NOUN INCORPORATION IN NATCHEZ

Mary R. Haas
University of California

In an earlier paper I have discussed the problem of noun incorporation in the Muskogean languages (1941). Examples were taken from the several languages. Further examples are cited more recently by Booker (1979). It is generally supposed that the process goes back to the protolanguage. Natchez, a language isolate found in the same general area of the Southeast as the Muskogean languages, also exhibits some examples of noun incorporation.

Before giving examples of Natchez noun incorporation I would like to make brief mention of another characteristic of the Natchez language which must be distinguished from noun incorporation, namely the direct use of some Natchez noun stems as verb stems. Examples:

(1) a. Noun stem: ʔic 'blood'
   b. Verb stem: ʔic-ha·ʔiš 'to bleed' (-ha·ʔiš, copular auxiliary) ʔic-halʔiš 'to make bleed' (-halʔiš, causative, transitive aux.)

(2) a. Noun stem: ʔuwah 'fire'
   b. Verb stem: ʔuwah-heti·ʔiš 'to get hot, firey' ʔuwah-haLši ʔiš 'to be hot (in the sun)' (-haLšiʔiš, indirective-benefactive of -halʔiš) ʔuwah-helu·ʔiš 'to light a fire' (helu·ʔiš, trans. aux.)

(3) a. Noun stem: ʔihi 'mouth'
   b. Verb stem: ʔihi-heti·ʔiš 'to sound, blow a horn, (rooster) to crow' (-heti·ʔiš, aux.).

In the examples above ʔic, ʔuwah, and ʔihi, as active verb stems, are combined with auxiliary verbs but not with other active verb stems. Examples of noun incorporation involve the combination of a noun stem and a verb stem, as in the following use of ʔuwah:

(4) ʔuwahle-halʔiš 'to boil...(food, meat)', lit. 'to fire-set' le-halʔiš 'to set...' (-halʔiš).

And the noun ʔihi can also be incorporated, as in:

(5) ʔihilaku·-hawʔiš 'to rinse the mouth' (laku·- is found only here but clearly means 'to rinse', -hawʔiš, transitive aux.)

Besides ʔihi above, another body-part stem used in noun incorporation

in this language is ʔi·š 'hand' and it enters into several combinations:

(6) a. ʔi·šle-halʔiš 'to point', ʔi·šle-haLši ʔiš 'to point to'
         (le- 'to hold out straight, to point', -halʔiš, aux.,
         -haLši ʔiš, indirective-benefactive aux.)

     b. ʔi·špo·kpo·k-haLši ʔiš 'to clap, slap with the hand'. Cf.
         po·k-halʔiš 'to burst...', po·k-haki ʔiš 'to pop, crackle'
         (-haki ʔiš, intransitive aux.)

     c. ʔi·šwici·-helu·ši ʔiš 'to shake hands' (-helu·ši ʔiš,
         indirective-benefactive of -helu·ʔiš aux.). An example
         of wici·- without ʔi·š has not turned up, but it appears
         to refer to grasping. The custom of shaking hands is a
         European one, so this form is likely to have been a
         post-Columbian innovation.

     d. ʔi·šci·ši·-hešku ʔiš 'to swear' (-hešku ʔiš, intransitive,
         transitive aux.). An example of ci·ši- without ʔi·š has
         not been found, but the combination probably refers to
         placing one's hand on the Bible or else raising the right
         hand. Hence this form also is apparently a post-Colum-
         bian innovation.

Since ʔi·š 'hand' occurs in several combinations one naturally wonders if
ʔa·t 'foot' can also be incorporated. Only one such form has been found:

(7) ʔa·tša·-hešku ʔiš 'to step, walk' (-hešku ʔiš, aux.). No
     separate occurrence of ša·- has turned up.

