

Basic Yurok grammar

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August 9, 2010
— INCOMPLETE DRAFT —

This draft is meant for discussion and revision during the August 2010 Yurok Language Institute, at the end of which I expect to distribute a revised version.

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I Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This booklet provides information about basic grammatical patterns in the Yurok language. The patterns covered are identified by the Yurok Tribe as elements of “basic” Yurok for teacher certification purposes. Anyone is welcome to use this, but teachers and future teachers are the intended audience. Please keep in mind that languages are best learned by speaking and listening, not by reading; this is meant as a supplement to the spoken language.

Among the topics NOT covered here are bipersonal verbs, subjunctive verbs, attributive verbs, locative nouns, and many more elaborate sentence patterns. These and other important areas of grammar will be included in intermediate and advanced descriptions of Yurok grammar.

1.2 Questions

If you have questions or suggestions about this booklet, or if you find errors in it, please don't hesitate to write or call me. My email address is garrett@berkeley.edu, my office phone number is 510-643-7524, and my full mailing address is: Andrew Garrett, Department of Linguistics, University of California, 1203 Dwinelle Hall #2650, Berkeley CA 94720-2650.

1.3 Abbreviations

Nearly all the Yurok example sentences cited in this booklet are quoted from actual first-language Yurok speakers, recorded sometime during the long period of Yurok language documentation from the 1880s to the present day. Wherever possible, the speaker and year are noted as well as the source of the quotation.¹

SPEAKERS		SOURCES	
AF	Aileen Figueroa	AG	recordings by Andrew Garrett
AS	Alice Spott	ALK	notes and recordings by A. L. Kroeber
DW	Domingo of Weitchpec	AQ	recordings by Alysoun Quinby
FD	Frank Douglas	ES	notes by Edward Sapir
FS	Florence Shaughnessy	GR	notes by Gladys Reichard
GT	Georgiana Trull	JB	recordings by Juliette Blevins
JJ	Jimmie James	JC	notes by Jeremiah Curtin
LT	Lucy Thompson	JP	recordings by Jean Perry
MM	Mary Marshall	LC	recordings by Leo Canez
MR	Minnie Reed	MRO	recordings by Margo Robbins
		PP	recordings and notes by Paul Proulx
		RHR	recordings and notes by R. H. Robins
		WB	recordings and notes by William Bright
		YL	R. H. Robins, <i>The Yurok language</i> (1958)
		YLCB	<i>Yurok language conversation book</i> (2003)

Of course, many other Yurok speakers have worked on language documentation over the years; this list includes only those whose names are known and whose sentences happen to be quoted in this booklet.

¹This is not always possible, because some of those who recorded language information did so without naming the speaker they worked with. NOTE that in this DRAFT version, the citations are not complete; this will be done by next week.

2 Definitions

You do not need to know special terminology to speak a language fluently. Yurok children learned their language perfectly, and elders have spoken masterfully and subtly in the language, for centuries without any help from linguists. But linguistic terminology is sometimes helpful in talking about the structure of a language, and describing how a language is used. The following terms will come up frequently:

Singular and plural. A singular noun or verb refers to one person or thing; a plural noun or verb refers to more than one. (On the terms NOUN and VERB see §4 on page 9.)

Subject and object. Almost every sentence has a subject: the person or thing that does the action or is in the state expressed by the sentence. In English, for example, *that rock* is the subject of the sentences *Yesterday that rock fell on my car* and *That rock was big*. Some sentences also have an object: the person or thing affected or targeted by the action. So, in English, *that rock* is the object of the sentences *I saw that rock* and *I threw that rock*. In Yurok, it is common for subjects and objects to be understood but not actually expressed in sentences; for example, in *To' kee kem newochek'* "I will see you again", the subject ("I") and object ("you") are understood.

1st, 2nd, 3rd person. Verb forms are said to be first-, second-, or third-person forms: first person (1st person) means that the subject is "I" or "we"; second person (2nd person) means that the subject is "you" (singular or plural); and third person (3rd person) means that the subject is "he", "she", "it", or "they".

3 Pronunciation

3.1 Writing Yurok

Table 1 below shows the symbols used here to represent the distinct sounds of Yurok. Note that all words printed here with word-initial vowels are actually pronounced with a glottal stop before the vowel; for example, *oyhl* 'lie' is actually pronounced 'oyhl in Yurok. English speakers do this automatically in English, so it is also easy for Yurok learners to do.

SHORT VOWELS		LONG VOWELS	
a	as in <i>pa'ah</i> 'water'	aa	as in <i>raak</i> 'creek'
o	as in <i>'yoch</i> 'boat'	oo	as in <i>hoogech</i> 'star'
er	as in <i>tergers</i> 'rat'	err	as in <i>k'err</i> 'crow'
ee	as in <i>keehl</i> 'redwood'	eee	as in <i>cheeek</i> 'money'
ue	as in <i>muesmues</i> 'cow'	uue	as in <i>puuek</i> 'deer'
e	as in <i>nepuy</i> 'salmon', <i>nepek</i> 'I eat', or <i>kem</i> 'also'		(unlike the other short vowels, short e has no long counterpart)
CONSONANTS			
ch	as in <i>chaahl</i> 'sand, beach'	ch'	glottalized ch, as in <i>ch'eeshah</i> 'dog'
k	as in <i>ka'an</i> 'blanket'	k'	glottalized k, as in <i>k'ooy</i> 'bluejay'
kw	as in <i>kwar</i> 'nail, peg'	kw'	glottalized kw, as in <i>cheekw'ar</i> 'chair'
p	as in <i>pahtuen</i> 'neck'	p'	glottalized p, as in <i>kaap</i> 'brush'
t	as in <i>teguuek</i> 'beaver'	t'	glottalized t, as in <i>t'ohlt'ohl</i> 'mud'
l	as in <i>lekwisee</i> 'outside'	l' ~ 'l	glottalized l, as in <i>kel</i> 'you'
m	as in <i>mech</i> 'fire'	m' ~ 'm	glottalized m, as in <i>ko'moyok</i> 'I hear it'
n	as in <i>nek</i> 'I, me'	n' ~ 'n	glottalized n, as in <i>re'noh</i> 'feather'
r	as in <i>raak</i> 'creek'	r' ~ 'r	glottalized r, as in <i>ekar</i> 'necklace'
w	as in <i>wenchokws</i> 'woman'	w' ~ 'w	glottalized w, as in <i>ke'ween</i> 'eel'
y	as in <i>yohpenee</i> 'in a circle'	y' ~ 'y	glottalized y, as in <i>we'yon</i> 'teenage girl'
s	as in <i>segep</i> 'coyote'	hl	as in <i>oohl</i> '(Indian) person'
x	as in <i>mer'erx</i> 'gills'	g	as in <i>keget</i> 'mountain lion'
h	as in <i>heekon</i> 'long ago'	'	glottal stop, as in <i>to</i> 'thigh, hip'

Table 1: Yurok pronunciation: Symbols used in this booklet

For pronunciation help, listen carefully to elders, consult your teachers, or listen to the recordings on the Yurok Language Project website at UC Berkeley (<http://linguistics.berkeley.edu/~yurok>).

3.2 The Yurok Alphabet in this Guide

The spellings used in this booklet differ in three ways from the Yurok Tribe's official Yurok Alphabet:

Syllable breaks. These are not shown here: *sootok'*, for example, not *soo-tok'*. This has three reasons.

First, speakers must pronounce a word slowly to reveal its syllabification, but slow pronunciations by first-language speakers are not documented for many Yurok words; too many guesses would be needed for other words. Second, even fluent speakers may disagree on the syllabification of words in their language (for example, *sonowok'* may be syllabified as *so-no-wok'* or as *son-o-wok'*). Finally, especially in long words, hyphens take up a lot of space.

The letter e. This is used here both for the sound written *e* in the Yurok Alphabet (like English *bed*) and for one of the two sounds written *ey* (the one that is somewhat like English *bait*). In Yurok, unlike

English, the two are variants of a single “phoneme”. In this booklet, *ey* is used for the combination *e + y*, which sounds very different.

The letters *i* and *u*. These are not used here, though they are sometimes used in the Yurok Alphabet for reduced variants of *ee* and *o*. This is because reduction depends on speech rate and style. In careful speech a fluent speaker may pronounce a clear *o*, but in quick or casual speech it may sound like English *but*. Variation that depends on speech rate is best ignored in a writing system. (A typical English example where we ignore such variation is found in the second syllable of *Mississippi*, where people sometimes pronounce an “uh” sound and sometimes an “i” sound.)

3.3 Five important pronunciation differences between English and Yurok

When you learn a second language as an adult, your first language always influences your new language. For example, usually you have an accent in your second language; you do not sound like somebody who grew up speaking that language. To reduce your accent and what you carry over from your first language, it can be helpful to focus on major differences between the two languages. Five examples are given here: not a complete list, but if you pay attention to these differences between English and Yurok, your Yurok may sound less English-influenced. You can hear recordings of most words below on the Yurok Language Project website.

3.3.1 Long vowels

Yurok has long vowels (*aa*, *oo*, *err*, *eee*, and *uue*); English doesn't. In linguistics, the term ‘long vowel’ is used to describe a vowel sound that lasts twice as long as an ordinary vowel. English doesn't have these, but Yurok does (like many languages). The Yurok long vowels are *aa*, *oo*, *err*, *eee*, and *uue*, corresponding, respectively, to the short vowels *a*, *o*, *er*, *ee*, and *ue*. Make sure to draw them out; they should last fully twice as long as short vowels, and about as long as a short vowel plus *h*. Practice these examples:

SHORT VOWEL	LONG VOWEL	VOWEL PLUS H
<u>hak</u> 'ws 's/he laughs'	<u>chaah</u> l 'sand'	<u>chah</u> chew 'difficult'
<u>hekwsa</u> ' 'whale'	<u>chpegaa</u> ' 'cormorant'	
<u>so</u> ' 'toward'	<u>soo</u> ' 'thus'	<u>soh</u> chee 'on top'
<u>komchuemek</u> ' 'I know it'	<u>myootek</u> ' 'I put it on'	<u>hoh</u> kuemek 'I make it'
<u>koh</u> chee 'once'	<u>rek</u> ' <u>eeen</u> ' 'sit' (collective)	
<u>ch</u> ' <u>ee</u> shah 'dog'		
<u>kue</u> chos 'grandmother'	<u>muue</u> weemor 'old men'	<u>hue</u> ' <u>ueh</u> ' 'nut'
<u>muen</u> chey 'white'	<u>puue</u> k 'deer'	<u>merue</u> h 'five'

3.3.2 Glottalized stops

Unlike English, Yurok has a set of glottalized stops: *p'*, *t'*, *ch'*, *k'*, and *k'w*. They are sometimes hard to hear, especially at the end of a word, but they can be very important. For example, first-person singular verb forms (meaning “I” did it) usually end in *-k'*, and for many verbs glottalization also expresses the third-person singular. Thus *nek* “I, me” and *nek'* “he or she puts it” do NOT sound identical; the second word ends in a glottalized *k'*. Here are some more examples for practice:

PLAIN STOPS

GLOTTALIZED STOPS

*NOT YET COMPLETED

3.3.3 Word-final *h* and 'ʔ'

Yurok has *h* and glottal stop (ʔ) at the ends of words; English doesn't. For practice, listen to the difference between these words:

WORDS ENDING IN VOWEL WORDS ENDING IN *h* WORDS ENDING IN GLOTTAL STOP (ʔ)

*NOT YET COMPLETED

3.3.4 Word-final *kw*

Yurok has *kw* at the ends of words; English doesn't. For practice, listen to the difference between these words:

WORDS ENDING IN *k* WORDS ENDING IN *kw*

*NOT YET COMPLETED

3.3.5 Stress patterns

- Yurok words sometimes have very different stress patterns from English words.
- Good examples for practice: *NOT YET COMPLETED

4 Word classes

In any language, words can be grouped into various **CLASSES**, which are defined partly by their meaning and partly by how they are used in sentences. It is useful to identify the word classes of a language because then you can make general statements about them, for example, “Yurok nouns do not usually change according to whether they are singular or plural” and “Yurok preverbs are positioned before the verb”.

Though there are many similarities across languages, word classes do differ from language to language. For example, English has a class of **ADJECTIVES**; Yurok does not. In Yurok, the meanings that are expressed by English adjectives are instead expressed by the class of verbs. Likewise, English has no class of **PREVERBS** despite the importance of this word class in Yurok grammar. English also lacks **NONINFLECTED VERBS**.

Some word classes are referred to as **OPEN** because they contain an unlimited number of words: the existing number is very large, and it is easy to create new ones. The **CLOSED** classes contain relatively few words, though they are often crucial. Every Yurok word belongs to one of the word classes below.

4.1 Open word classes: Nouns, verbs, and noninflected verbs

Yurok has three open word classes.

