

'Klahowiam Mr Smis': Collocation and Context of Situation in the Interpretation of a Chinook Jargon Text.

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Most of the previous work on Chinook Jargon has dealt with spoken text (see for example Boas, 1883; Drechsel, 1981; Grant, 1945; Jacobs, 1932; Silverstein, 1972; Thomason, 1983). The problems involved in dealing with an original written text<sup>1</sup> are quite different, because of the heavy dependance of meaning in CJ on various linguistic factors, not the least of which was the physical and social context of the utterance. Hale (1846:643) remarked of Jargon, 'A good deal is expressed in the tone of voice, the look, and the gesture of the speaker.' More recently, Drechsel (1981:99) has commented, 'Much understanding depended on the extralinguistic context, including the speaker's tone of voice, looks, gestures and other body language, as well as the particular speech situations.' The reason for this reliance on context is found in the lexicon. As Drechsel (96f.) explains, CJ had a 'parsimonious vocabulary of semantically and grammatically ambiguous, generically defined entries (core lexicon); polysemy due to their functions in different linguistic and extralinguistic contexts and/or metaphorical extension.' A glance through Shaw's (1909) dictionary<sup>2</sup> is all that is needed to exemplify this statement. An early comment on the multiplicity of meanings inherent in many CJ words was made by the Rev. Herbert Beaver, Hudson's Bay Chaplain at Fort Vancouver in the late 1830's (see Jessett 1958). In a letter to Benjamin Harrison, Hudson's Bay House, London, dated March 10, 1837, Beaver complained of his inability to communicate

1 As opposed to formal writing such as that found in the *Kamloops Wawa* or in translations of hymns, prayers, Bible stories, etc.

2 This dictionary is by far the most complete of those I have seen, as Shaw combined all the features of his predecessors and quoted their comments at length. For other dictionaries consulted see *References*.

effectively with his Indian charges:<sup>3</sup>

The word 'Cock-shot' belongs to every part of speech, and signifies everything relating to shooting; hunting, killing, fighting, striking, wounding, etc, etc. whether men or other animals. The word 'Tan-ap' signifies 'little' in its various acceptations, and everything that is little from a child to every species of young. Thus 'Tan-ap Sun', the speaker pointing to the East, means early in the morning; raising the hand a little in the same direction the day a little more advanced; pointing to the west, the evening. 'Klout-che-man' is the term used to express the whole female sex in whatever degree of relationship, whether rational or irrational. (Jessett, 38f.)

It would be hard to find a clearer statement of the role of extralinguistic context in the interpretation of Chinook Jargon.

Not only are CJ words polysemous, they can often function as several parts of speech, and since CJ has no inflectional morphemes, function is indicated on the surface largely by word order, as the following questions illustrate:<sup>4</sup>

- |     |      |                                     |         |          |
|-----|------|-------------------------------------|---------|----------|
| (1) | Nika | kumtuks                             | Chinook | wawa?    |
|     | 2 SG | 'know'                              | 'CJ'    | 'speech' |
|     |      | 'Do you understand Chinook Jargon?' |         |          |
|     |      |                                     |         |          |
| (2) | Nika | kumtuks                             | wawa    | Chinook? |
|     | 2 SG | 'know'                              | 'speak' | 'CJ'     |
|     |      | 'Can you speak Chinook Jargon?'     |         |          |

In (1), *wawa* functions as the second element of the nominal compound *Chinook wawa*, whereas in (2) it completes the verb phrase *kumtuks wawa*.

Word order, however, is not infallible as an indicator of function, as may be seen in the ambiguous statement, *yaka kumtuks wawa*, which may have four possible

3 The three words discussed here were later written, respectively, *kokshut*, *tenas* and *kloochman* although like all CJ words they have several orthographic variants.

4 All glosses are from Shaw unless otherwise indicated.

structures, two with closely related meanings.

