A Tsilhqút’in Grammar

Eung-Do Cook
FIRST NATIONS LANGUAGES

The First Nations languages of the world, many of which are renowned for the complexity and richness of their linguistic structure, embody the cumulative cultural knowledge of Aboriginal peoples. This vital linguistic heritage is currently under severe threat of extinction. This new series is dedicated to the linguistic study of these languages.

Patricia A. Shaw, a member of the Department of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia and director of the First Nations Languages Program, is general editor of the series.

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Abbreviations and Symbols

Numerical symbols are used to specify person categories. Alphabetic symbols are used for other grammatical categories, constructions, and features. One and the same symbol may represent two or more different terms where there is no ambiguity.

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<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Category/Morpheme</th>
<th>Remark, gloss, example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>default subject (ts’e-)</td>
<td>unspecified, ‘(some)one’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00</td>
<td>default subject dual</td>
<td>dual subject marked in the stem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>first person singular</td>
<td>1sg, ‘I’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>second person singular</td>
<td>2sg, ‘you’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>third person singular</td>
<td>3sg, ‘s/he/it’, Ø (= unmarked)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3’</td>
<td>impersonal subject</td>
<td>gwe- ‘it’ (place, situation, weather)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>fourth person</td>
<td>ye- ‘the other’ (object)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>first person dual (inclusive)</td>
<td>1dl (speaker and hearer), ‘we’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>second person dual</td>
<td>2dl (two hearers), ‘you two’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>third person dual</td>
<td>3dl, ‘they two’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>fourth person dual</td>
<td>‘the other two’ (object)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1p</td>
<td>first person plural</td>
<td>‘all of us (three or more)’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2p</td>
<td>second person plural</td>
<td>‘all of you (three or more)’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3p</td>
<td>third person plural</td>
<td>‘all of them’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1O</td>
<td>1sg object</td>
<td>‘me’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbol</td>
<td>Category/Morpheme</td>
<td>Remark, gloss, example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2O</td>
<td>2sg object</td>
<td>‘you’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3O</td>
<td>3sg object</td>
<td>‘him/her/it’, Ø (= unmarked)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4O</td>
<td>4sg object</td>
<td>ye-, a second third person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>1sg subject-3sg object</td>
<td>subject-object in transitive verbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-1, etc.</td>
<td>3sg subject-1sg object, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>AM</td>
<td>aspect/mode</td>
<td>inflectional aspect and mode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>asp</td>
<td>aspect</td>
<td>inflectional or lexical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>benef</td>
<td>benefactive</td>
<td>refl-benef = reflexive-benefactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>consonant, classifier</td>
<td>any consonant/any classifier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>caus</td>
<td>causative</td>
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<tr>
<td>cont</td>
<td>continuative</td>
<td>lexical aspect</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>demonstrative</td>
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<td>dl</td>
<td>dual</td>
<td>marked in the verb stem</td>
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<tr>
<td>dp</td>
<td>duoplural</td>
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<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>high tone</td>
<td>marked by acute accent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>imp</td>
<td>imperfective</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>impers</td>
<td>impersonal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inc</td>
<td>inceptive</td>
<td>‘to start’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>incho</td>
<td>inchoative</td>
<td>‘to become’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iter</td>
<td>iterative (repetitive)</td>
<td>‘again’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>low tone</td>
<td>unmarked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>modal</td>
<td>mode, modal auxiliary</td>
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<tr>
<td>mom</td>
<td>momentaneous</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>noun, [nasal], floating nasal</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>neg</td>
<td>negative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NI</td>
<td>noun incorporation, incorporated noun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num</td>
<td>numeral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbol</td>
<td>Category/Morpheme</td>
<td>Remark, gloss, example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>object</td>
<td>(e.g., 4O = 4th person object, 3O = 3rd person object, ImpersO = impersonal object, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opt</td>
<td>optative mode</td>
<td>ōwe-</td>
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<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>postposition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>Proto-Athabaskan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PI</td>
<td>postposition incorporation, incorporated postposition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perf</td>
<td>perfective</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>pl</td>
<td>plural</td>
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<tr>
<td>PP</td>
<td>postpositional phrase</td>
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<tr>
<td>pro/p</td>
<td>pronoun, pronominal prefix</td>
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<tr>
<td>prog</td>
<td>progressive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q</td>
<td>question marker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qt</td>
<td>quantifier</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rec</td>
<td>reciprocal (e.g., recO = reciprocal object ‘each other’)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>refl</td>
<td>reflexive (e.g., reflO = reflexive object)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>sentence, clause, subject</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Th</td>
<td>thematic prefix</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top</td>
<td>topic marker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>usit</td>
<td>usitative (habitual) aspect</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>verb, vowel</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>disjunct prefix marker, disjunct boundary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{}</td>
<td>contains identifiable underlying elements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>marks ungrammatical (ill-formed) forms</td>
<td></td>
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Tsilhqüt’in territory map. This map is based on one provided by the Tsilhqüt’in National Government and is not definitive.
Introduction