Noun. A noun is a kind of word that can be the subject or object of a sentence, or the object of a preposition; nouns usually refer to kinds of person, place, thing, event, substance, or quality. English nouns include *boy, creek, boat, water, and happiness*; Yurok nouns include *mewah* “young boy”, *raak* “creek”, and *yoch* “boat”. (Abstract concepts tend to be expressed as verbs in Yurok, not nouns.) For more information about Yurok nouns see §5 on page 11.

Verb. A verb is a kind of word that usually changes its form according to the subject (and possibly the object) of the sentence, and that usually refers to a kind of activity or state. English verbs include *know, run, sing*. A Yurok verb is *komchuemek* “I know it”, which changes its form according to the subject (and sometimes the object), as illustrated by this selection of forms:

<i>komchuemek</i> “I know it”	<i>komchuechek</i> “I know you”
<i>komchuemem</i> “you know it”	<i>komchuepa</i> “you know me”
<i>komchuem</i> “he or she knows it”	<i>komchuesek</i> “I know him or her”

For more information about Yurok verbs see §7 on page 18.

Noninflected verb. This is a special kind of verb that does not change its form at all; it is not “inflected” according to the subject. For example, without changing its form, the Yurok noninflected verb *skewok* “like, want” can be used in expressions like *nek skewok* “I want”, *kel’ skewok* “you want”, or *yo’ skewok* “he or she wants” For more information see §7.1 on page 18.

4.2 Closed word classes: Adverbs, articles, conjunctions, and preverbs

Yurok has five closed word classes.

Adverb. An adverb is a kind of word that modifies a verb by indicating the time, place, or direction of an action (among various other notions). The use of adverbs is not much discussed in this guide.

Article. An article is a little word (like English *a* and *the*) that occurs with a noun. Yurok has two articles: *kue*, which can mean either “the” or “that”; and *k’ee*, which means “this”. For more information about Yurok articles see §6 on page 16.

Conjunction. A conjunction is a word that is used to combine words, phrases, or sentences. In English, common conjunctions include *and* and *but*. Yurok conjunctions include *esee* (or *emsee*) “and”, *mee* “because”, *mo(cho)* “if”, and others.

Preposition. A preposition is a word that is used together with (and preceding) a noun to indicate how the noun relates to the meaning of the sentence as a whole. English examples include *for* and *with*; Yurok examples include *ho* “to” and *mehl* “because of, for, with”.

Preverb. A preverb is a kind of Yurok word that is short (one or two syllables) and ordinarily occurs before the verb, expressing meanings having to do with time, place, and direction (among various other notions). The meanings expressed by preverbs are broadly similar to those expressed by adverbs, but adverbs can have much more specific meanings (like “tomorrow” or “over there”) and adverbs can occupy various positions in the sentence. Typical Yurok preverbs include *ho* (referring to past time), *keech* (referring to past and present time), and *nue* (referring to motion that takes place together with the verbal action). Some of the most common Yurok preverbs are listed here:

- Circumstance, manner, and relation: *eekee*, *keekee*, *mehl*, *neekie*, *noo*, *see*, *soo*
- Direction and location: *ee*, *nee*, *o*, *so*
- Motion: *neenee*, *nue*
- Negation: *mos*; *eemee*, *mee*, *neemee*
- Time: *ap*, *kee*, *keech*, *keet*, *keetee*, *keetue*, *kue*, *ma*, *ochkaa*, *wo*

See below for more information about Yurok preverbs of motion (§10 on p. 37), time (§8 on p. 26), and negation (§9 on p. 34).

5 Nouns

This section will describe a couple of changes that nouns undergo, and ways that you can modify their forms. Two areas are emphasized: changes in PLURAL nouns, expressing ‘more than one’ (in §5.1); and the various prefixes that mean ‘my’, ‘your’, and so on (in §§5.2–5.3).

5.1 Plural nouns

Usually nouns have no separate singular vs. plural forms, but can refer to one or more than one. For example, **wenchokws** can mean “woman” (singular) or “women” (plural). But a few nouns do have distinct plurals; as seen in Table 2, these are mostly words for people.

SINGULAR		PLURAL	
meweemor	“old man”	muuweemor	“old men”
perey	“old woman”	pegerey	“old women”
mewah	“boy”	mewahsegoh	“boys”
we’yon	“girl”	we’yono’	“girls”
wer’yers	“girl”	wer’yernerk	“girls”
huuek	“child”	huueksoh	“children”
’ne-k’ep’ew	“my grandchild”	’ne-k’ep’eworoh	“my grandchildren”
’ne-me’y	“my daughter”	’ne-me’yp’or	“my daughters”
sepolah	“prairie”	segepolah	“prairies”
knuuue	“hawk”	knuuuewerehl	“hawks”

Table 2: Nouns with special plural forms

Modern Yurok speakers mostly use **huuek** as the singular “child” and **huueksoh** as the plural “children”, but other (earlier) speakers used both words in both meanings.

5.2 Possessed nouns

To express possession of nouns — “my”, “our”, “your”, etc. — Yurok has a set of PREFIXES that can be attached to the beginning of a noun:

- 1st person **’ne-** “my, our”
- 2nd person **k’e-** “your”
- 3rd person **’we-** ~ **’ue-** “her, his, its, their”

Like nouns themselves, these prefixes do not have separate singular vs. plural forms: **’ne-** means “my” or “our”, **k’e-** means “your” (singular or plural), and **’we-** ~ **’ue-** means “her”, “his”, “its”, or “their”. A few examples are given in Table 3.

The possessive prefixes are also used to construct longer expressions like those in (1).

- (1) Possessive phrases
- nek ’ne-pahtuen** “my neck”
 - kue ch’eeshah ue-pahtuen** “the dog’s neck”
 - ’ne-psech ’we-yohlkoych’** “my father’s wood”
 - k’e-psech ue-psech** “your father’s father”

"X"	smohta'r	nepuy	'yohlkoych'	pahtuen
"my, our X"	'ne-smohta'r	'ne-nepuy	'ne-'yohlkoych'	'ne-pahtuen
"your X"	k'e-smohta'r	k'e-nepuy	k'e-'yohlkoych'	k'e-pahtuen
"her, his, its, their X"	'we-smohta'r	'we-nepuy	'we-'yohlkoych'	ue-pahtuen
	"bow"	"salmon"	"(fire)wood"	"neck"

Table 3: Nouns with possessive prefixes

The possessive prefixes also often change their form, according to three special rules.

First, if a noun begins with **h**, then at least in fluid speech, Yurok speakers usually substitute the initial consonant of the prefix for the **h**. See Table 4 for examples.

NOUN		POSSESSED NOUN	
haamoh	"bear grass"	'n-aamoh	"my bear grass"
ha'aag	"rock"	'n-a'aag	"my rock"
holeehl	"hazel stick(s)"	'w-oleehl	"her hazel sticks"
herkwterkws	"drinking basket"	'w-erkwterkws	"his drinking basket"

Table 4: Possessive prefixes and nouns beginning with **h**

Second, in the third person ("her, his, its, their"), the prefix has two basic forms, 'we- and ue-. Here is how you know which one to use:

- Use **ue-** if the noun begins with any **k** sound or any "labial" (lip) sound, in other words, any of the following: **k k' kw k'w p p' w'w m' m**.
- Use **'we-** otherwise, unless the noun begins with **h** — in which case see the first rule above!

This is called the KAMP rule, named after the consonants K, M, and P. Some examples of the rule are listed in Table 5.

KAMP NOUNS (PREFIX UE-)	OTHER NOUNS (PREFIX 'WE-)
ue-kahkah "his sturgeon"	'we-leen "his or her eyes"
ue-mey' "her daughter"	'we-'yoch "his boat"
ue-meehl "his legs"	'we-'lep "his or her hair"
ue-kegoh "her acorn soup"	'we-to' "her hip"
ue-'wers "his skin"	
oohl 'ue-pop "Indian bread"	oohl 'we-ekah "Indian cap"
tekwonekws ue-kwerhl "television"	

Table 5: Third-person possessive prefixes: The KAMP rule

Third, a special pattern is found in words beginning with **hue-** in the third singular ("his, her, its, their") form, **h** is replaced by ' rather than 'w. The only common examples are with **huuek** "child" and **huueksoh** "children": 'n-**uueksoh** "my children", but **uueksoh** "his or her children". Note that word-initial glottal stop (ʔ) is not written, so the word **uueksoh** is actually pronounced as 'uueksoh, and the initial glottal stop (ʔ) is the possessive prefix!

5.3 Dependent and independent nouns

Yurok has a class of nouns that cannot be used without a possessive prefix. An example is “father”. You must say *'ne-psech* “my or our father”, *k'e-psech* “your father”, or *ue-psech* “his or her father”; you cannot simply say *†psech* or *†kue psech*!

Nouns that require a possessive prefix are called **DEPENDENT** (abbreviated *n dep* in the dictionary); others, called **INDEPENDENT**, may occur by themselves with no prefix. Almost all Yurok dependent nouns are kinship terms (§5.3.1) or body part terms (§5.3.2).

5.3.1 Kinship terms

The dependent kinship terms are listed in (2), divided into four groups according to type of relation.

(2) Dependent kinship terms

a. Parents and children

'ne-chek “my mother”

'ne-psech “my father”

'ne-merm “my son”

'ne-mey' “my (unmarried²) daughter”, plural *'ne-me'yp'or*

'ne-'moo “my married daughter”

b. Brothers, sisters, and cousins

'ne-ley' “my (a woman's) brother or male cousin”

'ne-paa “my (a man's) brother or male cousin”, plural *'ne-paagoh*

'ne-let “my (a woman's) sister or female cousin”

'ne-wey “my (a man's) sister or female cousin”

'ne-ykew “my younger sibling”

c. Nieces and nephews

'n-ekchuem “my nephew”

'ne-romech “my niece”

d. Relations by marriage

'n-ahpew “my wife”

'ne-nos “my husband”

'n-ahpemew “my mate, my spouse”

'ne-chne'wk'wos “my son-in-law”

'ne-k'ep'ch'em “my daughter-in-law”

'ne-kwaa “my more distant relative by marriage”

'ne-chkar “my relative by marriage after the connecting relative has died”³

The independent kinship terms are listed in Table 6, divided into five groups according to type of relation. Notice that many (but not all) independent kinship terms end in *-os* and that many of them also have address terms, used in speaking directly to the person.

²In traditional Yurok, this term was apparently used only for unmarried daughters. With twentieth-century changes in family structure, *'ne-mey'* is also used for married daughters and the term *'ne-'moo* has fallen out of use.

³This designates in-laws after the blood relative connecting them has died. For example, after her brother dies, a woman could use this term for her brother's wife.

REFERENCE TERMS	ADDRESS TERMS
kokos "mother" (familiar) totos "father" (familiar)	kok "mom" tot "dad"
kuechos "grand- or great-grandmother" peechowos "grand- or great-grandfather" k'ep'ew "grand- or great-grandchild", plural k'ep'eworoh kekchew "deceased grandmother" psychew "deceased grandfather"	kuech "grand- or great-grandmother" peech "grand- or great-grandfather" tos "child or grandchild"
meechos "older brother or male cousin" peenos "older sister or female cousin" cheichos "much younger sibling"	meet "older brother" peen' "older sister" chich "younger sibling"
tuelos "aunt" cheemos "uncle"	tuel' "aunt" cheem' "uncle"
cheween "mother-in-law" paarew "father-in-law" chnaa "woman's brother-in-law" tey "man's brother-in-law" chneen "sister-in-law (of a man or a woman)" me'loh "widow(er) living with a spouse's family"	

Table 6: Independent kinship terms

5.3.2 Body part terms

Many body part terms are independent; but many others are dependent nouns, requiring a possessive prefix whenever they are used. Most such dependent terms are listed in (3). In some cases, as in (3a), the prefixes appear in their shorter forms because the dependent nouns begin with vowels.

- (3) Dependent body part terms
- a. Dependent body part terms beginning with vowels
 - 'n-aawech "my back"
 - 'n-eephI "my tongue"
 - 'n-ekwol "my fishing rock"
 - 'n-erp'ern' "my nose"
 - 'n-erp'ern' 'we-tohpew "my nostril" ("my nose hole")
 - b. Consonant-initial nouns
 - 'na-rkow "my armpit"
 - 'na-rpehl "my tooth, my teeth"
 - 'ne-hlp'ehl "my eyelash"
 - 'ne-keek "my hips"
 - 'ne-kwen "my chest"
 - 'ne-leen "my eye(s)"
 - 'ne-luehl "my mouth"
 - 'ne-yah "my stomach, my belly"

	DEPENDENT	INDEPENDENT
"my, our X"	'n-erp'ern'	'ne-errkerhl ~ 'ner-errkerhl
"your X"	k'-erp'ern'	k'e-errkerhl ~ k'er-errkerhl
"her, his, its X"	'w-erp'ern'	'we-errkerhl ~ 'wer-errkerhl
	"nose"	"knee"

Table 7: Two possessed noun patterns

'ne-ykwet "my penis (usually of a prepubescent boy)"

'ne-'rep' "my eyebrow"

'ne-CHKah "my foot, my feet"

'ne-leen "my eye(s)"

'ne-'rep' "my eyebrow"

'ne-seen ~ 'ne-sen "my arm"

Some representative independent body part terms, among many others, are listed in (4).