- (3) Yaka kumtuks wawa  
 NP NP  
 Subj PredNom  
 'He/she [is] an orator'
- (4) Yaka kumtuks wawa  
 NP AjP  
 Subj PredAj  
 'He/she [is] eloquent'
- (5) Yaka kumtuks wawa  
 NP VP NP  
 Subj Vb Obj  
 'He/she understands speech'
- (6) Yaka kumtuks wawa  
 NP VP  
 Subj Vb  
 'He/she knows how to talk'

The last is the most likely interpretation if the context is unknown.<sup>5</sup> Lexical collocation must also be taken into account as, in common with other pidgins, CJ expands its small core lexicon by compounding and circumlocution.<sup>6</sup> Thus the sentence *Yaka halo kumtuks*, which appears to have (and indeed could have) the structure

- (7) Yaka halo kumtuks  
 NP NEG VP  
 'He/she [does] not understand'

could equally well, given the right context, be analysed

- (8) Yaka halo kumtuks  
 NP NEG AjP  
 'He/she [is] unaware' or 'It[is] unintelligible'

<sup>5</sup> Notice in examples (3) and (4) that CJ does not have a lexical form corresponding to stative *be* in English; *mitlite* is often used like existential *be*.

<sup>6</sup> The prime example of this is probably found in the expression *mahsh lametsin kopa lemah yaka kloshe kopa smallpox*, (lit.) 'Put medicine in arm it good against smallpox.'

where *halo* functions like the English negative prefix *un-*.

If all these factors -- polysemy, multifunctionality, and lexical collocation -- must be taken into account when dealing with the spoken language where (at least in the original circumstances) the extralinguistic context was clear, they become much more important when dealing with written texts. Firth (1930:174) points out, 'In written language the context is entirely verbal and referred to an assumed common background of experience.' But what happens when the 'assumed common background of experience' is missing, as is the case when one is dealing with old texts? Lyons (1977:578) says 'Problems of spatio-temporal reference arise when the participants are separated in space and time'; how much more are these problems compounded when dealing with a language like Chinook Jargon, which is so heavily dependant on an understanding of the context, both linguistic and extralinguistic.

The text referred to in the title is a letter written in the year 1881 by 'Jack' in Quileute, W.T. to 'Mr Smis' in Seattle (see Appendix I). A photocopy of this letter was given to me by a colleague, along with a first attempt at an interlinear and a free translation by an anonymous consultant. A first comparison of the interlinear and free translations with the text revealed that they did not seem to fit properly. The free translation was too free and some of the glosses in the interlinear did not agree with those accepted by most dictionaries and glossaries of CJ. As well, some of the transcription did not make sense in terms of CJ structure, but these misinterpretations were mostly attributable to difficulties with reading the text, for reasons explained below. Excited by the prospect of analysing a piece of 'real' CJ and inspired by Firth's dictum (1930:175f.) that 'to translate mere words is a vicious waste of time,' I set about the task of producing a translation that would not only be as accurate as possible but would also fit in with the historical and social context as far as it could be determined. This paper deals with my ensuing attempts to relate the apparent content of the letter to its time and place of origin, over a century ago in Washington Territory.

The first problem to be overcome was the physical condition of the letter. Although the photocopy is amazingly clear, time has wreaked its havoc, and the paper appears to be badly foxed. A few (apparently original) inkblots and fold marks add to the difficulty

of decipherment. The handwriting is an exceedingly careful copperplate, in itself easy to read. With the aid of a magnifying glass and a strong light, I was able to transcribe the letter to my own satisfaction, and thus clear up a number of the puzzles posed by the first interlinear translation. For example, Jack only used capital letters at the beginnings of paragraphs (and not always then) or for proper names, so it is often difficult, reading the letter with the naked eye, to tell whether a dot is in fact a full stop or whether it is one of the many tiny marks caused by foxing over the years or by a spluttery pen nib at the time of writing. And although the penmanship is generally clear, various spots and fold marks have in some places almost obliterated the writing. I am satisfied that the transcription I have provided is as accurate a one as can be achieved from the photocopy in my possession. However, I would like at some time to try either to get a look at the original, or have the copy cleaned up in order to be completely sure.

The next stage in the interpretation was to prepare a new interlinear translation. Because of the polysemy involved in the lexicon of CJ, it was necessary to do this in very general terms, and to make a small accompanying glossary of terms having more than two or three meanings for easy reference. This having been done, the actual interpretation could begin.

Although at the time my progress was more of a meander than a bee-line, I will deal with the letter here sentence by sentence.

