DIALECTS IN A DEAD PIDGIN: A PRELIMINARY EXPLORATION OF VARIATION IN CHINOOK JARGON[1]

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Chinook Jargon (CJ) is not as dead as it is reputed to be. It still lives in the speech of many British Columbians (even though most speakers probably don't realize that the words they are using, like "skookum," "tyee," or "tillicum," are in fact of Jargon origin), and in place names, street names and business names in the Pacific Northwest as a whole. In the American parts of this area, a healthy interest in CJ is both maintained and evoked in various specific geographical areas, the upper part of Puget Sound for one, and in the place where the annual rendezvous of the "pioneer people" is held. Some adults are learning it for the first time as part of their cultural heritage; others who learned it as children still use it to some extent today, albeit for quite specific special purposes, and still others, like the "pioneers," are dabbling in it, apparently just because it's a "fun thing to do."[2]

Nearly all these modern users of "Chinook Jargon as a Second Language" are doing so from dictionaries and textbooks without the benefit of pronunciation drills or native speaker example that the learning of a second language would normally provide. (A possible exception to this is the Grand Ronde programme.) Since the social context is also missing, there tends to be little variation of any kind, so that much of what is found today is a kind of modern standardized variety or "book Chinook" based on the 19th century dictionaries. The Grand Ronde programme and its proponents are trying to insist that their form is the "proper" one and would like to make it the standard for the whole Pacific Northwest area, refusing to take into account that the Grand Ronde form has always been considered by scholars as somewhat different, possibly closer to the Chinookan languages of the Columbia River area, and ignoring the fact that there is always variation in a pidgin or trade language, not only from one region to another, but even among speakers of different linguistic backgrounds living in the same region.

But it is with the older, i.e. 19th century and early 20th century, forms of the language that this paper is concerned. Any language as widespread as was Chinook Jargon is bound to have variation. The use of the Jargon spanned several thousand miles (Northern California to Alaska and the Pacific Coast to the Rocky Mountains) and was based on variables such as ethnicity, location, and purpose, so it is not surprising to find that it was used not only in a variety of linguistic registers but also in a variety of linguistic manifestations. The problem is how to get at this variation. The few living people who remember CJ as a viable tongue will say things like, "Well, we say so-and-so, but down [up, over] there, they said thus-and-such." Fine, but where does one go from there?

Travel books are a good place to start. I could fill up the rest of the space allotted for this paper citing quotations that comment on the differences found in the Jargon from one area to another, but that would be pointless.

Dictionaries and glossaries? Yes, indeed, especially Shaw (1909), who not only has the most complete lexicon of all the dictionaries available, but who also quotes Eels (1893) and his other sources on the subject of variation. The orthography varies considerably among and sometimes even within most of the lexicographical documents that I have examined, and this may or may not indicate phonological variation. Often these spelling variations seem to have been just different representations of the same phonemes, but whether or not this is true is almost possible to determine. However, my research has revealed both lexical and phonological differences from the two ends of the CJ areal spectrum, that is, from about mid-Oregon (the written material from southern Oregon

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[2] Since this paper was first written, I have learned that in Grand Ronde, OR, CJ is being taught as a second language in the reservation school, and indeed a whole programme has been instituted to encourage its use among all the Native Americans who live there.

and northern California is scarce) to southern Alaska, and between coastal and inland varieties (the east-west dimension is particularly well-documented). Because various dictionaries were written for various purposes, they also reveal registral difference, especially in the lexicon.

I have therefore chosen, in order to demonstrate some of the variation in Chinook Jargon, to use four dictionaries from four geographical areas, showing at least two different registers.

The primary source is Shaw (1909), published in Seattle. Because this dictionary is based on a number of preceding ones (Gibbs 1863, Eels 1893, etc.) and includes their commentaries on the Jargon and its structure, I have used it as the one against which the others are compared. It is certainly among the most exhaustive and comprehensive of all the available lexicons, glossaries, etc., and according to "El Comanchero" (W.S. Phillips), a turn-of-the-19th-to-20th-century Northwest author who was a fluent speaker of CJ, "the most nearly correct [*sic*] treatise bearing on the Jargon that I have ever seen."

The other three are perhaps more correctly termed "glossaries," although one, (LeJeune 1924) is part of a whole language manual for learning Chinook Jargon. Closest geographically to Shaw is Hibben (1908) from Victoria, but it is largely a version of Gibbs (1863) and therefore probably more typical of Oregon. Hibben published his dictionary every year from 1877 to 1931, and there are remarkably few differences among the different editions. Both Shaw and Hibben have English-Chinook sections as well as Chinook-English, though in Hibben's case, there is not a complete correspondence; that is to say, words that are in the Chinook-English section cannot always be found in the English-Chinook , which must have made life rather difficult for the users - it is certainly frustrating for the researcher!