(4) Independent body part terms

chekws "heart"

'leptoyhl "hair"

merterw "butt"

pahtuen "neck"

errkerhl "knee"

It is important to notice the difference between the two patterns in Table 7. Nouns like **errkerhl** "knee" are actually pronounced with an initial glottal stop (ʔ), not written here. (If it were written, one would write 'ne-ʔerrkerhl "my knee".) But in 'n-erp'ern' "my nose", there is no extra glottal stop immediately before the er.

6 Using articles

6.1 Two articles

Yurok has two articles, **kue** and **k'ee**. The first of these, **kue**, is far more common and is used in most contexts where English *the* would be used; it can mean “the one(s) we were talking about”, “the one(s) you know about”, or “that” or “those”. Articles cannot be used on their own; they must be used together with a noun. The second article, **k'ee**, means “this” or “these”, or “the one(s) right here”. Some examples are given in (5–6).

(5) Examples of **kue**

- a. **Nek kue mewah meskwok'**.
“I’m treating the boy with medicine.” (GT 2007 (AG))
- b. **Kue pegerk pa'aahl 'ee koo'**.
“The man is standing in the water.” (J 2007 (LC))
- c. **Keech hl'ewhl'ekw kue 'weryhl**.
“The eggs broke.” (JJ 2006 (AG))

(6) Examples of **k'ee**

- a. **Cho' negahchkem' k'ee ahtemar**.
“Pass out these papers.” (GT 2003 (YLCB))
- b. **Nek megetohlkok' k'ee ch'eeshah**.
“I’m taking care of this dog.” (FS 1980 (PP))

If you are pointing or referring to something near you, you would use **k'ee**, but otherwise you would use **kue**.

6.2 Articles and possessives

A notable difference between English and Yurok concerns the use of articles together with possessives. In English, you cannot say †*the my father* or †*the my leg*, but in Yurok, the equivalent expressions are not only common but ordinary. In English, you can say *this leg of mine*, but nothing as simple as †*the my leg*. In Yurok, by contrast, you would ordinarily say **kue 'ne-psech** “my father” or **kue 'ne-meehl** “my leg”; **kue** implies familiarity, or that people know that the person or thing exists, and this is ordinarily true of body parts and kin terms. You might say plain **'ne-psech** “my father” or **'ne-meehl** “my leg” in a situation where you hadn’t been talking about your father or your leg, or where their existence was even uncertain. (An orphan might say **Neemokw' 'ne-psech** “I don’t have a father.”)

(7) Examples of **kue** with possessives

- a. **Kue k'e-k'ep'ew ho negeeen'**.
“Your granddaughter was looking for you.” (GT 2007 (LC))
- b. **Kue 'n-ekchuem o chkey'**.
“My nephew fell asleep.” (AF 2002 (JB))
- c. **Kues kue 'ne-leen?**
“Where are my glasses?” (GT 2003 (YLCB))
- d. **Keech tmoolak' kue k'e-chekas**.
“I shot your donkey.” (FS 1986 (JP))

(8) Examples of k'ee with possessives

a. **Cho' myootem' k'ee k'e-no'oy.**

"Put on your shoes."

(JJ 2006 (AG))

b. **Kee hekwssem' k'ee 'ne-ma'a'.**

"You will find my spear."

(MM 1927 (ES))

This difference between Yurok and English is important because people often refer to family members, body parts, and familiar possessions like glasses and clothing. The article kue is ordinarily used in such references.

7 Forming verbs

Broadly speaking, Yurok verbs are of two types:

- non-inflected verbs, which do not change their form depending on the subject or object (§7.1)
- inflected verbs, which do change their form, as described after §7.1

Every inflected verb — that is, every verb that changes its form depending on whether its subject is first person (“I, we”), second person (“you”), etc. — belongs to one of four VERB CLASSES. The four classes are named according to the vowel that sometimes appears before the ending:

- e-class verbs (see §7.2.1 and §7.3.1 below)
- o-class verbs (see §7.2.2 and §7.3.2 below)
- oo-class verbs (see §7.2.3 and §7.3.2 below)
- aa-class verbs

The first three of these classes are described below. The fourth class, the aa-class verbs, includes a very small number of verbs like *chewep’ak* “I tidy it”, and is not illustrated here.

For details about the forms of individual verbs, you may want to consult the *Yurok Verb Guide*, which lists most of the forms of many common verbs.

7.1 Non-inflected verbs

Noninflected verbs (abbreviated *vn* in the dictionary) have no endings. They are shorter — sometimes a lot shorter — than their inflected counterparts; usually they are used in familiar expressions or in certain settings in narratives. See Table 8 for a list of some common non-inflected verbs, given with inflected counterparts where those are common. Sample sentences with non-inflected verbs are given in (9).

- (9)
- Skewok* *kee* *'ne-newochek*’.
“I want to see you.”
 - Kues keech roo?* *Chomee'sh keech roo*.
“What time is it? It’s mid-day.”
 - Mos nek kom*.
“I don’t know.”
 - Nek soo neemoksue nue nes o wee'shk'oh*.
“I don’t think he’ll come today.”
 - Keetee kol' nue goh (hoh)*.
“I’m going to work.”

7.2 Singular verbs

7.2.1 Singular e-class verbs

The chart below shows how e-class verbs work for singular subjects, that is, where one person does the verbal action; either I do it (1 SG); you (one person) do it (2 SG); or he, she, or it does it (3 SG).

NON-INFLECTED VERBS	INFLECTED COUNTERPARTS
chahchew “it’s difficult”	
chergerhcherhl “be lazy”	chergerhcherhkok’ “I am lazy”
chween “speak”	chweenkepek’ “I speak”
ekonor “keep safe”	ekonorkwok’ “I keep (people) safe”
e’gah “eat a meal” (> 1 person)	
ha’p’ehl “forget”	ha’p’ehkok’ “I forget”
hkyork “watch”	hkyorkwek’ “I watch”
hl’e’goh “thunder”	hl’e’gohko’hl “it’s thundering”
hoh “make”	hohkuemek’ “I make”
keychek “be tired”	
kweget “visit”	
myah “jump”	myahkepek’ “I jump”
neeen’ “look”	neee’nek’ “I look at it” ~ neee’nowok’ “I watch it”
rohkor’ “roll”	rohko’repek’ “I’m rolling”
sa’ar “be crazy”	sa’arkeyek’ “I am crazy”
skewok “want, like”	skewokseemek’ “I want, I like”
slo’ehl “be skinny”	slo’ehkok’ “I am skinny”
soch “say, speak”	sochpeyewek’ “I say”
soo “think”	soosek’ “I think”
serrhl “do”	serrhlerpek’ “I do”
ten “it’s raining”	tenpewe’hl “it’s raining”
tewomehl “be glad”	tewomehkok’ “I am glad”
toh “talk, use language”	

Table 8: Some common Yurok non-inflected verbs

(10) Singular e-class verbs

1 SG	ro'opek'	myootek'	kepoyuerek'
2 SG	ro'opem'	myootem'	kepoyuerem'
3 SG	ro'op'	myoot'	kepoyueɾ'
IMPV. SG	ro'op'es	myoot'es	kepoyue'res
	"run"	"push (it)"	"swim"

Most e-class verbs are regular according to the pattern in (10), but a few are irregular. For example, **hegolek'** has two irregular forms, **hem'** "he, she says, tells" and imperative **hach'es** or **heksem'** "tell him, her!"

Two e-class sub-regularities for IMPERATIVES — imperative patterns that don't hold for all e-class verbs, but that are regular for certain subclasses — are notable:

- Verbs in **-eemek'** and **-uemek'** make imperative singular forms in **-'es** and **-'ues**, not **-ee'mes** and **-ue'mes**. An example is **knoks'es** "leave!", the imperative of **knokseemek'** "I leave".
- Verbs ending in **-onemek'** often have imperative singulars ending in **-'ones** (sometimes in addition to the expected forms in **-'onemes**).

Examples of these patterns are shown in Table 9.

I SG VERB FORM	IMPERATIVE SINGULAR
ekonemek' "I hold (it), I keep (it)"	ek'ones "hold it!"
mehlonemek' "I touch (it)"	mehl'ones "touch (it)!"
ke'yonemek' "I release (it), I let (it) go"	ke'yones "let go of it!"
s'ooponemek' "I hit (him)"	s'oop'ones "hit him!"

Table 9: Minor e-class imperative regularities

7.2.2 Singular o-class verbs

The regular pattern is very similar to the e-class pattern (but with **o**, not **e**):

(11) Singular o-class verbs

1 SG	chpe'royok'	ruerowok'
2 SG	chpe'royom'	ruerowom'
3 SG	chpe'roy'	ruerow'
IMPV. SG	chpe'ro'yos	ruero'wos
	"listen"	"sing"

Note that "listen" has an alternative imperative form **hechpa'r** [*hech-peyr'*]. Similar o-class verbs include **hloypeyok'** [*hloy-pey-ok'*] "I taste it", **nohsunowok'** [*noh-sue-now-ok'*] "I grow up (in a place)", **tenpeyok'** [*teyn-pey-ok'*] "I overeat", and **ni'nowok'** [*nee'-no-wok'*] "I watch, look for".

There are common irregularities in two areas of the o-class singular:

- In the imperative form, verbs in **-ey-** or **-oy-** often lack the imperative glottalization.

1 SG	ko'moyok'
2 SG	ko'moyom'
3 SG	ko'moy'
IMPV. SG	ko'moyos
	"hear, understand"

- In the 3rd person singular of many verbs in **-owok'** (but not **ruerowok'** above), the **-ow-** is absent:

1 SG	wa'soyowok'	sonowok'
2 SG	wa'soyowom'	sonowom'
3 SG	wa'soy'	son'
	"be poor"	"act or be (in a certain way)"

7.2.3 Singular oo-class verbs

The **oo**-class verbs are not quite as straightforward as the **e**-class and **o**-class verbs. There are four main **oo**-class patterns, differing in the 3rd person singular form. Note that some speakers shorten the 2nd person singular **oo** to **o** (making the 1st and 2nd person forms identical to **o**-class forms):

(12) Singular **oo**-class verbs

1 SG	kohchewok'	wenok'	sootok'	rechok'
2 SG	kohchewoon.'	wenoom'	sootoom'	rechoom'
3 SG	kohchewom'	wenok'w	sootok'w or sootol'	recho'
IMPV SG	kohche'wos	wenos	soot'os	rech'os
	"catch"	"come"	"go"	"paddle"

In other words, for an **oo**-class verb you have to learn what 3rd person singular form it is. There are some good generalizations: for example, verbs in **-echok'** mostly go like **sootok'**. This includes a lot of verbs, such as **neskwechok'** "I arrive", **kwomhlechok'** "I return", **sloychok'** "I descend, I go downhill". See the *Yurok Verb Guide* for details about many of these individual verbs.

7.3 Plurals

7.3.1 Plurals of e-class verbs

Plural verbs distinguish two kinds of formation: collective and non-collective. Collectives have an extra piece added into them before the plural ending, for example **-ee'm-** or **-e'm-** below. When you learn a verb, you should also learn which plural it usually forms. (A verb that usually has collective plurals can sometimes make non-collective plurals, but the best learning strategy is to learn its ordinary plural.)

(13) Plurals of e-class verbs

a. Non-collective plurals

1 SG	sermertek'	hohkuemek'
2 SG	sermertem'	hohkuemem'
3 SG	sermert'	hohkuem'
IMPV SG	sermert'es	ho'k'ues
<hr/>		
1 PL	sermertoh	hohkuemoh
2 PL	sermertue'	hohkuemue'
3 PL	sermertehl	hohkuemehl
IMPV PL	sermertekw	hohkuemekw
	"beat, kill"	"make"

b. Collective plurals

1 SG	nepek'	helomeyek'
2 SG	nepem'	helomeyem'
3 SG	nep'	helomey'
IMPV. SG	nep's	helomes
<hr/>		
1 PL	nepee'moh	helomeye'moh
2 PL	nepee'mow'	helomeye'mow'
3 PL	nepee'mehl	helomeye'mehl
IMPV. PL	nepee'mekw	helomeye'mekw
	"eat"	"dance"

Note that collective and non-collective plurals have different second-person plural ("you") endings!

(14) Examples

- a. skewokseemek' "I like, want"
tokseemek' "I admire"
- b. Nekah skewokseemoh yo'.
"We like him."
- c. Kelew hes neekECHYUE tokseemue' kue yo'hkOH?
"Do you all admire them?"
- d. Tee'neesho skewokseemehl?
"What do they want?"

(15) Singular and plural imperatives

- a. Kol' nue' nep's!
"Come and eat!"
- b. Kol' nue nepee'mekw!
"Come and eat (plural)!"

