* ‘j’ai la veue bonne’, but *dekkahra* ‘je vois’, *kkariakch* ‘je paye’. But later sources lack it: Zeisberger *wakøgha* ‘I did see it’, Modern *áhkhøh* ‘I have seen it’, *wáʔhkøʔ* ‘I saw it’, *ihkhøh* ‘I see it’.

Similarly, Huron uniformly shows a simplification of syllable-final *ts* clusters: HS *astey* ‘dehors’ (**átste* ‘outside’), HS *aseta* ‘bouteille’ (**katsheʔtaʔ* ‘bottle’); HCh *ødhista aasetøten* ‘metal bottle’, *iondøts* ‘it rains’ (**yó·nots*). Seneca shows the same simplification: *asteh* ‘outside’, *kashéʔtaʔ* ‘bottle’. Cayuga shows the

simplification in a more restricted context: *aste* ‘outside’, but *katshé?ta?* ‘bottle’. Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Onondaga both show variation: Shea *aste* ‘dehors’, *kencheta* ‘flacon’; Zeisberger *haste* ‘outside’, *kasheta* ‘bottle’.

The innovations described here cut across both established subgroups and language divisions. A few could be rationalized as the natural result of parallel drift stimulated by features already present in the common parent. The weight of the set as a whole is enigmatic, however, until seventeenth-century political events are considered.

In 1649, the Iroquois Confederacy (the Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, and Mohawk) attacked and nearly decimated the Huron Confederacy and its allies. Some of the Huron survivors, led by Chaumonot, migrated toward Quebec City, eventually founding the Lorette community. Others joined remnants of neighboring allied nations, such as the Erie, the Wenro, the Tionontati (Petun), and the Neutral, and migrated toward Sandwich, Ontario, near Detroit. Now known collectively as Wyandots, many moved to Oklahoma, where their language was spoken into this century. Still other Hurons took up residence among the Iroquois in New York State, particularly in the west.

The Hurons must have brought linguistic innovations to the Iroquois. Some never caught on (e.g., loss of **k*), but others remain in the Iroquois languages as dialectal variants, perhaps among the very descendants of those Huron refugees, who thus still preserve part of a Huron heritage over three centuries old.

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