Texts in Chinook Jargon collected by Melville Jacobs:
13. "Chipmunk and His Mother"

Told by Jack Stillman, a Snoqualmie Coast Salish
In "northern" dialect; spelling standardized
by David Douglas Robertson, PhD[1]

1. Iht lamiyai yaka mitlait kopa yaka hous, pi okok[2]
A certain old woman lived at her house, and that one

mitlait(,) yaka tenaas, kanamokst yaka. Pi okok tenas-man
who lived there, was her child, along with her. And that boy

yaka hayoo-klai kopa[3] tlatawa iskam olali. Pi okok lamiyai yaka
he was crying about going to get berries. And that old lady she

wawa, "Tloosh[4] heilo tlatawa, naika tenaas. (ii) Pos maika
said, "Don't go, my child... ...If you go,

tlatawa, Stik-Sawaash iskam maika. Pos maika tlatawa,
the Stick Indian will take you. If you go,

tloosh heilo-ikta[5] wawa.
don't say anything.

---

1 See end of story for a guide to "Spelling rules".

2 **Okok** 'this; that' appears to mean 'that one; the one'; it's a slightly unusual use of this word. It may have been intended as 'there', and could reflect Jack Stillman's first language, probably Dxʷləšucid (Lushootseed) Salish, where some of the words for 'this/that' and 'there' are similar to each other. So the two possible interpretations of **okok mitlait yaka tenaas** here seem to be (A) 'the one who lived there was her child' or (B) 'her child lived there'.

3 To express a verbal purpose ('to go picking berries'), we would expect **pos** here. Instead we have **kopa**, which can express a noun purpose ('for berrypicking') – but it would be unusual for Chinook Wawa to treat 'berrypicking' as a noun. Maybe the **kopa** here could be another small influence from Dxʷləšucid on Mr. Stillman's CW. But if we remember that **kopa** can also mean 'about', there's no puzzle here at all.

4 **Tloosh** (literally 'good') can function in many CW dialects to turn a verb root into a command. (Without any subject pronoun for 'you', just as English commands normally leave out 'you'.) Some speakers prefer to express a command as **tloosh pos** (literally 'good if'). (With **maika** 'you'.) For some, **tloosh pos** specifically makes more polite commands than the simple **tloosh**.

Pos hayoo[6] maika wawa, Stik-Sawaash iskam[7] maika." Wel,
If you talk a lot, the Stick Indian will take you." Well,

okok tenas-man yaka wawa, "Tloosh." (iii) Wel, okok lamiyai
that boy he said, "All right." Well, that old woman

yaka wawa, "Tloosh, tenas-man. Maika tlatawa.[8] Maika
she said, "All right, son. You go. You

kumtuks <u>k</u>a hayoo olali."[9]
know where lots of berries are."

2. Wel, okok tenas-man yaka tlatawa. Wel, tenas-man yaka
Well, that boy he went. Well, the boy he

iskam olali, yaka mukmuk olali,[10] pi yaka iskam olali, pi yaka
picked berries, he ate berries, and he (kept) picking berries, and he

mash[11]kopa yaka baskit. Tenas man hayoo-wawa.[12] Pi alta Stik-
put them into his basket. The boy (also) kept talking. And then a Stick

---

5 **...heilo-ikta wawa** places the quantity expression **heilo-ikta** 'nothing' up front, before the verb **wawa**. You'll see this pattern used a great deal in Chinook Wawa. By the way, do you see how **Tloosh heilo-ikta wawa** (literally 'Good no-thing say') is the normal CW expression for 'Don't say anything'?

6 **Hayoo** here is a quantity expression ('a lot'), so it's placed up front in the phrase – literally saying 'if a lot you talk'.

7 Can you see why **iskam** here is best translated in English as the future tense, 'will take'?

8 An alternative way to express a command in CW is to include the word for 'you', as in this example, 'You go'. But this strategy is much more common with plural commands to 'you folks', **masaika**.

9 **<u>K</u>a hayoo olali** means the same as **<u>k</u>a mitlait hayoo olali**: 'where there are lots of berries'.