7.3.2 Plurals of o(o)-class verbs

(16) Plurals of o(o)-class verbs: Non-collectives

1 SG	neee'nowok'	kooychkwok'
2 SG	neee'nowom'	kooychkwoom'
3 SG	neee'now'	kooychkwom'
1 PL	neee'nowoh	kooychkwoh
2 PL	neee'nowow'	kooychkwow'
3 PL	neee'nowohl	kooychkwohl
IMPV PL	neee'nowekw	kooychkwekw
	"look for"	"buy"

(17) Plurals of o(o)-class verbs: Collective

1 SG	ruerowok'	hkook'
2 SG	ruerowom'	hkoom'
3 SG	ruerow'	hkO'
1 PL	ruerowoo'moh	hkOO'moh
2 PL	ruerowoo'mow'	hkOO'mow'
3 PL	ruerowoo'mehl	hkOO'mehl
IMPV. PL	ruerowoo'mekw	hkOO'mekw
	"sing"	"gather acorns"

7.3.3 Irregular plurals

Some verbs have no plurals at all! Some other verbs have collective plurals that sound very different from the singulars. Here's a table showing some of the most important:

SINGULAR	PLURAL
hegolek' "I say"	NO PLURAL USED
nekek' "I put"	NO PLURAL USED
ook' "I am"	oole'moh "we are"
hegok' "I go, walk"	hoole'moh "we go, walk"
sootok' "I go, leave"	le'moh "we go, leave"
neskwechok' "I arrive, come"	nuue'moh "we arrive, come"

If you want to say "we put" or "they say", either use a passive or find a different verb to use.

- (18) Important rule! Any collective verb can be used without its ending; the endings are optional; with or without an ending, it seems to mean the same thing.
- (19) Examples of 'oole'm-
- Weet nee oolem' kue kwegeruer'.**
"Pigs live there." (AF 2004 (AG))
 - Nekah neeko'hl pueleek nue nee oole'moh.**
"We often go to the beach to stay." (FS 1980 (PP))
 - Wonew nee oole'mehl.**
"They live up in the hills." (YL 1951)
 - SINGULAR
Segep er'gerrch nee ok'w.
"Coyote stayed in the sweathouse." (MM 1927 (ES))
- (20) Examples of hoole'm-
- Raak nee ma hoolem'.**
"They went up the creek." (FS 1980 (PP))
 - Nekah kee hoole'moh kue 'ne-negeee'n.**
"We will all go and look for it." (FS 1980 (PP))
 - SINGULAR
Raak nee ma hegok'.
"I went up the creek." (FS 1980 (PP))
- (21) Examples of le'm-
- Pechue keetee lem'.**
"They (salmon) are going to go upriver." (AF 2004 (AG))
 - Lekwsee le'mekw!**
"Go outside!" (GT 2003 (YLCB))

7.4 Table of verb inflections

See Table 10 on page 25 for a summary of e-class, o-class, and oo-class singulars and plurals, including for each verb only the more commonly used type of inflected plural (collective or non-collective).⁴ For additional details, see the various sections above and the *Yurok Verb Guide*.

⁴Note that ro'opek' also has a collective noninflected plural lo'omah "we, you, they run", which is more common than the non-collective inflected plural shown in the chart.

	E-CLASS	E-CLASS	O-CLASS	O-CLASS	O-CLASS	O-CLASS	OO-CLASS	OO-CLASS	OO-CLASS
							3 SG -o'm	3 SG -ok'w	3 SG -o'
SINGULAR	1	ro'opek'	nepək'	nee'nəwək'	ruerowək'	kohchewək'	hegək'	rechok'	rechok'
	2	ro'opem'	nepem'	nee'nəwom'	ruerowom'	kohchewoom'	hegoom'	rechoom'	rechoom'
	3	ro'op'	nep'	nee'nəw'	ruerow'	kohchewom'	hegok'w	recho'	recho'
	IMPV	ro'op'es	nep's	nee'nə'wos	ruero'wos	kohche'wos	hego'och	rech'os	rech'os
PLURAL	1	(ro'opoh)	(nepoh)	nee'nəwəh		kohchewəh		rechəh	rechəh
	2	(ro'opue')	(nepue')	nee'nəwəw'		kohchewəw'		rechəw'	rechəw'
	3	(ro'opehl)	(nepehl)	nee'nəwəhl		kohchewəhl		rechəhl	rechəhl
	IMPV	(ro'opekw)	(nepekw)	nee'nəwəkw		kohchewəkw		rechəkw	rechəkw
COLLECTIVE	1	lo'omah	nepee'moh		ruerowoo'moh		hoole'moh		
	2	lo'omah	nepee'mow'		ruerowoo'mow'		hoole'mow'		
	3	lo'omah	nepee'mehl		ruerowoo'mehl		hoole'mehl		
	IMPV		nepee'mekw		ruerowoo'mekw		hoole'mekw		
	"run"	"eat"	"look for"	"sing"	"catch"	"go, walk"	"paddle"		

Table 10: Singular and plural patterns for e-class, o-class, and oo-class verbs (parenthesized forms are rare)

8 Time reference

Basic time reference is expressed in Yurok by preverbs and preverb combinations. It is also possible to use adverbs of time, words like **chmeyaan** “yesterday”, **owook** “tomorrow”, or **we’yk’oh** “now”, which need not be pre-verbal and can even stand on their own without a verb. But these supplement the basic system of preverbs, to make time reference more specific.

There are at least four important differences between Yurok and English systems of time reference:

BASIC CATEGORIES OF TIME REFERENCE. The basic English categories are PAST vs. PRESENT vs. FUTURE: “I saw” vs. “I see” vs. “I will see”. Many languages have an English-style three-way set, but many other languages — including Yurok — have different systems. Of course it is possible to distinguish past-time and future-time preverbs in Yurok, but the basic system is more nuanced.

PRESENT VS. PAST TIME. In English, whenever you use a verb you must choose between a present-time form (*I see*) or a past-time form (*I saw*), among other verb forms. A distinction between present and past is obligatory in English grammar. But in Yurok, depending on context, verbs may express either present or past time; for example, **newook’** can mean either “I see” or “I (recently) saw”. The context will usually make the intended meaning clear.

ASPECT. Linguists use the term ASPECT to describe such concepts as starting and completing an action, as well as the viewpoint that a speaker chooses on an action being described (for example, depicting it as ongoing or as unitary). You do not need to know this terminology, of course, but the concepts sometimes play a key role in Yurok preverb choice.

NARRATIVE TIME. If you are telling a story set in the past, in English you will usually use past-time verbs (*he ran, they saw, etc.*). In Yurok, it is very common to use the ordinary verbs referred to below as GENERAL PRESENT, and then to use the narrative time as the reference. So, in a story, “the man ran and then got cold” might be **Ro’op’ kue pegerk, kwesee keech saawelek’**.

Table II lists the Yurok categories of time reference that are described in this section.

	LABEL	PREVERB	ROUGH TRANSLATION
PAST (§8.1)	GENERAL PAST	ho	“was doing it”
	PUNCTUAL PAST	ma	“went and did it”
	CONSECUTIVE PAST	ap	“thereupon did it”
PRESENT (§8.2)	GENERAL PRESENT	—	refers to present or recent past
	COMPLETIVE PRESENT	keech	“has done it, is now”
	DURATIVE PRESENT	ochkaa	“right now”
	INCEPTIVE PRESENT	keet	“starting to”
FUTURE (§8.3)	NEAR FUTURE	keetee	“about to, going to soon”
	GENERAL FUTURE	kee	“will, can”

Table II: Basic preverbs of time reference

Of course it is not necessary to learn the terminology; the key point is what the preverbs mean and how they are used. This will be described in §§8.1–8.3. In §8.4, the way that **keech** combines with other time-reference preverbs will be described. The categories of time reference in Table II also play an important role in Yurok negation and associated motion, topics which will be discussed in §§9–10.

8.1 Preverbs of past time

There are three main past-time preverbs. The first two are here called GENERAL and PUNCTUAL past.⁵

- The GENERAL PAST preverb **ho** indicates that a situation existed at some prior time
- The PUNCTUAL PAST preverb **ma** indicates that an action
- The CONSECUTIVE PAST preverb **ap** indicates that

The general past future preverb **ho** is illustrated in (22). This preverb generally indicates that a past action or situation existed without necessarily implying anything about its beginning or ending. It is always used in the intended meaning “was doing (something)” If the question is “what was going on?”, this preverb may be in the answer.

(22) Examples of general past **ho**

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| a. Ho ruerowok’.
“I sang.” | JJ 2003 (JB)) |
| b. Ho nerrmeryek’ nahschueh kue o melonee.
“I sang last night at the brush dance.” | JJ 2007 (LC)) |
| c. Kue k’e-k’ep’ew ho negeeen’.
“Your granddaughter was looking for you.” | GT 2003 (YLCB)) |
| d. Ho okw’ ’ne-ka’ar ner’er’eryhl.
“We had two pets.” | AF 2002 (JB)) |
| e. Yokmokee ho t’la.
“It was raining big drops all around.” | FS 1980 (PP)) |
| f. Wek ho oyhlke’s.
“It was lying here.” | FS 1980 (PP)) |
| g. Chpaanee neee’now’ ho pa’aahl.
“For a long time he would gaze out over the water.” | FS 1951 (YL)) |

One specific situation in which **ho** is used is with iterative verbs to mean “used to”. This is illustrated in (23).

(23) Examples of general past **ho** with iterative verbs

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| a. Nek ho hegelomeyek’.
“I used to dance.” | GT 2007 (YLCB)) |
| b. Sloowehl tue’ kem ho negepue’.
“Wild oats also used to be eaten.” | AS ~1962 (WB)) |
| c. Keech cheenkee’ kue ho legaaye’mow’.
“The path where people used to pass has been changed.” | YL 1951) |

The punctual past future preverb **ma** is illustrated in (24). This preverb generally indicates that a past action took place in one moment, or is understood as completed at a moment in the past. It is always used in the intended meaning “went and did (something)”. If the question is “what happened?”, this preverb may be in the answer.

⁵Linguists would probably use the terms IMPERFECTIVE and PERFECTIVE, respectively, but I think the terms used here are slightly clearer.

- (24) Examples of punctual past *ma*
- a. *Ma nohsepek' ku 'ne-slekwoh.*
"I took off my shirt." JJ 2006 (AG)
 - b. *Ma kooych 'ne-nepuy.*
"I bought some salmon." YL 1951
 - c. *Ma tmegok'.*
"I went hunting." YL 1951
 - d. *Tee'neesho ma newoom'?*
"What did you see?" YL 1951
 - e. *Segep ma kweget kohchee Merkwteeks.*
"One time Coyote went visiting Crane." MM 1927 (ES)

Compare the examples in (25). In the first example, the singing is described without any starting or ending point; in the second example, the implication is that the speaker started singing.

- (25) Examples of *ruerowok'*
- a. *Ho ruerowok'.*
"I sang." JJ 2003 (JB)
 - b. *Ma ruerowok'.*
"I came and sang." JJ 2003 (JB)

The consecutive past future preverb *ap* is illustrated in (26). In each example, there is a sequence of events being reported: "then X, and then Y, and then Z".

- (26) Examples of consecutive past *ap*
- a. *So nes Wohpekumew ap neee'now'.*
"Wohpekumew came and looked."
 - b. *Kwesee ap hegoomuem' kue 'w-ahpew.*
"So he said to his wife . . ."
 - c. *Kwesee kohchee heenoy o orogokw' kue wenchokws ap hem' . . .*
"And one day the woman followed him and said . . ."
 - d. *Kue 'we-neskwechok' ap ho'op'.*
"When he returned he made a fire."

8.2 Preverbs of present time

There are four main present-time categories:

- The term GENERAL PRESENT refers to verbs that have no time-reference preverbs. Such verbs can refer generally to the present or the recent past. For example, *ko'moyok'* can mean "I hear it" or "I (just) heard it", and you might ask somebody *ko'moyom' hes?* "did you hear it?"
- The COMPLETIVE PRESENT preverb *keech* indicates that something is true now because it has just recently come to be and the new situation now exists. Somebody may have just done something, or a situation may have just come to exist. It implies that some action or event has been completed, and a new situation now exists. Good translations will vary depending on the verb; they may include the words "now" or "has X-ed".

- The DURATIVE PRESENT preverb **ochkaa** indicates that an action is ongoing at the time of speaking, without implying anything about its duration or whether it recently started. Often a good translation is “is doing it right now”.
- The INCEPTIVE PRESENT preverb **keet** indicates that the action described by the verb is beginning. A good translation is usually “is starting”.

8.2.1 Present-time preverb examples

Examples of the completive present preverb **keech** appear in (27–28).

