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The Johnson Collection and Phoebe Maddux: Translating, Researching, Preserving, and Honoring Basketweaving Heritage among Karuk

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The Johnson Collection and Phoebe Maddux: Translating, Researching, Preserving, and  
Honoring Basketweaving Heritage among Karuk

By

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Senior Honors Thesis  
Bachelor of Arts

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## Introduction

It was a Thursday night in February. My advisor, Dr. Carolyn Smith (Karuk), was helping me with a Karuk word I couldn't seem to parse. I had tried everything, used all the resources I had available. Every week, I would meet with Dr. Smith and we would discuss the words or morphemes that I couldn't parse. This one in particular stumped me, but it had actually come up in a recording. This recording had, to my luck, been published in the online dictionary, called *Ararahih'urípih*, created through a collaboration between the Karuk Tribe and the Survey of California and Other Indian Languages at the University of California, Berkeley. This morpheme was said in a recording of Mr. Charron "Sonny" Davis (1941-2021) and Mr. Shan Davis (1918-?), esteemed members of the Karuk Tribe. While both father and son were included in the recording, it was Mr. Charron "Sonny" Davis who said the morpheme.



Image 1. Charron "Sonny" Davis, Siskiyou Daily News, 2016.

Mr. Davis was a council member who came from a long line of basketweavers and medicine people. He was considered "a true Karuk" (Lost Coast Outpost 2021). Because Dr. Smith and I had been trying to find any clues about the morpheme, we played the audio recording. I had already been doing this work for several months, already learning about the Tribe and the language, and already conducting my research. I started listening to the recording, and it was one of the most humanizing and humbling experiences.

Before that point, I knew this work was important, but I didn't fully grasp the extent of the importance until I heard the recording. Up until this point, my work revolved around the Johnson Collection, a collection of baskets at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History (NMNH), which was the collection in which I'd been parsing the Karuk words. I knew that this collection was an important piece for language revitalization, but it was hearing Mr. Davis in that moment that really put everything into perspective. Of course, it is important to note that this language revitalization work hasn't been happening in a bubble. There is a long history of Indigenous interlocutors and allies working on Karuk language restoration projects, which is seen through the work of the Karuk Language Restoration Committee (KLRC). While my project concerning the Johnson Collection is one that the KLRC hasn't directly worked on, this important committee has worked with Karuk language documentation from many archival collections for numerous decades, as one of their methods for revitalizing the Karuk language.

Because of Mr. Davis' words, this project instantly became so much more than just parsing words for revitalization purposes; it became an active effort to reunite a rich and vibrant language with beautiful cultural practices, particularly basketweaving. It became about life where language and culture intersect. It became about mitigating the damage caused by the United States government at the hands of forced attendance at boarding schools. "Past genocide in education is the main reason why language revitalization and regenesi s of languages are needed," which is why this work is so important (Skutnabb-Kangas 2018, 18). We cannot repair what has been done, but we can help mitigate the damage that has already been caused. It is the Karuk community's right to be able to practice their culture and speak their language, and it is time universities, linguists, and allies actively supported them in their rights.

At this moment, I began to question what this work was for and what it could actually mean. Before this point, I was more focused on how the original tags from the 1920 that were attached to the Johnson Collection baskets could inform the basketweaving terminology of today. But after listening to Mr. Davis, I began to ask the following: How do efforts in language revitalization impact cultural understandings of basketry?

Once I had this newfound overarching and guiding question in mind, I had a better understanding of how I wanted to continue researching, and how I wanted to frame my research to best fit the community. With this being said, this thesis will discuss the documentation of Karuk language by Mrs. Phoebe Maddux and JP Harrington in the 1920s, focusing on language preservation of basketry terms. This project also introduces how language revitalization is interwoven with cultural practices, like basketweaving. It pays homage to those Indigenous interlocutors who fought to keep their language alive. While I am parsing the Karuk morphemes to help expand the corpus on basketweaving terminology, I am also remembering and highlighting the courage of those who fought for their community.

## Chapter Summary

First, I will provide a brief, yet thorough, historical background. In this section, I will cover the background of the Karuk Tribe, the context of the collection I am working on, and the Indigenous interlocutors who fought for language revitalization.

The second section of this thesis will be the literature review, which will include information regarding the Karuk language, my theoretical framework, and my choices of language revitalization implementation. Most importantly, this section will cover the readings that informed my research.

The third section will focus on my methods. I will describe the steps I took to advise myself on how best to approach true community research that is Indigenous-focused. After establishing this, I will then explain the database I used for my research and how each step of the data collection process unfolded.

My fourth section will focus on my data collection findings. Here, I will examine common single-morpheme words in Karuk, the categories of morphemes that were particularly common, examples of those categories, and any difficulties I encountered during the data collection process.

My fifth section will be the discussion of my data collection findings. I will look more deeply at my findings in this section. This includes what the common morpheme categories reveal about the idea of basketweaving for the Karuk people. I consider specific data entries, and what the implications of these data entries are on the interconnectedness between the surrounding environment, the culture, and the language.

# Historical Background

Before being able to work on the project, it was important to understand the background of the Karuk Tribe, Karuk basketweaving, the Johnson Collection, JP Harrington, and Mrs. Phoebe Maddux. This background information helped provide much-needed context for framing my project and thinking through how to decolonize the Johnson Collection documentation. The background on the Tribe engages with ethnographic works from linguists William Bright and John Peabody Harrington, as well as Karuk tribal member Julian Lang, to describe the linguistic and cultural makeup of the Tribe. Literature about Karuk basketweaving practices provided needed background on the materials, weaving techniques, and basket types that are found in the Johnson Collection. Finally, this section ends with a discussion about the Johnson Collection, which is the collection I am working with, so an understanding of its history is extremely important. This can also be said for the individual who helped collect the information—Harrington—and his interlocutor—Mrs. Phoebe Maddux—who helped provide information on the baskets within the collection.

## The Karuk Tribe

One must consider the Tribe in its entirety before trying to understand and parse a collection of baskets meant to represent part of the culture. In order to consider the Tribe in its entirety, it is important to look at past descriptions of the Tribe. Linguists William Bright and John Peabody Harrington described the Tribe in detail within their books, while Karuk tribal member and scholar, Julian Lang, provided context of Karuk cosmology by recounting creation stories. In addition to understanding the Tribe, it is equally important to understand their own revitalization efforts by incorporating the documentations made by Bright and Harrington.

William Bright (1928-2006), a linguist and only honorary member of the Karuk Tribe, wrote a chapter called “Karok” within the book entitled, *The Handbook of the North American Indians, Vol. 8*. Written in 1978, it is meant to look at the Karuk’s language and cultural practices that are central to the Tribe. Bright (1978) starts the chapter by explaining the linguistic background of the Karuk Tribe. In terms of the linguistic background, he mentions that the Karuk language has no closely related ancestors, but that Powell (1891) classified the language as an isolate of the Quoratean family (Bright 1978, 180). This led Dixon and Kroeber (1913) “to discover distant relationships with other languages in California, which they grouped into the Hokan family” (Bright 1978, 180). Finally, Sapir (1929) tried to then connect Karuk to the Hokan-Coahuiltecan subgroup of the Hokan-Siouan phylum, but these claims remain unsubstantiated (Bright 1978, 180). While the linguistic background doesn’t explain some of the morphemes included in the data entries, the background helps us examine the language within the context which it was documented in. This background information can help inform the choices Harrington made throughout his Karuk language documentation process in the late 1920s.

After describing the changing grouping of the Karuk language, Bright then explains the geography of the Tribe. According to him, the Karuk Tribe shares many cultural traits with their nearest neighbors, the Yurok and Hupa Tribes, though each Tribes' languages are distinct (Bright 1978, 180). This is important to note, since the Johnson Collection features Yurok and Hupa baskets, in addition to Karuk baskets. Bright also notes that there are little cultural or linguistic divisions within the Karuk Tribe, which is important to note, because that means the linguistic data gathered by Harrington is representative of the entire language.

After providing a framework of the Karuk language, Bright then discusses the cultural setting, particularly concerning the cosmology, ceremonies, and curing practices of the Tribe. The cosmology of the Tribe includes a false claim that no creation myth has ever existed, but there are myths pertaining to features of the world around them (Bright 1978, 188). He emphasizes that "the Karoks seem mainly interested in their immediate surroundings," like the Klamath River, which influences their directional terms (Bright 1978, 188). To emphasize this point, he includes that the Klamath River is the basis for all spatial orientations, providing terms like *káruk* "upriver," *yúruk* "downriver," *máruk* "away from the river, uphill," and *sáruk* "toward the river, downhill" (Bright 1978, 188). Understanding the cosmology of the Karuk people is important, since it informs us on how the language is interconnected with their beliefs and environment. Therefore, the waterways—part of the environment—is so important to the Karuk people that it influences the terms used for directions and space. In terms of the ceremonies, Bright briefly accounts for three different dances—the Jumping Dance, the Deerskin Dance, and the Brush Dance. While the Brush Dance is held for healing sick children, the Jumping and Deerskin Dances are held for "'renewing the world' and assuring its stability between annual observances" (Bright 1978, 188). Details of these dances were further documented by Kroeber and Gifford (1949). This is also important to note, since we see another instance of the environment playing a major role in the culture, which informs us that the environment is a factor to consider throughout the data collection process. With regard to healing and curing practices, there were two types of curers: the "herb doctor" and the "sucking doctor." The "herb doctor" cured by administering herbal medicines to the patient both internally and externally, while the "sucking doctor" withdrew the pains from their patients by sucking on the affected areas (Bright 1978, 188). While the "herb doctor" might be a man or woman, it solely depended on if the practitioner learned all the appropriate procedures (Bright 1978, 188). This, too, connects back to the environment and belief system of the Karuk people. As seen through each aspect of the culture highlighted by Bright, the overall belief system of the Karuk is interconnected with the environment.