10 My understanding is that it would be girls who traditionally were brought up learning to pick berries, so the entire idea of this boy wanting so badly to do that job might seem questionable. Certainly he shows poor training when he finally gets to go do it; eating berries while you picked is traditionally looked down on, as seen in the SENĆOŦEN (Saanich) Salish expression EŁENO̱ŦEN̓ 'to be eating berries from picking basket' (literally 'to be an eating-mouth').

11 'He put <u>them</u> into his basket' – can you understand that there's what I call the 'silent it/them' here?

12 The boy's lack of good training also shows in his ignoring his mother's advice about staying quiet in the berry patch.

Injun chako.[13] **Pi alta okok tenas-man yaka kooli kopa stik,**[14] **yaka**
Indian came. *And then that boy he ran into the forest, he*

tlatawa-sahali kopa stik. (ii) Pi alta okok Stik-Injun yaka[15] **chako, pi**
climbed up a tree. *And then that Stick Indian he came, and*

yaka wawa,[16] **"Naika tenaas,**[17] **tloosh maika chako-kikwuli." Pi okok**
he said, *"My child, please climb down."* *But that*

tenas-man heilo-ikta wawa.[18] **Wel, okok Stik-Injun yaka wawa,**
boy said nothing. *Well, that Stick Indian he said,*

"Tloosh chako!" **Wel, okok tenas-man yaka wawa, "O heilo!**
"Come on!" *Well, that boy he said,* *"Oh, no!*

Maika huloima." **(iii) Wel okok tenas-man yaka tlatawa tenas-**
You're weird." *Well that boy he climbed a little*

sahali;[19] **wel okok Stik-Injun yaka chako. Wel yaka wawa,**

---

13 ...**Stik-Injun chako** 'a Stick Indian came'; contrast this with the further references to this being, now established as a definite entity in the story and therefore referred to with **Stik-Injun yaka chako/wawa/tlatawa** etc. ('the Stick Indian came/said/went'). These little CW grammar details carry important meaning!

14 **Stik** in this specific instance, and also in the expression **Stik-Sawaash/Stik-Injun**, has a pretty clear sense of 'forest', when we consider that the next words show the boy going up one single **stik** 'tree'. (Another meaning of **stik** is the material, 'wood', but that doesn't enter into the action.) If the speaker felt it necessary to express 'forest' in a really specific way, he might have said a commonly known expression like **hayas-stik** (the 'big-wood(s)'). For 'tree', he could have specified **mitwhit-stik** (a 'standing-tree').

15 **Yaka**, when referring to the Stick-Indian, makes it a clearly animate entity. I have arbitrarily translated it as 'he' in this story, but I don't know what gender if any these beings are customarily thought to have.

16 This story is really unusual in portraying a Stick Indian as speaking a language that a person can understand! Stick Indians are typically described as whistling or making other loud noises. It may be important to remember that this is a Chinook Wawa version of a Salish traditional story about the way things came to be as they now are, that is, it's set in the long-ago when all creatures were people. We might also keep in mind that many modern-day animals as well as spirit beings like Thunderbird have been reported to understand Chinook Wawa.

17 Notice that the Stick Indian, like the boy's mother, calls him **naika tenaas** 'my child'. This leads to some humour...

18 Oh, so now the boy is able to stay silent! More Chinook Wawa humour...

19 **Tenas-sahali** (literally 'little-high') is how you'd normally say 'kind of high', but as we so often see in actual CW usage, here it's obviously telling us a comparative degree -- the boy climbed 'a little higher'. Correspondingly,

higher; well that Stick Indian he came (closer). Well he said,

"Tloosh chako, naika tenas!" **Wel, okok tenas-man**
"Come one, my child!" *Well, that boy*

heilo-ikta wawa, tenas-man yaka kumtuks yaka Stik-Injun.
said nothing, the boy he knew he was a Stick Indian.

3. Wel, tenas-man yaka iskam tenas-stik,[20] wel yaka mash[21] kikwuli.
Well, the boy took a stick, well he tossed it down.