- (27) Somebody has done something: **keech**
- Keech sermertercherk’.**
“I have killed you.”
 - Keech kohchew’ nepuy.**
“He caught a fish.”
 - Kue meweemor lekwseek keech sootok’w.**
“The old man went outside.”
 - Wer’yers keech nohpew’.**
“The girl came in.”
- (28) A situation has come to exist: **keech**
- Kue ’n-uuek keech popel’.**
“My children are now big (they have become big).”
 - Nek poy keech sonowok’.**
“I am in charge now (I have come to be in charge).”
 - Nek keech skeweenepek’.**
“I’ve had enough to eat (I have become full).”
 - Keech ha’p’ehl.**
“I forgot (I have come to forget).”

Thus, **Keech tenpewe’hl** “it’s raining” means more precisely “it’s raining now (it might not have been raining before, it might have just started to rain).” This is also why **keech** is used in the expressions **keech ee roo** “it’s time” and **keech ee son’** “we’re ready”.

Examples of the durative present preverb **ochkaa** are given in (29).

- (29) Examples of **ochkaa**
- Ochkaa helomey’ kue pegerk.**
“The man is dancing now.”
 - Ochkaa kol’ nepek’.**
“At the moment I am eating.”
 - Ochkaa hlkyorkwek’ kue tekwonekws u-kwerhl.**
“I’m watching the tv.”
 - Ochkaa tektekw ’yohlkoych.**
“I’m cutting wood.”

(GT 2003 (YLCB))

- e. **Nek ochkaa yekwoyekwoh 'ne-slekw.**
 "I'm folding clothes."

(GT 2003 (YLCB))

Examples of the inceptive future preverb **keet** are given in (30).

- (30) Examples of **keet**
- a. **Kwelekw keet markewech' kue meweemor.**
 "The old man is starting to die."
- b. **Keet po'oh 'ne-meehl.**
 "My leg is healing."
- c. **Noohl keet saawelehl.**
 "Then they began to cool off."
- d. **Keet hegehlpa'.**
 "The water is rising."
- e. **Ko'moy' kue keet 'we-rueroom'.**
 "He heard them begin to sing."
- f. **'Ne-chewes keet tmentmen.**
 "My hand has started to throb."

8.2.2 Present-time preverb differences

The difference between **keech** and **keet** is illustrated by the example in (31). Here, notice that the first sentence (with **ochkaa**) describes an ongoing action (peeling hazel sticks) that may have been underway for a while; the second sentence indicates that this action is the first step in making a baby basket.

- (31) **Ochkaa pekwoluem' kue 'w-oleehl. Keet holeem' 'we-no'os.**
 "She's peeling her hazel sticks. She's going to make a baby basket."

The difference between **keech** and **keet** is illustrated by the examples in (32). The verb **kweskwesek'** means "I have a cold". In (32a) the situation has changed so that the speaker already has a cold, whereas in (32b) the speaker is starting to have a cold.

- (32) a. **Keech kweskwesek'.**
 "I have a cold." (J) 2006 (AG)
- b. **Keet kweskwesek'.**
 "I'm catching a cold." (J) 2006 (AG)

The difference between the completive present **keech** and the general present (with no preverb) is illustrated by the examples in (33). The first example, (33a), was given as a good, positive answer to the question **Komchuepa' hes?** "Do you know me?" The second example, (33b), would be appropriate if the speaker at first could not remember the other person, and then suddenly recalled: "Oh, right, now I know you!" In other words, the example with **keech** involves a change of situation from not knowing to knowing.

- (33) a. **Komchuechek'.**
 "I know you." (J) 2004 (JB)
- b. **Keech komchuechek'.**
 "I know you now." (J) 2004 (JB)

The difference between *keech* and *ochkaa* is illustrated by the pairs of examples in (34–37). In each case, in the first example *keech* is appropriate because there was a recent change of state. In the second example in each pair, *ochkaa* is appropriate because the action is presented as ongoing without a necessary starting or ending point.

- (34) Examples of *swoo'mel'* "he stinks"
- a. **Keech** *swoo'mel'*.
"He stinks (from contact with something)."
 - b. **Ochkaa** *swoo'mel'*.
"He stinks (naturally)."
- (35) Examples of *no'oyek'* "I have shoes on"
- a. **Keech** *no'oyek'*.
"I have shoes on."
 - b. **Ochkaa** *no'oyek'*.
"I am putting on shoes."
- (36) Examples of *teykelew* "bite"
- a. **Keech** *teykelew*.
"Something bit me."
 - b. **Nek ochkaa** *teykelew*.
"I'm biting."
- (37) Fishing examples
- a. **Keech nue mega'ahskeh'l**.
"They've gone spear-fishing."
 - b. **Ochkaa krtkrk'**.
"I'm pole-fishing."

8.3 Preverbs of future time

There are two main future-time preverbs:

- The NEAR FUTURE preverb *keetee* indicates that the action described by the verb is about to take place, or will take place very soon or in the near future. (What "very soon" and "the near future" mean may vary somewhat, depending on speaker's point of view.)
- The GENERAL FUTURE preverb *kee* indicates that action described by the verb will take place in the future, without specifying the near or distant future; these preverbs may also have the somewhat different meaning that the subject of the verb can do the verbal action.

The near future preverb *keetee* is illustrated in (38). As the examples show, sometimes *keetee* refers to an event that is just about to happen, and "about to" is a good translation. Sometimes it is a little farther in the future, but it is also seen as relatively near.

- (38) Examples of *keetee*
- a. **Ko'lo keetee me'lomek'**.
"I kind of feel like puking (it's like I'm about to puke)."

- b. **Keetee tenpewe'hl.**
"It's about to rain."
- c. **Keetee ho'oh.**
"It's getting dark (it's about to be dark)."
- d. **Kwesee noohl keech roo keetee ye'womey'.**
"Then the time came when the sun was about to set."
- e. **Keetee kol' sonowom'.**
"You are about to die."
- f. **Keetee sloyowon'.**
"The frost is going to come."
- g. **Wey' keetee shon'.**
"This is going to happen."

The general future preverb **kee** usually means that the action described by the verb will take place some-time in the future, but it can also mean that the subject of the verb **CAN** do the action described by the verb. Examples of the two meanings are given in (39–40).

- (39) Examples of **kee** = "will"
 - a. **Kee s'oks'oop.**
"I'm going to pound (you)."
 - b. **To' kee laayoluechek'.**
"I will teach you."
 - c. **Owook koy kee nowonem' puuek.**
"Tomorrow morning he will bring deer meat."
 - d. **Skewok kee 'we-komchuemehl.**
"They want to know."
- (40) Examples of **kee** = "can"
 - a. **Kol' neemee hesek' kee ko'moyohl.**
"I don't think they can hear (you)."
 - b. **K'ee regook tue' kem kee nepue.**
"Trout can also be eaten."
 - c. **Yo' kee saa'agoch'.**
"He can speak Yurok."

8.4 Combinations of time-reference preverbs

The completive present preverb **keech** can be combined with past-time and future-time preverbs. In each case the meaning of the resulting combination is the sum of its elements: it means that the subject of the verb is now in a state or circumstance (**keech**) in which he or she was doing (**ho**), did (**ma**), or can do (**kee**) something.

The most common combination with **keech** is **keech ho**, which means "have been doing it". In many cases a good translation is just "have done it". For example, if someone asks "What are you doing?", you might answer with a **keech ho** sentence. Examples appear in (41).

- (41) Examples of **keech ho**

- a. **Keech ho nep' puuek.**
"He's been eating deer." (MM 1927 (ES))
- b. **Kel' hes keech ho helomeyem'?**
"Have you danced yet?" (YL 1951)
- c. **Kol' keech ho hohkuemek'.**
"I've been working." (FS 1951 (RHR))
- d. **Keech ho sloyhlikek'.**
"I've been flattening eels." (FS 1980 (PP))

A second (less frequent) combination, **keech ma**, does not mean "have been doing it" but more simply "has done it", somewhat analogous to the English expression. An event happened in the past (**ma**), but its effect is still present now (**keech**). Examples appear in (42).

(42) Examples of **keech ma**

- a. **Keech ma saawelek'.**
"I've gotten cold." (GT 2003 (YLCB))
- b. **Keech ma markue' kue 'n-oolehl.**
"My plants got eaten." (FS 1980 (PP))
- c. **Yo' keech ma tohpekwtom'.**
"He has made a hold." (FS 1980 (PP))

The rarest combination is **keech kee**, which means "now (somebody) can (do something)"; the "can" part of the meaning comes from **kee** and the "now" part from **keech**. An example is in (43).

- (43) **Keech kee 'na-ahspee'moh.**
"Now we can drink." (YL 1951)

9 Negation

(Negation is included in this booklet, though it is not part of the “basic”-level Yurok standards, because its use is very closely linked with the time reference discussed in §8.)

English negative sentences usually have *not* or *-n't*. In Yurok, negative sentences are often formed with preverbs, especially the two most common negative preverbs **mos** and **neemee**.⁶ The usage patterns of these two preverbs are not yet fully clear, but where there is a difference, it is that **mos** tends to be used for general states or conditions. For this reason, only **mos** can have an additional meaning of INCAPABILITY (“cannot”).

9.1 Present negation

With verb forms lacking any time-reference preverb (the general present), both **mos** and **neemee** are used. Some speakers tend to prefer **mos**, others **neemee**; there has been a tendency for **mos** to become more common in recent times. Examples are in (44–45); some are translated as English past-time sentences because Yurok general present verbs can refer to past time.

(44) Examples of **mos**

- a. **Mos nuemi skuy' soo chwegeen kue wenchokws.**
“I don't like to talk to that woman.” (JJ 2007 (LC))
- b. **Mos skuy' soo chkeyek' nahschueh.**
“I slept badly last night.” (JJ 2007 (LC))
- c. **Mos nuemee ta'.**
“It's not too hot.” (JJ 2006 (AG))
- d. **Mos nuemee tenoneehkwee'.**
“It wasn't very expensive.” (FS 1980 (JJ))
- e. **Mos nek komchuemek'.**
“I don't know him.” (GT 2003 (YLCB))
- f. **Mos skuy' kee k'e-teloyewek'.**
“It's not good for you to lie.” (FS 1980 (PP))
- g. **Mos kol' soosek'.**
“I'm not thinking about anything.” (FS 1951 (YL))
- h. **Mos noo nep' kue maageen nepee'monee.**
“He did not eat what other people ate.” (FS 1951 (YL))

(45) Examples of **neemee**

- a. **Neemee skuy' soneenepek'.**
“I don't feel well.” (FS 1980 (PP))
- b. **Neemee nuenepuy k'ee lochom'.**
“The toad isn't seafood.” (AS ~1962 (WB))
- c. **Neemee nuemee rookw's o wee'eeet.**
“It's not very windy here.” (FS 1980 (PP))

⁶There are other negative preverbs related to **neemee**: **ynee**, **eemee**, **keemee** “cannot, will not”, **seemee**; some of these contain the preverbs **ee**, **nee**, and **kee** (plus negative **mee**). These preverbs are less often used and are not discussed here.

- d. **Neemee cheeweyek'**
 "I'm not hungry." (YL 1951)
- e. **To' neemee heeme'mehl.**
 "They did not hurry." (FS 1951 (YL))
- f. **Kue pa'aahl 'we-tmenomen neemee nepue'**
 "The water half (the half of the salmon facing the water) was not eaten." (FS 1951 (YL))
- g. **Muehlcho' neemee soo komchuermehl.**
 "Perhaps they do not know." (FS 1951 (YL))

With the completive present preverb **keech**, as in (46), the more common negative preverb is **mos**.

(46) Examples of **mos keech** "not yet"

- a. **Mos keech hopkekom'**
 "He has not stayed yet." (YL 1951)
- b. **Mos keech ee roo kee ue-kemeyeem'**
 "It is not time to go home yet." (GT 2003 (YLCB))

As these examples show, the sequence **mos keech** means "not yet".

9.2 Past negation

A special pattern is usually used to express negation with a past-time preverb. The past-time preverbs **ap**, **ho**, and **ma** are only rarely used, but instead a special past-time negative preverb **wo** is used, as a rule with **neemee**. Examples appear in (47); it is important to emphasize that this is the most common way of expressing past time negation.

(47) Examples of past time negation with **neemee wo**

- a. **Neemee wo nahchelek' ki 'ne-hlkyorkwek'**
 "They didn't let me watch." (FS 1980 (PP))
- b. **Neemee wo hlee'**
 "It was not accepted." (FS 1951 (YL))
- c. **Neemee wo skeweenepek'**
 "I didn't eat enough." (FS 1980 (PP))
- d. **Nimi wo newook'**
 "I did not see it." (YL 1951)
- e. **Neemee wo weykee'**
 "It was not finished."
- f. **Neemee heenoy wo hoole'moh.**
 "We did not follow you." (YL 1951)
- g. **Tue' neemee wo hewon newom'**
 "He was not the first to see it." (FS 1951 (YL))

There is one situation in which **neemee** is regularly used with **ho**: if a verb is iterative, with the inserted element **-eg-** that means "always" or "regularly", then **neemee ho** can be used with that verb to express the meaning "used to". This is illustrated in (48).

