

villages tend to become purely conventional and to lose what descriptive meaning they originally possessed.¹

Thus, it is by no means an accident that a considerable number of village names among the Nootka are incapable of satisfactory analysis, whereas the names of topographical features among such less settled tribes as the Paiute and Ojibwa are in practically every case readily interpreted. It is sometimes instructive to compare the names for the same topographical feature among two or more tribes. Mt. Shasta, in northern California, is visible to a considerable number of distinct tribes. The Hupa call it *nin-nis-'an lak-gai*, a descriptive term meaning "white mountain"; while the Yana have a distinctive term for it, *wa'galu'*, which does not yield to analysis.² We may infer from this that the Hupa, as an Athabaskan-speaking tribe, are newcomers in northern California as compared with the Yana, a conclusion that is certainly corroborated by other evidence.

CAUTIONS IN USE OF METHOD.

Danger in Comparison of Equivalent Words in Different Languages.

In actual practice, however, it is apt to be dangerous to use the method we have considered when dealing with words for the same culture concept in different tribes. The chief reason for caution lies in the great differences exhibited by different languages in the relative freedom with which descriptive terms are formed. Some languages, such as Chinook and Takelma, have a relatively large number of radical elements and hence are not as apt to resort to descriptive formations as are languages, say Athabaskan, that have a smaller number of radical elements but greater powers of synthetic word-formation. Moreover,

¹ Note, e.g., the more or less transparent analysis of such names of cities in America as New York, Philadelphia, Washington, New Orleans, Indianapolis, St. Louis, San Francisco, Buffalo, as contrasted with such at present meaningless European names as London, Paris, York, Leeds, Rouen, Rheims, Rome, Naples.

² *wa-* may be identical with Yana *wa-* "to sit." Of how long standing the term *wa'galu'* must have been among the Yana is further evidenced by the fact that its diminutive, *wa'ganu'pa* "little-Mt. Shasta," is applied to Mt. Lassen, a volcanic peak within the confines of their own territory. Mt. Shasta is in neither Hupa nor Yana territory.