Session 2

1. Summary so far

2. The comparative method
Summary

- In session 1, we looked at words in Menominee, Ojibwe, and Potawatomi

- We focused on their similarities

- Not just similar sounding, but deep parallels
The Comparative Method

Step 1: Put together lists of words that might be related
- There is some guesswork here...
- Helps to start with “basic vocabulary”

Step 2: Establish sound correspondences
- Focus on one sound at a time
- Is the sound at the beginning of a word? Middle? End?

Step 3: Figure out what the original sound was
In Related Words...

• Step 1: Find Related Words

• ‘It is red-hot’

  maehkuapachketæ(w)

  miskwaabikide

  mskwabkedé

• For this word, what are the most important differences between the three languages?
...The Sounds Line Up

Menominee: maehkuapaehketæw

Ojibwe: miskwaabikide

Potawatomi: mskwabkedé
Finding Related Words

• When languages are closely related like Menominee, Ojibwe, Potawatomi, it can be very easy to tell which words are related
  • However, languages will always throw you a curve...!

• When looking for related words, it helps to start with “basic vocabulary” – words everyone has to use.
  • Body parts (nenāch, ninik, nnek ‘my arm’)
  • Basic numbers (nekot, ningod-, ngot ‘one’)
  • Kinship terms (nōhnaeq, noos, nos ‘my father’)
Lining Up Sounds

- Sounds do not change willy-nilly!
  - Sounds appear to change regularly

- Check one sound, one position at a time

- For example, look at $n$ and $m$ in the three languages
Sound Correspondences

- Some cases are straightforward

- Menominee, Ojibwe, and Potawatomi all share $n$

1. $nīw$  
   $niiwin$  
   $nyéw$  
   ‘four’

2. $enāeniw$  
   $iniini$  
   $nene$  
   ‘man’

3. $anāem$  
   $animosh$  
   $nemosh$  
   ‘dog’

4. $nenāeh$  
   $ninik$  
   $nnek$  
   ‘my arm’

5. $naehkān$  
   $nikan$  
   $nken$  
   ‘my bone’
Sound Correspondences

• They also all share *m*

1. māhkesen makizin mkezen ‘shoe’
2. maehkōn miskozi mskweze ‘s/he is red’
3. pemōhnaew bimose bmosé ‘s/he walks along’
4. anāêm animosh nemosh ‘dog’
The Tricky Cases

- Sounds do not just change willy-nilly…
  - But sometimes one sound in one language can correspond to two or more sounds in another language

- What’s happening here?

1. nōhnaeq noos nos ‘my father’
2. maehkōn miskozi mskweze ‘s/he is red’
3. aqnap asab sep ‘net’
4. māhkesen makizin mkezen ‘shoe’
Fortis/Lenis

• In a lot of languages (including English), consonants come in pairs:
  • p, b
  • t, d
  • k, g

• Ojibwe and Potawatomi consonants also come in pairs
  • Linguists call these *fortis* (strong) and *lenis* (weak)

• Menominee consonants don’t!
Fortis/Lenis

- Ojibwe and Potawatomi have \( p \) and \( b \)...
- Menominee has \( p \), but not \( b \)

What’s going on here?

1. pemōhnaew bimose bmosé ‘s/he walks along’
2. ohpāën opin pen ‘potato’
3. ehpāhtaw apatoo peto ‘s/he runs to a certain place, that direction’
4. pemēpahtaw bimibatoo bmepto ‘s/he runs along’
What to do with these?

- After awhile, you’ll have a large set of sound correspondences

- Step 3: If all these languages came from a single language, what would that language look like?

- ...This is a really hard question to answer.
  - Luckily, a lot of really smart people have (mostly) figured it out for us already!
Borrowing

• Sometimes, words won’t always match up between languages – or they match up in unexpected ways.

• When people live in close contact with each other, they borrow words from each other.

1. panāēnas (akandamoo) bnéno

‘banana’
Borrowing

- Speakers of Algonquian languages also borrowed words from each other

1. anohkīw anokii noki
   - In M and O, this means ‘s/he works’
   - In P, this means ‘s/he hires someone to have something done’

- Consider these three words for ‘far’

1. wāqnaw waasa bnoch
   - Compare with Fox penoochi
Borrowing

Words for ‘white person, American’

Potawatomi:

kche-mokman  literally ‘big knife’

Ojibwe:

gichi-mookomaan  literally ‘big knife’

Menominee:

(kece-)mōhkomān  no literal meaning!

‘knife’ is aqsekan
‘big’ is kāeqc-
An important note...

- All living languages change over time.

- Sounds change over time.
  - English today is not the same as English 1000 years ago

- Menominee, Ojibwe, and Potawatomi changed (and are changing) too!