



# nimi yadua

Yahooskin Words and Phrases



Figure 1 Paiute Tule Reed Duck Decoys by Mike Williams



**nimi yadua**

**Yahooskin Words and Phrases**

Developed by the Cultural Heritage Program  
in conjunction with the Culture and Heritage Committee for  
The Klamath Tribes  
Post Office Box 436  
Chiloquin, Oregon 97624

© 1995 by the Klamath Tribes  
All rights reserved



## Table of Contents

Acknowledgments .....	3
Introduction .....	4
Resources .....	6
<b>Chapter 1</b> Learning to speak Yahooskin (Northern Paiute).....	7
1.1 Word Stress .....	8
1.2 Vowels .....	9
1.2.1 Short Vowels.....	10
1.2.2 Long Vowels.....	11
1.2.3 Diphthongs .....	12
1.3 Consonants.....	12
1.3.1 Stop Consonants.....	13
1.3.1.1 Bilabials--p and b.....	14
1.3.1.2 Alveolars--t and d.....	15
1.3.1.3 Velars--k and g.....	16
1.3.2 The Glottal Stop .....	18
1.3.3 Fricatives.....	18
1.3.4 Affricates.....	19
1.3.5 Nasals (long and short).....	19
1.3.6 Semivowels .....	20
1.4 Conclusion.....	21
<b>Chapter 2</b> Yahooskin (Northern Paiute) Vocabulary.....	22
2.1 People 'nimi' and Relatives .....	22
2.2 Body Parts.....	23
2.3 Clothes .....	23
2.4 Numbers 'simi' and Counting.....	24
2.5 Naming Peoples.....	24
2.6 Colors.....	25
2.7 Animals.....	26
2.8 Birds.....	26

## Table of Contents

2.9	Fish.....	27
2.10	Other creatures.....	27
2.11	Insects .....	27
2.12	Other crawling things.....	28
2.13	Trees / Plants .....	28
2.14	Earth and Sky.....	29
2.15	Seasons / Directions .....	29
2.16	Time .....	30
2.17	Some special places .....	30
<b>Chapter 3</b>	<b>Yahooskin (Northern Paiute) Phrases.....</b>	<b>31</b>
3.1	Greetings and Goodbyes.....	31
3.2	Asking Expressions.....	31
3.3	Commands.....	33
3.4	Seeing Someone or Something .....	33
3.5	Sleeping and Snoring .....	34
3.6	Going--Where? When? How? With Whom?.....	34
3.7	Hunting and Fishing.....	35
<b>Chapter 4</b>	<b>On Your Own--Yahooskin (Northern Paiute) Grammar .....</b>	<b>37</b>
4.1	Subject and Object.....	38
4.2	Pronouns .....	39
4.2.1	Basic Pronouns.....	40
4.2.2	Possession (vs. ownership).....	41
4.3	Past and Present .....	42
4.4	Post-positions.....	43
4.5	Instrumental Prefixes.....	44
4.6	Voiceless or “Whispered” Vowels .....	45

## Acknowledgments

The language data in this document was collected through a series of taped sessions from July 1994 through March 1995. Mr. Irwin Weiser of Klamath Falls, Oregon, is the source of all the information here. He is perhaps the last fluent speaker of the Yahooskin dialect of Northern Paiute. I gratefully thank him for his kindness, his willingness to share with me the treasure of his knowledge, and the unique pleasure of his company.

I would like to acknowledge the coordinator of this project, Mr. Gordon Bettles, Culture and Heritage Specialist for the Klamath Tribes, and thank him for giving me this opportunity and for providing the necessary encouragement and enthusiasm to keep me going. I would also like to thank Dr. Scott DeLancey and Dr. Doris Payne for their guidance.

My hope is that this introductory booklet of words and phrases in Yahooskin (Northern Paiute) will spark interest in the language, and that this interest will motivate further language recovery efforts on the part of the Klamath Tribes. The information provided here is not my own, of course, but remains the property of the tribe and the people who may find it useful. I am responsible, however, for any mistakes of interpretation and any lack of clarity.

Mr. Weiser wishes to dedicate this book to his grandfather, Dr. Samuel Watah and grandmother Maggie, as well as to **kai wadadi** "He-doesn't-sing-it" and Mahelia, his great-grandparents. Recognition is also hereby given to the Chocktoot, Foster, Naneo, and Godowa families, for this document is further dedicated to all Yahooskin Paiute descendants, past, present, and future.

Tim Thornes  
Eugene, Oregon

## Introduction

All of the language data in this phrase book has been the result of work done with a single Yahooskin elder, Mr. Irwin Weiser of Klamath Falls, Oregon. Although this isn't the best way to develop language materials, it was the only way, under the circumstances. Without his tremendous knowledge of the Yahooskin people and language, and his great patience in sharing it, a phrase book like this one would have been impossible.

For technical purposes, it is important to discuss how Yahooskin is related to other languages spoken throughout the vast region known as the Great Basin. The Great Basin is an area of high desert extending from the southeastern quarter of the state of Oregon, through Nevada, and includes border regions of California, Idaho, Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona. Northern Paiute is the technical name for the language of the northwestern third of the Great Basin.

There are many dialects of Northern Paiute, including those spoken in Burns and Warm Springs, Oregon, Ft. Bidwell, California, McDermitt and Owyhee, Nevada, and Ft. Hall, Idaho. These dialects have very much in common with one another. However, just how similar or different the Yahooskin dialect is from these is not clearly known.

There is also a southern grouping of Northern Paiute dialects that includes the language as it is spoken at Pyramid Lake, Yerington, and Fallon, Nevada, to name just a few. These dialects are more distinct from the northern dialects than they are from each other. The language in this phrase book will be referred to as Yahooskin, since Mr. Weiser is the



source for the data presented. However, when speaking in general terms, the language may be referred to by its more technical name.

Together with the Shoshone (including Comanche) and Southern Paiute languages, Northern Paiute is part of the Numic language family, so called because of the common name for “people” in all of these languages, **nimi**. This, in turn, is usually included as part of a still larger language family, namely, Uto-Aztecan. Uto-Aztecan languages are spoken throughout the Southwest and in many parts of Mexico.

The area occupied by the Yahooskin Band of Snake Indians includes the Christmas Valley and Fort Rock areas to the north, the area around Silver, Summer, and Abert lakes, south to Yocum Valley, and bounded to the east just beyond Abert Rim, but west of Warner Valley. These “boundaries” were never clearly defined, since the Yahooskin interacted with other peoples, especially other Paiute Bands and the Modocs.

Knowledge and exploitation of the available resources are probably the most important aspects of any culture. The Yahooskin were skilled hunters and also fished and gathered plants for food and medicine. They were very skilled at survival under harsh conditions. The dry climate and sparse vegetation explains their need to move about over such a large area. They adapted to the changes the seasons bring and knew where deer and antelope were plentiful as well as jackrabbits, from whose hides they made warm rabbit blankets for the winter.

For many people who begin to study this phrase book, it may be their first exposure to the language of their ancestors. Others may recall hearing their parents speak it when they were young, and maybe even remember a few words and phrases. If this book sparks an interest in and appreciation of Yahooskin, it has served its purpose.