Pi okok Stik-Injun yaka tlatawa iskam,[22] yaka tumtum okok yaka
And that Stick Indian he went to get it, he thought that this was his

tenaas.[23] **Pi alta okok tenas-man wawa, "Nanich! Maika huloima."**
child. *And then that boy said,* *"See! You're weird."*

(ii) Wel, Stik-Injun wawa, "Heilo, naika tenaas.Naika tumtum
Well, the Stick Indian said, "No, my child. I (just) thought

maika chako kikwuli. **Kakwa naika tlatawa, tiki iskam maika."**
you had come down. *So I went, wanting to get you."*

Wel, tenas-man yaka mash stik sayaaaa. **(iii) Pi alta okok Stik-**
Well, the boy he threw a stick reeeaaally far. *And then that Stick*

Injun yaka tiki iskam okok stik. **Pi okok tenas-man yaka jump,**
Indian he wanted to get that stick. *And that boy he jumped (down),*

---

the Stick Indian's reaction, **chako**, means that it 'came closer'.

20 **Tenas-stik** (literally 'little-wood') is how you'd typically express the English 'stick'.

21 **Yaka mash kikwuli** 'he threw it down', with another "silent it".

22 **Yaka tlatawa iskam** 'he went to get it', again with "silent it".

23 More humour; the Stick Indian thinks the stick is his child! Remember that the Stick Indian has been calling the boy 'my child'. Are Stick Indians that ignorant?

pi yaka kooli, pi alta okok Stik-Injun yaka kooli kimt'a.[24]
and he ran, and then that Stick Indian he chased after.

WE GOT THIS FAR ON 08.29/2020

4. Wel, tenas-man yaka kooli, pi yaka tlatawa kikwuli kopa[25]
Well, the boy he ran, and he went down into

stik.[26] **Pi alta**[27] **okok Stik-Injun heilo iskam**[28] **okok tenas-man, pi**[29]
a log. So then that Stick Indian couldn't get that boy, as

okok tenas-man yaka kooli kikwuli kopa stik.
that boy had run down into the log.

5. Wel, tenas-man yaka tl'ap kopa[30] **hous.** **Wel, tenas-man yaka**
Well, the boy got home. *Well, the boy he*

---

24 **Kooli kimt'a** (literally 'run behind') = 'to chase'. There's an older single-word expression for 'chase' in the southern dialect, but as is typical, the northern dialect had lost that and many other old words.

25 **Kikwuli kopa** is literally 'below to'. Be advised, **kikwuli** is an adverb in Chinook Wawa. That is, it's not a preposition, so it's different from English, where you can say 'under a log', 'below a log', etc. In CW, if you say something like ***kikwuli stik***, it's just turning **kikwuli** into an adjective, so that phrase would mean a 'low/short tree'!
- Note that Melville Jacobs tells us the storyteller here is expressing 'underneath' a log. Quite possibly, Mr. Stillman was making a hand gesture, as so many CW speakers would, to clarify this phrase.
- I also imagine he might have intended a sense of the boy running 'down into' the unreachable interior of a hollow, rotting fallen tree like we see in the woods around Puget Sound, rather than strictly 'under' a log. What do you think?

26 The generic word **stik** (fundamentally 'tree') can mean 'log', as Jacobs sees it here. Some speakers, at least in older and more southerly dialects, had a way to specify a fallen log, for example with a phrase written as **< whim stick >** in an old CW dictionary. I'd point out that **< whim >** seems to have connoted 'cut down, felled' by a lumberjack, etc., not just any old dead tree. How would you use CW to make sure someone knew you're talking about a dead log?

27 **Pi alta** ('and then'), for many CW speakers, expresses 'and therefore'.

28 **Heilo iskam** (literally 'not take') here conveys pretty obviously that the Stick Indian 'couldn't get/catch' the boy. Even though CW has ways to specify 'can't' (e.g. the adverb **weik-kata** in the northern dialect), speakers extremely often go without such a word, when they feel you can just get that meaning from the context.

29 **Pi**, for the same CW speakers who would start this sentence with **Pi alta**, expresses 'because; as'.