*Nika tenas wake tenas sick.* This sentence presents no problems to speak of. *Nika* is the first person singular pronoun, all cases, and *tenas* means either 'small, little, few' or by extension 'child, the young of any animal' (but in the latter case the animal is always specified, e.g. 'foal' is *tenas kuitan*). *Wake* is one of the two negatives used in CJ, the other being *halo*; they seem to be used almost interchangeably, though Shaw (1909:6) says:

Probably properly 'wake' means no, and 'halo' all gone, but on Puget Sound 'halo' is used for no, the same as 'wake' is in Oregon and other localities. Custom uses 'halo' in some combinations and 'wake' in others, and both in some.

Jack uses *halo* throughout except in this first sentence and once near the end of the letter. The position of the next occurrence of *tenas*, preceding *sick*,

indicates that it is functioning as an adverbial modifying *sick*, making a compound adjective *tenas sick* which could be glossed as 'ailing'. As usual in CJ, the intensive stative verb *be* is not represented. This sentence can thus be translated, 'My child is not ailing.'

*Yaka skookum, pe nika kloochman halo tenas sick.* *Yaka* is the third singular personal pronoun, all persons, all cases. Since no name is mentioned, we do not know whether the child is a boy or a girl, but presumably Mr Smith did, and would read 'he' or 'she' accordingly. (From internal evidence further on in the letter, it seems likely that it is in fact a boy. *Skookum*, commonly used as a modifier, means generally 'strong, fit tough' etc. *Pe* is one of the two conjunctions in CJ; it serves a co-ordinating function. Usually glossed 'and' or 'but', it sometimes seems to mean 'then' and occasionally 'or'. *Nika* here must be possessive, as it is followed by *kloochman*, always a noun. *Kloochman* means 'female' (see the Rev. Mr. Beaver's comments above), though like *tenas* it is always followed by the name of the species if non-human, e.g. *kloochman kuitan* 'mare'. It also refers, if unmodified, to the adult female; thus 'girl' is *tenas kloochman* and 'filly' is *tenas kloochman kuitan*. *Halo*, as stated above, is one of the two CJ negatives, and the one that Jack commonly uses. *Tenas sick* has been discussed in the context of the previous sentence. This sentence could then be rendered 'He/she is fine and my wife is not ailing [either].'

*Yaka skookum.* A truly simple sentence. Since *yaka* obviously refers to *kloochman* in the preceding sentence, there is no gender problem. The sentence reads 'She is fine.'

*Chee nika copet potlatch kopa nika tillicums.* *Chee* is a modifier indicating recent time, and may function adverbially or adjectivally; here it is obviously an adverb as no nominal form follows. The next phrase could be ambiguous and the interpretation hangs on the full stop at the end, and on the beginning of the next sentence. *Nika*, 1 SG, could be 'I' or 'mine'; *copet* can be a verb or a modifier; *potlatch* can be noun or verb. Thus *nika copet potlatch* could be glossed either 'my only gift' or 'I stop giving'. *Kopa nika tillicums* does not help, as it should mean 'to my people' in either case. *Kopa* is the all-purpose preposition of CJ; here it has to be glossed either 'to' or 'from', and 'to' is the more likely if *copet* is in fact a verb.

And so it would appear, because we then come to a full stop, and the next sentence begins with an adverbial phrase. The suggested interpretation of this sentence is therefore 'Recently I stopped giving to my relatives/my friends.'

*Moxt moon alta nika kwansome potlatch kopa nika tillicums.* *Moxt moon alta* can be seen to be an adverbial phrase: *moxt* 'two' modifying *moon* 'month' followed by *alta*, the present tense marker also used as an adverbial meaning 'now, at the present time'. *Nika* here functions as subject; it cannot be possessive since *potlatch* is obviously the verb in this sentence, modified by *kwansome*. *Kwansome*, according to Shaw, means 'always, forever, eternal, continual, everlasting, perpetual, unceasing'; apart from having these fairly specific meanings, it also seems to be used as a sort of continuous action marker that can often be translated by a progressive in English. *Kopa nika tillicums* constitutes the same phrase as in the previous sentence. Thus this sentence likely reads '[For] two months now I have been giving to my relatives/friends.'

