



By: Cleve Davis, Bannock Ecological LLC



# **A COMPARATIVE LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE BANNOCK DIALECT OF NORTHERN PAIUTE**



# Introduction

- Bannock/Northern Paiute is a northern language of the Uto-Aztecan language family
  - Spans portions of Nevada, California, Oregon, and Idaho
  - Reported to have two major dialects that exist between the north and south
- 




# Bannock dialect

- In 1957, Liljeblad wrote “today Bannock is identical with the Northern Paiute spoken at Fort McDermitt and at Miller Creek on the Western Shoshone Reservation”
- Later in 1967, he wrote that “the Bannock of southern Idaho are descendants of Northern Paiute immigrants from Oregon and speak the same general dialect as the Oregon Paiutes”
- Other linguists have identified the Fort Hall speech group as being “quite a bit different from other Northern Paiute dialects” or simply ignore dialectical differences all together.




# Oral traditions

- The Paiute Wada-Eaters of Eastern Oregon have tradition that Bannock migrated east across the Snake River when buffalo withdrew from Oregon
  - Lizzie Edmo (Bannock) stated the Bannock were always with the Shoshone, but they are Paiutes
  - She also stated “I heard of old people in the Comanche country. It had been told to them that long ago our people moved on the prairies up to the Sioux country. They had a severe winter up there. One party got lost up in the northern country. That is we”.
- 



# Multilingualism


- An actual comparison between the various dialects, including the Bannock, has not been published
  - Today, Bannock speakers are capable of speaking Shoshone and English
  - Historically, they were also known to speak Shoshone and Northern Paiute
  - Multilingualism creates high potential for linguistic exchanges
- 

# Why is this important?

- May lead to new insights into dialectology of the Northern Paiute language and Numic spread of the Northern Paiute speakers
- Can also provide information about the ancestor language (proto-language)
- As languages become extinct, it's important to gather as much information about them as possible to preserve the language for future generations and research
  - Approximately 22 Speakers of Bannock




# Lexicon development

- Compiled from both published sources and elicitations
  - Elicitations were used only when published materials were not available
  - Bannock and Northern Paiute words were transcribed using a developed Bannock/Northern Paiute Orthography
- 





# Orthography key


- To make the comparison all lexical items needed to be put into a single standardized orthography
  - Orthography Key was developed and used to standardize the various orthographies used on the Northern Paiute language
  - Northern Paiute/Bannock writing system was used to make reading the Northern Paiute and Bannock lexical items easier for those not trained in using the IPA
  - Shoshone lexical items were not put into the Bannock/Northern Paiute writing system because Shoshone is a separate language
- 



Bannock/Northern Paiute	Yerington Paiute	IPA	Shoshone
<b>t (initial)</b>	t	t	d (initial)
<b>ts</b>	ts	c, ts	ts
<b>u</b>	oo	u	u
<b>uu</b>	ooo	u:	uu




# Total # of lexical items collected from each dialect

- Bannock = 1,372
  - Owyhee = 294
  - Burns = 760
  - McDermitt = 727
  - Yerington = 533
  - Shoshone Language = 853
- 



# Lexical comparison

- Differences and similarities between the various dialects of Northern Paiute and Shoshone were adapted from the Swadesh method (1955)
  - Method is different in that an attempt to estimate time depth using the cognates was not done because of the numerous and substantial criticisms of Swadesh's method
  - However, Swadesh's (1955) method can be useful for determining differences and similarities between related languages
- 




ENGLISH	BANNOCK	OWYHEE	BURNS	MCDERMITT	YERINGTON	SHOSHONE
ABOVE	PA'A	PA'A	PA'A	PA'A	PA'A	BA'A
ABSENT	KATU'U	KADU'YU	KADU'U	KADU'U	KADU'U	GAIHAIWA'I
AGAIN	TEWAU	TEWAZU	TIWAU	TEWAU, TEWAZU	TEWAZU	DEASEN
ALREADY	MO'ASE, WIO	MAASE HA	MU'ASU	MUASU	MU'ASU	BAISHEN
ALSO	TEWAU TIMA	TEWAZU	TIWAU	TEWAU	TEWAZU	DEASEN





# Cognate comparison table

- Lexical items put into a comparative table
  - A total of 98 lexical items had a one-to-one match for Bannock, Burns, McDermitt, and Yerington dialects of Northern Paiute and Shoshone languages
  - This is two less than the normally accepted value used in Swadesh's (1955) method
- 