Other noun stems are also used in noun incorporation but they fit
into a variety of more general categories and the total number of such
stems is, in any event, limited. A common one is ʔu· 'road, trail':

(8) a. ʔu·ʔeL-haLši ʔiš 'to look for (someone)', lit. 'to look
         at, watch the road for'. ʔeL-halʔiš 'to see...',
         ʔeL-haLši ʔiš 'to look at, watch...' (-haLši ʔiš, indirec-
         tive-benefactive of -halʔiš)

     b. ʔu·hala-hakuši ʔiš 'to wait for...', lit. 'to place on
         the road for'. (-hakuši ʔiš, indirective-benefactive of
         -haku ʔiš)

     c. ʔu·kʷeye·-helu·ʔiš 'to prevent, cut off'. No example of
         kʷeye·- without ʔu· has been found.

     d. ʔu·toy-haw ʔiš 'to come out ahead', ʔu·toyhaWši ʔiš 'to get
         ahead of...'. Cf. toy-haw ʔiš 'to win' (-haw ʔiš, transi-
         tive, intransitive aux., -haWši ʔiš, indirective-benefac-
         tive of -haw ʔiš)

e. ʔuˑtoytoy-hetahnuˑʔiš 'to run a race' (-htahnuˑʔiš, reciprocal aux.)

Another interesting noun stem found in incorporation is <u>wit</u> 'day', as in:

(9) a. witlaW-haWši²iš 'clock, sun-dial', lit. 'to day-measure'. laW-haWši²iš 'to measure' (-haWši²iš, indirective-benefactive of -haw²iš)

b. witle-hal²iš 'to set the day (for an event)'. le-hal²iš 'to set...' Both of these forms appear to be the result of European influence and the second, indeed, is a straightforward calque.

Interestingly enough, <u>ʔeN</u> 'fish' enters into several formations:

(10) a. ʔeNcak-hal²iš 'to spear fish; fish-spear, gig'. cak-hal²iš 'to stick, spear...'

b. ʔeNpac-haLši²iš 'to fish with hook and line'. pac-hal²iš 'to hang...', pac-haLši²iš 'to hang...on'.

c. ʔeNšoˑ-hal²iš 'to fish, hunt for fish'. šoˑ-hew²iš 'to hunt (for game)'.

The noun <u>ʔinu</u> 'name' appears in one construction:

(11) ʔinoʔoˑ-haWši²iš 'to name...' ʔoˑ-haw²iš 'to call, halloa'. <u>ʔinu</u> has assimilated to the <u>o</u> of <u>ʔoˑ-</u>.

The final examples incorporate the noun <u>ʔeˑt</u> 'house'.

(12) a. ʔeˑtka-haci²iš 'to enter'. Cf. ka-haci²iš 'to get in, go in' (-haci²iš, intransitive aux.)

b. ʔeˑtka-haku²iš 'to put...in'. Cf. ka-haku²iš 'to put in, on' (-haku²iš, transitive aux.). All active verb stems have a plural form (implying plural of subject) made according to regular rule. If the plural form of ʔeˑtka- was regular it would be *ʔeˑtkaˑ- (lengthening of final vowel if short). But quite unexpectedly the correct form here is ʔeˑcaˑ- (as in ʔeˑcaˑ-haci²iš 'several to enter') and there are no other instances of <u>tk</u> being replaced by <u>c</u>.

Noun incorporation in Natchez is not a widespread phenomenon. Still there is greater variation than is found in the Muskogean languages. There are several other interesting differences between Natchez and Muskogean usage. Especially noteworthy is the fact that the Natchez examples all have concrete meanings while the Muskogean examples often have

figurative meanings which refer to emotional states. The variety of stems used in Natchez is greater than in Muskogean and the meaning categories also show greater diversity. Most Muskogean examples make use of body-part terms (often in figurative use, e.g. Creek fiksomkitá 'to get scared, frightened', lit. 'to get heart-lost') but Natchez uses only three and these retain their concrete meanings.

Although Natchez may be related to Muskogean in the remote past (Haas 1956), the noun incorporation examples, though not detracting from the possibility, do not really strengthen the argument for relationship.

Although examples of noun incorporation in Natchez are not numerous, it seems premature to suggest that it was a dead process in the speech of the last speakers. The best evidence for this comes from the fact that out of a couple dozen examples, four refer to items or customs of European (hence post-Columbian) origin. These are 'to shake hands' (6c), 'to swear (take an oath)' (6b), 'sundial, clock' (9a), and 'to set the day' (9b). This means that as recently as two or three centuries ago noun incorporated forms could still be innovated. It is possible that if Natchez was still a viable language, innovations might very well still be possible.

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