John Peabody Harrington (1884-1961) was an American ethnologist and linguist associated with the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C., who was a prolific documentor of Native American Indigenous languages. In 1932, he published a book called, *Tobacco Among the Karuk Indians of California*, based on the tobacco cultivation and practices of the Karuk Tribe. While there are many linguistic aspects to this book, the main focus is the culture of the Karuk Tribe through the lens of tobacco. Through this lens, he considers the social structures,

food, housing, and ceremonies of the Karuk people. According to Harrington, one of the food staples in the Karuk diet is salmon (1932, 5). This is important because it further connects the Karuk people to the Klamath River, which places an emphasis on their surrounding environment. Harrington also looks at housing within his introduction. He includes that their houses faced “downslope,” and that these “downslope” houses faced the Klamath River (Harrington 1932, 4). This further shows the Karuk’s connection to their environment. They are deeply connected to the Klamath River, as seen through their food sources, housing structures, and soon, through their baskets. Finally, even one of their ceremonies is deeply rooted in their environment. Harrington discusses the Spring Salmon Ceremony in his introduction, which is a ceremony that typically happens at the beginning of April. The purpose of the ceremony is that after it is completed, it will then be permissible to catch salmon for the remainder of the season (Harrington 1932, 7). As seen through their ceremonies, the Karuk people are actively engaging with their environment, which means that their environment is directly influencing their cultural practices. This provides the much-needed cultural context as to why mentions of the environment are so important when looking at the Johnson Collection.

In addition to *Tobacco Among the Karuk Indians of California* (1932), Harrington also collected stories and audio recordings from Karuk community members, which are available on microfilm at the National Anthropological Archives in Suitland, Maryland, and other archives across the US, including the University of California, Berkeley. These stories and recordings are also now part of the online Karuk dictionary, *Ararahih’urípih*. With the stories and recordings spanning from 1903-2015, Harrington helped collect the ones dated from the early 1920s-1932. Even though Harrington helped collect some of these stories and audio recordings, it was actually Bright who collected most of them from the late-1940s to the mid-1950s. While Harrington is responsible for some of the stories and recordings, it was actually Bright who collected many of them.

Harrington and Bright’s collection of Karuk language documentation and ethnographic field notes includes information about weaving and different aspects of life, such as weather and body parts. Additionally, it is important to note that there are some recordings of stories told by different community members. Since the stories are the same but told from different members, there are opportunities to listen to different variations within each story. Because of how the stories and recordings were collected, there is an emphasis on the knowledge of the Karuk people, which allows for the people to have an active say in what knowledge they share.

Engaging with language documentation from Harrington, Bright, and O’Neale—among many others—who have recorded Karuk language for over 100 years, the Karuk people have been actively revitalizing their language since the 1980s. This has taken the form of the Karuk Language Restoration Committee (KLRC). Created in 1988, the KLRC had the overall goal “to oversee and guide language revitalization efforts, [and] actively participat[e] in a range of programs that helped to keep the Karuk language alive” (Sims 1998, 109-110). Additionally, “founding members Nancy Steele, André Cramblit, Jeanerette Jacups-Johnny, Vi Silva, Blanche Moore, Robert Goodwin, Vina Smith, Alvis “Bud” Johnson, and advisors Bright and Lang

encouraged the documentation of fluent speakers, the growth of new speakers, and community language learning and use” (Garrett et al. 2024, 22). Over the years, this language program and the KLRC have hosted numerous workshops, classes, and events to engage tribal members in learning their own language. They have also worked with faculty and students from the UC Berkeley Linguistics Department on documenting language (Smith 2009). This shows that the Karuk people have been actively engaging with language documentation and involved in language restoration efforts, and that this project is part of an ongoing struggle for language reclamation.

Julian Lang, a founding member of the KLRC, wrote *Ararapivka* (1994), a compilation of linguistic materials with Karuk creation stories that have never been published before. Lang, a Karuk tribal member and speaker of the language, presents this corpus of knowledge within the context of the community. Until this point, only outsiders of the community had published information regarding the Tribe. His information, and the way in which he presents it, is refreshing and must be considered as true community work. There are some clear linguistic-focused sections within the book, including the pronunciation guide and notes on the translations. However, the main focus is on the five creation stories. This is important because Bright (1978) had mentioned that there were no creation myths, but as seen through Lang’s (1994) work, there clearly are creation stories. Regardless, the main focus of the creation stories is to highlight the Tribe itself. Each of the creation stories focuses on nature in some way. “How Pishpishi Got His Stinger” explains why yellowjackets have less painful stings than rattlesnakes or scorpion stings (Lang 1994, 45). “Eel-with-a-Swollen-Belly Creates Shrines” explains how this Lamprey Eel that travels along the Klamath River foreshadows the movements of eels today (Lang 1994, 55). While the above examples are only two examples of creation myths, both directly involve the surrounding environment. Additionally, both of these creation myths include animals that are actually reflected in the baskets within the Johnson Collection. This is important because it is another instance where the environment is rooted within the community. Therefore, we cannot truly understand the context of the Johnson Collection without the full picture of how all facets of Karuk life and community connect to the environment.

## Karuk Basketry

Lila O’Neale (1886-1948), a UC Berkeley-trained anthropologist, researched basket designs in the 1920s from the Yurok, Hupa, and Karuk tribes of Northern California. Working predominantly with the Yurok and Karuk tribes, she published the extremely important work that relied on ethnographic research in order to examine the different types of weaves used by the Hupa, Yurok, and Karuk basketweavers. In her book, titled, *Yurok-Karok Basket Weavers* (1932), she considers the different styles and designs, materials used, and gathering times for basketweaving materials. O’Neale’s (1932) book is extremely thorough, and describes these aspects of the baskets in great detail while focusing on what Karuk and Yurok weavers actually made. To elaborate further, the section looking at cooking and serving baskets described them as being made from “hazel or willow sticks with root twining elements and white grass overlay

patterns” (O’Neale 1932, 35). This is incredibly specific, and helpful in the classification process.

Within the same vein of research, O’Neale (1932) also made substantiated claims about basket authenticity and which baskets were made for the non-Indigenous world surrounding the Indigenous communities. The section where she considers the *commercialization* of the baskets was highly important as well. Considering the Johnson Collection, discussed below, is a collection based on the early-1900s *commercialization* of baskets, it is important to consider their authenticity and how it might be impacted by the aspect of *commercialization*. In reference to the buying and selling of baskets by outsiders, O’Neale states the following:

Much later, tourists became buyers to be depended upon and for the continuance of their custom, Indian women on the Klamath have perpetrated aesthetic atrocities. They are still willing to. Left to themselves weavers revert to old shapes and old patterns as the line of least resistance. Very often in admiring a basket picture an informant told me that that was the sort of basket or design a weaver might make for herself. But with every woman making baskets for sale, the obvious precaution is to produce results that will attract buyers. (O’Neale 1932, 148)

This observation is huge for understanding the motives behind certain designs and shapes of the baskets within the collection. If I was ever confused or intrigued about a particular item within the collection, I could ask myself if the item was made this way because of exterior factors, such as the fact that the basket was woven for outsider collection, rather than community use.

Ruth Bennett and Carolyn Risling Shaw, in consultation with California State University, Humboldt and the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs, created a manual for bilingual education among the Karuk that placed an emphasis on basketweaving materials. This manual, called, “Basketmaking Among Karuk” (1987), uses images and language terms in order to inspire the use of the Karuk language when basketweaving. Like my own project, this project was built on the premise of reuniting the language with the culture. This manual focuses on reuniting basketweaving terminology with the Karuk language. Some of the spellings show variation between the manual and Harrington’s original tags, but it is still helpful in seeing whether or not the translations seem to resemble the correct words. For example, the manual says that the Karuk word for *beargrass* is “pun-yú-ror,” while in Harrington’s notes and original tags, he spelled it “panyúrar” (Bennett and Shaw 1987, 15).