*Pe kwansome yaka hehe, kwansome yaka mamook halo ickta mamook kopet hehe pe klokwolly.* *Pe* and *kwansome* have already been discussed. The use of *yaka*, 3 SG, seems odd here, as the anaphoric referent is surely *tillicums* at the end of the preceding sentence. One has to assume that Jack used only one third person pronoun for both singular and plural, relying on the context to indicate number. *Hehe* means any kind of amusement, laughter, and so forth, and can also be used as a verb, as it is here. *Ickta* is generally considered to be the interrogative pronoun 'what', while as a plural noun it usually means 'thing'; however, Shaw (p.7) says 'occasionally the singular *icktah* is used, though not often' (see also footnote 7). This must be one of the occasions, as the interrogative function does not fit here, and Shaw's English-Chinook glossary (42f) gives *Halo icktah* for 'nothing' (although he does not list this compound under either of its component elements in the main dictionary). *Mamook* is the multi-purpose verb of action, often translatable simply by 'do'. *Kopet*

7 *Nika tillicum* is always glossed 'my relatives' but in the plural the sense seems to be less clear. *Tillicum* is one of two words in CJ that may be pluralized, the other being *icktah* 'thing', which in the plural has the connotation of 'belongings'.

this time apparently means 'only' (in a general sense) as it follows the verb *mamook*; *hehe*<sup>8</sup> seems to be a nominal here as it is conjoined to *klokwolly* 'Wolf dances' or 'Wolf dancing'. This last word caused me considerable puzzlement, as it is not in any of the dictionaries I consulted. It was at this point that I decided that some knowledge of Quileute culture was going to be needed for an accurate interpretation of this letter; the problem was quickly solved by referring to Powell and Jensen (1976). The structure of the second part of the sentence is also unusual in that it apparently contravenes the normal SVC word order of CJ. One would expect *kwansome yaka mamook halo ickta kopet hehe pe klokwolly*. It is difficult to render this sentence in clear grammatical English; however, I would suggest 'And they are always having fun, they work at nothing except games and Wolf dances.'

*Pe nika kwansome kloshe nanitch kopa nika tillicums pe konaway siwash.* The first three words have already been dealt with. *Kloshe nanitch* is a compound with various sorts of 'looking after' as well as admonitory connotations; *nanitch* by itself is a purely sensory verb of sight and (less often) sound, but when preceded by *kloshe* it acquires a whole host of extended meanings. It appears to need *kopa* preceding its object when it functions as a transitive verb; thus *nika tillicums pe kon away siwash* is the compound object. The sentence reads 'But I always look after my relatives/friends and all [the] Indians.'

*Kwansome nika potlatch hyiu muckamuck pe halo tolo ickt bit.* *Potlatch* must be verbal here as there is no other word in the first clause that can perform that function. *Hyiu* signifies a quantity, ranging from simply 'more than one' to its commonest meaning, 'plenty, a lot'. *Muckamuck* is anything to eat or drink. In the second clause, *tolo* 'earn, gain' is always used verbally as far as I can tell, and *ickt bit* 'one dime' is clearly its object. This sentence therefore reads 'I am always providing a lot of food and do not profit one dime.'

8 According to the *Guide to the Province of British Columbia for 1877-8* (Hibben 1877), *mamook hehe* means 'to amuse'. However, the structure of this sentence does not easily admit this analysis although the connotation fits well.

*Nika kloshe nanich kopa Wesley spouse yaka chaco kopa Quileute.* The only new lexical items in this sentence are *spouse* 'if, when', also acting as a sort of a sort of conditional marker, and *chaco* 'come'. The main question posed by this sentence was *Who was Wesley?* My first source (Powell and Jensen 1976) mentioned an A. W. Smith who established a school at La Push in 1882. The context of further references to 'Wesley' in the letter made it seem likely that this was the person in question, a suspicion that became almost a certainty with the discovery that 'A. W.' stood for 'Alanson Wesley' (Pettitt 1950:26).<sup>10</sup> The sentence is thus translatable as 'I [will] look after Wesley when he comes to Quileute.'

As this sentence is long, I have broken it into parts.