- (48) Examples of iterative verbs with **neemee ho** “used to”
- a. **Neemee ho negepue’ nepuy.**
“Salmon used to be eaten.” (FS 1951 (YL))
 - b. **Heekon neemee wi’ mehl ho regoowo’s oohi.**
“People didn’t use to smoke with pipes like this.” (FS 1951 (YL))

9.3 Future negation

To express future negation, only two patterns are common; the general future preverb **kee** is used with either **mos** or **neemee**.⁷ Typically, **neemee kee** means “will not (won’t)”, and **mos kee** means “cannot (can’t)”. These two patterns are illustrated in (49) and (50).

- (49) Examples of **neemee kee** “will not”
- a. **Neemee kee kooych.**
“I will not buy it.”
 - b. **Neemee kee skuy’ soo hoole’mow’.**
“You will not get on well.”
 - c. **Neemee kee yegok’.**
“I will not go.”
- (50) Examples of **mos kee** “cannot”
- a. **Mos kee nahchechek’ we’yk’oh.**
“I can’t pay you today.”
 - b. **Mos kee kol’ nepck’.**
“I cannot eat anything.”
 - c. **Mos kee yegokw’.**
“He cannot go.”

Notice the difference between (49c) and (50c): “I will not go” vs. “he cannot go”.

⁷The near-future preverb **keetee** is not ordinarily used with negation.

10 Associated motion

(Associated motion is included in this booklet, though it is not part of the “basic”-level Yurok standards, because its use is very closely linked with the time reference discussed in §8.)

The term ASSOCIATED MOTION refers to motion that is simultaneous with the action of a verb; it refers to meanings like “go make dinner”, “come say hello”, and so on. In Yurok, there are two basic associated motion categories:

- UNDIRECTED motion, expressed by the preverb **neenee** (§10.1)
- DIRECTED motion, expressed by the preverb **nue** as well as two special future preverbs (§10.2)

Another use of **neenee**, to express comparison (“more”), will not be discussed here.

10.1 Undirected motion

The preverb **neenee** is used for actions done in an aimless or undirected way. Examples appear in (51).

- (51) a. **Wee' neenee kepyuerek'.**
“I swim about at random.” (MM 1927 (ES))
- b. **Neenee rek'een.**
“They sit around.” (FS 1951 (YL))
- c. **Kolo wee' neenee hak'ws.**
“She was kind of laughing around there.” (FS 1951 (YL))

As in these examples, “around” is usually a good translation.

10.2 Directed motion

The preverb **nue** is used for actions along with a directed motion: “come do it” or “go do it”. Examples appear in (52).

- (52) a. **Nue hl'os.**
“Go get it!” (GT 2003 (YLCB))
- b. **Kol' nue neps.**
“Come eat.” (GT 2003 (YLCB))
- c. **Nue o'ch'es k'e-ch'eeshah.**
“Go feed your dogs.” (LT 1922 (GR))
- d. **See nue kweget.**
“You should come visit.” (YL 1951)

In theory **neenee** and **nue** are contradictory or incompatible, since the first refers to undirected motion (“around”) while the second refers to directed motion (“go do it”). But the two meanings can be combined in a sentence like (53). Here there are a lot of grasshoppers: each individual grasshopper is going in some direction (**nue**), but collectively the swarm is just going around (**neenee**).

- (53) **To' nue neenee tene'm.**
“There are a lot (of grasshoppers) going around.” (AS ~1962 (WB))

10.2.1 Present and past time reference

The preverb **nue** is most commonly used in commands, as in the first three examples in (52). It is not used in past-time sentences, and it is not used in sentences with the durative present preverb **ochkaa**. However, it is commonly used with the completive present preverb **keech**:

- (54) a. **Keech nue kweget.**
 “He’s gone visiting.” (MM 1927 (ES))
- b. **Kue pegerk keech nue hoh.**
 “The men have gone to work.” (YL 1951)
- c. **Keech nue tmeego’.**
 “They’ve gone hunting.” ((YL 1951)
- d. **Keech nue tregepah.**
 “They’ve gone dipnet-fishing.” (FS 1;30 (PP))

10.2.2 Future time reference

Directed motion also appears in future-time sentences. The preverb **nue** can be used together with the near future preverb **keetee** or the general future preverb **kee** to refer to “going and doing” something in future time. Examples appear in (55–56).

- (55) Examples of **keetee nue** “about to go do something”
- a. **Keetee nue kepoyuerək’.**
 “I’m going swimming.” (GT 2003 (YLCB))
- b. **Wonew keetee nue hegok’.**
 “I’m going up in the hills.” (YL 1951)
- c. **Keetee nue tmegook’.**
 “I’m going hunting.” (JC 1889)
- (56) Examples of **kee nue** “will go do something”
- a. **Chyue puelekw kee nue hoo.**
 “Let’s go down the road.” (GT 2003 (YLCB))
- b. **Keech ee roo kee nue chkeyek’.**
 “It’s time to go to sleep.” (GT 2003 (YLCB))
- c. **O meguehl kee nue hegok’.**
 “I’ll go to the store.” (MR ~1970 (MaR))
- d. **Nekah hesoh Kohpey kee nue goo (hoo).**
 “We decided to go to Crescent City.” (YL 1951)

But an alternative way of expressing directed motion with future time is to use special preverbs that combine the functions of **nue** plus either **keetee** or **kee**. These special combining or contracted preverbs are common.

The first contracted near-future directed-motion preverb is **keetue**, illustrated in (57).

- (57) Examples of **keetue**
- a. **Keetue hlkuue’moh.**
 “We’re going acorn gathering.”

- b. Keetue kweget 'ne-chek.
"I'm going to visit my mother."
- c. Keetue tmegok'.
"I'm going hunting."
- d. Nek keetue lewetek' o kue ha'aag.
"I'm going to set my net on that rock."

The second contracted general-future directed-motion preverb is **kue**, illustrated in (58). In (58a–58b), note that **kue** is used with **skewok** instead of **kee**. This is the normal way of saying “want to go do something”.

- (58) Examples of **kue**
- a. Skewok kue 'ne-me'ok'.
"I want to go to the brush dance."
 - b. Skewok hes kue k'e-kepoyuerek'?.
"Do you want to go swimming?"
 - c. Kue meges kue kweget.
"I'm going to visit the doctor."
 - d. Kel' kue lewetem' hes?
"Are you going to fish with a net?"
 - e. Tue kegey kue negeeen'.
"We'll look for an Indian doctor."
 - f. Chue kue nergerh.
"Let's go pick berries."
 - g. Nek kem kue hlkyorkwek'.
"I'll go and watch too."
 - h. To' nekah kue hloo k'e-'yoh.
"We'll go get your firewood."

The combined preverb sequence **mos kue** means “cannot go do it”, as in (59).

- (59) Mos kue hlkyorkwem'.
"You can't go watch it."

(GT 2003 (YLCB))

II Questions and commands

Linguists use the term **SPEECH ACT** to refer to what you're trying to do with an utterance: you might be trying to inform somebody about something, or to find out something, or to get somebody to do something, etc. Three types of speech acts:

- statements
- questions
- commands

In questions, either you want to find out if something is true or not (a **YES-NO QUESTION**), or you want to find out who did it, what it was, when it happened, etc. (a **CONTENT QUESTION**).

- (60) Yurok yes-no questions use the little word **hes**, which is usually either at the end of the sentence or (especially in earlier Yurok) after the first word of the sentence.
- (61) Yurok content questions use **tee'neesho** "what?", **tee'now** "who?", or **kues** "where? how?"
- Kues?** "Where?"
Kues noohl? "How long? How far?"
Kues choo'm? "How many?"
Kues no? or **Kues no'ohl?** "When? How long ago?"
Kues soo? "How?"
 - Kues noohl kee kemeyem?**
"When will we go home?"
 - Kues choom' k'-uuek?**
"How many children do you have?"
 - Kues no'ohl kee kem nue nuue'm yo'hkoh?**
"When are they coming back?"
 - Kues soo nekey?**
"What's it called?"
 - Kues soo hegolem?**
"How do you say it?"
 - Kues soo hesem?**
"What do you think?" or "Why do you think it?"
 - Kues soch?** or **Kues sochpeyowom?**
"What did you say?"
- (62) Questions
- If you expect a yes/no answer: **hes**
 - If you expect a content answer:
tee'now "who?"
tee'neesho] "what?"
kues "how / where?"
... or others that are formed with **kues** + other words

11.1 Yes-no questions

Yes-no questions are formed using the question particle **hes** [*hes*], positioned either at the end of the sentence (this is less common) or (more often) after the first word or phrase of the sentence. The following examples are divided into two groups: neutral questions, where the answer might be “yes” or “no” (there is no expected answer) and questions expecting a negative answer, where the expected answer is “no”. (In addition to these, note that polite requests using **pekwsu** [*pekwsue*] are in form also yes-no questions; they resemble English sentences like *Would you come with us?*)

11.1.1 Neutral yes-no questions

(63) Questions with **hes** [*hes*] after the first word or short phrase

- a. **Kel' hes keech cherhkwer'm?**
“Are you jumping center?”
- b. **Skewok hes kee k'e-megefok'?**
“Do you want to go with us?”
- c. **Matthew hes 'o tegernesem' we'yk'oh kechoyhl?**
“Have you talked to Matthew today?”
- d. **Keech ee son' hes kee kol' k'e-nepek'?**
“Are you ready to eat?”
- e. **Ok'w hes mehl e'ga?**
“Do you have a pencil?”
- f. **Kel' hes kem newoom'?**
“Did you see it too?”
- g. **Keetee tenpewe'hl hes?**
“Is it going to rain?”

(64) Questions with **hes** [*hes*] at the end of the sentence

- a. **Nekomuy kee k'e-pemek' kegoh hes?**
“Do you know how to make acorn soup?”
- b. **Nekomuy k'e-holeemek' kue luemon hes?**
“Do you know how to make eel baskets?”
- c. This is much less common than the option in (63).

11.1.2 Questions expecting a negative answer

Some questions presuppose that a negative answer is likely. English examples of this pattern include sentences like *Don't you see the hawk?* (a likely answer is *no, I don't see it*). In Yurok, these questions are formed with negatives, much as in English.

(65) Examples

- a. **Neemee hes newoom' kuech kue 'ne-ka'ar?**
“Haven't you seen my pet, grandmother?”
- b. **Kuech, nee mok'w hes oyhl kee nepek'?**
“Grandmother, isn't there anything lying here for me to eat?”

- c. **Nee mok'w hes k'-ohsepek'?**
"Aren't you ashamed?"
- d. **Kel' hes eemee uema newoom'?**
"Didn't you see it?"
- e. **Mo neemee ko'moyom' hes?**
"Don't you hear it?"

II.2 Content questions

II.2.1 Who?

(66) Questions with **tee'now**

- a. **Tee'now puen'?**
"Who farted?"
- b. **Tee'now hegoo's?**
"Who's hollering?"
- c. **Tee'now swechohpen' kue ahtemar'?**
"Who opened the letter?"
- d. **Tee'now helomey'?**
"Who's dancing?"
- e. **Tee'now ho helomey'?**
"Who was dancing?"
- f. **Tee'now keech kweryerw'?**
"Who whistled?"

(67) Word order

- a. **Tee'now newom' kue kel' k'e-psech?**
"Who saw your father?"
- b. **Tee'now weesh newom' kue 'ne-psech?**
"Who was it that saw your father?"
- c. **Kue kel' k'e-psech tee'now newom'?**
"Who did your father see?"

II.2.2 What?

(68) Often, but not always, **tee'neesho** is the equivalent of English "what?"

- a. **Tee'neesho kee nepem'?**
"What are you going to eat?"
- b. **Tee'neesho ho'yk'etem'?**
"What did you lose?"
- c. **Tee'neesho mehl toh?**
"What are you (or they or we) talking about?"

(69) **Tee'neesho** questions often have subjunctive verbs. Then they mean more like "What is it that ...?" and are sometimes emphasized with **weesh** or **wee'**.

- a. Tee'neesho mehl k'e-chwegeen?
"What are you talking about?"
- b. Tee'neesho weesh 'we-skewok?
"What does he want?"

II.2.3 Where? How?

(70) In the simplest sentences **kues** means "where?", or sometimes "how?"

- a. **Kues kee le'moh?**
"Where are we going?"
- b. **Kues me'womechoom'?**
"Where do you come from?"
- c. **Kues nekem'?**
"Where did you put it?"
- d. **Kues keech roo?**
"Where is the sun at? = What time is it?"

(71) Sentences with **soo** make questions with **kues**, not **tee'neesho**.

- a. **Kues soo nekey'?**
"What's it called?"
- b. **Kues soo hegolem'?**
"How do you say it?"
- c. **Kues soo hesem'?**
"What do you think? / Why do you think it?"

(72) Verbs starting with **so...** or **ser...** usually make questions with **kues**.