## Resources

- Fowler, Catherine S. 1992. In the shadow of Fox Peak: an ethnography of the Catail-eater Northern Paiute people of Stillwater Marsh. U. S. Government Printing Office: Washington.
- Heizer, Robert Fleming. 1972. Notes on Northern Paiute ethnography: Kroeber and Marsden records, R. F. Heizer and T. R. Hester (eds.) with the assistance of Michael P. Nichols. Berkeley, Archaeological Research Facility, University of California, 1972.
- Keeling, Richard. 1990. A Guide to early field recordings at the Lowie museum of Anthropology (now the Phoebe Apperson Hearst museum). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Kelly, Isabel. 1932. Ethnography of the Surprise Valley Paiute. University of California Publications in American Archeology and Ethnography. 31(3):67-210.
- Kelly, Isabel T. 1938. 'Northern Paiute tales.' The Journal of American Folk-lore. 51(202):363-438.
- Marsden, W. L. 1923. 'The Northern Pauite language of Oregon.' University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology: The Phoebe Apperson Hearst Memorial Volume. 20:173-191.
- Natches, Gilbert. 1923. 'Northern Paiute verbs.' University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology: The Phoebe Apperson Hearst Memorial Volume. 20:243-259.
- Snapp, Allen and Joy Anderson. 1982. 'Northern Paiute.' in Ronald W. Langacker (ed.) Studies in Uto-Aztecan Grammar, vol. 3: Uto-Aztecan grammatical sketches. Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics.
- Stewart, Omer C. 1939. The Northern Paiute Bands. Anthropological Records. 2: 127-149. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Wheat, Margaret M. 1967. Survival arts of the primitive Paiutes. Reno: University of Nevada Press.

# 1 Learning to speak Yahooskin (Northern Paiute)

## Learner goals:

- 1) To develop an "ear" for the rhythm and sounds of Yahooskin
- 2) To learn to produce or "imitate" these sounds accurately
- 3) To learn to recognize the written counterparts for these sounds

Learning a language requires several important steps. As children, before we could ever speak our language, we were learning to recognize its peculiar sounds. As adults, we need to keep in mind that good speaking skills go with good listening skills, and that we need to practice both in order to succeed in learning a language. That is why it is so important to pay close attention to how the elders speak.

It would be foolish to claim that everything you need to know in order to be a good speaker of Yahooskin will be explained in this little book. Hopefully, this book will help introduce you to the language and spark your interest in some of the unique aspects of Yahooskin.

First, we discuss rhythm or *stress* in the language. Second, there is an introduction to the individual sounds which make up words in Yahooskin. There will be examples of words which contain these sounds. An alphabet is simply a set of conventions developed for writing a language--a kind of artificial form of the language--not the language itself. Some of the letters may seem strange at first. But these are necessary for symbolizing the sounds that are unique to Yahooskin.

Also, although you may recognize similarities between some of the letters and sounds in this book with ones in English, they are not always spoken exactly as they are in English. The letters are simply a guide to learning. The most important first step is to recognize the rhythm and the sounds that make Yahooskin unique and beautiful.

## 1.1 Word Stress

The rhythm and melody of a language is as important to learn as its individual sounds. Rhythm can often be heard as parts of phrases or individual words that sound louder, longer, or higher in pitch, than others. Think of the English word 'language,' for example. It contains two beats or *syllables*---**lan guage**. It is difficult to know just where to divide the beats in writing, but think for a moment about which beat is stronger. **lan guage**. We can say that the first beat, or syllable, of the word 'language' is *stressed*. Stress is illustrated in this section by using **boldface** type for the part of the word that is stressed. Here are a few more examples from English:

<b>Pai</b> ute	<b>peo</b> ple	<b>per</b> son
a <b>dult</b>	ex <b>am</b> ple	im <b>por</b> tant
con ver <b>sa</b> tion	in tro <b>duc</b> tion	com mu ni <b>ca</b> tion
si mi <b>la</b> ri ty	ne ces <b>sa</b> ri ly	e lec <b>tri</b> ci ty

These examples are simply to help you become more aware of stress in English. Notice that it would be difficult to tell someone learning English where to put the stress on all English words. Sometimes, the first syllable, sometimes the second, the second from the end, the third, etc.

Fortunately, word stress is much more straightforward and predictable in Yahooskin. Two simple rules will be enough for you to know as you begin to learn to speak Yahooskin:

- 1) Where two vowels are written together in the first part of a word, the main stress will fall on that part. Section 1.2 describes *vowels*. Refer to sections 1.2.2 and 1.2.3 for a discussion of *long vowels* and *diphthongs*.

2) If there is not a long vowel or a diphthong in the first part (or *syllable*) of the word, stress falls on the second part. Compare the following pairs of words. Notice the contrast in where the stress goes.

<b>naana</b>	'men'	<b>nana</b>	'man'
<b>kiipa</b>	'ground squirrel'	<b>kidi</b>	'groundhog'
<b>pauma</b>	'rain'	<b>paba</b> [?yu] <sup>1</sup>	'big'

Nearly all syllables consist of a consonant<sup>2</sup> followed by a vowel (CV), so it is easy to identify the syllables. Since stress is so regular, it will not be marked on any of the examples to come. It is a good idea to listen for it when learning new words, however, because it is important to learning good pronunciation habits.

## 1.2 Vowels

Vowel sounds are made with the air flowing freely through the throat and mouth as the vocal cords vibrate. The tongue and lips shape the different vowel sounds, but the most important feature of vowels is the relatively uninterrupted flow of air. When we sing, for example, it is the vowels that can be held for a long time. As we have seen in the previous section, vowels, in some way, also *carry* the stress of individual words. It may be helpful to refer to the previous section from time to time until you feel confident you have an ear for the stress in the words that follow.

Usually, linguists apply Latin values for the vowels, and this practice is followed here, as for the Klamath-Modoc phrase book. This is because it is simpler to learn. Although English has only 5 written vowel *symbols* (a, e, i, o, u), it has many more actual vowel *sounds*. As an example, compare

---

<sup>1</sup>Words or parts of words in brackets indicate that they are optional or a variation.

<sup>2</sup>See section 1.3 for a definition of *consonant*.

the sounds for **a** in **father**, **fat**, and **fate**. We use 5 vowel symbols to represent each of the 5 vowel sounds of Northern Paiute.

### 1.2.1 Short Vowels

There are five vowels in Northern Paiute. These are written:

**a      i      u      o      i**

The **a** sound is similar to the **a** in the English word 'father.' Here are some Northern Paiute words that have this sound:

nana	'man'
oha?a	'baby'
hamma?a	'elder sister'

Already you have encountered an unusual symbol-- / . This is called a *glottal stop* and is discussed in section 1.3.2. Since it isn't possible to discuss everything at once, you may find it necessary to jump around in this first section. Or perhaps it is easier to read the descriptions of the sounds first, and then go back and listen to and practice the examples.

The **i** sound is actually pronounced like the **ee** in English words like 'see' and 'sleep'. Here are a few examples with **i**:

mubi	'nose'
puhi-kwikya	'blue'
isa	'wolf'

The **u** sound is similar to the **oo** in 'food' or 'too.' Here are some examples:

kuma	'husband'
mubi	'nose'
[pa]kutsu	'buffalo'

The **o** sound is similar to the **o**'s in 'oh no!' or the **ow** in the English words 'grow' and 'know.' Here are some Northern Paiute words that contain the **o** sound:

soba	'cheeks'
togoʔo	'grandfather (maternal)'
pokoadi	'hill'

The **i** sound is not heard very often in English. It is somewhere between the **i** sound and the **u** sound. One way to think of it is to imagine that you accidentally touched something really slimy, like an earthworm. Perhaps you say something like "iiiiiii!!" Another way to find this sound is to repeat the English word "roses" out loud. In between the two s's (actually pronounced as z's) is a sound like the **i** in Yahoo skin. Anyway, here are some Northern Paiute words with the **i** sound:

simiʔyu	'one'
kinnoʔo	'grandfather (paternal)'
nimi	'people/person/Indian'

Remember that even though it is possible to compare some Northern Paiute sounds to sounds in English, the sounds in the two languages are not exactly alike. That is one reason why it is so important to listen to the language as much as possible. By listening, you will be able to hear the sounds which are totally different from ones usually heard in English as well as ones that are only slightly different.