The two remaining glossaries are removed in register as well as in distance. From Grand Ronde, Oregon, in 1985 comes a book celebrating the 125th anniversary of the arrival from Belgium of later-to-be Msgr. Adrien-Joseph Croquet, generally anglicized by his parishioners and everyone else who knew him as "Father Crockett." This book contains a catechism as well as a number of prayers in the Jargon, from which the author, Fr. Martinus Cawley, has extracted a "Vocabulary of the Chinook Jargon, Prayers, Hymns and Catechism." The vocabulary is based on the work of Demers, Blanchet and Saintonge, the last-named working from Yakima, WA, published in 1871. (Eels, quoted in Shaw, p. xiv, makes the comment that this dictionary was "intended more for use by the Catholics than by the public"; one can only assume that he means "Catholic priests"!). While far from complete, this little glossary is quite adequate to show some of the differences we will be looking at. Fr. Cawley has also included some useful comments about registral differences.

The fourth work used in this study is "Chinook Rudiments" (1924) by Fr. Jean-Marie Raphael LeJeune, published in Kamloops B.C. in 1924, apparently as a special edition of the Kamloops Wawa, a periodical usually thought to have ceased publication a year previously. This is an especially useful, although occasionally frustrating, work, as LeJeune not only lists all the common words, but divides them according to their most common syntactic use, comments on their etymologies when he knows them, and gives tips as to their usage. The frustration comes in trying to find exactly what one is looking for, as the glossary part is not set out in an ordinary alphabetical list, by rather by categories such as "The 163 original words" or "Chinook words more or less used but not included in the above list." There are also lists of what he calls "Hudson's Bay French words" and "English words." The latter list is very long (over 200 words), and he comments on the former that the words are "hardly ever used now." One then discovers, in reading the practice exercises, that they are indeed used, but in their Jargon from, not in the original French listed by LeJeune. The same applies to some, though by no means all, of the English words.

The time of these lexicons covers a span of about fifty years, from Crockett in the 1870s to LeJeune in the 1920s. This brings to light another type of variation: there are noticeably many more English words in LeJeune's vocabulary than in the others. Chinook Jargon was, by this time, undergoing relexification, and by the 1940s, in the available records we have of actual spoken or written utterances, it looks more like a "pidgin English" than the Chinookan and Nootkan-based trade jargon it started out as. That this process began soon after the turn of the century is evidenced by Shaw, who quotes Eels as saying that in 1904 there were 570 words of English origin in the Jargon (this seems somewhat excessive to me; even in 1924, LeJeune lists only 233) and that "many words of French and Indian origin have been dropped. The English words are used both by Indians and whites when they talk Chinook, and so have become part of the language" (Shaw, xii).

Let us now look more closely at the several types of variation. I should like to begin by noting some of the comments contained within those references I have used -- except Hibben, who makes no comments at all. His is definitely a "do-it-yourself" work, probably because, having copied it from Gibbs, he had no original comments to make.

First of all, variation in register. In chronological order, we must begin with Fr. Crockett in the middle of Oregon (though the voice is actually Fr. Cawley's, talking about Fr. Crockett and his work). Enlarging on the fact that he has reduced to 180 words Saintonge's list (the edition from which Crockett was working, and which Boas (1933) considered "the most scientific in the spelling," also remarking that it was "entirely independent of all the others"), Cawley says:

In the full list, one sees immediately that the Jargon, made for use among frontier men, did not shrink from "street-language" terms for such basics as animal excrement. In the council hall, one could speak elegantly in Jargon, and there is always dignity in the translations provided in government documents, but Jargon was not "high-brow" in everyday usage. This fact needs to be borne in mind if the reader is not to be misled by the special diction used in our own translation.

Shaw does not make many comments himself, but quotes others such as Eels and Gibbs at length. None of these others, however, pays much, if any, attention to differences of register. Shaw himself does note, apropos of words of Canadian French origin in the lexicon, "When the Hudson's Bay Company removed from Oregon and Washington these Canadians also largely left, so a large share of these words of French origin have been dropped" (xii). He goes on to say of French lexical items (which he distinguishes from Canadian French), "About thirty words are now in use [down from 153 in 1894], and these will soon be dropped, as they are seldom used, except by the old folks." So we have evidence of an age register, as well as of the contextual registers referred to by Cawley. Shaw (xvi) does quote Eels as saying, "The environment always affects the language," although it is probably not quite fair to cite this as evidence of register, as Eels was discussing the number of unusual words in Judge Swan's (1857) word list, and so probably intended the remark to refer to local lexical variation.