## Bear grass

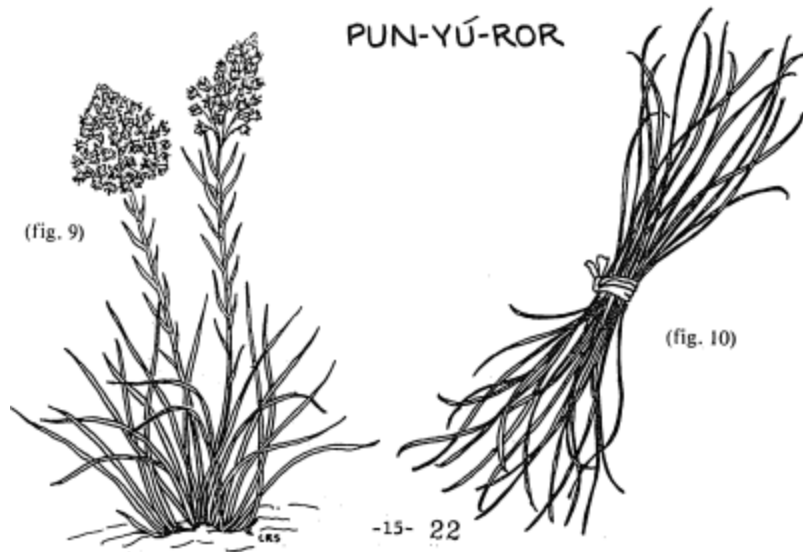


Image 2. Ruth Bennett and Carolyn Risling Shaw, *Bear grass*, 1987, drawing, Humboldt State University, [ed282706.tif.pdf](#).

Additionally, this manual focuses on “becom[ing] familiar with the environments in which cultural groups have developed” (Bennett and Shaw 1987, ii). This is important for my research, since the Karuk use their environment to help explain some basketweaving processes, like the patterns on the baskets themselves. It is all interconnected, and this manual served as a resource to better understand the interconnectedness of the language, basketweaving practices, and the environment.

## The Johnson Collection

In order to truly understand the scope of my project, it is important to first understand the collection I am working with—the Johnson Collection—located at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) in Washington D.C. It was through the Johnson Collection that the stories, and subsequently, the Karuk words, were collected and stored for future reference.



Image 3. EG Johnson Collection, Clarke Historical Museum, n.d.

The Johnson Collection is a collection of baskets that has a rather complicated past. It is named after the collector, Emil G. Johnson, also known as Earl G. or E. G. Johnson. He was a piano salesman in Eureka, California in the 1910s (Smith 2016, 94). As time went on, he eventually started buying and selling baskets that had belonged to the local tribes. Then, in 1922, he contacted a woman named Mrs. Lucretia Monroe. It was at this time that he was able to convince her to consign her basket collection over to him (Smith 2016, 94). Mrs. Monroe, like other prominent society members, often bought baskets from the local tribes as part of her charity affiliations (Smith 2016, 94). After Johnson offered double what she would get from a museum, he acquired the collection. The collection itself included 430 baskets total, predominantly from the Karuk, Yurok, and Wiyot tribes in Northern California (Smith 2016, 94).

JP Harrington contacted Johnson in 1927 regarding a curatorial request from the Southwest Museum (Smith 2016, 95). Johnson immediately replied with a detailed report of Mrs. Monroe's collection that he was selling, even though he told Mrs. Monroe that the collection was lost. Just the previous year in 1926, she even visited the collection, at which time Johnson had assured her of the safety of her collection (Smith 2016, 95). However, when Harrington reached out in 1927, Johnson eagerly supplied information regarding Mrs. Monroe's collection, including the names of the makers (Smith 2016, 95). With clear information tracing the collection's items

back to the Karuk, Hupa, Yurok, and Wiyot tribes, Harrington traveled to California and bought the collection in the spring of 1928. He bought the entire collection for \$1,800 (Smith 2016, 95).

Following the purchase of the collection, Harrington had it shipped directly to the Smithsonian, where he hoped to work with Mrs. Phoebe Maddux, a Karuk basketweaver and medicine woman, to gain further insight into the collection. This is also where he took extensive photographs and other documentation of each item within the collection.

### John Peabody Harrington (1884-1961)



Image 4. Harris and Ewing, *John Peabody Harrington at a Guna language studies reception Willard Hotel*, 1924, photograph, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, <https://cdn.loc.gov/service/pnp/hec/32600/32600v.jpg>.

John Peabody Harrington, or JP Harrington, as mentioned briefly above, was an American ethnologist who was a prominent figure in Anthropology in the 1900s. Born in 1884, Harrington grew up in Santa Barbara, California where he showed a great interest in languages and the local “Mission Indians” (Golla 1991, 337). Between 1902-1905, Harrington studied Anthropology and Classical Languages at Stanford University, where he also took summer classes at the University of California, Berkeley. This is where he met Alfred Kroeber, a leading anthropologist of the time (Wikipedia 2024). After his time at university, he began working on Indigenous languages throughout the country, which led him to gaining recognition as a researcher of languages. In 1915, Harrington was hired by the Bureau of American Ethnology to serve as a Research Ethnologist, which was a highly coveted position for working linguists at the time (Golla 1991, 337-338). Despite being the sole recorder of some Indigenous languages and having an extreme focus on detail, his Boasian emphasis extending into the 1920s earned him little academic recognition within the field (Wikipedia 2024; Golla 1991, 339). His book

mentioned above, *Tobacco Among the Karuk Indians of California* (1932), was one of Harrington's few published works, and was even written in both English and Karuk as a bilingual text (Wikipedia 2024). Harrington published little, despite amassing more than enough data to publish on a multitude of Indigenous communities (Wikipedia 2024). In fact, it took until the late 1960s to consolidate Harrington's notes, and until 1991 to microfilm all linguistic and ethnographic notes, papers, and correspondence within the National Anthropological Archives (Golla 1991, 339-340). It is because of Harrington's work that we have such abundant resources for Indigenous languages that were previously thought to be extinct.

### Mrs. Phoebe Maddux (1866-1937)



Image 5. Grace Nicholson and Carroll Hartman, *Phoebe Maddux at Somes Bar on the lower Salmon River*, 1908, photograph, Huntington Digital Library, <https://huntington.org>.

Born in 1866, Mrs. Phoebe Maddux was a Karuk tribal member who was known for her knowledge in basketweaving and doctoring. Ever since she was a young girl, she practiced doctoring alongside her mother (Smith 2016, 92). After some time, however, she transitioned into working as a housekeeper and cook for the white settler families in the area. She did this while raising her own children (Smith 2016, 92). Mrs. Maddux was bilingual in both English and Karuk, which became helpful during her time in the settlers' homes and at the Smithsonian with Harrington.

Beginning her work with Harrington in 1926, Mrs. Maddux provided invaluable information, including language terms, her experiences, and her knowledge on basketweaving practices (Smith 2016, 95). It was Mrs. Maddux who provided the language Harrington wrote on the original tags associated with each basket in the Johnson Collection between 1928-1929. These tags included valuable information regarding stories behind the baskets, the types of weaves involved, and Karuk terminology. These original tags are now stored in the National Anthropological Archives (NAA). While the tags are no longer directly kept with the collection, most of the information on the tags was written on the Smithsonian's catalog cards.

Once Mrs. Maddux began working with Harrington in 1926, she spoke of her experiences and knowledge on different topics. She reviewed recordings of Karuk songs, as well as reviewed Kroeber's paper called, *Basket Designs of the Indians of Northwestern California* (1905a), where she compared Kroeber's findings to her own basketweaving knowledge (Smith 2016, 93).

Mrs. Maddux was in her 60s by the time she traveled with Harrington to the Smithsonian in 1928. This is where she provided the invaluable information that advised Harrington on the Johnson Collection. Without Mrs. Maddux, the original tags Harrington created would lack the information regarding the materials used, the weaves involved, and the specialized patterns that are expressed through personalized language. Because Mrs. Maddux was bilingual, she switched between Karuk and English often when conversing with Harrington. It is her personal choice to speak in both Karuk and English that has allowed the basketweaving terminology to be preserved.

Without Mrs. Maddux, the information regarding the basketweaving terms would be incomplete. It is her knowledge that she shared with Harrington that we now rely on for language revitalization concerning basketweaving terms. Mrs. Maddux was part of one of the last generations to grow up without the influence of white settlers on Karuk territory. Even then, Mrs. Maddux was aware of the extreme language loss impacting the Karuk people. In reference to the work she was doing with Harrington, she is reported to have said the following: "My work will stay here in the Nature Museum [Smithsonian], but, poor me, I'll be a different road (dead)" (Qtd. In Smith 2016, 94). While this statement is extremely saddening to read, it shows that Mrs. Maddux understood that the work she was doing would stay in the Smithsonian. While it might not be shared with the world, at least the information she provided would be documented somewhere. She was right; the information did stay in the Smithsonian. However, her information will also be returned to the people.

## Connections

The background knowledge pertaining to the Karuk Tribe and the basketry is extremely important when considering the Johnson Collection and its impact on basketweaving terminology today. When looking at the Tribe and its linguistic and cultural backdrop, the role of the environment is incredibly important to consider. If we can understand how the Karuk people connect to and actively engage with their environment, then we can better understand some of the linguistic choices they made to connect with their environment. The same can be said with

the basketry. If we can understand how interconnected the weaves, the materials, and the designs are with the environment, then we can begin to understand how interconnected the environment, culture, and language are with each other. The sooner we understand that the environment is not just what surrounds the Karuk, but what helps shape them as a people, the sooner we can begin to understand the context of the Johnson Collection.