### 1.2.2 Long Vowels

Some vowel sounds are held longer than the ones in the words above. In Northern Paiute, this can be important for distinguishing two different words. These *long vowels* are written with two letters, rather than one.

They are not pronounced twice, but are simply pronounced longer. They attract the main stress when they are in the first part (syllable) of a word. Here are some examples of words with long vowels contrasting with words having short vowels:

naana	'men'	nana	'man'
huudi	'river'	huna	'badger'
tiipi	'earth'	yipi	'desert'

### 1.2.3 Diphthongs

Diphthongs are a combination of two vowel sounds pronounced together. What begins as one vowel sound, ends as another. The vowel sounds in "try" and "buy" in English are like the diphthong **ai** in Yahoooskin. The English words "cow" and "doubt" have the diphthong written **au** in Yahoooskin. Like long vowels, diphthongs attract the main stress to the first syllable of a word. Here are some examples of diphthongs and words that have them:

<b>ai</b>	kaiba	'mountain'	agai	'trout'
<b>ui</b>	atsa huida	'red ant'	pui	'seed/eye'
<b>au</b>	kaupa	'leg'		

### 1.3 Consonants

Consonants are the sounds that usually involve some interruption of the flow of air by the tongue, the lips and/or the teeth. They are not listed here in alphabetical order, but by using the system linguists use--in an order that shows where in the mouth each sound is made. The consonants listed on the far left, for example, are made with the lips. Moving right,



each column represents a *series* of consonants that are made further and further back in the mouth.

Here is the arrangement of consonants in Northern Paiute:

front of	p	t	ts	k	ky	ʔ	back of mouth
mouth	b	d	dz	g	kw		or throat
or lips			s		gw	h	
			z				
	m	n		ng			
	mm	nn		nng			
	w		y				

Even though some of the consonant sounds are written with two letters, they can be thought of as single consonants. Each will be explained and illustrated with examples below. Again, I will attempt to explain these sounds in terms of their similarities to some sounds in English. However, it is much more important to listen to the sounds as they are spoken by a native speaker of Yahooskin, for you may notice slight differences.

### 1.3.1 Stop Consonants

Some consonants are called *stops*, since they actually stop the flow of air completely. In this section, we will look at the set of consonants which include **p**, **t**, **k** and **b**, **d**, and **g**. In English, the characteristic which distinguishes the first three sounds from the second three, is a quality called *voicing*. This involves whether or not the vocal chords in the throat are vibrating while the sound is being made. The first three sounds are

*unvoiced*, since the vocal chords are not vibrating. The second three sounds are *voiced*, because the vocal chords are vibrating.

Although the quality of voicing distinguishes these sounds in English, there are other qualities as well which distinguish these sounds in Northern Paiute. This is not all that surprising, since they are not exactly the same as the English sounds. The **b**, **d**, and **g** sounds, for example, do not stop the flow of air as completely as **p**, **t**, and **k**.

### 1.3.1.1 Bilabials--p and b

These two consonants are called *bilabial stops*, because they are made with the lips. The **p** sound is similar to the sound in the English word “spill.” There is a difference in the way English speakers pronounce the **p** in “pill” and in “spill.” When the English sound **p** is at the beginning of the word, it is usually pronounced with a puff of air. Hold your hand in front of your mouth and pronounce the words ‘pill’ and ‘spill.’ Can you feel the difference? In Northern Paiute, the **p** sound doesn't have a big puff of air when it comes at the beginning of a word.

Here are some examples:

pia	‘mother’
pui	‘eye/ seed’
pokoadi	‘hill’
paa	‘water’

The **b** sound is similar to the **b** sound in the English words trouble and noble. In general, the **b** sound in Northern Paiute is softer than in spoken English, however. Air escapes between the lips, making a buzzing sound almost like the **v** sound. Usually, the sound is only heard in the

middle of a word, not at the beginning. Listen carefully to the difference between **p** and **b** in the middle of the following words<sup>3</sup>:

popiʔi	‘spotted owl’	madabi	‘woodtick’
tiipi	‘earth’	taba	‘sun’

Often, what sounds like a **p** at the beginning of a Northern Paiute word in isolation, has more of a **b** sound in a compound word, after a vowel prefix, or even in the middle of a sentence. Here are a couple of examples of this contrast:

pia	‘mother’
i bia	‘my mother’
pokoadi	‘hill’
pobokoadi	‘hills’

### 1.3.1.2 Alveolars--t and d

The sounds written **t** and **d** in Northern Paiute are similar to their English counterparts. They are called *alveolars* because they are made with the tongue touching the *alveolar ridge* just behind the upper front teeth. But **t**, like **p**, is pronounced without any puff of air. Compare the **t** sounds in the words “till” and “still” in English. Try to say the following Northern Paiute words without any puff of air following the **t** sound. Listen carefully to the way a Yahooskin elder says it.

tamano	‘spring’
tabino	‘noontime’ (usually anytime around midday)
taba	‘sun’
tiipi	‘earth’

---

<sup>3</sup>**p** in the middle of a word is pronounced more forcefully. This difference may become more important for you later, but it is good to try and take note of these slight differences.

The **d** sound is similar to the **d** in *rider* or the **tt** in *butter*. You may notice that it is a little softer than the way we learned to pronounce **d** in English. The tongue often only brushes the roof of the mouth, rather than closing hard against it. Also, like **b**, the **d** sound occurs only in the middle of words:

kidi	'groundhog'
kuudi	'coat'
huudi	'river'

Also, the **t** sounds more like **d** in the same situations:

tika	'eat'
kididikaʔa	'groundhog eaters' (name for the Paiutes living around Ft. Bidwell, California in Surprise Valley)

### 1.3.1.3 Velars--k and g

These consonants are called *velar stops* since the air flow is stopped by the tongue at a point toward the back of the mouth called the *velum* or *soft palate*. The **k** sound of Northern Paiute is similar to the **k** in the English words 'skin' and 'cheek.' You can practice this sound by repeating a meaningless syllable like **ku, ku, ku, ku** or **ki, ki, ki, ki**. Hold your hand in front of your mouth and repeat it until you no longer feel that big puff of air.