(1) *Pe alka spouse mika chaco kopa Quileute: alka* is no doubt *alki*, the sign of the future tense. The changed final vowel is probably through contamination from *alta*, the present tense marker. Both words can be used adverbially. In this sentence, 'sometime' or 'by and by' might be adequate glosses, or it may be that *alka* is simply putting the whole sentence into a future time frame. The rest of this part of the sentence is quite transparent.

(2) *Nika kloshe nanich kopa mika pe lolo mika kopa kloshe illahe.* *Nika* is obviously the subject of both *kloshe nanich* and *lolo*. *Lolo* has the generic meaning 'carry', but here the connotation seems to be 'bring' or 'convey'. *Illahe* means anything to do with land, from the soil itself to a field or farm, to a district, region, or country. Preceded by *kloshe* it seems to

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<sup>9</sup> Pettitt (1950) gives the date of the founding of the school as 1883.

<sup>10</sup> Were 'Mr Smis', the A. J. Smith who signed the notation at the end of the letter, and Wesley's father all the same man? I have not been able to answer that question yet. All I have been able, so far, to discover about Wesley's father is that he was a schoolteacher from New York state who came to Washington Territory via Wisconsin and Dakota Territory; in 1876, Mr Smith senior was employed as a cook for the Indian Agency at Neah Bay (Pettitt, p.26). But as he was literate, he may well have risen in the Agency service and have been employed in Seattle in 1881.

have had an especially favorable meaning,<sup>11</sup> somewhat in the sense of belonging to one's own people. I have no evidence whatsoever, but just a very strong feeling that it may refer to the village of La Push itself, located at the mouth (*la bouche*) of the Quillayute River, and by all accounts a *kloshe illahe* indeed. Allowing for this flash of intuition, then, sentence J. in its entirety would read 'And if you come to Quileute sometime, I will look after you and take you to the village.'

*Spouse Wesley klap kopa Quileute nika konamoxt kopa yaka mamook tsum kopa konaway siwash.* *Spouse* could probably be interpreted here as 'when', since from the preceding two sentences (even if the historical context were not known) it seems certain that Wesley was in fact going to Quileute. *Klap* means 'find, arrive', surely the latter in this context. *Konamoxt* is a blend of *konaway* 'all' and *moxt* 'two' thus 'both', but it can also be glossed 'together', which seems more likely in this case, followed as it is by the preposition *kopa* and the 3 SG pronoun *yaka*, yielding 'I together with him'. *Mamook* has already been discussed; *tsum* by itself means any kind of mark or coloration, as well as writing and various other combinations of background and pattern. The compound *mamook tsum* denotes various activities involved in putting marks on paper or other material; two such meanings are 'enroll' and 'enumerate'. Because of the following preposition *kopa*, the best gloss here seems to be 'make a list of' especially when followed by *konaway siwash* 'all the Indians' -- a particularly likely occupation for a prospective schoolmaster and his native mentor. For this sentence we then have 'When Wesley arrives at Quileute he and I will make a list of all the band members.' (In terms of the sentence structure, *mamook tsum kopa konaway siwash* could just as well read 'write to all the band members', but it is unlikely that many of them could have read what was written to them at that time; one has the feeling that Jack was a leader and an exception in his literacy in CJ. In any case, if Wesley and Jack were right there with them, it would hardly have been necessary to write to them.)

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<sup>11</sup> The term *kloshe illahe* was used in reference to an Indian village near Bedwell Harbour on Pender Island in about 1896, where it was shortened to 'the Klosshie' (Elliott, forthcoming).

*Pe nika tenas sick, moxt sun nika halo get up.*  
The first half of the sentence is ambiguous, taken by itself, and the ambiguity is structural:

(9) Nika tenas sick alta  
1 SG NP Aj PRES  
Poss Subj PredAj Av  
'My child is sick at present'

(10) Nika tenas sick alta  
1 SG AjP PRES  
Subj PredAj Av  
'I am a little sick at present'

However, the second clause disambiguates the first: 'For two days I [did] not get up.' The whole sentence can thus be interpreted 'I am not very well just now, I didn't get out of bed for two days.'

This sentence is preceded in the original letter by a sort of equal sign as well as an overly large full stop. These marks are perfectly clear and quite obviously deliberately made, but I can offer no logical explanation as to their significance, if any.<sup>12</sup> As this sentence is long and difficult to interpret, it too is better dealt with in two parts.