With this in mind, I would like to note that language revitalization for the Karuk language is an ongoing struggle. It does not begin with this project, nor does it end with it. We see this ongoing struggle with the conscious decisions made by Mr. Davis, and many others who worked with the UC Berkeley Linguistics Department dictionary collaboration. However, my project truly couldn't be done without the work and forethought of Mrs. Maddux. Mrs. Maddux was an incredible woman who happened to live at a specific period of time when Harrington was documenting all he could. His methods were concerning to say the least, but this project is only possible because of his propensity for documenting languages and Mrs. Maddux's willingness to share her knowledge with him.

Mrs. Maddux once shared that one should not stop in the middle of weaving a round, but one should finish weaving the round before stopping. Within the context of weaving a tobacco basket, she says, "It does not come undone when I do it this way" (Harrington 1932, 122). If the round remained unfinished, then it would begin to unravel. This work is a lot like that. Right now, we are in the middle of weaving our own round. Mrs. Maddux wove the first round; Mr. Davis wove a round. We can't let the weave of language revitalization unravel. We must keep weaving, just like this work must continue.

# Literature Review

Before being able to work on the project, I first needed to actively engage with several readings that would advise me on the Karuk language, methodologies, as well as the incorporation of language revitalization into my project. The literature regarding Karuk language is important because I must understand the language in order to work on translations, and subsequently, the project. Methodologies, specifically ones that focus on Indigenous communities, are also important. My research scope is determined by the frameworks discussed in those readings. Finally, the literature that considers language revitalization is extremely important, since this project directly relates to ongoing revitalization programs in the Karuk Tribe. Even though there are ongoing revitalization programs, it is still important to contribute ethically and with the community's permission, which is what the literature discusses.

## The Karuk Language

In order to actively engage with the Johnson Collection Karuk language documentation, it was extremely important that I understand the nuances of the Karuk language itself. For this, I relied heavily on linguists who had researched the Karuk language in great detail already. I first looked at Victor Golla's book, *California Indian Languages* (2011). Section 3.9, in particular, provided an extensive background on the Karuk language. This gave me the background knowledge to be able to dive deeper into other linguistic resources about the Tribe's language. Within Golla's (2011) book's section, he considers the Karuk language to be "a classificatory isolate within the Hokan phylum," which extends about sixty miles along the Klamath River in the Siskiyou and Humboldt counties (Golla 2011, 84). Within this sixty-mile cutout, he explains that there are four main "districts," and that there are no major dialectal differences between those districts. However, he notes that the Yurok abuts the Karuk downriver, while the Shasta abuts the Karuk upriver, each having their own distinct languages (Golla 2011, 1984). In addition to Golla (2011) explaining the linguistic geography of the Karuk, he also includes that many notable historic linguists worked on documenting the language, including Gibbs (1850s), Kroeber (1902-1903), Merriam (1910-1921), and Harrington, who I discussed in more detail within the historical background section (Golla 2011, 85).

Golla also discusses linguistic properties within the language. He notes that the phonemic inventory of the Karuk language has four stops and affricates, five fricatives, two laryngeals, two nasals, a flapped "r," or /ɾ/, two approximants, three vowels that can be either long or short, and two additional mid vowels that can only occur long (Golla 2011, 86).

| TABLE 11<br>Karuk Phonemes (Bright 1957) |   |   |   |   |        |        |        |  |  |
|------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|--------|--------|--------|--|--|
| Consonants                               |   |   |   |   | Vowels |        |        |  |  |
| p                                        | t | č | k | ʔ | i / i: |        | u / u: |  |  |
| f                                        | θ | š | x | h | e:     |        | o:     |  |  |
| v                                        |   |   |   |   |        | a / a: |        |  |  |
| m                                        | n |   |   |   |        |        |        |  |  |
|                                          | r | y |   |   |        |        |        |  |  |
|                                          |   |   |   |   | Long   |        | Short  |  |  |
| Pitch Accents                            |   |   |   |   |        |        |        |  |  |
| Unaccented                               |   |   |   |   | v:     |        | v      |  |  |
| Acute (high)                             |   |   |   |   | v̌:    |        | v̌     |  |  |
| Circumflex (high falling)                |   |   |   |   | v̂:    |        |        |  |  |

Image 6. William Bright, *Karuk Phonemes*, 1957, table, University of California.

Additionally, “long vowels may carry one of two pitch accents,” either acute or circumflex (Golla 2011, 86). Golla (2011) also mentions that “locational-directional stem compliments are found with most verbs of motion, situating the action of the verb in a spatial frame that is in many cases intimately linked to the riverine topography of Karuk territory” (87). With this background knowledge, I was then able to look at more specific details pertaining to the language, such as Karuk verb reduplication.

While I never came across verbal reduplication in the data entries, I did want a broader understanding of what can happen morphologically, particularly with verbs. As described further in the data collection process, verbs are a common morpheme category found in the data entries. With this in mind, it is important to consider what could be seen in the data entries concerning verbs. For this aspect of information, I looked at Monica Macaulay’s paper, entitled, “Reduplication and the Structure of the Karuk Verb Stem” (1993), which considers two main points: verbal reduplication and internal reconstruction of the verb stem itself. The first section of her paper discusses Bright’s (1957) claims regarding the non initial positioning of verbal stems, and how these claims have allowed for her to determine additional prefixes and roots by looking through his dictionary (Macaulay 1993, 66; 68). The identification of these prefixes has allowed me to consider what might be a prefix versus an actual verb during the parsing process. Additionally, she discusses Bright’s (1957) claims in conjunction with Haas’s (1980) claims regarding phoneme patterning, specifically that verbs occur in a CVCVC or (C)VCCVC pattern (Macaulay 1993, 67). This information is also incredibly useful, considering I can determine if a

morpheme fits within the verb morpheme category based on its distribution of vowels and consonants. While the other sections focus solely on reduplication, and therefore not relevant past the idea of it, the first half of this paper makes interesting claims that help me when analyzing the data entries. In the end, Macaulay concludes that “it appears that the first part is synchronically a prefix, and the second a root” and that the only time the CV structure strays is when reduplication is considered (Macaulay 1993, 80). Once again, reduplication never appeared in the data entries I parsed, but considering the CV order and if there was a prefix before the root of the verb was extremely helpful. With knowledge of the verbs, I was then able to focus and gain knowledge on grammatical patterns, such as directional suffixes and word order.

There was one paper in particular that helped me gain a better understanding on directional suffixes and the Karuk’s word order, which was Garrett et al.’s (2024) chapter, “Karuk.” Within the book, *The Languages and Linguistics of Indigenous North America: A Comprehensive Guide*, Garrett et al. (2024) looks at different facets that have influenced the Karuk language over time, including the settler colonial history in Karuk territories. While this information was helpful in understanding some of the linguistic choices made by Mrs. Maddux when speaking about the collection, I was more concerned with the chapter’s discussion of directionals. As discussed within my data findings, directionals, like verbs, are another common morpheme category that require basic understanding within the context of the language. The chapter begins with a quote from Mr. Charlie Thom, Sr. (1928-2013), who was a Karuk medicine man and ceremonial leader (Mount Shasta Bioregional Ecology Center 2018).



Image 7. Charlie "Red Hawk" Thom, Sr., n.d., photograph, [www.shadowlight.org](http://www.shadowlight.org).

Mr. Thom, at the beginning of the chapter, said the following:

‘The Karuk language is a canoe. It holds all our baskets, our regalia, our materials, our food. The canoe holds all our practices, songs and stories. It holds all our people and all the Karuk people yet to be born. The canoe carries us all; without it, we can’t get anywhere.’ (Qtd. In Garrett et al. 2024, 1169)

This quote, while seemingly unrelated to the directionals, is actually directly related to them. Mr. Thom compares the language to a canoe, an object that touches the Klamath River. Based on the readings I engaged with about the Karuk Tribe, I know that their entire culture is so deeply rooted in their environment that this comparison was deliberate. Everything is connected, which can only mean that their directionals are also connected, further illustrating their deep reverence and connection to the Klamath River. This is exactly what I see in the data entries that I undertook, and this is exactly what Garrett et al. considers in the chapter. Within the section that considers directionals, there is the inclusion of multiple directionals that involve the environment, such as “*ûuth*” *out in water* and “*kâam*” *a little upriver* (Garrett et al 2024, 1179). The most interesting part of this section, however, is the conclusion that certain verb roots *must* combine with directionals, some roots *might* combine with directionals, and some roots *cannot* combine with directionals (Garrett et al. 2024, 1180). This is not only important information to know for my own parsing purposes, but it also helps inform me on just how deeply the environment and language intersect. Since the directionals are part of the language and deeply rooted in words associated with the environment, we see this underlying sense of connection that can be explored further.