Here are a few examples of the **k** sound at the beginning of words:

kuta	'neck'
kumiba	'clouds'
kiipa	'ground squirrel'
kuudi	'coat'

The **g** sound is similar to the **g** sound in the words ‘ago’ and ‘tiger.’ Once again, like **b** and **d**, the **g** sound only occurs in the middle of words and is a little softer than the **g** sound in English. Here are some examples:

niga[ti]	‘mine’
manigi?yu	‘five’
nagita	‘goose/geese’

Before the vowels **a**, **o**, and **u**, however, the **g** sound changes somewhat. Rather than stopping the air with the back of the tongue, there is more friction between the tongue and the roof of the mouth. You will need to listen to a native speaker pronounce words like the following and practice them yourself to fully appreciate this sound:

agai	‘trout’
mogo?ni	‘woman’
sogo puku	‘foot horse’ (an early name for dog)

It is important not to let the letters themselves influence how you pronounce these sounds. Sounds often change depending on the surrounding sounds. Before **a** and **o**, for example, the velar stops **k** and **g** are made even farther back in the throat. See how well you can recognize the differences between the **k** and **g** sounds in the following words:

kuyui	‘sucker/mullet’		
moko	‘shoes’	mogo?ni	‘woman’
kiipa	‘ground squirrel’		
kaiba	‘mountain’	agai	‘trout’

Like the other voiceless stop consonants we have looked at, the **k** sound at the beginning of a word also sounds voiced sometimes:

kuudi	‘coat’
i guudi	‘my coat’

### 1.3.2 The Glottal Stop

The last stop consonant to be described here is the *glottal stop*. It is written using the unusual symbol like a question mark--ʔ. (Some books write this sound as an apostrophe--'). This sound is made by stopping the flow of air way at the back of the throat. When saying "uh oh!" in English, the air is closed off momentarily between the **uh** and the **oh**. This is the glottal stop. It occurs only in the middle of words in Northern Paiute. Here are some words with the glottal stop:

waʔitsi	'old man'	taʔwizogo	'ankle'
mogoʔni	'woman'	izaʔa	'coyote'
ohaʔa	'baby'	hammaʔa	'elder sister'

### 1.3.3 Fricatives

*Fricatives* are consonant sounds that allow the air to pass through the mouth, but with a certain amount of friction between, for example, the lower lip and the teeth, as in the **f** sound in *fricative*. There are just three fricatives in Northern Paiute. These are the **s** and **z** sounds, as in the following words:

simiʔyu	'one'	moʔasu	'already'
taʔwizogo	'ankle'	kaazi	'car'

and the **h** sound, as in:

haʔo ii	'how are you?'
ohaʔa	'baby'

These are truly fricatives in Northern Paiute. As we have already seen, sometimes the voiced stops, **b**, **d**, and **g**, undergo some changes that make them sound more like fricatives. The flow of air is not stopped

completely, but is allowed to pass with some friction. This produces a brief buzzing sound. Listen again to the examples with **b**, **d**, and **g** in section 1.3.1 above.

#### 1.3.4 Affricates

Another group of sounds in Northern Paiute are those linguists call *affricates*. These sounds begin as a stop, but end as a fricative. The **ts** sound is like the **ts** in *cats*. Although this sound never begins a word in English, it often does in Northern Paiute. Here are some examples:

tsopihi	'hair'	atsa-kwikya	'red'
naatsi	'boy'	tsiaʔa	'girl'

This affricate is *voiceless*, in other words, the vocal chords do not vibrate while this sound is made.

The voiced counterpart for this sound is written **dz**. The sound is like that in the English word *adze*. Another example of this sound in English, is when a word ending in **d** is made into a plural, like *buds* and *kids*. Once again, the way an elder makes this sound in Northern Paiute may be a little bit different than the way the sound is made in English, so listen carefully.

tikwikwidzi	'lightening'
pabidzi	'weasel'

#### 1.3.5 Nasals (long and short)

Sounds called *nasals* are made with air passing through the nose. There are three nasal sounds in Northern Paiute. These are **m**, **n**, and **ng**. The **m** and **n** sounds are basically the same as in English. The **ng** sound is like the **ng** in *sing* or *bring*. Although written with two letters, it is just a

single sound. Do not pronounce the **g** sound like in the word “finger.” Like the vowels, nasals can be either short or long. When long, they are written **nn**, **mm**, and **nng**. They are not pronounced twice, only longer. Here are some examples of short nasals contrasting with long ones:

tina	‘root’	tinna	‘antelope’
nimi	‘person/Indian’	tammi	‘we <sup>4</sup> ’
pungikya	‘skunk’	ninngaba	‘chest’

### 1.3.6 Semivowels

The *semivowels* are in between consonants and vowels. In some ways they are like either one. For example, they may come in the same place in the word as a consonant. That is, they can begin a word or a syllable. In many ways, they are formed like vowels. Northern Paiute **y** and **w** are semivowels because, like any consonant, they can begin a word or a syllable that has a vowel following it.

yuhu	‘grease/tallow’	kuyui	‘sucker’
wagatsaʔa	‘frog’	miawo	‘knee’

There are two more consonant sounds that are important to know to use this phrase book. Although they are written with two symbols (letters), they behave as a single sound. These sounds consist of a **k** sound followed immediately by a semivowel sound, either **w** or **y**.<sup>5</sup> Here are a few examples of **kw** and **ky**:

kwiʔnaʔa	‘golden eagle’	pakwi	‘chub/minnow’
tihikya	‘deer’	atsa-kwikya	‘red/it's red’

<sup>4</sup>There are three different words to express ‘we’ in different ways in Northern Paiute. This one is called *inclusive* because it includes the person spoken to. Section 4.2.1 lists and describes the basic pronouns.

<sup>5</sup>They are actually related in some ways to the semivowels, although that relationship will not be discussed here.



## 1.4 Conclusion

This concludes the chapter on the sounds of Yahooskin (Northern Paiute). You can now apply what you've learned about the sounds of the language to help you learn more words in Yahooskin. You may want to review this first chapter from time to time as you expand your vocabulary.

The next chapter provides lists of words. These words are grouped according to topics like 'body parts' or 'birds.' Practicing them in groups may help in remembering them. This part can also be used as a mini-dictionary.

This is also a good time to practice writing Yahooskin words on your own. As you learn new words that are not in this book, such practice can be very valuable. A language notebook is very useful, both for keeping track of new words and for jotting down questions you may have.

Following the chapter on vocabulary is a chapter on some everyday phrases as well as some information about the *grammar* of the language. As you become more confident, you may wish to concentrate on how words are put together to form phrases, as well as on the different pieces that go together to form words.

## 2 Yahooskin (Northern Paiute) Vocabulary

### 2.1 People 'nimi' and Relatives

mogoʔni	'woman'	nana	'man'
tsiaʔa	'girl'	naatsi	'boy'
siadimi	'young woman'	tuwibisiʔi	'young man'
piawabi	'old woman'	waʔitsi	'old man'
ohaʔa	'baby'	piaʔa <sup>6</sup>	'friend'
wakwaʔitsi	'elders'	momoakimidi	'old ones / ancestors'
nanimi <sup>7</sup>	'(my) cousin'(or, simply, 'relative')		
nodikwa	'(my) wife'	kuma	'husband'
padi	'daughter'	tua	'son'
pia	'mother'	naa	'father'
pidu	'aunt'	ʔaatsi	'uncle'
pinniʔi	'younger sister'	wangaʔa	'younger brother'
hamaʔa	'elder sister'	pabiʔi	'elder brother'
moʔa	'grandmother (maternal)'		
togoʔo	'grandfather (maternal)'		
hutsiʔi	'grandmother (paternal)'		
kinnʔo	'grandfather (paternal)'		

<sup>6</sup>On the tape, **i biaʔa**, or "my friend." Since we usually talk about friends, relatives, and body parts in terms of *whose*, this might be a good time to learn some *possessive* words. Pronouns are discussed in section 4.2. See especially section 4.2.2 on possessive pronouns.