Tšinlhqút’in/Tsilhqút’in, also known as Chilcotin, is one of the twenty-three northern Athabaskan languages recognized by Krauss and Golla (1981). It is spoken by the people of the Chilco River (Tsilhótx) in interior British Columbia. This language is spoken by approximately 2,000 adults in six reserves, which include Xení (Nemaiah), Yunešít’in (Stone), Tl’etinqóx (Anaham), Tši Deldel (Red Stone), ʔEšdilagh (Alexandria), and Tl’ésqóx (Toosey). The language was acquired by children as their first language until the early 1980s. Both spoken and written forms are taught as part of school curricula in the reserves.

Although no thorough dialect survey has been conducted, it is useful to distinguish two dialects: one in which nasal vowels are more prominent (e.g., Stone) and another in which nasal vowels are being denasalized (e.g., Anaham). No problem of mutual intelligibility has been noted among the speakers from different communities.

0.1. Existing linguistic work
Quindel King was the first to seriously attempt to analyze the phonemic system of Tsilhqút’in. In 1968, he produced a manuscript that was later included in a compilation by Hamp and colleagues (1979). This work revealed some typical characteristics of the Athabaskan consonantal system, including (among others) three series of stops and affricates (plain, aspirated, and glottalized) and two series of continuants.
The most remarkable and quintessential characteristic of Tsilhqút’in phonology, however, is the contrast between two sets of consonants, sharp and flat, and their effect on vowel allophony. This characteristic was documented by Michael Krauss (1975) in a historically oriented analysis that was the product of one week’s field work when Krauss joined me during the summer of 1975 at Fish Lake, British Columbia.

More work was required, however, to better define the complete synchronic phonemic system, especially the velars, uvulars, vowel phonemes, and tone. With the help of Bella Alphonse, Maria Myers, and Stanley Stump, I produced an overall phonemic inventory in 1976 that is the basis of the orthography adopted by the Tsilhqút’in Nation. Further detailed analysis of the phonology has been presented in a number of conference papers and a thesis (e.g., Cook 1977, 1978, 1984b, 1985, 1987; Latimer 1978), as well as in published journal articles, including five (Cook 1983, 1989a, 1989b, 1993a, 1993b) that report on more general theoretical issues that the Tsilhqút’in language presents.

The current orthography consists of a phonemic inventory that covers all dialects and variability among the most conservative as well as innovative speakers in different communities. This practical orthography has been used by native speakers during the last three decades in producing pedagogical materials and other documents. The people who first learned the system include Bella Alphonse, Maria Myers, Stanley Stump, William Myers, and Linda Myers. These individuals have produced many educational materials, most of them unpublished. Particularly noteworthy are Maria Myers’ four booklets (1979), which have been used in teaching the orthography at school in Tsilhqút’in communities; Bella Alphonse’s vocabulary lists and transcriptions of traditional stories (1983); and William Myers’ two booklets (1994, 1998) and unpublished “Chilcotin lexical database.” The lexical database is an ongoing project that contains a large number of lexical files. From the point of view of linguistic documentation, the lexical files are most significant and promising.