Each paper helped provide background information on the Karuk language. Golla’s (2011) section focused on a basic understanding of Karuk’s linguistic background. Without the background, I wouldn’t understand which phonemes are part of their inventory, or how rooted in the environment their directionals are. This became vital information to have once I started parsing out the data entries. Macaulay’s (1993) paper provided valuable information regarding prefixes and CV order. As seen with Golla (2011), this paper became important when I began parsing out the data entries, because it helped me determine what made the most sense within the grammatical structure of the language. Finally, Garrett et al.’s (2024) chapter features information that highlights the role of the environment on the language. While cultural context is important, understanding how closely the environment influences the language is extremely important. Because the language is interconnected with the environment, both must be considered in order to accurately parse the data entries.

## Indigenous Methodologies

Learning about community-focused research is central to language revitalization projects, such as the one I have carried out. My research has been guided by Indigenous Methodologies that provide guidance for working on Indigenous issues, with Indigenous peoples, in ways that honor and respect Indigenous knowledge and protocols. While it is important for me to work with Dr. Smith on this project and consult with her on Indigenous concerns, it is equally

important to thoroughly engage with scholars who actively participate in Indigenous Methodologies.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (2012) book, called, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, is the first instance of a manual written by an Maori individual whose main focus is to examine Indigenous-forward research. Rather than an outsider of the community merely observing and noting what makes Indigenous communities "primitive," there is an emphasis on ensuring that the Indigenous community guides the research, so it can actually fit the community's needs. There was one chapter in particular that stood out to me. Chapter twelve, "Getting the Story Right, Telling the Story Well: Indigenous Activism, Indigenous Research," makes insightful claims regarding how to decolonize Indigenous narratives. This chapter focuses on righting the wrongs done to Indigenous communities by outsider researchers. Within this chapter, Tuhiwai Smith claims that the researcher, or activist's, struggle is to "defend, protect, enable, and facilitate the self-determination of Indigenous peoples over themselves in states and in the global arena where they have little power" (Tuhiwai Smith 2012, 221). Thinking through this statement through the lens of Karuk history, I began to understand that because of decades of Indigenous suppression at the hands of the United States government, the Karuk people have historically been left with little say in their culture and language. They actively fight, and have fought, for sovereignty, and it is within my power as a researcher to help support in any way that I can. Through my research, I can add to the Tribe's language revitalization efforts. Tuhiwai Smith aptly puts, "Indigenous knowledge [is] a unique body of world knowledge" (2012, 223). This highlights that the cultural and linguistic knowledge shared through the Johnson Collection is a corpus that belongs in the Tribal domain as Tribal knowledge, rather than being hidden away in a museum. While my work centers around reuniting the culture and language and bringing it back to the people, there is also an underlying mission of ensuring the Tribe has the choice to share this basketry knowledge in the public domain.

The second book that advised my research scope was Margaret Kovach's *Indigenous Methodologies* (2021). This is another example of how to conduct Indigenous-focused research. Kovach is a Pasqua First Nation scholar who was adopted out of the community at a young age. Throughout her book, she shares her struggles to conduct research as an insider because she feels like an outsider of the community. In chapter eight, "Indigenous Theorizing," Kovach (2021) considers the ideas of conceptual frameworks that are meant to best support Indigenous research. On this topic, she writes the following:

An Indigenous epistemology assumes that knowledges arise from multiple sources, a perspective commonly referenced as holism (scope); from an interconnected tangible and intangible animate world that is process oriented and cyclical; and from a web of interdependent, contextual relationships. (Kovach 2021, 182)

Parsing basketweaving terms from the Johnson Collection requires an engagement with Indigenous epistemologies. This project is working towards honoring Mrs. Maddux's language and cultural knowledge as Tribal knowledge, not just "data." It is a project centered around the decolonization of a collection founded in community knowledge. Considering that language,

culture, and environment are all interconnected, paying attention to Karuk epistemology is vital for conducting research that is meant for the community, based on community efforts.

While both Tuhiwai Smith (2012) and Kovach's (2021) books focused on research scopes, there was another book that advised my research within the context of language revitalization. Because my thesis focuses on reuniting the language with the culture, there are clear aspects of language revitalization—and the presentation of it—that needs to be considered. Leanne Hinton's *Flutes of Fire, 2nd Edition* (2022) does just that. Hinton (2022) focuses on many aspects of Indigenous languages within her book, but a part that advised my research in particular was the exploration of language revitalization. The main chapter that considers language revitalization programs is chapter nineteen, "Rebuilding the Fire: The Advocates for Indigenous California Language Survival." Within this chapter, Hinton (2022) considers different language revitalization programs, such as the Master-Apprentice Program. The Master-Apprentice Program, which has been essential to Karuk Tribe's language revitalization efforts, has the goal of helping community members become fluent second-language speakers. The program is designed to pair a "master speaker," who is fluent in the language, with an "apprentice," who is a learner of the language (Hinton 2022, 236). This program is viewed as a positive program that has aided many Tribal communities with their language revitalization projects.

Hinton (2022) shares that even though programs like the Master-Apprentice Program can aid in revitalization, it is important to consider the pitfalls of current revitalization practices with regards to documentation:

It is more challenging to learn one's language entirely from documentation, especially since most of the documentation is not oriented toward language teaching and learning but toward the goals of linguistic science. (Hinton 2022, 243)

Even though this is the product of early "salvage" approaches, it is still a pitfall of language revitalization practices today. "Salvage" refers to an approach that was started and perpetuated by anthropologist Franz Boas in the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries, which centered on voraciously documenting Indigenous cultures and languages because they were thought to be nearly extinct. "Salvage" era research featured extreme documentation and fieldwork without any consideration for the community being studied at the time. When starting my own research, I wanted to take this existing information—information that was clearly the product of "salvage" approaches—and find a way to make it work within the context of language revitalization that is focused on teaching and learning goals. Regardless of when this information was gathered, revitalization work can still bring Tribal knowledge and information back to the communities. It is dependent on the context and motivation of the revitalization work, which means that I must actively consider the community when attempting to participate in revitalization efforts.

Tuhiwai Smith (2012), Kovach (2021), and Hinton (2022) all provide pathways on how to structure my research scope to focus on the needs of the community I am serving. In Tuhiwai Smith's (2012) book, the focus on decolonization of the narrative is extremely important to consider more closely. While I am an outsider of the Karuk community, I am actively trying to

decolonize the Johnson Collection. If I can accurately parse the morphemes, then I can help decolonize the language and preserve it in a way that supports the community. The Johnson Collection was acquired under unfortunate circumstances, but my hope is to correct the errors of past data collection methods. Kovach's (2021) book looks closely at Indigenous epistemologies, with an emphasis on a holistic scope. This is directly applicable to my research, since I must consider all aspects when parsing the data entries. I must consider the words Mrs. Maddux chose to describe each item, the personal stories Mrs. Maddux told Harrington, and the orthography Harrington chose. This requires a holistic approach that looks at the connection the baskets have with the language and environment. Hinton (2022) argues that even if the revitalization materials are rooted in past "salvage" approaches, a meaningful revitalization program can still be created with proper community consultation. Such information was important to consider, since it was important I actively engage with the Karuk people to ensure my revitalization efforts reflected the needs of the community.

## Language Revitalization

Within the concept of language revitalization, I wanted to explore it more broadly, not just within the context of my research. The reason I wanted to examine the concept more broadly is because I wanted to learn more about the different facets of revitalization. Instead of focusing solely on how to frame my project as one of revitalization, a general understanding of the topic could provide the resources necessary to make language revitalization efforts fit the needs of both the project and community.

Lenore Grenoble and Lindsay Whaley's book, *Saving Languages: An Introduction To Language Revitalization* (2006), considers many facets of language revitalization, including the roots of language revitalization work. Mentioning that since the Cold War, there has been an active shift away from suppressing cultural differences, which has allowed for communities to pursue their own cultural interests, and governments to rethink what is considered a human right (Grenoble and Whaley 2006, 2). Ever since this shift, there have been arguments surrounding what a human right is, which has led to The United Nations to define linguistic human rights as human rights afforded to all citizens (Skutnabb-Kangas 2018, 14). This, of course, includes Indigenous communities and Indigenous languages. With the idea that linguistic rights are human rights, Grenoble and Whaley (2006) outline UNESCO's factors for language vitality, Krauss' (1997) distinction for language vitality, Campbell and Muntzel's (1989) types of attrition, and Kinkade (1991) and Wurm's (1998) six-way scheme for categorizing languages (4-18). Each outline is a different way of looking at language loss, and how a particular language ranks compared to other languages in terms of being passed down to the next generation.

Chapter two, "Issues in Language Revitalization," was particularly informative for my research because this chapter not only explains the problems commonly associated with language revitalization programs, but also details what makes some programs successful. In fact, they write, "Language revitalization programs are considered successful because they are realistic about what the program is trying to accomplish" (Grenoble and Whaley 2006, 48). While this

statement might appear to be obvious, it was important to recognize that what makes a program successful was its expectations and its ability to meet those expectations. Instead of immediately aiming for local literacy, successful programs “require a dedicated sense of collaboration, [and] a willingness to put aside disagreements” (Grenoble and Whaley 2006, 49). If I were to frame my research goals to be attainable and focus on community collaboration, then my efforts towards language revitalization would also be successful. This was important to keep in mind when beginning the project and beginning to collect my data.