<sup>7</sup>Notice that this word contains the word for person or people **nimi**. **na-** is a noun prefix meaning something like 'to each other,' what linguists call *reciprocal* or *reflexive*. Many of the words on the tape have **i**, "my" before it. Notice how this changes many of the stop consonants at the beginning of these words to the *voiced* counterpart. Review section 1.3.1 on this sound change.

## 2.2 Body Parts

tsopigi	'head'	tsopihi	'hair'
naka	'ear'	pui	'eyes'
mubi	'nose'	mubi tawaga	'nostril' <sup>8</sup>
tipa	'mouth/lips'	tama	'teeth'
igo	'tongue'	kamu	'chin'
soba	'cheeks'	aa nata	'forehead' <sup>9</sup>
kuta	'neck'	hapoda	'back'
tsoaba	'shoulder'	pita	'arm'
mai	'hand'	matsihi	'elbow'
ma?wizo?o	'wrist'	ningaba	'chest'
hamataba	'ribs'	sapi	'stomach'
kaupa	'leg'	kiki	'foot/feet'
miawo	'knee'	ta?wizogo	'ankle'

## 2.3 Clothes

kusa	'pants'	kwasi	'shirt'
moko	'shoes'	tasopa	'socks'
mogo?ni kwasi	'dress'	tsoti?aa	'hat'
kuudi	'coat'	winagapi	'shawl'
mago?o	'pouch'	wigya	'rabbit blanket'

---

<sup>8</sup>Literally, 'hole in the nose'

<sup>9</sup>Literally 'horn side'

## 2.4 Numbers 'simi' and Counting

Many of the numbers below have the same ending---?yu. This is a suffix that is used for counting, and also for other special forms for numbers. For counting, it is important to learn the forms here. Listen carefully to how they are pronounced on the tape:

simi?yu	'one'	naapahi?yu	'six'
waha?yu	'two'	natakwasikwi?yu	'seven'
pahi?yu	'three'	waho qado?opi	'eight'
watsikwi?yu	'four'	simi qado?opi	'nine'
manigi?yu	'five'	simi mano?yu	'ten'

## 2.5 Naming Peoples

nimi	'Indian/people'
minimi	'the people'
ni nimi	'I am Paiute'
yuhuskin	'Snake River people (Yahooskin <sup>10</sup> )'
agaitsi?i	'Warm Springs Paiute <sup>11</sup> '
sai?i	'Modoc'
panakwati	'Bishop tribe <sup>12</sup> '
taibo?o	'white person(s)'

<sup>10</sup> **yuhu** means 'grease' or 'tallow.' **skin** is from English 'skin.' A story of first contact accounts for their combination. The Yahooskin Band applied tallow from deer bone marrow to their skin to ward off insects. A white settler probably asked what it was called and then gave them the name.

<sup>11</sup> Notice that the word for trout **agai** is part of the name.

<sup>12</sup> Literally, the name means 'water side/direction'

In Yahooskin, and among other Northern Paiute bands, people were often named according to the food source most common to the area in which they lived. So the names given often ended in **-dika** meaning 'eat' or 'eaters.' Here are a few of them<sup>13</sup>:

yapadikaʔa	'ipos eaters,' Yahooskin people
pakwidikaʔa	'chub eaters,' Klamath people
wadadikaʔa	'red seed eaters,' Burns Paiute
kididikaʔa	'groundhog eaters,' Ft. Bidwell Paiute
kuyuidikaʔa	'sucker/mullet eaters,' Pyramid Lake Paiute

## 2.6 Colors

Color words are not generally pronounced by themselves, but as part of a phrase. Therefore, it may be easier, and probably more beneficial, to remember these words in the context of a short phrase meaning, roughly, 'It's red\It's blue\etc..' or, in Yahooskin, **atsa-kwikya/puhi-kwikya** / etc.

atsa-kwikya	'It's red'
puhi-kwikya	'It's blue'
puhi-[na ʔay]kwikya	'It's green <sup>14</sup> '
oha-kwikya	'It's yellow'
tuhu-kwikya	'It's black'
toha-kwikya	'It's white'

<sup>13</sup>The **ʔa** ending is like the English **-er** in 'eater'. The final vowel is usually *voiceless* (see sec. 4.6), and you may find it difficult to hear this final syllable at all on the tape.

<sup>14</sup>In Northern Paiute and many other languages, the words for green and blue are very similar.

## 2.7 Animals

The names for animals, birds, etc. are often descriptive. The literal meaning for these names are sometimes given in a footnote.

puku	'horse'	sogo puku	'dog' <sup>15</sup>
kutsu	'buffalo'	tihikya	'deer'
iza?a	'coyote'	issa	'wolf'
tinna	'pronghorn antelope'		
sona?a / padoa?a	'bear'		
wangi?i	'fox'	ha?ngisa	'beaver'
pabidzi	'weasel'	huna	'badger'
kami	'jack rabbit'	tsagwidi	'porcupine'
tuhu?u	'bobcat'	kakwi-duhu?u	'cougar'
pungikya	'skunk'	kidi	'groundhog'

## 2.8 Birds

kwi?na?a	'golden eagle'	pasiakwao	'bald eagle' <sup>16</sup>
popi?i	'spotted owl'	puzia[ba]	'burrowing owl'
paanosa	'pelican'	wahiti	'swan' <sup>17</sup>
(toha) nagita	'(white) geese'	kuda?a / pii	'duck' (general)
wasa	'blue heron'	kwi?ada?a	'raven'
ada	'crow'	tuu kuta	'quail' <sup>18</sup>
noho	'eggs'	nobi	'nest'

<sup>15</sup>Literally, 'foot horse.' There is another word for dog that has been borrowed from English. This one can be written **toogi**

<sup>16</sup>This is also the place name for Hager Mt. and means something like 'frosty head.'

<sup>17</sup>Literally, 'he hollers.'

<sup>18</sup>Literally, 'black neck.'

## 2.9 Fish

agai	'trout'
kuyui	'sucker/mullet'
tsiaʔnasi	'salmon' <sup>19</sup>
pakwi	'minnows/chubs'

## 2.10 Other creatures

togokwa	'rattlesnake'
kwida muguza	'lizard'
isi pamakazaʔa	'salamander'
wagatsaʔa	'frog'

## 2.11 Insects

mopongi	'mosquito'
mopongi i gui	'a mosquito bit me'
muhibi	'fly'
pipusi	'beetle (stink bug)'
ani[bi]	'ant'
atsa huida[pi]	'red ant'
nota	'yellow jacket'
sii tsotsoʔo	'dragonfly'
tsoʔapa	'butterfly' <sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup>Salmon are sometimes called **pabaʔyu agai**, or 'big trout.'

<sup>20</sup>Also, someone's ghost.

## 2.12 Other crawling things

suada	'spider'
madabi	'wood tick'
puzi?a	'louse/flea'

## 2.13 Trees / Plants

Many plant names have a similar ending, either **pi** or **bi**. This ending often occurs only in the *citation* form, or when the word is spoken by itself and not in a sentence.

wogopi	'piñon pine'
winipi	'tamarac/lodgepole pine'
waapi	'juniper'
pawapi	'cedar'
sinngabi	'aspen'
sawabi	'sage brush/medicine brush' (silvery grey)
hinabi	'beader brush'
pui	'seed(s)'
hinabui	'beader brush seeds'
hugasi	'wocus'
tina	'root (of a tree) sticking up' (compare with tinna 'antelope')



## 2.14 Earth and Sky

tiipi	'earth'	tugupati	'sky'
yipi	'desert'	kaiba	'mountain'
pobokoadi	'hills'	huudi	'river'
paninadi	'lake'	tibizibaa	'ocean'
taba	'sun'	miha	'moon'
paatuzubaʔa	'stars'	kumiba	'clouds'
paoma	'rain'	nibabi	'snow'
niniaba	'thunderstorm'	tikwikwidzi	'lightening'
kwinaha		'north (cold) wind'	
yui hikwa		'south (warm) wind'	

## 2.15 Seasons / Directions

tamano	'spring'
taza	'summer'
yibano	'fall'
tomo	'winter'
kwinaha nakwati	'north' (north wind side)
yui / wihi nakwati	'south' (warm side)
taba tsiboʔi nakwati <sup>21</sup>	'east' (sun coming up side)
taba igini nakwati	'west' (sun going down side)

<sup>21</sup>On the tape, Mr. Weiser chose **taba tsiboitami** and **taba igyitami** for these two entries.

