



YOUNG NATIVE WRITERS
ESSAY CONTEST

Announcing the 2012 Young Native Writers Essay Contest

The Holland & Knight Charitable Foundation is proud to welcome entries for the Young Native Writers Essay Contest, which we organize each year in partnership with the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian. This essay contest for Native American high school students is designed to encourage young Native Americans to think about the most important issues affecting their tribal communities, as well as ways in which challenges can be addressed. Hundreds of Native American high school students participate each year. While all participants receive a Certificate of Honor for submitting their essays and adding their voices to this important dialogue in Indian Country, the five first-place winners are awarded an all-expenses-paid "Scholar Week" trip to Washington, D.C., accompanied by a teacher or mentor nominated by each winner, to visit the National Museum of the American Indian and other prominent Washington, D.C. sites. Each winner also receives a \$2,500 college scholarship. Please help us spread the word about this year's contest by forwarding this email to groups and individuals who might be interested in submitting an essay. The deadline for submissions is April 30, 2012. We look forward to reading this year's essays! For more details please visit: <http://www.nativewriters.hklaw.com/>

This is your language

'ícha-'ara mæni 'apaghapi 'ura-'ay

By Tom Givón
Ute Language Program

6. Words

6.1. Preliminary

A language is a system of communication. In order to communicate, we take **words** that carry **meaning** and combine them into **utterances** (sentences, clauses) that carry **information**.

A human language works as a **combinatorial system**, one that can be divided into two main parts:

- **Vocabulary** (lexicon, dictionary): The collection of all the meaning-bearing words of the language; that is, the elements that can be combined into meaningful utterances.
- **Grammar**: (a) The rules used for combining words into utterances; and (b) the rules used for combining the smaller sub-parts of words into whole words. Our column today opens the discussion of Ute words.

6.2. Word meanings: The vocabulary as cultural world-view

Our vocabulary as a whole represents what we know about our **universe of experience**. Individual words classify either the types of **states** or **events** that our culture recognizes as significant, or the types of entities ('things') that partake in those states or events. Our universe of experience encompasses first **physical reality** ('woman', 'cat', 'tree', 'rock', 'water', 'hill', 'red', 'large', 'eat', 'break', 'run', 'talk', etc.), as well as **social-cultural constructs** ('husband', 'medicine-man', 'celebration', 'court', 'chief', 'police', 'lawful', 'polite', 'mediate', 'marry' etc.), and finally **mental experience** ('mind', 'love', 'fear', 'hate', 'painful', 'suspicious', 'want', 'know', 'expect', 'mean' etc.).

The words that code what we know about our universe of experience are used as the **reference** or **contents** of our communication; that is, they code what we communicate **about**. It is of course true that we also have experiences for which we have no words. But in each culture, having a word for some type of experience indicates that the experience is important, general, or frequent. And it is hard to communicate about non-verbal experiences.

6.3. Word classes and word structure

We have noted last time, in our discussion of hyphenation, that English words can be deceptively short and simple, as in e.g. 'horse', 'man', 'rock', 'chair', 'knife', 'green', 'tall', 'strong', 'walk', 'sleep', 'love', 'want', or 'know'. In contrast, Ute words are overwhelmingly longer and complex; that is, they are most commonly made of several parts that are combined together. This **combinatorial complexity** of Ute words is different for different word-types. We will thus discuss this subject as part of our description of Ute word types.

Our vocabulary, or dictionary, is made out of different **word classes**, the most common of which are nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs. We will describe these word classes. In deciding how a word fits into one class rather than another, we use a combination of three criteria:

- **meaning**: what type of experience the word codes;
- **syntactic distribution**: what is the **grammatical slot** in the sentence ('clause') into which the word typically fits;
- **structure**: what are the smaller sub-parts – **morphology** – that make up a word.

6.3.1. Nouns

6.3.1.1. Meaning

The traditional definition of nouns as "names of persons, places or things" is intuitively appealing but requires some elaboration. Nouns most typically code the stable, durable, concrete, compact entities of our physical universe, be they features of the terrain ('hill', 'river'), materials ('water', 'rock', 'sand'), plants ('pine', 'grass'), animals ('deer', 'mouse'), humans ('woman', 'child', 'father', 'grandma'), artefacts ('knife', 'house', 'blanket'). Less typically, nouns code general concepts derived from verbs ('drinking', 'knowledge', 'trial').

6.3.1.2. Syntactic distribution

Nouns can occupy five major syntactic positions in the clause ('sentence'). First, the positions of **subject** (S) and **object** (O) as in:

ta'wa-chi 'u sivaatu-chi 'uway paqha-qa
man/S the/S goat/O the/O kill-ANT
'the man killed the goat'

Next, the position of **indirect object**, marked in Ute with a **post-position**, as in:

múusa-chi 'u kani-náagha-tukhya yéga-péga
cat/S the/S house/O-in-to enter-REM
'The cat went into the house'

Next, the position of **predicate** (PRED) as in:

'ícha-'ara pə'ə-kwa-tə 'ura-'ay
this/S-be book/PRED be-IMM
'This is a book'

And finally, the position of **possessor/genitive** (GEN) noun modifying another noun, as in:

'áapa-chi pə'ə-kwa-tə təw'a-tə 'ura-'ay
boy/GEN book/S good be-IMM
'The boy's book is good'

In the next column we will deal with the internal structure ('morphology') of Ute noun.

'wəw.s. toghoy-aqh

The Southern Ute Royalty Committee Presents:
Ribbon Shirt and Dress Making Workshop
Multipurpose Facility
Tuesday, May 1, 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Come kick off the beginning of spring with new regalia for our upcoming Bear Dance.

A dinner of sub sandwiches and chips will be served. Please bring your own material (2-3 yards), ribbon, and thread.

For further information please contact
Edna Frost at 970-799-0361

Powwow Trails

20th Annual NCIPA Powwow
April 20 – 22
CSU Moby Arena • Fort Collins, CO
Contact: Northern Colorado Intertribal Powwow Assoc.
Phone: 970.498.0290 or ncipa@fortnet.org
Email: 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

Randlett Bear Dance
April 27 – 30
Randlett, UT
Contact: Louis Chappoose 707-971-9853 or Henry Cesspooch 435-401-5363

Northern Ute "Spring Celebration" Bear Dance
May 11 – 14
Uintah & Ouray Reservation • Fort Duchesne, UT
Phone: 435-722-3136 (Bear Dance), 435-724-2451 (Powwow)
Web: www.utetribe.com

19th Annual Spring Bear Powwow
May 19
Regis University Field House, 3333 Regis Blvd. • Denver, CO
Phone: 303-648-3414
Email: powwow@ravendancers.org
Web: www.ravendancers.org/powwow/

Tesoro 12th Annual Indian Market & Powwow
May 19 – 20
The Fort, 19192 Hwy. 8 • Morrison, CO
Phone: 303-839-1671
Web: www.tesoroculturalcenter.org

University of Denver Powwow
May 26
Driscoll Green, 2190 E. Asbury Ave. • Denver, CO
Phone 505-269-4761
Web: www.du.edu/

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