Frederick White, in his paper “Rethinking Native American Language Revitalization” (2006), argues that it is important to actively consider the needs of Indigenous communities when trying to implement revitalization programs. White (2006) considers the Haida and Tewa Tribes in his paper as examples of how revitalization programs must fit the needs of the people (White 2006, 100). Based on their respective histories and the programs that were implemented, they both eventually acquired the languages the programs sought to teach; however, their attitudes regarding the programs were an important part in this. White (2006) admits that while the Haida Tribe was more willing to learn English, the Tewa Tribe was “vigorously resistant and had a negatively hostile attitude toward the Spanish” (104). This should have led to Spanish not being acquired by the Tewa people, but as White (2006) notes, the Tewa people did acquire Spanish. In order to explain why the Tewa did learn Spanish, White (2006) includes the following:

Enforced assimilation through punishment, psychologically or physically, is not part of the acculturation model, but its impact cannot be underestimated in the role of acquiring Spanish in the case of the Tewa. This comparison suggests that SLA/L theory falls short when examined in and applied to Native American contexts either past or present. It is unmistakable that a new way of thinking about language revitalization is necessary. (White 2006, 104)

White (2006) found that the willingness and attitudes of the community is what determines if the community will participate in the revitalization process. While the Tewa Tribe was part of a program meant to help them learn Spanish, it is important to note that they only participated out of fear of the government. Even though this program was meant to support learning a politically dominant language, fear of the government directly impacts any type of language program. This is why it is important to consider Tribal attitudes and willingness when preparing revitalization resources. If a Tribe rejects a revitalization program out of fear of the government, then the program itself is not meant to actively support the community. White’s (2006) paper advised me on how to approach the community’s attitudes when formulating the revitalization scope of a project.

With the importance of community attitudes in mind, I wanted to consider what existing revitalization programs are being implemented in the Karuk Tribe. To address this, I turned to Christine Sims’ article, “Community-Based Efforts to Preserve Native Languages: A Descriptive Study of the Karuk Tribe of Northern California” (1998). While this article is somewhat dated, it was a great guiding tool when thinking about revitalization programs. Since it is important to

consider the attitudes of the Tribe, knowing the other programs available to the Karuk Tribe helps establish if the community would be receptive to my own efforts. The past attempts of language revitalization are the following: immersion camps, instruction in public schools, language instruction for adults, and the Master-Apprentice Program (Sims 1998, 104-108). Additionally, there have been efforts made by the Karuk Language Restoration Committee, mentioned in the Historical Background section, to provide guidance and review of revitalization efforts, as well as “sanction different initiatives” (Sims 1998, 109). This is important because I now know that the community is interested in language revitalization programs and resources. If they are accepting of these resources generally, then they might be accepting of my efforts to reunite the culture and language.

One of the existing language revitalization projects for the Karuk Tribe is the dictionary project made in collaboration with the Tribe and the Survey of California and Other Indian Languages. According to Justin Spence (2018), language revitalization is possible through the use of both published and unpublished sources, including dictionaries and grammars (179). This dictionary collaboration is discussed, in some detail, by Andrew Garrett (2018), in his chapter within *The Routledge Handbook of Language Revitalization*. Chapter nineteen is called, “Online Dictionaries for Language Revitalization,” which discusses famous dictionaries, such as the Karuk *Ararahih'uripih* dictionary. Garrett’s (2018) description of online dictionaries is thorough, and considers its benefits and any concerns that appear with the creation of a dictionary. He goes as far to include that online dictionaries “may assist in the project of repatriating Indigenous knowledge from the academy and the archive, into the communities that created it” (Garrett 2018, 205). This is extremely important for my research, since my focus is to decolonize a collection held by the Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History. However, Garrett (2018) does share a problem with online dictionaries. He posits that often online dictionaries only feature short—even single-word—translations, which assumes “one-to-one” mapping within the minority and majority languages (Garrett 2018, 203). Basically, a single-word response in the majority language is used to explain a single-word in the minority language—the language being supported through the dictionary. This is sometimes problematic, since the concept might not be a direct translation from the minority language, but an entirely new concept that requires context-dependent descriptions for a proper definition.

Grenoble and Whaley (2006), White (2006), Sims (1998), and Garrett (2018) all consider language revitalization in different ways, but each directly advised my research scope. Grenoble and Whaley’s (2006) book looks closely at the beginnings of language revitalization, as well as what makes these programs successful. This was important for advising my own research, since my research revolves around the parsing of Karuk basketweaving terms in an effort to enrich Karuk knowledge about designs. It is important to remember that my research scope only works toward revitalization if it is attainable to begin with. Once I realized that the scope of revitalization must be attainable, it was important to consider White’s (2006) points regarding community attitudes. If a community doesn’t want to engage in revitalization, then the program will never be successful. This is important to consider, because if I want this project to be one of

revitalization, it must be done with the direct engagement of the community. Luckily, the Karuk Tribe has always been interested in language preservation and documentation, which is seen through Mrs. Maddux's work with Harrington, the KLRC, and the online dictionary collaboration. It is also seen through their implementation of the Master-Apprentice Program, which was described in Sims (1998). In fact, this drive for preservation and documentation has spanned over 100 years in the form of different efforts. Garrett (2018) focuses on how dictionaries can actively help repatriate Indigenous knowledge. My purpose is to reunite the culture and language by decolonizing the Johnson Collection and Harrington's original tags. By working directly with the Johnson Collection and the original tags, I am actively working to aid in repatriating Indigenous knowledge.

# Methodology

As an outsider of the community, it was important that I came at this project holistically in order to conduct research that is representative of the community's needs. It isn't enough to simply begin conducting research; rather, I needed to establish a baseline of knowledge pertaining to the community prior to conducting the research. Because of this, my overall research process was the following: library and archival research about the Karuk Tribe, language, and basketweaving traditions, familiarizing myself with the Johnson Collection and the original tags, learning how to read Harrington's handwriting, and parsing the language.

Before I started parsing the data entries, I spent roughly sixteen weeks reading about the individuals involved in the Johnson Collection, the Karuk Tribe, the Karuk language, Karuk basketweaving traditions, and the orthographies used in the past. In order to conduct research for the community, I needed to understand the context and background of these aspects before working with the Johnson Collection directly. This also meant that researching Indigenous Methodologies and the arguments surrounding language revitalization was equally important, since this directly advised me on my research scope.

After sixteen weeks of background research, I was then able to start working with the Johnson Collection. While the background research is extremely important, the scope of my project, and subsequently thesis, is as follows: I am taking Harrington's handwritten notes (the tags) and translating the Karuk words into English. In order to accurately parse out the Karuk words on Harrington's original tags, I needed access to and rely upon the original tags themselves, the images of the baskets within the collection, and the database I would use to store all the data. Harrington's original tags are housed in the National Anthropological Archives (NAA); the Johnson Collection is housed in the NMNH. For my purposes, I am using images of the original tags taken by Dr. Smith that have been uploaded onto a PowerPoint presentation for my convenience. The images of the Johnson Collection are directly part of the database I am using for this project. The database is called FileMaker Pro, which has all the information needed to complete the project. All the information was previously uploaded by Dr. Smith, so my main focus was using the existing information in the database.

FileMaker Pro has multiple areas I worked with throughout the data collection process. The first area was the "Card" area, which had all the information that would connect this particular item back to the collection. It had the Smithsonian's catalog number for the item, as well as the original tag number Johnson assigned at the time of purchase. Additionally, the date of accession, measurements, and potential remarks were included on this page of the database. The second area was the "Linguistics" area, which included the Karuk words, once parsed out, that corresponded to that particular item. The third area was the "Narratives" area, which had all the information that Harrington included on the original tags. These tags were the comments and stories Mrs. Maddux told Harrington regarding each item within the collection, which meant that this is where I would look for the Karuk words to parse out. This area would often include the person who made the item (especially if the item was a basket), and where it was made (within

the Karuk Tribe territory). The last area in the database is the “additional sheets” area, but that was unrelated to the work I was doing. It is important to note that there were often images in the right column of the database, where I could see what the item looked like. These images were either directly from the Smithsonian’s website, or research photographs taken at the Smithsonian by Dr. Smith.

Dr. Smith thought this database would make the most sense for the scope of the project. It makes sense to have all the information in the same place. The only problem, however, was if the notes from Harrington’s original tags were misspelled when being typed into the database. Because Harrington’s orthography was a mix of International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols and the standard Latin alphabet, it is sometimes difficult to predict what he meant by certain spellings on the original tags. An additional confounding factor was that Harrington’s handwriting was often difficult to read. His letters were often weirdly shaped, which led to some letters looking similar, or sometimes identical, to each other. For example, Harrington’s “v’s,” “r’s,” and “n’s” look very similar. This can prove to be a problem when a language he was documenting, like with the Karuk language, had all three phonemes. Sometimes a specific spelling would be put into the database, but then if the morpheme with that spelling couldn’t be parsed out, it would become clear that the spelling that was originally written was actually incorrect. This will be discussed further within the data and discussion sections.