## 2.16 Time

awamoʔa	‘morning’	tabino	‘noontime’
ohanaʔa		‘early in the morning’	
tokano		‘night (dark time)’	
ya tabina		‘today’	
iziʔi		‘yesterday’	
moʔa		‘tomorrow’	
ommoʔa		‘day after tomorrow’	
ʔu iziʔi		‘day before yesterday’	

## 2.17 Some special places

paba huudi	‘Snake River’ literally, “big river”
udi huudi	‘Crooked Creek’ (by Redmond) lit. “deep canyon creek”
puhi basoni	‘Crater Lake’ lit. “big blue spring”
amana baniʔi	‘Fort Rock’ (big cavity, like inside someone's chest)
tibaizi naʔa paninadi	‘Lake Abert’ lit. “bad water” (you can't drink it)
paʔa tikwinidi	‘Abert Rim’ lit. “high rim rock”
paba katidi	‘Yamsey Mountain’ lit. “big sitter”
toga katidi	‘Fuego Mountain’ lit. “dark sitter”
pasiakwao	‘Hager Mountain’ lit. “bald eagle” (bare of trees on top)
timada dziaʔa	‘Gearhart Mountain’ (shade your eyes/look out all around)
paatunuba kwina	‘where the star fell’ (Comes from a story about the formation of the area described in the introduction as Yahooskin territory.)
mata	‘grinding place’ (area around Paisley)

### 3 Yahooskin (Northern Paiute) Phrases

This chapter will introduce some phrases you may find useful as you begin to practice Yahooskin. You can refer to the previous chapter when possible and try substituting other words in place of the ones you find in the phrases below.

#### 3.1 Greetings and Goodbyes

haʔo ii	‘How are you?’ (a general greeting)
pisa ni nim	‘I am well/fine.’
tibizi pisa ni nim	‘I’m great!’
sidaʔa ni nim	‘I’m not feeling well.’
nimima ni yadua	‘I speak Paiute.’
iha nimima yadua	‘Do you speak Paiute?’
saʔasi ni punnikwi	‘I’ll see you later.’
tikamakwi i ni punnidua	‘I’ll see you after lunch.’

#### 3.2 Asking Expressions

iha nimi <sup>22</sup>	‘Are you Paiute?’
ahaa	‘Yes.’
kai ni. saiʔi ni	‘No, I’m Modoc.’
hayu ii naniʔa	‘What is your name?’
‘Irwin Weiser’ miʔi ni naniʔa	‘My name is Irwin Weiser.’
haga usu	‘Who is that?’

---

<sup>22</sup>On the tape, **nimi haa ii**.

usu i wanga?a	'That's my younger brother.'
hayu [usu] nani?a	'What is his/her name?'
Richard mi?i. nani?a	'His name is Richard.'
haga usu mogo?ni	'Who is that woman?'
i badi usu	'That's my daughter.'
hii usu	'What is that?'
usu i sakinobi	'That's my hogan (traditional house).'
hayusu 'deer' nani?a ka nimima	'How do you say "deer" in Paiute?'
himma ii [ma]hani	'What are you doing?'
tika ni	'I'm eating.'
kai imi [ma]hanisini	'It's none of your business.'
iha tsiaya?i	'Are you hungry?'
ni tsiaya?i	'I'm hungry.'
himma nadika	'What is there to eat?'
imi tsiaya?i	'(Those people)They are hungry.'
himma ii pizapi.	'What do you want?'
kai ni himma pizapi	'I don't want anything.'
iwao ni himma pizapi	'I want a lot of things.'
paa ni hibigya?a	'I am thirsty.'
paa ni hibibi nim	'I want a drink of water.'
paa idia	'Give me water.'
oka paa idia	'Pass me that water.'
oka tikaba idia	'Pass me that bread.'
oka atuku <sup>23</sup> idia	'Pass me that meat.'
pisa ii	'Thank you.' ('you're good')
pisa ii matiki	'You're nice (good) to me.'

<sup>23</sup>Another word you can use that is borrowed from English is **miidi** .

### 3.3 Commands

o?o natikaga	'Go over there and eat'
maga katini tikagati	'Sit down there and eat'
obi hunnakwa?yo tika	'Go outside and eat'
yato kimao	'Come here!'
obi hunnakwa?yo tibi mo?a	'Go outside and play!'
ii kyosinayo	'Get up!'
tipuni[ni]	'Wake up!'
mo?asu ohana kyosini	'It's already daylight! Get up!'
oka idiao	'Give me that!'

### 3.4 Seeing Someone or Something

himma ii punni	'What do you see?'
i kaazi ni punni	'I see your car.'
haga ii punni	'Who do you see?'
imi ni punni	'I see you.'
imi ni punni	'I see them.'
imi hi punni	'They see me.'
iha mi punni	'Do you see them?'
iha i punni	'Do you see me?'
ka tihikya o?o winidi iha punni	'Do you see the (that) deer yonder?'
iha ka tihikya o?o miawgi?i punni	'Do you see the deer over there going?'
iha ka tihikya o?o winidi punni	'Do you see the deer standing over there?'

### 3.5 Sleeping and Snoring

iwidapi ni	'I am sleeping.'
usu i?wi[dapi]	'He/she is sleeping.'
toysi iwidapi	'He/she is still sleeping.'
usu iwikati chair-wai	'He/she is sleeping. (while sitting)'
ii isododoi <sup>24</sup>	'You're snoring.'
ni isododoi	'I'm snoring.'
usu isododoi	'He/she's snoring.'
Gordon paba isododoi	'Gordon snores loud.'
Gordon ini isododoi	'Gordon snores a lot.'
tipuni ini ii isododoi	'Wake up! You're snoring loud!'

### 3.6 Going--Where? When? How? With Whom?

hanotu ii mi?a	'Where are you going?'
oo ni kaibamatu miakwi	'I'm going up on the mountain.'
hano[tu] imi mi?a	'Where are they going?'
imi tauni <sup>25</sup> waitu mi?a	'They are going to town.'
awamo?a tammi miakwi	'We'll go in the morning.'
awamo?a sizi ni miakwi	'I'll go early in the morning.'
imi awamo?a sizi mia?akwi	'They will go early in the morning.'
ta awamo?a sizi miakwi	'We'll go early in the morning.'
ha?o ii [mi] miakwi	'How are you going?'

<sup>24</sup>On the tape, you hear **usu isododo?i**.