# Phonetic correspondence

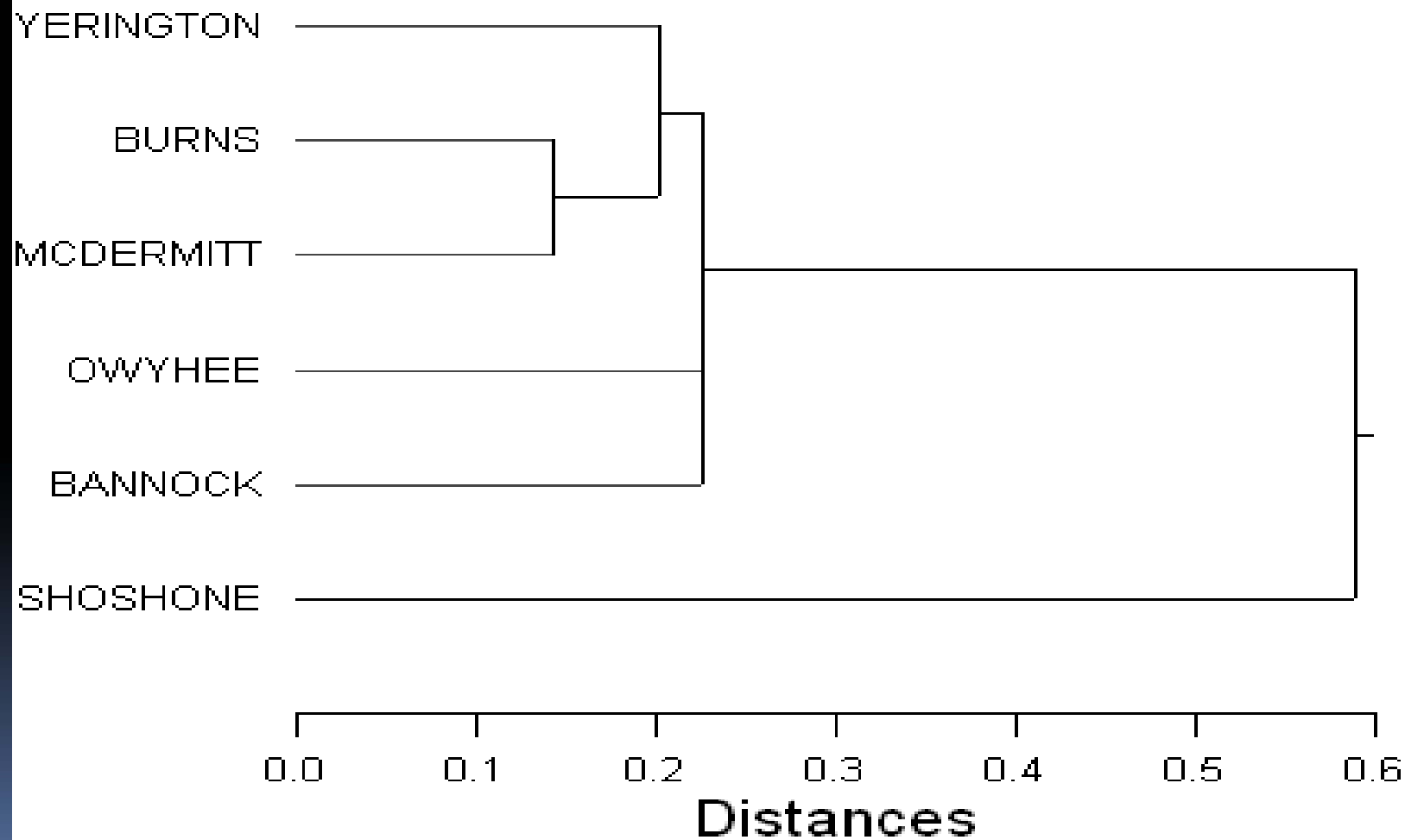
- Lexical items considered to have a positive correspondence when items exhibited reflexes of a common proto-form
- For example, the Bannock lexical items *Wenu* for “stand” and Burns *Wene* for “stand” have attestable correspondences because they share the root *Wen-*
- Lexical items found not to have attestable correspondences were scored as a zero (i.e., not a cognate)
- For example, the Bannock *izi’i* for “yesterday” and the Shoshone “*gendun*” for “yesterday” clearly do not exhibit reflexes of a common proto-form

# Results

- The closest relative of the Bannock dialect is the Owyhee dialect
- The Burns and McDermitt dialects are equally less similar to the Bannock dialect with a similarity value of 93%
- Bannock, Owyhee, Burns, McDermitt, and Yerington dialects differ by no more than 10%
- Shoshone is only 65% similar to the Bannock dialect
- Thus, comparable to English and German (i.e., not mutually intelligible languages, but clearly derived from a common ancestral language)