(1) *Tenas alka klonas ickt moon pe sitkum, nika klatawa kopa Queets pe Ho.* *Tenas* here acts as an intensifier attached to the future marker *alka*; Shaw gives 'in a little while' for *tenas alki*. *Klonas*, he says, is 'an expression of uncertainty or doubt' and may be glossed 'might, may' (among other things). *Ickt moon pe sitkum* is literally 'one month and [a] half', hence, six weeks. The rest of this part of the sentence presents no problem (*klatawa* meaning loosely 'go') except that I had no idea of the location or the significance of *Queets* and *Ho*. I soon discovered (Pettitt 1950, and Powell and Jensen 1976) that *Queets* and *Hoh* are both rivers and Quileute settlements south of La Push.

(2) *iskum kopa siwash lolo kopa Quileute mamook sealskin.* This part of the sentence looks difficult at first because of the structure. There seems to be either one element too many or one too few; i.e. either the first occurrence of *kopa* is unnecessary, or there should be something between *siwash* and *lolo*:

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<sup>12</sup> The more frivolous side of my mind suggests 'All things being equal' as an introduction to this sentence suggested by the '='.

(11) *iskum kopa siwash lolo kopa Quileute...*  
V PREP NP V PREP NP  
'get' ? 'Indian''bring' ? Quileute

This analysis assumes, however, that *kopa* is always a preposition, when, in fact, it is not. It can also be used as an adverb of place. In speech, the difference of function would be clear: 'When thus used as an adverb, the accent is on the last syllable which is prolonged.' (Shaw, p.12). In writing, this prosodic difference cannot be realised. *Lolo* means not only 'carry' or 'bring' but also 'fetch'. *Mamook*, in this context followed by *sealskin*, likely has connotations of 'work'. Sentence M. may then be interpreted as 'In a little while, maybe six weeks, I will go to Queets and Ho to get band members there to come back to Quileute to work on sealskins.'<sup>13</sup>

The second page of the letter begins with the sentence *Pe nika Ow Henry yaka kloshe, halo tenas sick.* No problems arise here, as the only new word is *Ow* 'younger brother', and there are no structural or contextual difficulties. The only point of grammatical interest is the use of the reinforcing or recapitulatory (Quirk et al. 1980:970) pronoun *yaka* after a subject nominal, a normal feature of CJ syntax.<sup>14</sup> The translation is 'And my younger brother Henry [is] fine, not ailing.'

*Pe nika mama yaka kloshe pe kwansome mitlight kopa nika house.* The only new item in this sentence (but see footnote 5) is *mitlight* having a general existential meaning; it can be translated in a number of ways, e.g. 'be, stay, rest, live'. This sentence then means 'My mother is fine and still lives at my place.'

*Pe John yaka kwansome k[1]oshe nanich kopa nika pe potlatch pire stick.* The beginning of the sentence presents no difficulties. The original translation

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<sup>13</sup> Sealing was one of the traditional occupations of the Quileute, especially after the establishment of the fur trade in the Pacific north-west. In 1881, when this was written, as many as 8,000 sealskins were traded in a season (Pettitt, 1950).

<sup>14</sup> Untypically, this feature does not occur when Wesley is the subject, *Spouse Wesley klap kopa Quileute...*  
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assumed that the subject of *potlatch* in the second clause was *nika*, but the structure, compared to that of previous sentences would seem to indicate 'John' as the giver of the *pire stick*<sup>15</sup>. My first reaction to this compound was that 'fire stick' must equal 'gun' (the result, no doubt, of watching too many old western movies on TV), and indeed the first translator had so interpreted it. A quick search of the dictionaries and glossaries soon revealed, however, that 'gun' in CJ is either *musket* or *kalipeen* (from Fr. *carbine*), and that *pire stick* is in fact simply 'firewood' -- which better fits the feeling of the letter, in any case. Thus, this sentence tells us, 'And John always looks after me and gives [me] firewood.'