Within FileMaker Pro, there were different steps that needed to be taken in order to complete each data entry, or each item in the collection. The necessary tabs within FileMaker Pro for each entry were the following: the “Narratives” tab, the “Linguistics” tab, and then inputting the information directly into the “Glosses” and “Words” areas.

To start a new parsing entry, it was important to first look at the “Narratives” tab first. Looking at this tab, I could read Harrington’s original tags and the information he transcribed from his interviews with Mrs. Maddux. Once I read the information in the “Narratives” tab completely, I could pick out the words that were written in Karuk by Harrington and uploaded into the database by Dr. Smith. After picking out the Karuk words, I would hand-write the words in a notebook. I would then use the online Karuk dictionary, the result of a UC Berkeley Linguistics Department collaboration project with the Tribe, to look for any potential morpheme matches. If the dictionary provided a morpheme match, I would write the definition provided by the dictionary in the notebook below the morpheme. I would also include the dictionary ID number, that way the morpheme could be traced back to the words it was found in.

If a particular morpheme was found in the dictionary but with a different spelling, then I would consider Harrington’s original tags from the NAA. Because Dr. Smith typed Harrington’s notes manually, there is the potential that she misread his spelling. It is possible that the dictionary’s spelling actually matches Harrington’s original spelling, but was actually input wrong into the database. Regardless, if there was a misspelling with one of the morphemes, I would make note of the corrected spelling in the “Narratives” tab with the date that correction was made. Of course, it depended on how close the spellings were. If it were a difference in vowel length or type of vowel, then I felt confident that it was still the same morpheme. If the

difference consisted of multiple letters or changes in consonant clusters, then I would consult Dr. Smith or Dr. Mikkelsen prior to making the correction in the database. Sometimes, however, a morpheme wasn't found in the dictionary at all. If this were the case, I would consult Bright's book called, *The Karok Language* (1957), which included an extensive lexicon and morpheme inventory of the Karuk language. If the morpheme couldn't be found in Bright's (1957) book, then it could be assumed that the morpheme couldn't be reasonably parsed at this time. I would then make a note in the data entry itself with the date and my initials.

A resource that was particularly helpful when determining if the database entry matched Harrington's original tag was an orthography conversion sheet created by Clare Sandy. The conversion sheet, called, "Karuk Orthography Key," compared Bright's notes, Harrington's typed notes, and Harrington's handwritten notes to the modern-day Karuk orthography (Sandy 2013). As mentioned briefly, if there was a morpheme that was spelled differently in the dictionary, or not found at all, I would look at Harrington's original tags. Sandy's (2013) conversion sheet allowed for me to be able to look at changes in vowel, consonant, and consonant cluster representations. It was sometimes possible that Harrington's handwritten notes were reflected a certain way in the database, so being able to look at the present-day orthography in comparison was extremely helpful.

Once I parsed all the morphemes within the Karuk words in that particular data entry, I would then navigate to the "Linguistics" tab of the database. Within the "Linguistics" tab, I could then navigate to the "New Glosses" and "New Words" areas to input the new data I acquired. The "New Words" section focused on the individual morphemes. It would ask for the dictionary ID number, the morpheme spelling, and the exact definition of the morpheme. The "New Glosses" section focused on the entirely parsed-out word, which often included several morphemes linked together. This section would ask for the entire word's spelling, the rough translation of the word's definition, and all the morphemes and their ID's joined together to create the word. In fact, without the information in the "words" area, the "glosses" area couldn't be completed. Once the new words and glosses were uploaded, I would go back to the "Linguistics" tab and search for the words newly input into the "Glosses" section. Once this step was completed, then I could move onto the next data entry.

Once I had completed my data collection in its entirety, I began to reflect on my findings. While I didn't come into the data collection process with any hypotheses about what I might find, I began finding patterns within the data after reflecting on it. As part of the reflection process, I looked back at each data entry and noted any similarities between entries. Based on these reflections, I found that there were some categories of morphemes that were more common than others, and there were some types of baskets that were more common than others. I also found that there were considerable connections with the environment. The language incorporates environmentally-driven words to describe basketweaving concepts. Finally, I found that there is this idea of animacy when talking about baskets. This will be discussed further in the discussion section.

## Data Collection/Findings

In all, I completed a total of 122 data entries in FileMaker Pro. Some data entries took less time than others, but according to my notes, each entry took 20 minutes to complete on average. When I first started the data collection process, each data entry took between 45 minutes to an hour. This is because I was less familiar with the parsing process, but also less familiar with the language. It is one thing to study the language and how it intersects with the cultural practices of basketweaving, but another entirely to actually look at each individual morpheme. As I became more familiar with the types of morphemes commonly used and what they meant, the process sped up exponentially.

There were some words (singular morpheme words) that were common in the data entries. They were often the names of the items in the data entries, like the name of the basket for that particular entry. At the top of the entry, often on its own line, there would be a Karuk word that was the name for the item Mrs. Maddux was talking about. It was common to see three names in particular: “átimnam,” “tínvaap,” and “múruk,” or *burden basket*, *flour-sifter*, and *mealing tray*, respectively.

| átimnam (or a variation of the spelling) | tínvaap (or variation of the spelling) | múruk (or a variation of the spelling) | Total (out of the baskets that were labeled in all of the data entries) |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 11 data entries                          | 17 data entries                        | 36 data entries                        | 77 data entries                                                         |
| 11/77=14.29%                             | 17/77=22.1%                            | 36/77=46.8%                            | 64/77= 83.19%                                                           |

Table 1. Distribution of the three most common basket types in the Johnson Collection compared to all labeled baskets in the parsed 122 entries.

As Table 1 shows, those are the three most common types of baskets in the Johnson Collection, which is why those names are commonly found in the top part of the data entries. If there was a data entry that didn't feature the name of the basket, then I would consult O'Neale (1932). In O'Neale's (1932) book, she often included thorough descriptions of baskets, including any defining features. Because of this, I often consulted her writings whenever there was an unlabeled basket.

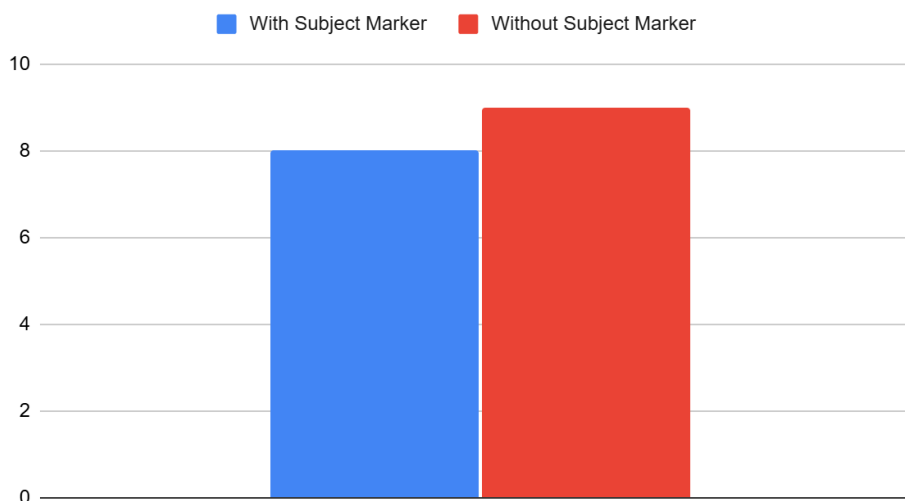
However, another common Karuk term was the word for *hazel sticks*, or “sárip.” While the online dictionary defines it as *hazel twigs*, the Karuk people call it *hazel sticks*, as that is the material they gather. There were around 10 data entries (out of the 122 completed) that featured information on hazel sticks. Hazel sticks are used in Karuk basketweaving, so being featured in the collection makes sense. Mrs. Maddux would often use these data entries to explain their importance and potential role in the weaving process.

There were also some morphemes that were particularly common, while some only appeared in the data entries once. I also found that certain types of morphemes were more likely to appear in multiple words within a singular data entry. Karuk is an agglutinative language, which means that within a single Karuk word, there are often multiple morphemes strung together. The categories of morphemes that I often found lumped in a singular word, and therefore more common in the data entries, are as follows: duratives, subject markers, verbs, and directionals. This doesn't mean that these were the only types of morphemes found in the data entries; rather, these were the most common given the nature of the words found throughout the database.

Duratives, specifically in Karuk, are often used to express a continuation of an action. This means that a durative was always paired with a verb in some capacity. The durative always followed the verb within the word structure of Karuk. "Tih" or "Ti" were the two spellings I came across, which both signified the marker. When I would input the fully-parsed word into the database, I would say "continuously" as the rough translation. There didn't appear to be a clear delineation between the two spellings, however.

Subject markers were often used in conjunction with a verb, but were sometimes seen with a noun. They always precede the actual verb or noun in the word structure, since they are categorically initial. Sometimes, there would be a glottal marker (') separating the subject from the rest of the morphemes. The most common subject marker that I came across was "u," which meant that *the third person singular subject (he, she, they, it) was acting upon him/her/it/them object* [transitive], or *the third person singular subject (he/she/it) acting without an object* [intransitive]. Other subject markers were used throughout the entries, such as "ku" or "nu." "Ku" means *you plural subject acting on he/she/it object* [transitive], or *you plural subject acting without an object* [intransitive]. "Nu" means *we subject are acting on he/she/it object* [transitive], or *we subject acting without an object* [intransitive]. It is important to note that it was highly irregular to use a subject marker that lacked the aspect of acting on an animate object within the context of the entries.