<sup>25</sup>**tauni** is borrowed from English "town."

yi kaazi<sup>26</sup>wai ni miakwi  
 puku gana ni miakwi  
 sogo miakwi ni  
 ta kwayatu miakwi  
 tammi kwayatu miakwi  
  
 ni kwayatu miakwi  
 awamo?a sizi ta?a miakwi  
 haga ino miakwi  
 Gordon nino miakwi  
 Gordon ino miakwi  
 Gordon tano miakwi  
 Gordon imino miakwi  
 ni zimi miakwi

'I'm going by car.'  
 'I'm going on horseback.'  
 'I'm going by foot.'  
 'We're going a long ways.' (you and I)  
 'We're going a long ways.' (3 or  
 more of us)  
  
 'I'm going a long ways.'  
 'Let's go tomorrow morning.'  
 'Who is going with you?'  
 'Gordon is going with me.'  
 'Gordon is going with you.'  
 'Gordon is going with us (two).'  
 'Gordon is going with them.'  
 'I am going alone.'

### 3.7 Hunting and Fishing

hano imi mi?a  
 winaigya[kwi]  
 wikwinaigyakwi  
 iha imino [winaigyakwi]  
 kai ni [su]mi?a  
 hano ii miakwi  
 winaigya[kwi] ni  
 ta winaigya[kwi]  
 winaigya sikwa ta

'Where are they going?'  
 'pole-fishing'  
 'They are going fishing.'  
 'Are you going fishing with them?'  
 'I'm not going.'  
 'Where are you going?'  
 'I'm going fishing.'  
 'We (us two) go fishing.' (present)  
 'We (us two) ought to go fishing.'

<sup>26</sup>Another word for car is the English borrowing **adamobi**, from automobile.

hano ii nimi	'Where have you been?'
winai nimi ni	'We've been fishing.'
himaο ii tsakiba	'What did you catch?'
tu?i kwinaι nimi ni	'I didn't catch anything.'
hano su Gordon	'Where's Gordon?'
Sprague River-waitu wikwinaigya	'He's fishing in the Sprague River.'
himama ii winai-nim	'What did you fish with?'
pakwima ni winai-nim	'I used chubs for bait.'
tihwawaygyakwi ni	'I'm going hunting.'
usu tihwawaygyakwi	'He's going hunting.'
iha nimmino tihwawaygyakwi	'Are you going hunting with us?'
hano ii nimi	'Where have you been?'
tihwaway nimi ni	'I've been hunting.'
imi bino[?o] tihwawaymo?o	'They've been hunting.'
hano yaisi imi ka yamino?o	'Where are they now?'
tihikya hwawaygya?a	'(They're) deer hunting.'
kuda imi hwawaymo?o	'They're hunting ducks.'
miha tibasi	'Did you get anything?'
pisao tihikya patsao	'He got a nice buck.'
usu tihikya patsao	'He killed the deer.'
imi ka tihikya tihanikwi	'They will skin the deer.'
mo?asi ni ka tihikya tihani	'I already skinned the deer.'



## 4 On Your Own--Yahooskin (Northern Paiute)

### Grammar

#### Learner goals:

- 1) To learn some of the basic "rules" of grammar
- 2) To begin to be creative with your knowledge of Yahooskin
- 3) To be able to apply some of this knowledge to the phrases you know

Learning any language means learning more than isolated words, just as learning to speak means more than learning individual sounds or the letters that symbolize them. Every language has a way of putting those words together to make phrases or sentences. This is why it is important to begin to learn the *grammar* of language---the rules for putting words and ideas together.

There is no tape to accompany this chapter. Its purpose is to introduce you to some important rules of grammar. It is hoped that these will be used as a guide so that you can begin to be creative in your use and knowledge of Northern Paiute. Knowing how words can be put together allows you to experiment with the words you know by making phrases and sentences that are not already put together for you.

You can also go back to section 3 and identify the different parts of the phrases there as well as see how those phrases are put together. When you speak to a Yahooskin Paiute elder, you may find that you know what to listen for and can begin to understand what that elder is saying!

The first part of this section is a discussion of the grammar of simple sentences. The next will help you to identify *pronouns*. Other interesting aspects of the language will follow.

## 4.1 Subject and Object

One very important concept for understanding the grammar of Yahooskin (or English) is the idea of *subject* and *object*. The subject of a sentence is generally the noun that performs the action of the verb<sup>27</sup>. A *noun* is a word that names a person, a place, or a thing. So, in the English sentence “Mary is sleeping,” Mary is doing the sleeping, and so she is the subject of the sentence.

The object of a sentence is generally the noun that is somehow affected by the action of the verb. So, in the sentence “Mary kicked John,” John is the object of the sentence, since it is toward him that the action of the verb is directed.

In the English examples, when there is both a subject and an object, the order is SUBJECT + VERB + OBJECT. So, linguists often say that the *basic word order* in English is SVO. Now look at the following examples in Yahooskin:

usu iwi-dapi                                ‘He/she is sleeping.’

usu tihikya patsao                        ‘He killed the deer.’

In the first sentence, there is only a subject and a verb. **usu** is the subject and, like in English, comes before the verb. As you can see in the second example, **tihikya**, “deer,” is the object, since it is the thing being killed. It comes between the subject and the verb, so we can say that SUBJECT + OBJECT + VERB is the basic word order in Yahooskin, or SOV.

---

<sup>27</sup>Verbs are further described in section 4.3.

However, word order is not as strict as it is in English. It can be more flexible in Yahooskin, especially when there are *pronouns*. For example:

tihikya ni punni            ‘I see the deer.’  
(deer I see)

Here, the order is OSV. The forms of *pronouns* change, however, depending on whether they are subject or object, just as the difference in English between I/me, she/her, he/ him, we/us, and they/them.

i tihikya punni            ‘The deer sees me.’  
(me deer see)

By these changes in the forms of the pronouns, it is possible to keep track of who is doing what to whom. Pronouns are discussed in the next section.

## 4.2 Pronouns

When we speak, we often use *pronouns* in place of the full name for the things we are talking about. Pronouns, in a way, stand for other things. For example, in English, we can say “John is going home,” or “He is going home.” This is because everyone knows that “he” *stands for* “John” in this sentence. The word “he” is a pronoun in English.

Also, we can say “Mary sees John,” “Mary sees him,” or even “She sees him,” as long as we know that these different pronouns stand for particular people. In the last sentence, we can call “she” the *subject pronoun* and “him” the *object pronoun*, since those are the parts of the sentence they stand for. In the last two examples of the previous section, you saw an example of how the pronoun can change in Yahooskin. There are also *possessive pronouns* which are discussed in section 4.2.2.

### 4.2.1 Basic Pronouns

There is one important difference between the system of pronouns in Yahooskin. When I say to you “We are going hunting,” in English, I can mean *only* you and I, or you, I, and someone else, or myself and someone else, but *not* you. Yahooskin uses a different form of the pronoun “we” for each of these. These are called *dual* for the speaker and the hearer--that is “one of you plus I/me,” *inclusive* for the speaker, the hearer, and one or more others--that is “you and some others plus I/me,” and *exclusive* for the speaker and one or more others, but *not counting the hearer*--that is “some others plus I/me, but not you.” Here is a table showing the pronouns of Yahooskin (Northern Paiute):

subject		object / possessive	
ni	‘I’	i / i	‘me’ / <b>my</b>
i	‘you’	i / i	‘you’ / <b>your</b>
Ø <sup>28</sup> / usu	‘he’	pi / u	‘him’ / <b>his</b>
ta	‘we (you + I)’	ta	‘we (you + me)’
tammi	‘we (more than one of you + I)’	ti	‘we (more than one of you + me)’
nimmi	‘we (they, not you, + I)’	ni	‘we (them, not you, + me)’
umi	‘they’	imi	‘them’

You may wish to study the phrases in chapter 3 to look for examples of some of these pronouns. See if you can determine which form is used

<sup>28</sup>Sometimes, when the person performing the action is known, it is not necessary to use a pronoun. However, it is important to learn to use **usu**, since it occurs in many of the phrases in part 3.

and why. Also, try substituting different pronouns to form new sentences. The possessive forms are discussed in more detail in the following section.