The most obvious example of registral variation to be found in these four sources is between the two priestly glossaries on the one hand, and the two general-use dictionaries on the other. Although Fr. LeJeune's vocabulary is general on the whole, it does include many religious terms that are found neither in Shaw nor in Hibben. Cawley, in his adaptation of Fr. Saintonge's dictionary, has eliminated all of the common words except those found in the prayers and the catechism, but has also included all the religious terms that would have been used by the missionaries and their flocks. While these differ in some minor details from those of LeJeune, they are in most respects the same.

As in most dialect work, it is the regional differences in lexicon and phonology that are the most eye- and ear-catching. Fr. Cawley, whose comments on the whole tend to the sociolinguistic, remarks, "Pronunciation seems to have differed a good deal from place to place." Fr. LeJeune was interested in teaching his parishioners to read and write the Jargon through the use of Duployan shorthand and thence to pronounce it to some sort of standard. (He used Duployan as a sort of phonemic system, which he interpreted through English - by 1924 there were probably not too many French speakers in the Kamloops area.) He does remark, however, in his 'Preface,' "...such modifications were made in pronunciation as suited tongues accustomed to different sounds." This of course refers to a type of variation in the Jargon that is already well-known, that native French speakers probably kept their nasalized vowels, non-rhotic English speakers still left out the /r/s, and speakers of the various indigenous languages kept their glottalized obstruents and lateral fricatives. And yet we also know that there was a good deal of compromise in the interests of comprehension, the modifications of which LeJeune speaks. Thus in any given area, some pronunciations would depend upon what were the native languages spoken there and who were the European settlers.

Because, except for the odd comment provided by Shaw from his authorities, we have to rely on the spelling for the pronunciation, dealing with "regional accents" in CJ presents problems. In the first place, one has to assume that the author was consistent in his orthography (most of them give pronunciation keys, although these are not always complete). Secondly, spelling is often influenced by the native language of the author. For example, words that seem to begin with [h] in the English dictionaries are spelled without <h> by Fathers Crockett (remember, he was really "Croquet") and LeJeune. Thus where the others have **hyak** 'fast, quick,' **hyas** 'large,

great,' and **hyiu** 'much, many,' the two French-speaking priests have [ajak], [ajas] and [aju], with slight differences in spelling such as <i> ~ <y>. But even they are not totally consistent, either within themselves or taken together. Fr. Crockett (or was it really Saintonge?) gives the negative **halo** as <helo>, indicating that [h] was present, while Fr. LeJeune has <elo>. Thus:

[h]/#_	**vs.**	**[0]/#_**	
Shaw		Crockett & LeJeune	
hyak 'fast, quick'		aiak	ayak
hyas 'large, great'		aias	ayaz
hyiu 'much, many'		aiu	ayoo
halo NEG		helo	elo

LeJeune also apparently follows the French rule (though not consistently) of unstressed vowel deletion, as in **muckamuck** 'food' and **huloima** 'different,' which he perceives as <makmak> and <h'loima>. Crockett, on the other hand, has <mokamok> and <holoima>:

Shaw		Crockett & LeJeune (spelling same as transcription)	
muckamuck	[mʌkəmʌk]	[mokamok]	[makmak]
huloima	[hʊloimə]	[holoima]	[hloma]
sapolil	[saepolɪl] 'wheat, flour'	[sapolil]	[saplel]
tenas	[tɛnəs] 'small, child'	[tanas]	[tanaz]
snass	[snaes] 'rain'	no entry	[snaz]

Fr. Cawley states, "The vowels, of course, [as in Saintonge's spelling] are pronounced as in Italian," thus giving quite different pronunciations from Shaw's as can be seen from the transcriptions above, especially in the first three words.

There is some evidence also from LeJeune's orthography that he sometimes has [z] in final position where the others have [s], as in the examples above **tanaz** for **tenas** and **snaz** for **snass**, and in **gliz** for **gleas** 'fat, grease.' But sometimes final [s] becomes [sh], as in **kaltash** for **cultus** 'bad, useless,' while at other times the reverse is true, as when Shaw's and Hibben's **kloshe** 'good, beautiful, etc.' is LeJeune's **tloos** (and note the orthographical representation of the lateral fricative which in the "English" renditions becomes [kl]). Cawley's final sibilants are "standard," if one may use that term here, as seen in **tenas** in the chart above, as well as by his spellings **kaltas** (cultus) and **tlush** (kloshe) (though note the initial lateral fricative here as in LeJeune). It is also quite possible that the pronunciations given by LeJeune simply follow local pronunciation (Dale Kincaid, p.c.). This is just one of many things that need further investigation.