A significant portion of the data presented in this book was collected in the late 1970s and early 1980s when I was involved in establishing and teaching the current orthography. This book is an expanded and revised version of
an earlier manuscript titled “A Linguistic Introduction to Tsilhqút’in (Chilcotin)” (2005). The earlier work was intended to provide pedagogical material that would be suitable for a postsecondary course. For this reason, much of the detailed technical analyses of the language were not included in the manuscript. Even so, the manuscript is too technical for the intended course, and Susan Russell and Maria Myers have produced a companion that can be used as a textbook.

Since completion of that manuscript (Cook 2005), I have continued to work with a view to revising it into a more or less comprehensive grammar for professional audiences. I have added four new chapters and three annotated texts, originally written by the three most competent and literate speakers of the language. The present book is primarily a description of the phonology, morphology, and syntax of the language, written in the spirit of Generative Grammar. No in-depth theoretical analysis is intended in this book; rather, I have focused on the accuracy of the observed data and clear descriptions of the recorded material instead of interpreting the data based on any particular theoretical framework. The first task was to determine the phonemic system. This language has extremely complex phonetic (allophonic) and morphophonemic processes. Particularly noteworthy is the opaque nature of the vocalic system, which is described in terms of “flattening.” As for the morphological structure, the analysis is based on the traditional approach found in the Athabaskan literature. The major and minor lexical categories are defined first, followed by a detailed description of verbal prefixes in terms of their positions and functions (grammatical versus lexical). For syntactic analysis, I define the structures of simple sentences with respect to their underlying constituents and orders, before dealing with complex sentences that involve conjoining and embedding and with syntactic rules of movement.

0.2. Two phonological features worthy of note

Because the intended audience of this book comprises primarily professional linguists, especially Athabaskanists, it is worth mentioning some of the features that would be of particular interest, especially from historical and pan-
Athabaskan perspectives. The features to be discussed here are phonological and several are morpho-syntactic in nature.

0.2.1. Tone
Besides the complex phonemic system (Tsilhqút’in probably has the largest consonantal inventory among the existing Athabaskan languages), there are two phonological features, tone and nasal vowels, that deserve special attention. It is hoped that both of these features described in this book will shed some light on the historical development of these phenomena.

At first glance, it appears that the Tsilhqút’in tone can be described in terms of marked high tones versus unmarked low tones (as in many other Athabaskan languages). As discussed in Chapter 1, section 1.5, however, the system is much more dynamic, with a rule of high tone spread, a rule of tone reversal, and morphophonemically derived high tones. Furthermore, high tone spread reveals that every syllable is prelinked to either a high tone (H) or a low tone (L), or unlinked (i.e., L is distinct underlingly from both the marked H and the unmarked).

Although much has been learned about tone, it still remains one of the most challenging problems in Tsilhqút’in phonology. The problem is due in large part to what appears to be variability. Although there is clear evidence for high tone spread, not all unlinked syllables are always affected by the spreading high tone. Although there is clear evidence for tone reversal, there are apparent counterexamples. There are also prefix high tones that cannot be accounted for by the rules proposed in this book. However, none of these spreading high tones, reversed tones (high or low), and variable prefix high tones affect lexical meaning, and these derived tones are different from underlying lexical tones, especially stem tones (e.g., senén ‘my land’ versus senen ‘my back’; šeži ‘my belt’ versus šeži ‘my mouth’).

0.2.2. Nasal vowels
Not all nasal vowels are predictable at least in one dialect, whereas in another dialect all nasal vowels can be predicted, as they occur only before a continuant.
In the latter dialect, there is an ongoing process of denasalization (i.e., N-deletion). It is particularly interesting to observe the development of nasal vowels according to the D-effect rule (see Chapter 1, section 1.2.3), which has triggered phonologization of nasal vowels at least in one dialect.

In the late 1970s, when the orthography was developed, the corpus of data did not reveal any evidence of unpredictable nasal vowels, which are extremely rare, and all nasal vowels are predictable in most communities. The fact that the orthography (which does not include any nasal vowels) has worked over the last three decades attests to the fact that the status of the nasal vowels is marginal (as discussed in detail in Chapter 1).

When I returned to the community recently after some 25 years, William Myers and Maria Myers alerted me to the fact that there were a couple of verb stems that could not be written without recognizing nasal vowels. This prompted me to investigate the phonemic status of nasal vowels, which is documented in detail in Chapter 1. Although nasal vowels are phonemic, the data are cited using the practical orthography, which does not include nasal vowel symbols.