*Howeattle yaka kwansome ickt tumtum kopa nika kwansome kunamoxt kopa nika spose ickta mamook*. This sentence presented problems both contextual and structural. The original transcript reads *How-kwut'l yaka . . .*, translated as 'I can't he . . .' in the interlinear version and left out of the free version altogether. The wording in the photocopy was decipherable as *Howeattle*, but I was then faced with another mystery man (having dismissed 'John' as a relative of Jack and Henry). Back then to Quileute history, to find that one of the Quileute chiefs appointed by the treaty of 1855 was How-yaks (Powell and Jensen) or How-yat'l (Pettitt), and that *Howeattle* is now a Quileute surname. Assuming that Chief *Howeattle* was somewhere between thirty-five and fifty years old at the time of the treaty, he could easily have still been alive in 1881. The tone of the sentence also seems to imply someone who is respected and looked up to. In any case, *Howeattle* was of one *tumtum* with the writer, and here we encounter one of the most abstract and at the same time one of the most useful words in CJ.<sup>16</sup> It can mean the heart not only in the physical sense, but in all of its many metaphorical senses; it also refers to anything related to the mind or soul. The rest of the

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<sup>15</sup> This lexical item is of interest on phonological grounds, as the first element is usually spelled *piah*, CJ not normally containing an [r].

<sup>16</sup> And in the B.C. dialect of Canadian English. This morning (8 June 1984), I heard myself saying 'It's not his *tumtum*,' meaning 'He doesn't deal with that sort of thing' (or more colloquially, 'That's not his bag.')

sentence reinforces the notion of *Howeattle*'s approval of the writer's ideas: *kwansome kunamoxt kopa nika* 'always together with me' *spose ickta mamook*. The last two words are a phrase, glossed 'what's the matter?'; with *spose* preceding, a likely translation might be 'whatever happens'. For this sentence as a whole, then, we have '*Howeattle* is always of one mind with me, always supports me no matter what happens.'

*Nika tikegh spose mika potlatch kopa nika tenas delate kloshe whistle*. *Tikegh* has a number of meanings denoting various degrees of volition; the commonest are 'like' and 'wish'. *Potlatch* is again a verb, as there is no other word in this clause that can function verbally. The end of the sentence presents a second case of structural ambiguity:

(12)	Kopa	nika	tenas	delate	kloshe	whistle
	PREP	1 SG	Aj	Av	Aj	NP
	Indirect Obj		Direct Object			
	'to me'		'small very good whistle'			

(13)	Kopa	nika	tenas	delate	kloshe	whistle
	PREP	1 SG	NP	Av	Aj	NP
		Poss				
	Indirect object			Direct object		
	'to my child'			'very good whistle'		

If we assume that the child is more likely than the father to want a whistle, then (13) is the correct analysis, and the child is probably male, as in the late nineteenth century a whistle would not have been considered a very proper toy for a girl child. It is, however, entirely possible that Jack wanted a whistle for himself, but in that case, *delate kloshe tenas whistle* would surely be the more likely word order. Based on that assumption, I have opted for 'I [would] like [it] if you [would] give my child a really good whistle.'

*Wake kakwa mitlight kopa okoke make house*. *Wake* is used for the negative here, where it means simply 'not'. *Kakwa* is used for comparison, and sometimes for 'because'; it clearly has the former meaning here. *Mitlight* is again existential. *Okoke* is a demonstrative, either pronoun or determiner. Here it modifies *make house* a compound made up of *make* 'trade' and *house* 'building', thus a store, shop or trading post. The sentence thus reads 'Not such as are in this store.'

*Klahowiam, Mr Smis.* The 'ordinary salutation at meeting or parting' (Shaw, p.10) is *klahowya*, but there is very clearly an *m* on the end of the word in this letter. *Klahowyam* is glossed as 'poor, miserable, in need of help' and may have been used as a sort of honorific when addressing anyone of higher social standing (p.c. Thom Hess). However, Shaw quotes Eels as saying:

I have never been able to see any difference.

In the Willamette Valley in 1850 and afterwards we always used *Klahowyum* for both and I never heard *Klahowya*. On Puget Sound for about twenty years we have used *Klahowya* for both; and I have seldom heard *Klahowyum*. (p.10)

I would venture to suggest that whoever taught Jack his epistolary style used it as the closest CJ equivalent to 'Y'r humble servant.'