Yet another notable feature that occurs, mainly in Crockett's list but occasionally also in LeJeune's, is the rendering of barred lambda as [tl] versus the [kl] of the dictionaries written by native speakers of English. I have commented briefly on this above, but further examples are:

Shaw		Crockett & LeJeune	
klahowya	[all purpose salutation]	tlaHowiam	klahoyiam
klaska	III PL	tlaska	klaska
kliminawhit	'to tell a lie'	tleminwhit	tlemeno

Thomason (1983) has remarked that Bishop Demers' orthography indicates that the French heard allophonic differences that seem to have escaped the English (this agrees with Boas' comment on Saintonge cited earlier, and is certainly true of Saintonge as represented by Cawley). The English have never been noted for their ability to cope with foreign languages!

It seems that stress, as well, varied from place to place. LeJeune makes no overt comment about stress in general, but he does mark it on words of more than one syllable. Shaw treats stress the same way. Cawley, on the other hand, does not mark stress, but states, "Most words of two syllables have accent on the second," which leaves one wondering about polysyllabic words like **konamokst** 'both' and **nawitka** 'yes, indeed, to be sure,' which are,

according to Shaw, stressed on the first and second syllables respectively; LeJeune stresses them the other way around. LeJeune also stresses his **ayak, ayaz** and **ayoo** on the first syllable, while Shaw stresses the corresponding **hyak, hyas** and **hyiu** on the second. (Interestingly, normal English stress patterns seem to have taken over where **hyak** is used in the name of the "Hyak Anvil Battery" of New Westminster, B.C. and the New Westminster girls' basketball team, where as far as I have ever heard, the stress is on the first syllable.

As one last piece of evidence for the great variation of pronunciations possible for one item over the area of CJ, let us consider the Jargon words for "devil," where the variations in spelling as given by Shaw certainly indicate, for the most part, variation in the phonetic realization of two French etymons, **diable** without the article, and **le diable** with. From the first, we find **dahblo** (or is it somehow < Sp. diablo?), **diaub/dieaub/deob** and **derb**, as well as **yaub** with deletion of the initial consonant and from the second, **lejaub** (Shaw's headword for the entry), **leiom/lejaum** and **leiop**.

The last major type of variation that I wish to discuss is lexical. Neither Hibben nor Cawley makes much mention of regional variation in lexicon, but Shaw has many such notes, and Fr. LeJeune has a complete section of vocabulary headed "Words used in other districts." He says that his first knowledge of Chinook Jargon came to him from "flying sheets" given to him by Bishop Durien so that he could study the Jargon on his journey from LeHavre to New York, across the continent to San Francisco and thence to Kamloops in 1879. It is likely from the date that these lists were based on Demers, and would therefore contain many items peculiar to the Oregon Territory and possibly the coastal area. Further on, LeJeune comments of this list, "Some of these words are not used up the country [where he was], while the [*sic*] are in the lower and coast districts." He has included most of these words in the second part of his vocabulary, "Chinook words more or less used, not included in the above list." When comparing LeJeune's list of words used outside the interior of B.C. with Shaw (who has included etymologies), it becomes apparent that many of the words are borrowed from Chinook and neighbouring languages. It is therefore hardly surprising that they either had not made their way up into the Interior, or had been replaced with local words. That LeJeune quickly adapted to the variety of the Jargon used where he was now living is evidenced by the fact that in his word lists he includes several lexical items not to be found in the other dictionaries. For examples of these categories, see Appendix A.

As a final demonstration of the several kinds of variation, I would draw your attention to Appendix B, which contains two versions of the Lord's Prayer in CJ, one the usual one (at least in my part of the world, i.e., B.C. and the state of Washington), the other, the one given in the Father Crockett memorial. The interlinear translations here are mine, though both sources do give their own more or less literal translations. I have also given the King James Bible/Book of Common Prayer version and a French version, the one I learned many years ago, as these were probably the main sources for the Jargon translations by Protestant, Anglican, or Roman Catholic missionaries.