- a. **Kues cho' sonowom'?**
"How are you?"
- b. **Kues soch? or Kues sochpeyowom'?**
"What did you say?"
- c. **Kues serrhl? or Kues serrhlerperm'?**
"What are you doing? / What did you do?"⁸
- d. **Kues serrnerh?**
"What color is it?"
- e. **Kues serrnerkws?**
"How fast is the wind blowing?"

II.2.4 When?

(73) **Kues cho'** "at what time (did it happen)?"

- a. **Kues cho' nuue'm?**
"When did they come?"

⁸Note that at least one speaker (GT) often used **ti'nisho** [*tee'-nee-sho*], not **kus** [*kues*], with this verb.

b. **Kues cho' neskechok'w?**

"When did he come?"

(74) **Kues noohl** "when (will it happen = how far in time), how far (in space)?"

a. **Kues noohl ki kemeyem'?**

"When will we go home?"

b. **Kues no'ohl kee kem nue nuuem' yo'hkogh?**

"When will they come again?"

c. **Kues noohl wee' kee k'e-le'mow'?**

"How far will you all go?"

II.2.5 Why?

(75) **Kues ('we-)son' "why?" (+ mehl)**

a. **Kues 'we-so'n?**

"Why?"

b. **Kues 'we-son' mehl mee' 'we-nuumem'?**

"Why didn't they come before?"

c. **Kues 'we-son' mehl tetomokseemem'?**

"Why are you mad at me?"

d. **Kues son' mehl nes?**

"Why have you come?"

II.2.6 Which?

(76) **Kues wee' k'e-skewok kue nepuey?**

"Which salmon do you want?" ("Which is the salmon that you want?")

II.3 Commands and requests

Three common strategies are used in commands and in requests for people to do something. In increasing order of politeness, they are the following:

- Use the imperative (never with **cho'**): "Come eat something!"
- Use **cho'** + the second person singular or plural form: "Please come and eat something!"
- Use **pekwsue hes** + the second person singular or plural form: "Won't you please eat something?"

12 Basic word order

12.1 A few general patterns

Yurok word order is very flexible, and it is often possible to arrange the words in the same sentence in two or more different ways, all of them perfectly acceptable. The order that speakers choose may depend more on emphasis and the nature of their story or conversation than on purely syntactic rules. But several clear patterns can be noted here.

One obvious pattern is that preverbs come before the verb. (This is why they are called preverbs.) Thus:

(77) PREVERB(S) — verb

a. *** TO BE COMPLETED

Some other patterns, discussed in the next section, concern the relative order of nouns and verbs.

12.2 Nouns and verbs

It is uncommon for a sentence in ordinary usage to have more than one noun, and it is not rare for a sentence to have no nouns. But if there is a noun, it may be positioned either before or after its verb. As a rule, NO MORE THAN ONE NOUN will be positioned before the verb. Any others will be positioned after the verb, and it is even possible that all nouns will be positioned after the verb.

If one noun at most is positioned before the verb, which noun is it? When are nouns positioned before their verbs? The general rule is stated in (78), with examples in (79).⁹

(78) A noun is usually BEFORE the verb if it is contrastive, emphasized, or new to the discourse.

(79) Examples (verbs in *italics*, preverbal noun underlined)

a. Nek kwelekw keech *kohchewok'*, tue' nek ka'ar wee' kee yoh.

"I have *caught* it (a deer), and I will *make* it a pet."

(FS 1951 (YL))

b. Eekee toom' nue *hkeeeegor*. Kwesee kue lochom' o ges', Nek kem kue *hikyorkwek'*.

Kue negeneech tue' kem wee' o gegokw'.

"Everyone went to watch. And the toad thought, 'I will go watch too.'

The mouse too was walking there."

(FS 1951 (YL))

In the example in (79a), *ka'ar wee'* "a pet" is emphasized; the idea that the speaker will make the deer his pet is new in this sentence.

- A noun is usually AFTER the verb if it conveys old information, or if it is very long.

⁹The rule in (preverbal-nouns) applies to nouns; pronouns (like *nek*) are almost always preverbal.

13 Numerals and color terms

Words used for counting things (“one”, “two”, etc.) and words used to describe colors (“light-colored”, “red”, etc.) are mostly verbs in Yurok. (Recall that Yurok, unlike English, does not have any adjectives.) The forms that are most commonly used are ATTRIBUTIVE verb forms and NON-INFLECTED verb forms.

One distinctive feature of Yurok numerals and color terms is that they often change form depending on the meaning of what they are applied to; a different form of “two” or “light-colored” is used for snakes and for human beings. This kind of system, in which words change form depending on characteristics of what they refer to, is called a CLASSIFICATORY system; it is how the Yurok language organizes phenomena in the world. Yurok numerals show more different forms than color terms, but both are classificatory.¹⁰

13.1 Numerals

13.2 Color terms

While the natural environment is visually rich and many colors were present in traditional Yurok life, the Yurok linguistic system for describing color arose long before modern technology. Many color terms are like the English word *orange*, referring to an object in the world that has that color (from which, in some cases, the color might be derived for a dye). And because the hues of many plants and animals in the natural world were generally known, the use of terms for “light” and “dark” color was probably more widespread than it is in English and other European languages.

In any case the Yurok color terms can be divided into three groups: those in Table 12, those in Table 13, and those in (82) below.

The colors shown in Table 12 have a relatively rich classificatory structure; they show many different forms.¹¹ These are the color terms that were probably most common in traditional Yurok usage, and it is likely that the terms for “light” and “dark” had a broader range of uses than English *white* and *black*. (For example, it is likely that they would have been used for many light or dark hues that English might describe as (*light*) *green* or (*dark*) *brown*.)

	LIGHT, WHITE	DARK, BLACK	RED
GENERAL	muenchey	lo’ogey	pekoyoh
ANIMALS	muenter’ery	ler’ergery	perkeryer’ery
HAIR	muencher’ery	*ler’ergery	*perkeryer’ery
TREES & STICKS	muenchar’	lo’ogar’	pekoyar’
ROUND	muencherh	ler’ergerh	perkeryerh
FLAT THINGS	muenchok’s, ATTR muenchokseen		pekoyok’s, ATTR pekoyokseen
WATER		ler’ergerh	pekoyop’, ATTR pekoyohpeen

Table 12: Classificatory color terms

The color terms in Table 12 are illustrated in sentences in (80–81).

(80) Some examples of LIGHT, WHITE

¹⁰Certain other basic descriptive verbs, not discussed here, are also classificatory in a similar way.

¹¹An asterisk (*) in Table 12 means this is the form it must be, but no examples are available. The abbreviation ATTR stands for ATTRIBUTIVE.

- a. **Newom' muenchey 'ue-'wer'**.
'You see its white roots.' (AS ~1962 (WB))
- b. **Keech muencher'ery'**.
'He or she has white hair.' (FS 1980 (PP))
- c. **Muenchey 'ue-'wers**.
'Its skin is white.' (FS 1980 (PP))
- d. **Koosi muenchey k'ee chaahí**.
'The sand was all white.' (FS 1951 (YL))
- e. **Newom' wee'eeet 'oyhí nuemee chey muent'er'ery kepcheneesh**.
'He saw lying there a tiny white fawn.' (FS 1951 (YL))
- (81) Some examples of DARK, BLACK and RED
- a. **Kue 'we-'ekah pekoyoh 'esee lo'ogey**.
'His hat is red and black.' (GT 2003 (YLCB))
- b. **See kee lo'ogey**.
'It is almost black.' (YL 1951)
- c. **Neekee pekoyoh kue wee' 'o teponee**.¹²
'All the trees are red.'

In contrast to the richer classificatory scheme in Table 12, the colors in Table 13 have only two forms each, one form used for animals (or deer in particular) and one that applies generally to anything else.

	REDDISH-BROWN, BROWN, BAY	GRAY (like mold)	GRAY (like ashes)
GENERAL	s'oktoy	polhkwen 'ue-son	pontet son
ANIMALS	s'erokter'ery	perhikwer'ery	perncherch (deer)

Table 13: Color terms with two forms

Finally, (82) lists Yurok color terms that do not vary: there is only form per color term, and in most cases the term is derived from the name of an object with that color.

- (82) Invariant Yurok color terms
- a. YELLOW-GREEN: **taanep**
- b. BLUE: **skoyon**
- c. YELLOW-GREEN (like moss): **ti'npelah**
- d. GREEN (like grass): **'errwerh son'**
- e. ORANGE (like alder bark dye): **'wer'errgerch son'**

¹²The attributive phrase *wee' 'o teponee* "rooted there" is a very common way to say "tree".

4 Word classes

In any language, words can be grouped into various **CLASSES**, which are defined partly by their meaning and partly by how they are used in sentences. It is useful to identify the word classes of a language because then you can make general statements about them, for example, “Yurok nouns do not usually change according to whether they are singular or plural” and “Yurok preverbs are positioned before the verb”.

Though there are many similarities across languages, word classes do differ from language to language. For example, English has a class of **ADJECTIVES**; Yurok does not. In Yurok, the meanings that are expressed by English adjectives are instead expressed by the class of verbs. Likewise, English has no class of **PREVERBS** despite the importance of this word class in Yurok grammar. English also lacks **NONINFLECTED VERBS**.

Every Yurok word belongs to one of the nine word classes below.

4.1 Verbs

Verbs in the broad sense actually consist of two distinct word classes:

- A **VERB** is a kind of word that usually changes its form according to the subject (and possibly the object) of the sentence, and that usually refers to a kind of activity or state. English verbs include *know, run, sing*. A Yurok verb is **komchuemek'** “I know it”, which changes its form according to the subject (and sometimes the object), as illustrated by this selection of forms:

komchuemek'	“I know it”	komchuechek'	“I know you”
komchuemem'	“you know it”	komchuepa'	“you know me”
komchuem'	“he or she knows it”	komchuesek'	“I know him or her”

For more information about Yurok verbs see §7, beginning on page 20.

- A **NONINFLECTED VERB** is a special kind of verb that does not change its form; it is not “inflected” according to the subject. For example, without changing its form, the Yurok noninflected verb **skewok** “like, want” can be used in expressions like **nek skewok** “I want”, **kei' skewok** “you want”, or **yo' skewok** “he or she wants” For more information see §7.1, beginning on page 20.

4.2 Adverbs

An adverb is a kind of word that modifies a verb by indicating the time, place, or direction of an action (among various other notions). Examples include **owook** “tomorrow”, **lekwsee** “outside”, and **pueleek** “downriver”. The use of adverbs is not much discussed in this booklet.

4.3 Nouns

A noun is a kind of word that can be the subject or object of a sentence, or the object of a preposition; nouns usually refer to kinds of person, place, thing, event, substance, or quality. English nouns include *boy, creek, boat, water, and happiness*; Yurok nouns include **mewah** “young boy”, **raak** “creek”, and **'yoch** “boat”. (Abstract concepts tend to be expressed as verbs in Yurok, not nouns.) For more information about Yurok nouns see §5, beginning on page 13.

4.4 Pronouns

A pronoun is a kind of word that stands in place of a noun. It may be the subject or object of a verb, for example, but its reference may differ from sentence to sentence, depending on context. English pronouns include words like *me*, *that*, and *what*. Yurok pronouns are of three types:

- PERSONAL PRONOUNS refer to “I”, “you”, “me”, etc.: *nek*, *kel'*, *nekaḥ*, *kelew*, etc.
- DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS refer to a third person, that is, “s/he”, “that one”, “them”, etc.: *yo'*, *wee'eeet*, etc.
- QUESTION PRONOUNS (also called INTERROGATIVE PRONOUNS) include words such as *kues* “how?”, *tee'now* “who?”, *tee'neesho* “what?”, and other words in forming content questions (§11.2).

4.5 Particles

The term PARTICLE refers to a set of five different word classes which share two features: all of them have relatively few words, ranging from only two articles to a few dozen preverbs; and in all cases they cannot be used on their own to form utterances. Particles occur only with other words. For example, since you can answer a question with just an adverb, an adverb is not a particle: if someone asks where you're going, you can just answer *lekwsee* “outside”. A noun is not a particle because if someone asks what you want to eat, you can say *nepuy* “salmon” by itself. But you cannot say words like *keetee*, *ochkaa*, *k'ee*, or *kwelekw* on their own without being part of a larger phrase or sentence. The five Yurok word classes that can be regarded as particles are detailed in §§4.5.1–4.5.5.

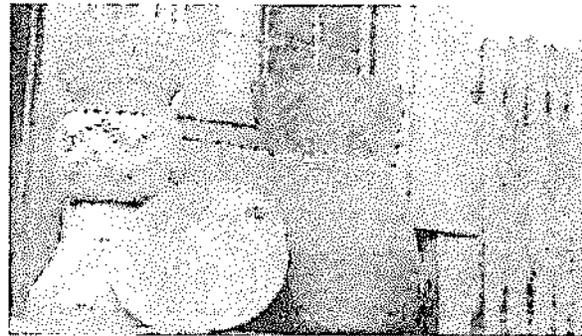


Figure 1: Yurok baskets (early 20th century)

But you cannot say words like *keetee*, *ochkaa*, *k'ee*, or *kwelekw* on their own without being part of a larger phrase or sentence. The five Yurok word classes that can be regarded as particles are detailed in §§4.5.1–4.5.5.