*Kloshe mash haleuiman tsum kopa mika nika kakwa kwansome mika tillicum.* *Mash* is the verb that generally denotes movement away from, into, or out of, and can function either transitively or intransitively.<sup>17</sup> The next word, *haleuiman* appeared on the original interlinear translation as *hahlakl* glossed 'open'; in spite of a rather large blot, it was clearly identifiable under the magnifying glass as *haleuiman*, which must be a variant spelling of *huloima* 'different, strange, another.' *Tsum* here apparently refers to the letter itself, as it is followed by *kopa nika* 'to you' and a further expression of friendly sentiment, *nika kakwa kwansome mika tillicum* 'I am always your friend.'

It is now possible to put the whole thing together in one coherent whole, having solved all the puzzles, historical and linguistic, except one -- exactly who was 'Jack'?

#### The letter

Quileute, W.T. Feb. 7, 1881

Mr. Smith

My child is not sick at all. He is fine, and so is my wife. Recently I stopped giving handouts to my relatives. For two months I have been supporting them

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<sup>17</sup> See footnote 6 for an example of this verb used as part of a compound.

while all they did was amuse themselves, doing nothing but play games and perform Wolf dances. But I have always looked after my relatives and all the band members. I always provide lots of food and never get one dime back. I'll look after Wesley when he comes to Quileute and then if you come too I'll watch out for you and take you to the village. When Wesley comes, he and I together will make a list of all the band members. But I'm not very well at the moment. I stayed in bed for two days. In a little while, maybe six weeks, I'm going to Queets and Hoh River to get some band members there to bring back to Quileute to work on sealskins.

My younger brother Henry keeps well, not ailing. My mother is well too and still staying in my house. And John always looks out for me and gives me firewood. Howeattle is always on my side and backs me up no matter what.

I would like it if you would give my child a really good little whistle, not like the ones they have in the store here.

I remain, Mr Smith, your humble servant. I am pleased to write to you again and I am as always your friend,

Jack

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#### APPENDIX I

Letter from  
Jack  
to  
Mr Smis

NOTE: Apparent inconsistencies in spelling are not typographical errors; punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing are as they appear in the original.

Quileute, W. T. Feb. 7, 1881

Mr Smis

Nika tenas wake tenas sick. yaka skookum. pe nika kloochman halo tenas sick. yaka skookum. chee nika copet potlatch kopa nika tillicums. moxt moon alta, nika kwansome potlatch kopa nika tillicums. pe kwanso[me] yaka hehe, kwansome yaka halo ickta mamook kopet hehe pe klokwoolly. pe nika kwansome kloshe nanitch kopa nika tillicums pe konaway siwash. kwansome nika potlatch hyiu muckamuck pe halo lolo ickt bit. nika kloshe nanich kopa Wesley spouse yaka chaco kopa

Quileut. pe alka spose mika chako kopa Quileute nika kloshe nanich kopa mika pe lolo mika kopa kloshe illahe. spose Wesley klap kopa Quileute nika konamoxt kopa yaka mamook tsum kopa konaway siwash. pe nika tenas sick alta, moxt sun nika halo get up. = tenas alka klonas ickt moon pe sitkum, nika klatawa kopa Queets pe Ho, iskum kopa siwash lolo kopa Quileute mamook sealskin.

(p.2) pe nika Ow Henry yaka kloshe, halo tenas sick. pe nika mama yaka kloshe pe kwansome mitlight kopa nika house. pe John yaka kwansome koshe nanich kopa nika pe potlatch pire stick.

Howeattle yaka kwansome ickt tumtum kopa nika kwansome kunamoxt kopa nika spose ickta mamook. nika tikegh spose mika potlatch kopa nika tenas delate kloshe whistle. wake kakwa mitlight kopa okoke makoke house.

Klahowiam Mr Smis

Kloshe mash haleuiman tsum kopa mika nika kakwa kwansome mika tillicum.

Jack [E?]

[A notation (at the bottom of the letter and written in another hand) signed *A. J. Smith, Seattle, Wash.* and dated Feb. 26, 1881, reads, 'If the above is acceptable to the [illegible]t, you may m[illegible] it. In any event please return this to me.']