#### 4.2.2 Possession (vs. ownership)

Possessive pronouns in Yahooskin are different from those in English. In English, we use a separate word right before whatever it is we are talking about. These words are:

my	our(s)
your(s)	their(s)
her(s)	his its

Yahooskin also uses a separate word and it also comes right before the person or thing that is possessed. However, there are important differences from English.

First, there is the *dual*, *inclusive*, and *exclusive* distinction discussed in the previous section. Also, there is a second form for each of the possessive pronouns which is used when the person speaking wants to be more emphatic, or to be clearer in distinguishing who possesses what. These correspond to the English words “mine,” “yours,” etc. Possessive pronouns in Yahooskin are:

<u>possessor</u>	<u>emphatic</u>	
i	niga	‘my/mine’
i	imi	‘your/yours’
u	uga	‘her/his/its’
ta	taga	‘our (yours and mine)/ours’
ti	tammi	‘our (more than one of you and mine)’
ni	nimmi	‘our (his/hers or theirs and mine)’
mi	imi	‘their(s) (not ours)’

Another important difference is that when using one of the possessors above, sometimes the first sound of the following word is changed. This has also been discussed in the section on stop consonants (1.3.1) above.

pia	'mother'	ibia	'my mother'
piaʔa	'friend'	ibiaʔa	'my friend'
kuma	'husband'	iguma	'my husband'
kusa	'pants'	igusa	'my pants'

### 4.3 Past and Present

*Verbs* are usually words that describe an action, like “come,” “go,” “sleep,” “get up,” “hunt,” “fish,” “eat,” “drink,” or “see.” They can also describe something else about the subject of the sentence, or a relationship between the subject and the object. The verbs “like” and “want,” for example, tell something about the subject's feelings.

Languages have different ways to talk about events that happen at different times, usually with respect to the present. A typical example is the English **-ed** ending on verbs. In the English sentence “I killed the deer,” the **-ed** ending on the verb “kill” tells the listener that the action happened sometime in the past, in other words, before the present. One way to express a past action (or something that is otherwise over and done with) in Yahooskin is by adding the **o** sound to the verb. Compare the following examples of expressions in the past and present:

ni tihikya patsa	'I am killing the deer.'
ni tihikya patsao	'I killed the deer.'
usu ka tihikya punni	'He sees the deer.'
usu ka tihikya punnio	'He saw the deer.'

#### 4.4 Post-positions

In order to talk about the *location* of things, or the *direction* of an action, English uses words called *prepositions*. In the sentence “The book is on the table”, “on” is a preposition. The word “preposition” itself consists of two parts--“pre” and “position.” Position or location is the central meaning of words like “on,” “under,” and “beside,” to name a few. **Pre-** means these words occur *before* the word that states the actual position or location being discussed. So, in the example, “on” comes before “the table” in English. “The table” is called the *object of the preposition*.

Northern Paiute and many other languages have what are called *post-positions*. That is to say, the word or suffix indicating the nature of the position or location comes *after* its object. The post-position in the following examples is in **bold** type:

su tsiaʔa oʔo ka siibi **tuha** kati  
the girl there the willow under sitting

‘The girl is sitting there under the willow.’

su nana nobi **kimai** wini [nimi]  
the man house beside standing

‘The man is standing beside the house.’

Some post-positions are *suffixes* to their objects. In other words, like the past ending on verbs, they cannot stand on their own, but must be part of the previous word. A hyphen - is used to show the break between the main part of the word and its suffix.

su tsiaʔa ka siibi-**ma** puiya kati  
the girl the willow-on climb sitting

‘The girl climbed up on the willow.’

Gordon imi-no miakwi  
Gordon them-with will go

'Gordon is going with them.'

There may also be more than one post-position attached to a single object.

kaiba-ma-tu ni miakwi  
mountain-on-toward I will go

'I'm going up on the mountain.'

#### 4.5 Instrumental Prefixes

Every language has its own unique and interesting way of doing certain things. Yahooskin (Northern Paiute) is no different. Certain *prefixes* on nouns and verbs indicate a relationship with, or use of, some body part or object used as an *instrument*. Note the following contrasts:

<b>ma</b> -togo	<b>ta</b> -togo
hand-big appendage	foot-big appendage
'thumb'	'big toe'

When these same prefixes are attached to verbs, they are referred to as *instrumental prefixes*. By comparing the following examples, we can see that the alternation is in what is used to perform the action:

paa-tuha	<b>ma</b> -tsopa
water-under	hand-sink

'to push under the water with the hand'

paa-tuha	<b>ta</b> -tsopa
water-under	foot-sink

'to push under the water with the foot'

You may wish to consult Snapp and Anderson (1982) for a more complete list of the different instrumental prefixes and their meanings.



## 4.6 Voiceless or “Whispered” Vowels

One more thing that is unique to Yahooskin and other related languages of the Great Basin is its use of *voiceless vowels*, or what you may prefer to remember as “whispered” vowels. You may have already noticed them in some of the words from the tape. They sound just like any of the five vowels discussed in section 1.2, but they are pronounced with a very breathy voice, as if they were being whispered. Occasionally, when a Paiute elder is speaking rapidly, these vowels may disappear from the ends of words altogether!

When speaking slowly and carefully, an elder may pronounce the vowel as fully voiced. However, one can usually predict when a vowel may become voiceless. The following is a list of conditions that may help you predict or hear when a vowel may be pronounced as voiceless or “whispered.”

A vowel may become voiceless:

- 1) When the vowel is in the last syllable of a word, but not if that syllable is stressed.
- 2) When the vowel is in the syllable immediately following the one with the primary stress.
- 3) When the vowel follows a voiceless consonant: **p, t, k, ʔ, s, h**, or **ts**.

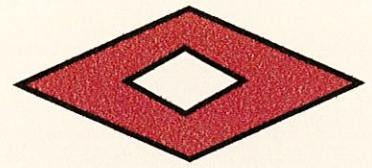
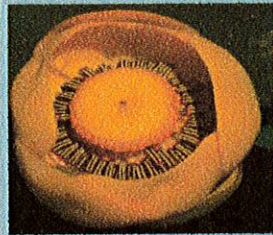
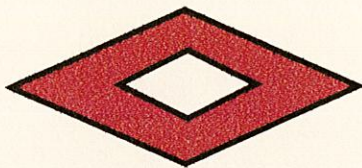
These conditions may interact to strengthen the possibility that a vowel be pronounced as voiceless. These are important for you to be aware of as you speak and hear more and more Yahooskin (Northern Paiute). Listen and imitate and your elders will be very impressed by your ability to do so! Good luck!



The Klamath Tribes  
Culture & Heritage Department  
PO Box 436  
Chiloquin, OR 97624  
(541) 783-2219







*nii # nini-natinediedi*

*I am teaching you Paiute*

"MAY THE PEOPLE'S MINDS BLOSSOM LIKE A WOCUS LILLY"—GeorGene Nelson, Language Department Director 5/26/2022