One last comment as to the present use of Chinook Jargon. Apart from the New Westminster organizations mentioned above, the canoe used by the RCMP in 1997's "vision quest" was called "Skookum Kalitan" or 'brave/strong arrow'; the former Vancouver basketball team, the Grizzlies, had as part of their logo the phrase Hyas chetwoot, which really means 'great black bear.' (Shaw's word for grizzly is siam, but that might have caused confusion.) And just look around you for street names, business names, topographical names. Chinook Jargon is alive and surviving in British Columbia!

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APPENDIX A. LEXICAL VARIATION

I. Some of LeJeune's "words used in other districts" with Shaw's etymologies and comments:
amo't 'strawberry' [amota (Chinookan family) - in list of words "of only local use"]
cheet-woot 'black bear' [chetwoot (Salish) - same list]
kwana'is 'whale' [Hibben gives ehkoli; Shaw has no words for whale in the main vocabulary, just in the English-Chinook list, where he gives variations on both these words with no comment.

II. Some words in LeJeune not found elsewhere (with the "common" word):

ayaz 'all' [this seems to be the equivalent of hyas 'large, great' in Shaw; the "common" word is konaway.]

bear 'bear' [the common word is chetwoot 'black bear' the most numerous variety in the Pacific Northwest area]

Canada man 'Canadian' [nobody else bothers to distinguish us from "Boston men"]

haha 'awful, divine, perfect, glory, etc.' [Shaw gives kahkwa saghalie tyee 'like God']

spa'kram 'flower' [the common expression is kloshe tupso 'beautiful plant']

APPENDIX B. THE LORD'S PRAYER

["H" = Hibben, "C" = Crockett/Cawley, KJV = King James Version, F= French]

H **Nesika papa klaksta mitlite kopa saghalie**
I pl. father who stays PREP above
C **Nsaika Papa, SeHali mika mitlite**
I pl. father above II sg stay
KJV "Our Father , who art in Heaven,
F -Notre Père, qui êtes aux cieux

H **kloshe kopa nesika tumtum mika nem**
good PREP I pl. heart II sg name
C **tlush pus kanewa telikom komtoks maika nem**
good if all people know II sg name
KJV hallowed be Thy name,
F que Votre nom soit sanctifié,

H **kloshe mika tyee kopa konaway tillicum**
good II sg chief PREP all people
C **tlush pus aiak nsaika nanich kopa maika**
good if forthwith I pl. look PREP II sg
KJV Thy kingdom come
F que Votre règne arrive,

H **kloshe mika tumtum kopa illahie kahkwa kopa saghalie**
good II sg will PREP earth as PREP above
C **Okuk tlaska kopa saHali, tlaska komtoks maika wawa pi tlush kakwa nsaika kopa**
those III pl. PREP above III pl. know II sg word and good as I pl. PREP
elehi
earth
KJV Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.
F que Votre volonté soit faite sur la terre comme aux cieux.

H **Potlatch konaway sun nesaika muckamuck**
give every day I pl food
C **Okuk san, pi kanewe san potlach nsaika mokamok**
This day and every day give I pl food
KJV Give us this day our daily bread
F Donnez-nous aujourd'hui notre pain quotidien

H **Spose nesika mamook masachie wake mika hyas solleks**
If I pl do evil NEG II sg very angry
C **Pi tlush maika kopet komtoks nsaika mesache**
And good IIsg stop know I pl evil
KJV And forgive us our trespasses
F Et pardonnez-nous nos offenses

H **pe spose klaska masachie kopa nesaika, wake nesaika solleks kopa klaska**
and if III pl evil PREP I pl NEG I pl angry PREP IIIpl
C **spos tlaksta mamook kata nsaika**
if someone do something I pl
KJV as we forgive those who trespass against us.
F comme nous pardonnons ceux qui nous ont offensés.

H [line not there]
C **pi mamuk skukom nsaika tomtom pus wek nsaika mamuk mesache**
and make great I pl heart, will for NEG I pl do evil
KJV And lead us not into temptation,
F Et ne nous induisez point en tentation,

H **Mahsh siah kopa nesaika konaway masachie. Kloshe kahkwe.**
move far PREP I pl all evil. Good so.
C **Pe mamuk tlak nsaika kopa masache. Tlk[3] [tlusk kakwa].**
And make broken I pl PREP evil. Good so.
KJV but deliver us from evil. Amen."[4]
F mail délivrez nous du mal. Ainsi soit-il.-

[3] All the prayers in Cawley end with this abbreviation.
[4] The doxology, "For thine is the kingdom...," is not used in the Roman Catholic church; both versions occur in the Anglican services; none of the CJ versions have it - many of the early missionaries were either RC or C of E.