



Learning to speak Ute



Southern Ute tribal elder Lynda Grove-D'Wolf goes over class notes during a Ute language lesson at the Multi-purpose Facility on Wednesday, March 21.

photo Ace Stryker/SU DRUM

This is your language

'ícha-'ara mæni 'apaghapi 'ura-'ay

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5. The sounds and writing of Ute: More consonants púupa-aqh núuchi pø'ø-ta-vaa-na

In this column we will finish the description of Ute consonant sounds. With one exception, the rest of the consonants are unproblematic, since their pronunciation in Ute does not differ all that much from their pronunciation in English. We will start with the exceptional one, a sound that does not exist in English but is very important in Ute, and is often – unwisely – ignored.

/ʔ/ (glottal stop)

This consonant doesn't exist in English or Spanish, but is very common in Ute. To begin with, all words that seem to the untrained ear to begin with a vowel in fact begin with a glottal stop, as in: 'áapachí 'boy', 'áka-gha-ræ 'red', 'ívičhi 'stick', 'úu-pa 'that-a-way', 'øøvi 'bone', 'ææ 'yes'.

In many word-medial environments, /ʔ/ is very clearly present and cannot be ignored, as in: pagha-'ni 'walking about', paghay-'way 'walking', 'ura-'ay 'being', pæni-'ni 'looking' ta'wachi 'man'. What is more, in many cases one finds **minimal pairs**, where meaning differences depend on the presence vs. absence of the glottal stop. Thus compare:

| no glottal stop | glottal stop |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| maavi 'vegetation' | ma'avi 'weeds' |
| 'øa-qa-ræ 'yellow' | 'ø'a-qa-y 'sneaking on' |
| kæi 'taking' | kæ'i 'biting' |
| tapøni 'be bound together' | tapø'ni 'knocking' |
| maay 'finding/seeing' | ma'ay 'be lost' |
| pæi-n 'I'm sleeping' | pæ'i-n 'my eye' |

/ch/ (voiceless palatal stop)

This consonant is pronounced as its English counterpart in words such as 'church', 'child', or 'peach'. It can be found in Ute words such as: mamachí 'woman', chaqha-chi-n 'my younger brother', wichichí 'bird', wiichí 'knife', mæchøpæ 'facial hair', chíuchí 'pipe'.

/s/ (voiceless dental fricative)

This consonant is pronounced just like its English counterpart in words such as 'sit', 'masses', 'boss', 'past', or 'kiss'. It may be seen in Ute words such as: sari-chí 'dog', múusa-chí 'cat', sá-gha-ræ 'white', sí-gwanachí 'hawk', ma-sæævæ-n 'my finger(s)'

/m/ (labial nasal)

This Ute consonant is pronounced much like its counterpart in English. It can be seen in Ute words such as: mama-chí 'woman', mí-pæ-chí 'small', 'æmæ 'you', múusa-chí 'cat', mæchøpæ 'facial hair'.

/n/ (dental nasal)

This Ute consonant is pronounced much like its counterpart in English. It can be seen in Ute words such as: nanapæchí 'little old man', 'ínæ 'this' (animate), næ 'I', núuchi 'person', 'Indian', 'Ute'.

/w/ (labial glide)

This Ute consonant is pronounced much like its counterpart in English. It can be seen in Ute words such as: wá-ini 'two' (subj.), wúitæ 'long time ago', kawachí 'frost', mawisí-kya '(he/she) appeared', wiichí 'knife'

/y/ (palatal glide)

This Ute consonant is pronounced much like its counterpart in English. It can be seen in Ute words such as: yoghovæchí 'coyote', tugu-paya 'sky', 'skyward', yáakwi 'disappearing', yagha-y 'crying', toghoy-aqh 'thank you', 'it is good'.

Hyphenation conventions

As we shall see in the next columns, almost all Ute words – unlike their English counterparts – are complex; that is, they are made out of multiple parts that combine together. This is true both for simple words ('dog', 'chair', 'rain') and for words that carry grammatical markers ('he gave it to them', 'they kicked him repeatedly'). Native speakers, having learned Ute words as unit 'chunks' in their childhood, are not necessarily aware of the internal structure and complexity of their words. But in teaching the language to people whose first language is not Ute, we must make the internal structure of words clear to the learners. This is part of the difference between first- and second-language acquisition. In addition, this is also useful for native speakers who would like to become literate in their first language. For these reasons, in presenting our language materials, we will often hyphenate between parts of Ute words, and sometime explain such hyphenation in the intermediate ('grammatical') glosses of Ute expressions.

Houses past and present



photo Jeremy Wade Shockley/SU DRUM

Gina Preszler, a Kindergarten teacher for Needham Elementary in Durango, brought her students along with two other classes to the Southern Ute Cultural Center & Museum on Wednesday, March 21. They are learning about houses of the past and present. Preszler said the exhibits in the museum presented good visual aids for her class to see how the Southern Utes lived.

Powwow Trails

Easter Powwow

April 6 – 8

99 Great Plains Road • Arapahoe, WY

Contact: Claudette C'Bearing

Phone: 307-840-4185

Email: dchairl201@gmail.com

Spring Contest Powwow and Indian Art Market

April 20 – 22

CSU Moby Arena, Elizabeth and Shields intersection • Fort Collins, CO

Contact: Northern Colorado Intertribal Powwow Assoc.

Phone: 970.498.0290 or ncipa@fortnet.org

Web: www.fortnet.org/PowWow/NCIPA_powwow.html

Gathering of Nations Powwow

April 26 – 28

University of New Mexico's University Arena • Albuquerque, NM

Phone: 505-836-2810

Web: www.gatheringofnations.com

Come learn to read, write and speak Ute!

Taught by Mr. Alden Naranjo, Tom Givon and Dr. Stacey Oberly.

Organized by Ms. Dedra White and Mr. Nathan Strong Elk.

Ute Language 102

Wednesdays 5:30-7:30 pm

Fridays 12:00-1:00 pm

Jan. 18th-May 15th, 2012

Large Classroom

Southern Ute Cultural Center and Museum

Beginners and community members are welcome!

College credit available from Fort Lewis College or Adams State College.

Sponsored by the Southern Ute Cultural Department: (970) 563-0100 ext. 2306: soberly@southern-ute.nsn.us