

Salish;¹ the instrumental verb prefixes of Maidu, Shoshonean, Washo, and Shasta-Achomawi;² and the local verb suffixes of Maidu, Washo, and of Shasta-Achomawi and Yana.³ There seems no practical alternative in these and many other cases that might be mentioned to the hypothesis of morphological influence exerted by one language on another. The point of historical interest in such assimilatory phenomena is that they necessarily presuppose a very long period of tribal contact. They may, therefore, be employed as indications of the relative age of a tribal contact or even of the former existence of a contact now disrupted. While I do not think that too free a use should be made of this criterion for historical purposes, difficult as it generally is to isolate and apply, there is no doubt that in special cases it can yield interesting results.

An inference or two from some of the morphological facts listed above will be helpful towards the understanding of the method of application. Tsimshian, as far as we know, is genetically unrelated to either the Na-dene languages to the north or the group comprising Kwakiutl-Nootka, Salish, and Chemakum to the south. Culturally the Tsimshian Indians are more closely affiliated with the Na-dene tribes of the Pacific coast (Haida and Tlingit) than with even the northernmost of the latter tribes (Kitamat, Bella Bella; Bella Coola). Nevertheless, the morphologic resemblances noted above between Tsimshian and the languages south of it, when contrasted with the lack of correspondingly significant resemblances between Tsimshian and Na-dene, seems to be indicative of a much earlier contact of the Tsimshian with the Kwakiutl and Salish than with the Haida and Tlingit. Such contact need, of course, not have been in precisely the same territory as now occupied by the tribes nor need their geographical relation have been quite the same. Should

¹ These three, as long ago pointed out by Boas, have several important morphological traits in common. They may well prove to be genetically related.

² In this respect Maidu differs from the other Penutian languages (Yokuts, Miwok-Costanoan, Wintun, also Coos and Lower Umpqua; Takelma also, but quite independently of Maidu though perhaps again under Shasta-Achomawi influence, has developed a set of instrumental verb prefixes of a rather different type). On the other hand, instrumental verb prefixes seem characteristic of certain Hokan languages (Shasta-Achomawi, Chimariko, Pomo).

³ Here again Maidu differs from all the other Penutian languages (including Takelma, Coos, and Lower Umpqua). Once again the peculiarity is characteristic of several Hokan languages (Yana, Shasta-Achomawi, Chimariko, Karok).