0.3. Verbal prefixes
Traditionally, the verbal prefixes are analyzed according to three assumptions. First, the verbal prefixes are organized into more or less a dozen positional categories relative to each other and to the stem. Second, the prefixes are divided into two sets – conjunct prefixes versus disjunct prefixes – based on their different morphophonemic behaviour and syllable structure, as well as on morphosyntactic differences. Third, the prefixes belong to two functionally different categories: lexical (thematic) versus grammatical (inflectional). However, this traditional mode of organizing verbal prefixes (especially the linear order of prefixes) has revealed challenging problems, discussed most notably by Kari (1989) and more recently by Rice (2001). Although Tsilhqút’in has revealed that both the positional analysis and the dichotomy between conjunct and disjunct prefixes are much less straightforward than is assumed for Athabaskan languages, no attempt has been made to follow up with any new
proposals for organizing the verbal prefixes.

Other challenging morphological problems that I have encountered in Athabaskan include the identity and distribution of what are often called “conjugation markers,” which mark inflectional aspects or modes. While working on Dëne Sųłiné/Chipewyan (Cook 2004), I noted that the nasal feature \(N\) in the perfective prefix \(gheN\) is realized phonetically (i.e., \(gheN\) is realized as \(ghin\)) only if the subject is not first or second person, in certain verb themes, whereas the nasal is totally absent from the perfective paradigm in certain others (i.e., \(gheN\) is realized as \(ghe\) in every paradigmatic form). In the latter case, it is impossible to distinguish the \(ghe\)-progressive and the \(gheN\)-perfective in many paradigms. I was unable to explain, however, why the underlying \(N\) does not surface in such paradigms in Chipewyan. In working on Tsilhqút’in, I discovered the two necessary conditions under which \(N\) gets phonetically realized: (1) the underlying classifier is either \(lh\) or zero, and (2) the subject is not first or second person – that is, the phonological behaviour of \(N\) is morphologically conditioned.

With the underlying \(N\), the \(gheN\)-perfective is distinct from the \(ghe\)-progressive. Also revealed in Tsilhqút’in is evidence that there are verbs that can inflect for a perfective aspect but not for an imperfective aspect, and that some verbs inflect for two perfective aspects. For example, the neuter verbs inflect for the \(še\)-perfective and the \(gheN\)-perfective, but not for an imperfective. The most transparent aspect markers (besides \(ghe\) and \(gheN\)) include two perfective markers (\(N\)-perfective and \(še\)-perfective), one mode marker (\(wē\)-optative), and two inceptive aspect markers (\(teghe\)-inceptive-progressive and \(teše\)-inceptive-perfective). These two inceptive aspect markers are consequences of the grammaticalization of \(te\).

0.4. Other special topics and features

In this section I would like to draw special attention to negation, questions, demonstratives, causative ditransitive verbs, disjunct pronominal prefixes, and what I call “third person anomaly.”
0.4.1. Negation
This topic is dealt with in Chapter 8. The prefix structure of negative verbs is most interesting from a historical-comparative perspective. In addition, synchronically, a notable feature in negative sentences in Tsilhqút’in is the variable positions of the verbal prefix še-.

A brief review of negation in Carrier (Morice 1932), Witsuwit’en (Hargus 2007), Navajo (Young and Morgan 1987), Ahtna (Kari 1979), Slave (Rice 1989), and Chipewyan (Cook 2004) vis-à-vis Tsilhqút’in reveals two interesting features. First, all of these languages have either a proclitic/prefix or enclitic/suffix that contains a lateral consonant, e.g., lágo in Navajo, le in Slave, le- in Carrier (but we# in Witsuwit’en). Second, the cognates of še- occur in negative sentences only in Ahtna, Witsuwit’en, Carrier, and Tsilhqút’in and not in Navajo, Chipewyan, and Slave. A detailed comparative study on this topic will reveal interesting internal relationships of these and other Athabaskan languages.