30 **Tl'ap kopa**, literally 'get to/reach to', is a common idiom for 'reach' a place, 'arrive at' a place. In fact it seems to be more commonly said than **k'o' kopa** 'arrive at'.

wawa, "Wel, Stik-Injun[31] weik-sayaa[32] iskam naika."Wel,
said, "Well, a Stick Indian nearly got me." Well,

lamiyai wawa, "Nanich?!?![33] Heilo hayoo-wawa,[34] Stik-Injun
the old lady said, "See?!?!" Don't be talking so much, Stick Indians

tl'ap maika.[35] Wel, naika tenas, tloosh chako yakwa."[36] (ii) Wel,
will get you. Well, my child, better come here." Well,

tenas-man yaka tlatawa,[37] lamiyai yaka mamook-ipsoot[38] ~~kopa~~[39]
the boy he went there, the old lady she covered up the

tenas-man. Wel, Stik-Injun yaka chako kopa lamiyai, yaka
boy. Well, the Stick Indian he came to the old lady, he

wawa,[40] "Maika nanich[41] tenas-man yaka chako[42] kopa maika
asked, "Did you see the boy who came to your

---

31 **Stik-Injun**, 'a Stick Indian' here, is a great example of how CW can distinguish between definite 'the' and indefinite 'a', even though the language hardly has any article. This is a point that no other Jargon sources will tell you, so pay attention now :) The sentence as it is, **Stik-Injun weik-sayaa iskam naika**, would become a definite reference if you added the famous "resumptive pronoun". (So, **Stik-Injun weik-sayaa <u>yaka/tlaska</u> iskam naika** would be '<u>The</u> Stick Indian(s) nearly got me.")

32 Remember, **weik-sayaa** almost always means "nearly; almost". Take out the dash, and you get the much less frequent expression **weik sayaa** 'not far; close'.

33 **Nanich?!?!** -- this is like modern English, when someone ignores what you've told them, and you end up pointing out that you were right all along. In an exasperated tone, you'd say 'See?!?!', meaning 'I told you so!'

34 **Heilo hayoo-wawa**: the **hayoo-** prefix on the verb gives you the sense of continuous action, so this means 'Don't be (always) talking (and talking)!

35 **Stik-Injun tl'ap maika**: the sense here, as an expression of the woman's advice, is of a general truth. One clue showing this is that **Stik-Injun tl'ap maika** again lacks the resumptive pronoun **yaka** or **tlaska**, as seen just above. In spoken English we often phrase such broad statements with indefinite nouns and in the future tense – 'Stick Indians will get you'.

36 **Tloosh chako yakwa** – from the flow of the story, I gather than the exasperated woman's tone of voice turns this phrase ('come here') into what I'd say in English as 'better come here'.

37 **Tlatawa** in effect means 'went there', and CW in fact often leaves out a word for 'there' in such expressions. (Again, it does so when 'there' is felt to be just plain obvious.) You might recall a similar usage of **mitlait** 'to be (located)', because speakers are constantly using that word all by itself to say 'lived there; is here' and so on. (Sort of like Spanish *¿David está?* 'Is David here?', literally something like 'Is David located?')

38 **Mamook-ipsoot**: the woman is literally 'making hidden' the boy, 'hiding' him. See the next footnote.

39 **~~Kopa~~**:this word appears to be a mistake of some kind. Maybe Melville Jacobs accidentally wrote it here. Maybe the storyteller was starting to express that the woman hid the boy 'in' something (***mamook-ipsoot tenas-man kopa...***), but lost the train of thought momentarily. In any case, an expression **mamook-ipsoot kopa tenas-man,** literally 'hid to the boy', doesn't make sense as presented by Jacobs, so I've lined-out the word **~~kopa~~**.

hous?” Lamiyai wawa, “Heilo.”[43]
house?” The old lady answered, “Nope.”

40 **Wawa** doesn't always just mean 'say'; in this context, it expresses 'asked'. Soon after, we see it meaning 'answered'

41 **Maika nanich...?** 'Did you see...?' Because this is a yes/no question, some of the more southerly/earlier dialects would use the yes/no particle **na**, added onto the end of the concept being asked about. So in this case, you'd hear ***Maika nanich-na...?*** Take note, if you were to say instead, ***Maika-na nanich...?***, you'd be asking 'Was it you who saw...?'