# Cluster Tree





# Cluster results

- Closest relative of the Bannock dialects is the Owyhee dialect
  - Burns and McDermitt dialects form a related cluster and are the most similar of all the Northern Paiute dialects analyzed
  - The Bannock, Owyhee, Burns, and McDermitt dialects form a cluster separate from Yerington, which would support the North and South superdialect conclusions made by Dick et al. (1987) and Fowler and Liljeblad (1986)
  - Isogloss bundle between the north and south occurs near Pyramid Lake (Fowler and Liljeblad 1986)
- 

# Phonological Rule Borrowing

- Phonemic rules from Shoshone may have also been borrowed into the Bannock vocabulary
- For example, the Bannock word for breast is /piži/ which is essentially the same as the Shoshone /biži/
- This is different from the Owyhee dialect of Northern Paiute for breast, which is /piza/
- Liljeblad (1966:5) stated: “there is approximation but no strict phonetic equivalent to English [š]”
- Therefore, it would appear that the Bannock dialect may be borrowing the Shoshone phonological rule /s/→[š] / i \_\_\_ and /z/→[ž] / i \_\_\_
- A possible example of this rule being borrowed and applied to the Northern Paiute language is the Bannock word for good, /piša/ or / pišaʔju /, where no other Northern Paiute dialect has /š/ in this word

# Phonetic Innovation

- Liljeblad (1966) observed the /ɛ/ occurred infrequently when /i/ or /i:/ was followed by /u/
- Liljeblad (1966) did not identify the dialect where this observation took place, nor did he mention it in *Bannock I: Phonemes* (Liljeblad 1950)
  - /hibiu/ is pronounced [hibɛ:u] by some speakers
  - Possible that this observation was made in Fort Hall after his 1950 publication
- First appearance of the /ɛ/ phoneme may have facilitated the phonemicization of the sound into the Bannock dialect
- Total of 16 lexical items were found to have this innovation

# North and South Superdialect

- Being the furthest south, Yerington is more different than any of the other Northern Paiute dialects analyzed
- For example, the word *mami'isu* (more), *huza* (nephew), *kudu'u* (stick), *nimaggemi* (a lie or false statement), and *sagwa'ni* (little) are all different than what is found in the other dialects
- Interestingly, the Yerington word for “ground”, *sogo*, is very similar to the Shoshone word for “ground”, *sogope*
- Supports purported North and South superdialects

# Internal Reconstruction


- The only regular sound change observed occurs between the northern dialects (i.e., Bannock, Owyhee, Burns, and McDermitt) and southern dialect of Yerington Paiute
- $dd \rightarrow ch$  / {b, w, m}i \_\_\_\_
- For example, the lexical item for the color green in Yerington is /puhiɣwidad/ which goes to /puhikwičade/ in Bannock
- Supports the conclusion made by Fowler and Liljeblad (1986) and Dick et. al (1987) that there are two superdialects, North and South

# Other findings

- Unique Bannock words not found in other dialects of Northern Paiute
- Included:
  - Number 9 = *Semewemihoide*
  - Run = *Ahomenai*
- The word for “seven”, *tatsekwi’yu* or *tatsikwi’yu*, appears to have a Shoshone root with a Bannock suffix
  - Shoshone root *tatse-*, with the Bannock number suffix *-kwi’yu*.
- Lexicon differences among the Bannock group provides some evidence that would support an east-to-west branch of the North superdialect of Northern Paiute.



# Conclusions

- Bannock dialect has some unique lexical items not found in other Northern Paiute dialects
  - Phonetic innovation /ɛ /not observed in other dialects
  - Cognate cluster analysis indicates that the Bannock dialect is different from the other dialects
  - Evidence of phonetic rule borrowings, as well as direct lexical borrowings from the Shoshone language
  - Bannock speakers are quick to make a distinction between their vernacular and the Northern Paiute speakers to the west and south
  - All speakers of the Bannock dialect in Fort Hall also refer to their language as “The Bannock Language”
  - Combined linguistic differences would support the Bannock as being at the very least a discernable and separate dialect from other Northern Paiute speech groups, or for political reasons a separate language
- 





# Acknowledgements

- Caroline Teton-Racehorse
  - Kermit Bacon
  - Christopher Loether
  - Catherine Fowler
  - Tim Thornes
  - Shoshone-Bannock Tribes
- 