0.4.2. Questions
This topic is dealt with in Chapter 9. There are two types of questions in Tsilhqút’in, one based on the question words (NEN-words) and another based on the verbal prefix hú-. Only a brief discussion of the morphosyntactic characteristics of each type is offered in this book. This is another topic of considerable interest from a pan-Athabaskan perspective, but existing Athabaskan grammars have not adequately dealt with this topic (although Rice 1989 offers a very detailed description of the matter). It might also be noted that Morice’s data (1932) on the Carrier language (more specifically Central Carrier) would be invaluable if one could interpret his somewhat chaotic transcription system.

0.4.3. Demonstratives
Another topic of interest from a pan-Athabaskan perspective is a three-way gender contrast among demonstratives. Three characteristics of the demonstratives in Tsilhqút’in deserve special attention (see Chapter 2, section 2.6.2, and Chapter
5, section 5.6). First, the three demonstratives (e.g., *ʔeyen* ‘that, human’, *ʔeyi* ‘that, non-human’, *ʔeyed* ‘that, place’) are also used as topic markers. Second, the topic markers are contracted to *ʔin, ʔi*, and *ʔid*, respectively, and are affixed to a noun (NP) in colloquial style. Another verbal prefix that may have originated historically from a demonstrative is *ʔi#*, which is salient in the prefix structure of causative ditransitive verbs (see below).

### 0.4.4. Causative ditransitive verbs

Of all verbs, the causative ditransitive verb is most remarkable from a morphological point of view (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.5, and Chapter 7, section 7.6.4). The pronominal prefixes in this secondary (derived) theme include *ʔi*# as well as a disjunct set of object prefixes. The morphological function of *ʔi*# is most interesting, and I have not yet found a cognate of *ʔi*# in other Athabaskan languages that I am familiar with. What is also notable is the presence of the object prefix ye- in ditransitive verbs (causative or not), where this object prefix occurs not only when the subject is third person but also when it is not third person, only if the indirect object is third person.

### 0.4.5. Disjunct pronominal prefixes

There are two sets of disjunct pronominal prefixes (pronouns). The grammatical function of both sets is straightforward in ditransitive verbs, in which they mark an indirect object. One set, which includes se-, ne-, be-, and so forth, encodes indirect objects (causees) with *ʔi*#, e.g., se-*ʔi*# → *si*# ‘me’, ne-*ʔi*# → *ni*# ‘you’, be-*ʔi*# → *bi*# ‘him’, and so forth in causative verbs. There is another disjunct set of pronominal prefixes that occurs in non-causative ditransitive verbs. This set derives historically from the inflected forms of the postposition *gha* ‘to, for’, i.e., se-*gha* → *sa* ‘to me’, ne-*gha* → *na* ‘to you’, be-*gha* → *ba* ‘to her’, and so forth. In other words, *sa, na, ba, ya*, and so forth are treated synchronically as indirect object pronouns (rather than inflected forms of the postposition *gha*) that may or may not be incorporated into the verb.
0.4.6. Third person anomaly
Chapter 10 includes sections highlighting the morphophonemic rules that are phonologically unmotivated. The “third person anomaly,” discussed in Chapter 10, refers to the challenging morphophonemics of third person and default subject forms. For example, an intervocalic sibilant is blocked from being voiced, or a vowel is deleted, resulting in atypical syllable structure, and so forth, all of which result in morphophonemic opacity. In placing the relevant data together in one chapter, it is my hope that this anomaly can be examined from a comparative perspective.

0.5. Cited forms and English glosses
Individually cited words and words in interlinear translations require comment. Note the different glosses for the same word in (1). Only one of these is chosen, depending on circumstances, such as the point of focus in the context, availability of space, and so forth.

(1) hejen
a. ‘she sing(s)’
b. ‘he sing(s)’
c. ‘3-sing’
d. ‘s/he is singing’
e. ‘to sing’/‘to be singing’
f. ‘3-imp-sing’
g. etc.