42 **Tenas-man yaka chako...**: I understand this as an ordinary CW relative clause, 'the boy who came (here)...' Similar to my comments about “resumptive” **yaka/tlaska** above, I'll point out that the speaker could have said just **tenas-man chako...**, which would then have meant 'a boy coming (here)' / 'a boy who came (here)'.

43 **Heilo.** 'Nope.' You can see that the story ends abruptly! Did the storyteller get interrupted? Did he get tired of performing for the Settler anthropologist? Did he misplace his thoughts? This is just about the only CW story we've seen that lacks a traditional story-ending phrase such as ***Kopit naika kumtuks*** 'That's all I know (about that).'

Spelling rules:

Stress:

- Assumed to be almost always on the first syllable.
- Any stress coming later in a word is indicated by a 2-vowel spelling (examples *tanaas, sayaa, la-miyai*).

Words from Canadian/Métis French: Spelled as close to the French original as possible without deviating from common Chinook Jargon pronunciations. You may be surprised how much certain words differ from their Canadian French source! (Examples *lamiyai* 'old lady' from French 'la vieille', *ninamoo* 'turnip' from French 'le navot'.)

Indigenous sounds: most Chinuk Wawa words are from Pacific NW Native languages, so you'll need to know their proper pronunciations.

- The "slurpy L" is spelled *tl* (examples *tlaska, patlach*). NOTE: Many BC Indigenous/elder speakers vary here between saying a simple slurpy-L & having a slight "t" (or even "k") sound before it.
- Apostrophe ('):
  - After a vowel = glottal stop [ʔ] (examples *tiyaa'wit, k'o'*).
  - With a consonant, forms a "popping" sound (examples *k'ow, tl'onas*).
- Underlined consonants are made in the back of the mouth (examples *kata, tlahani*).
- The combination *wh* is like the careful/older pronunciation "HW" at the start of English "what", "why", "which", etc. -- not a plain "W" sound (examples *mitwhit, tlwhap*).

Vowels:

- Single vowels *a, e, i, o* are said generally as in French / English (examples *aha, dlet, hihi, O!*), but *u* is reserved for the schwa sound as in English "sun" and "chuck". NOTE: In BC Indigenous/elders' speech, stressed *a* is frequently /æ/ as in English "ash" (examples: *yaka, hayaas*).
- Two-vowel spellings (diphthongs) are *ai* as in English "eye" / French "taille", *ei* as in English "hey" / French "vieille", *oo* as in English "boo", *ou* or *ow* as in English "house", "how". NOTE: In BC Indigenous/elders' speech, *e & ei* are often said as *i* (examples: *dlet ~ dlit*, *leili ~ lili*), and *o* is often pronounced as *oo* (examples: *spos ~ spoos ~ poos*, *tl'onas ~ tl'oonas*).
- Wherever you see a *y* or a *w*, those are not vowels but consonants, as in English "yes", French "yeux", and English "we".
- *Don't read this :)* I try to avoid most 3-vowel & 4-vowel sequences (thus **haioo*, **mouich*, etc.), as they are confusing to English-readers & would lead French-readers to strange pronunciations.

Consonants: generally said as in English, except for the rules above.

Hyphens are used when two or more words combine to form an idiomatic meaning (examples *kakwa-spos, tanaas-yaka-tanaas*).

Traditional Chinook Jargon spellings have influenced my choices. Many learners are familiar with these, from the classic dictionaries, from BC place names, and from BC English words like *skookum* & *saltchuck*. I'm trying to write CJ that's both recognizable (which traditional spellings should be honoured for), and easy to pronounce well (which they're not wonderful at). Part of my strategy is to change similar-looking traditional spellings, so they're more distinct from each other. Examples –

- Traditional <*nesika*> 'we, us, our' versus <*mesika*> 'you (plural), your' have been confusing English-readers for 150 years. So I spell these *nesaika* & *masaika*.
- The traditional <*wake*> 'not; no!' versus <*weght*> 'also; again; some more' also have a long history of mix-ups, even though they've never sounded similar! So I spell these *weik* & *wuht*, to reduce confusion.