4.5.1 Articles

An article is a little word (like English *a* and *the*) that occurs with a noun. Yurok has two articles: *kue*, which can mean either “the” or “that”; and *k'ee*, which means “this”. For more information about Yurok articles see §6, beginning on page 18.

4.5.2 Conjunctions

A conjunction is a word that is used to combine words, phrases, or sentences. In English, common conjunctions include *and* and *but*. Yurok conjunctions include *esee* (or *emsee*) “and”, *mee'* “because”, *mo(cho)* “if”, and others.

4.5.3 Discourse particles

The term discourse particle refers to the class of words that includes *hes*, *kem* “also, even”, *kwelekw*, *to'*, and *tue'*. Most Yurok discourse particles tend to occur near the beginnings of sentences, and while a few have uses that are easy to describe (for example see §11.1 on the question particle *hes*), most of them have very elusive meanings and will not be discussed here.

4.5.4 Prepositions

A preposition is a word that is used together with (and preceding) a noun to indicate how the noun relates to the meaning of the sentence as a whole. English examples include *for* and *with*; Yurok examples include **ho** “to” and **mehl** “because of, for, with”.

4.5.5 Preverbs

A preverb is a kind of Yurok word that is short (one or two syllables) and ordinarily occurs before the verb, expressing meanings having to do with time, place, and direction (among various other notions). The meanings expressed by preverbs are broadly similar to those expressed by adverbs, but adverbs can have much more specific meanings (like “tomorrow” or “over there”) and adverbs can occupy various positions in the sentence. Typical Yurok preverbs include **ho** (referring to past time), **keech** (referring to past and present time), and **nue** (referring to motion that takes place together with the verbal action). Some of the most common Yurok preverbs are listed here:

- Circumstance, manner, and relation: **eekee, keekee, mehl, neekee, noo, see, soo**
- Direction and location: **ee, nee, o, so**
- Motion: **neenee, nue**
- Negation: **mos; eemee, mee, neemee**
- Time: **kee, keech, keet, keetee, keetue, kue, ma, ochkaa, wo**

See below for more information about Yurok preverbs of motion (§10, beginning on page 40), time (§8, beginning on page 28), and negation (§9, beginning on page 35).

9 Negation

English negative sentences usually have *not* or *-n't*. Yurok negative sentences are usually formed with the following words:

- the ordinary negative preverb *neemee*, or (especially in earlier Yurok) its variants *mee*, *eemee*, and *keemee* “will not”
- the EMPHATIC negative particle *mos* (and a rare longer variant *mosee'*)

Note that *neemee* is a preverb that occurs before the verb together with other preverbs, while *mos* is a discourse particle that occurs, like *to'*, at the beginning of a sentence. In texts and spontaneous language use by fluent speakers, in the expression of negation *neemee* is more common; *mos* occurs in an important but restricted set of situations.

9.1 Emphatic and ordinary negation

The emphatic negative particle *mos* is used in four main situations. First, *mos* is the usual negative word used to express meanings such as “nobody”, “nothing”, “not . . . anybody”, and “not anything”. Examples, which mostly have *mos kol'*, are shown in (42).



Figure 2: Aawokw Aileen Figueroa taught Yurok for many years, in schools and community classes, and was a founder of the Yurok Elder Wisdom Preservation Project.

(42) Examples of *mos kol'*

- a. *Mos kol' soosek'.*
“I’m not thinking about anything.” FS 1951 (YL)
- b. *Mos kol' kee nee nosep'.*
“Nobody could marry there.” BF 1951 (YL)
- c. Q: *Neemee hes newoom' kuech kue 'ne-ka'ar?*
A: *Paa, tos, mos k'ee we'yk'oh 'u-wook kol' o newook'.*
“Haven’t you seen my pet, grandmother?”
“No, child, I have not seen anything here this morning.” FS 1951 (YL)
- d. *Mos kwelekw wee'eeet kol' mehI son'.*
“That does not matter to me.” FS 1951 (YL)

Second, *mos* is the usual negative word used with the particle *cheetaa* “at all”. Examples of *mos cheetaa* “not at all” are shown in (43).

(43) Examples of *mos cheetaa*

- a. *Mos cheetaa wo pahchew.*
“it made no movement at all.” FS 1951 (YL)
- b. *Mos cheetaa kue 'wo-'o'hl.*
“His house was no more.” FS 1951 (YL)

c. **Kwesee mos cheetaa wo neee'nowee'.**

"No notice at all was taken of him."

FS 1951 (YL)

Sometimes the first two patterns are combined, with **mos cheetaa kol'** "nobody at all", as in (44).

(44) Examples of **mos cheetaa kol'**

a. **Mos cheetaa kol' osreer.**

"There isn't a sound anywhere."

FS 1980 (PP)

b. **Mos cheetaa kol' sook kee nee oyhl.**

"Nothing at all lay on it."

FS 1951 (YL)

c. **Mos cheetaa koleen chwinkep'.**

"Neither (of them) spoke at all."

FS 1951 (YL)

A third context for **mos** is when the intended meaning has a generalizing sense like "could not", "would not", "shall not", or "never", as in (45).

(45) Generalizing **mos**

a. **Wek mos kelew hasee wohpew kee negosepeem', 'ohlkuemee mos kee skuy' soo goole'mow'.**

"Here you shall not marry into the west, because you would not fare well."

BF 1951 (YL)

b. **Mos weet kee skuyen' kee k'e-'wegahpemew.**

"It would not be good for you to marry with them."

BF 1951 (YL)

c. **Mos wey ue-kertkerk'.**

"He was never done fishing for trout."

FS 1951 (YL)

Finally, in (46), examples are given of a fourth context for **mos**.

(46) Emphatic examples of **mos**

a. **Mos kelee' k'-ekwol.**

"It is not your fishing place."

FS 1951 (YL)

b. **Mos kee nahcheechek'.**

"I won't give you any."

FS 1951 (RHR)

In (46a), for instance, the emphasis is clear from the emphatic pronoun **kelee'**: "this is absolutely not YOUR fishing place!" The example in (46b) implies the meaning "any". In general, when the intended negative expresses or implies meanings such as "not at all" or "not any", then the emphatic negative particle **mos** is used.

By contrast, the ordinary negative preverb **neemee** is used in other situations. It is the default negative marker, and illustrated in (47).

(47) Examples of **neemee**

a. **Neemee skuy' soneenepek'.**

"I don't feel well."

FS 1980 (PP)

b. **'Eemee wo tektesoh.**

"We were not angry."

FS 1951 (YL)

c. **Neemee nuenepuy k'ee lochom'.**

"The toad isn't seafood."

AS ~1962 (WB)

- d. **Neemee nuemee rookw's o wee'eeet.**
 "It's not very windy here." FS 1980 (PP)
- e. **Neemee cheeweyek'.**
 "I'm not hungry." YL 1951
- f. **To' neemee heeme'mehl.**
 "They did not hurry." FS 1951 (YL)
- g. **Kue pa'aahl 'we-tmenomen neemee nepue'.**
 "The the half of the salmon facing the water was not eaten." FS 1951 (YL)
- h. **Muehlcho' neemee soo komchuemehl.**
 "Perhaps they do not know." FS 1951 (YL)
- i. **To' neemee heeme'mehl.**
 "They did not hurry." FS 1951 (YL)
- j. **Neemee komchuemek' . . .**
 "I did not know (which pipe it was)." FS 1951 (YL)
- k. **Neemee hegohkuemehl stowstek' ue-'weskwen neemee mehl hego'omah.**
 "They did not pick fir branches and did not make fire with them." FS 1951 (YL)
- l. **Weesh neenee rek'een eemee nepehl.**
 "They sit around and do not eat." FS 1951 (YL)
- m. **Eemee cheewey' kue 'ne-psech.**
 "My father was not hungry." FS 1951 (YL)

The difference between **mos** and **neemee** comes out sometimes in the difference between **mos skuy'** and **neemee skuy'**. The first of these, **mos skuy'**, means "not at all well" — implying "quite badly". By contrast, **neemee skuy'** just means "not well". Examples are given in (48–49).

(48) Examples of **mos skuy'** "not at all well"

- a. **Mos skuy' kee k'e-teloyewek'.**
 "It's not (at all) good for you to lie." FS 1980 (PP)
- b. **Mos nuemi skuy' soo chwegeen kue wenchokws.**
 "I don't like to talk to that woman." JJ 2007 (LC)
- c. **Mos skuy' soo chkeyek' nahschueh.**
 "I slept badly last night." JJ 2007 (LC)

(49) Examples of **neemee skuy'** "not well"

- a. **Nimi sku'y soo newi'.**
 "It doesn't look good." GT 2003 (YLCB)
- b. **Neemee skuy' soneenepek'.**
 "I don't feel well." FS 1980 (PP)

In (49a), for example, it is more polite to say something doesn't look good than to say that it looks bad ("not at all good"). Or compare "slept badly" in (48c) vs. "don't feel well" in (49b).

9.2 Negation and time reference

9.2.1 Past negation

A special past-time preverb is used in negative contexts: **wo**, as in (50); it is important to emphasize that this is the most common way of expressing past time negation.

(50) Examples of past time negation with **wo**

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| a. Neemee wo nahchelek' ki 'ne-hlkyorkwek'.
"They didn't let me watch." | FS 1980 (PP) |
| b. Neemee wo hlee'.
"It was not accepted." | BF 1951 (YL) |
| c. Neemee wo skeweenepek'.
"I didn't eat enough." | FS 1980 (PP) |
| d. Nimi wo newook'.
"I did not see it." | YL 1951 |
| e. Neemee wo weykee'.
"It was not finished." | |
| f. Neemee heenoy wo hoole'moh.
"We did not follow you." | YL 1951 |
| g. Tue' neemee wo hewon newom'.
"He was not the first to see it." | FS 1951 (YL) |
| h. Tue' kue 'ne-psech 'eemee nuemee wo tenpey' kue wee'eeet 'we-chmeyonen.
"But my father did not eat much that evening." | FS 1951 (YL) |
| i. Kwesee' neemee nuemee wo chpaa nohl helomey'.
"Coyote did not dance for a very long time." | MM 1927 (ES) |
| j. Eemee wo pelep' mehl wee'.
"There was no fighting over it." | FS 1951 (YL) |

There is one situation in which **ho** is regularly used in referring to past time: if a verb is iterative, with the inserted element **-eg-** that means "always" or "regularly", then **ho** is used to express the meaning "used to". This is illustrated in (51).

(51) Examples of iterative verbs with **ho** "used to"

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| a. Neemee ho negepue' nepuy.
"Salmon used to be eaten." | FS 1951 (YL) |
| b. Heekon neemee wi' mehl ho regoowo's oohl.
"People didn't use to smoke with pipes like this." | FS 1951 (YL) |
| c. Chuelue mos ho legaay' oohl.
"A person couldn't go through Bald Hills." | AS ~1962 (WB) |

9.2.2 Negation and **keech**

With the completive preverb **keech**, the negation may appear BEFORE OR AFTER **keech**. The difference is important the meaning: the order negation + **keech** means "not yet", as in (52), while **keech neemee** means "now (something is) not", as in (53).

- (52) Examples of negation + *keech* “not yet”
- a. *Mos keech ee roo kee ue-kemeyeem’*
“It is not time to go home yet.” GT 2003 (YLCB)
 - b. *Mos keech hopkekom’*
“He has not started yet.” YL 1951
 - c. *Neemee keech lekón’*
“It has not fallen yet.” YL 1951
- (53) Examples of *keech* + negation “now it is not”, “stop doing something”
- a. *Keech neemee skuyen’*
“Now it is no good.” YL 1951
 - b. *Keech mee chweenkep’*
“He stopped talking.” FS 1951 (YL)

9.2.3 Negation and future time

To express future negation, only two patterns are common; the general future preverb *kee* is used with either *mos* or *neemee*.⁵ Typically, *neemee kee* means “will not (won’t)”, and *mos kee* means “cannot (can’t)”. These two patterns are illustrated in (54) and (55).

- (54) Examples of *neemee kee* “will not”
- a. *Neemee kee kooych*
“I will not buy it.”
 - b. *Neemee kee skuy’ soo hoole’mow’*
“You will not get on well.”
 - c. *Neemee kee yegok’*
“I will not go.”
- (55) Examples of *mos kee* “cannot”
- a. *Mos kee nahcheechek’ we’yk’oh*
“I can’t pay you today.”
 - b. *Mos kee kol’ nepek’*
“I cannot eat anything.”
 - c. *Mos kee yegokw’*
“He cannot go.”

Notice the difference between (54c) and (55c): “I will not go” vs. “he cannot go”.

⁵The near-future preverb *keetee* is not ordinarily used with negation.