Note that the subject of the sentence (represented by a single verb) is translated with the pronoun ‘he’, ‘she’, or ‘it’ and ‘3’ (third person singular) because there is no contrast between the masculine and feminine genders in Tsilhqút’in as in other Athabaskan languages. The lexical aspect (see Chapter 3, section 3.1.2.4) of the verb in (1) is durative, and the meaning of this verb may be better translated as ‘be singing’, but when such details are not the
point of interest, the verb is glossed as ‘sings’, ’sing’, or ‘be singing’, and so forth. Consider another example, the optative form in (2).

(2) wesjen

a. ‘I will sing’
b. ‘I should sing’
c. ‘I would like to sing’
d. ‘opt-1-sing’

Depending on the context, the optative verb has slightly different semantic interpretations, but note that this verb expresses the speaker’s will, opinion, or judgment, just like English modal auxiliary verbs (*will, may, must, etc.); hence “optative” is a modal category, not an aspect or tense category. In this book, the optative forms are often translated with the auxiliary verbs *will and *should.

Some example sentences are cited with capital letters and punctuation marks, and others are cited without them. When examples are cited out of an existing written text, the spelling conventions are followed, i.e., uppercase letters and punctuation marks are used. When sentences are cited from elicited examples (not from spontaneously narrated stories), no capital letters or punctuation marks are used. These are exemplified in (3).

(3)

a. nenguyen ṭš’iqih hetsagh ‘that woman is crying’
b. Nenguyen ṭš’iqih hetsagh-án. ‘That woman is crying.’

This distinction is intended to include data from casual speech that may be somewhat different from formal speech. Fluent speakers sometimes reject sentences that they actually used in spontaneous conversation. For this reason, it is important to note speech forms that are actually used by fluent speakers in everyday speech as well as those elicited examples that are more carefully
enunciated. This does not mean, however, that speakers’ judgments about words and sentences are ignored. On the contrary, every effort has been made to conform to their opinions and judgments in citing examples, keeping in mind the natural and inevitable linguistic variability within the community. For example, consider the pronunciation and spelling of “Chilcotin,” as given in (4).

(4) Chilcotin
a. Tšinlhqót’in
b. Tšinlhqút’in
c. Tsilhqót’in
d. Tsilhqút’in

The variable spelling of the word involves the presence or absence of $n$ in the first syllable and the alternating vowels $ó$ versus $ú$ in the second syllable, as well as $tś$ versus $ts$. This variability is due to three factors: (1) conservative versus innovative pronunciations, (2) dialect differences, and (3) etymology. There is a tendency to drop $n$ (denasalization of vowels) before a fricative, especially $lh$, in innovative speech, especially in Anaham. In addition, there is a tendency to deflatten flat sibilants, e.g., $ś → s$, $tś → ts$, and so forth. Three decades ago, (4a) and (4b) were preferred to (4c) and (4d) by most fluent speakers. Etymologically, this word originated from the words $Tšinlhqóx$ ‘Chilco River’ and -$t’in ‘people’, the second of which is not a free form. When the latter is affixed to the former, the final consonant $x$ of the former is deleted, hence the word was spelled $Tšinlhqót’in$ (4a). However, when the final consonant ($x$) is deleted, the vowel in the same syllable is lengthened, i.e., $ó → ú$ (compensatory lengthening), hence it is pronounced $Tšinlhqút’in$ (4b). In short, the four different spellings of the same word meaning ‘people of Chilco River’ reflect a linguistic change in progress and etymology of the word.

0.6. Presentation
There is a certain amount of redundancy throughout this book. For example, subject/object inflection and aspect/mode markers are discussed in Chapter 3 with
focus on their prefix positions in the verb and their phonological behaviour. Some of the data and analysis presented in Chapter 3 are repeated in subsequent chapters that deal with syntactic aspects of pronouns. To cite another example, the morphological aspects of incorporation are discussed in Chapter 3, some salient aspects of which are repeated in chapters dealing with syntax in order to discuss syntactic functions of the incorporated elements. This makes each chapter more or less self-contained and user-friendly.

The data analyzed in this book are presented in the practical orthography (well established and widely used by Tsilhq̓út̓ in people), unless phonetic details are relevant.

I have attempted to make this book as comprehensive as possible within the given time frame and available data, as well as to make the analysis and presentation as accurate, simple, and clear as possible. It is only a small first step, however, towards a more adequate documentation of the language.