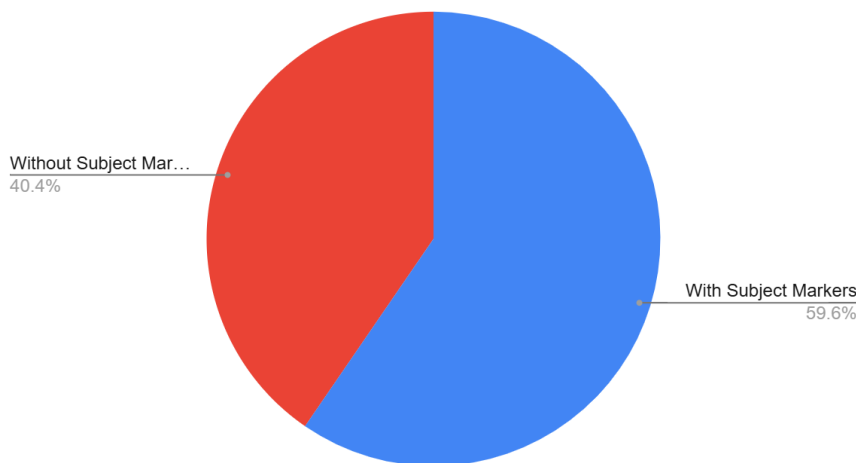
Distribution of Nouns



Graph 1: Shows the frequency in which certain nouns will sometimes appear with subject markers.

As seen with Graph 1, the nouns that sometimes used subject markers seemed to switch between using it regularly. There were only certain types of nouns that would have a subject marker attached at any given time, which means that I only accounted for those nouns in my distribution. Even if the noun sometimes included a subject marker, the noun often didn't include the marker. It appears that the inclusion of the subject marker with nouns is context dependent.

Distribution of All Verbs



Graph 2. Shows the percentage of all the verbs throughout the parsed data entries having a subject marker or not.

Graph 2, on the other hand, shows that it was much more common to include the subject marker on verbs. Verbs are discussed further below, but it appears that the nature of the verb itself, paired with its role in describing the baskets, allows for the subject marker to accompany the verb. Additionally, the role of subject markers will be discussed further in the discussion section.

Verbs were used often because of the nature of the data entries. Mrs. Maddux was often referencing the types of weaves used, materials incorporated, and any unusual or notable patterns. Because of this, verbs were often used to describe the basket itself. The verb could often be found embedded in the middle of the word, with the subject marker before it and any directionals or other discourse markers after. Sometimes, there would be slight variations in spelling among the same verbs. For example, a common verb was *to make a vertical stripe*, or “xuriph.” However, “xuriph” could also be spelled “xuripha” or “xuriphi” and mean the same thing. The spellings of the verbs are seemingly arbitrarily assigned.

Directionals are an important part of the words, and often used when considering the patterns of the weaves on a basket. While English doesn't employ directionals to describe patterns, the Karuk language often uses nature-driven directions to explain certain basketweaving patterns. For example, *upriverward from here*, or “roon, roona, roov, roovu,” all mean the same thing but with slight variations. “Roon” and “roona” are meant for plural versions, while “roov” and “roovu” are the singular versions. In other words, based on the verb, that particular action is meant to be going upriverward, either repeatedly or just once. If it were in the context of

“xuripha,” then the stripes would be going in an upward direction. The singular or plural version would determine if there were multiple stripes or just a singular stripe.

While the above is a comprehensive list of the most common morphemes, there were plenty of nouns throughout the data entries. However, the nouns varied widely, depending on what was being discussed within the entry. Mrs. Maddux often told stories surrounding the items within the collection, so nouns from her stories could be the Karuk words. Since the stories are highly unique to that particular item, it causes there to be a lack of repetitiveness. Verbs, on the other hand, are used in a different capacity, which means it’s more likely that verbs would reappear than nouns.

There was another aspect of the morpheme parsing that is worth mentioning—how a morpheme could be spelled the same way but have two different meanings based on the context it appeared in. One morpheme in particular, “aha” or “ahi,” could mean either a stative passive or a modal. A stative passive, as defined by Bright (1957), is *the denoting of a resulting state in the passive*. It is important to note, that as Bright (1957) defines it, it is meant to describe the result, not the actual event. Even though the stative passive appears in the online dictionary as an essive, Bright’s (1957) version is different from the essive grammatical case.

### Dictionary Entry

lexicon ID #168 | revised Oct 31 2014

**-aha / -ahi- • SUFF • Essive**

Derivatives (79; [show derivatives](#))

Image 8. William Bright and Susan Gehr, *Dictionary Entry*, October 31, 2014, screenshot, UC Berkeley, <https://linguistics.berkeley.edu>.

A modal, on the other hand, is a marker meant to express a concept’s relation to the truth, but in Bright (1957), he refers to a modal as *how something is done*.

### Dictionary Entry

lexicon ID #169 | revised Oct 31 2014

**-aha / -ahi- • SUFF • Modal**

Derivatives (2)

[kupavêenaha](#) "to do; to be up to something, to make mischief"

[kupaveenahiichva](#) "to make-believe"

Image 9. William Bright and Susan Gehr, *Dictionary Entry*, October 31, 2014, screenshot, UC Berkeley, <https://linguistics.berkeley.edu>.

The online dictionary makes the distinction that the modal is part of a circumfix “kupa-[verb]-ahi/a,” while the stative passive is a single morpheme. Unfortunately, either spelling of “ahi” or “aha” could appear in either instance, and always appeared in roughly the same position within the words provided. This means that it was context dependent and based on if there was a circumfix or not. These two factors determined if it were a stative passive or a modal.

With this in mind, it was sometimes difficult to determine which spelling of a word to choose, or what the rules were for changing some of the spellings. In the instance of the duratives, for example, either spelling was fine, but it was often difficult to understand when the final letter was dropped versus not dropped. This might be based on how quickly Harrington was writing, or if he felt Mrs. Maddux was only saying the final letter in certain circumstances. There is a distinctive phonetic feature of Karuk, however, where sometimes the final vowel devoices. These devoiced vowels become almost whisper-like, which might be reflected in Harrington's orthography.

### Dictionary Entry

lexicon ID #6930 | revised Feb 04 2016

**xúripha / xúriphi-** • v • to make a vertical stripe

Derivation: **xúrip-ha** (= xúrip-a-ha)  
vertical.stripe-DENOM (= xúrip-DEVERB-DENOM)

Image 10. William Bright and Susan Gehr, *Dictionary Entry*, February 4, 2016, screenshot, UC Berkeley, <https://linguistics.berkeley.edu>.

For the example of “xúriph” (mentioned above and seen in Image 10) it could lack the final vowel, end in an /a/, or end in a /i/. Because their sessions were never recorded, we will never know for certain why some letters are left out of his spellings. These slight modifications in spellings are found in each of the common groupings of morphemes. Unfortunately, Harrington never noted why he chose to spell certain morphemes differently in certain data entries, which leaves us with mere speculation. All we can do is interpret the information he provided us through his writings.

Additionally, it was difficult to parse some of the morphemes in a given word. Like I mentioned earlier, there were some morphemes that appeared rarely in the data entries (sometimes only once). If a morpheme only appeared once, it was often difficult to know if the morpheme was simply misspelled, or if there was a greater issue to consider. An example of an unparsed morpheme that remains a mystery could be found in data entry #54.

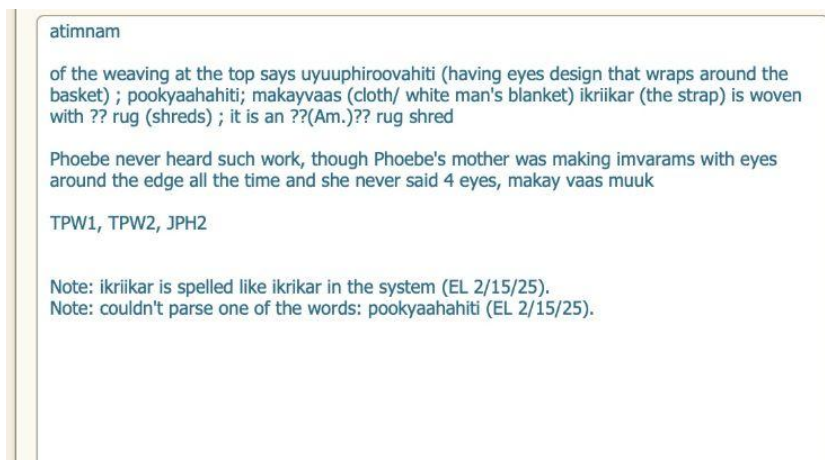


Image 11. Emily Lindsay, *Screen Grab of FileMaker Pro Entry #54*, May 3, 2025, screenshot.

This is an instance where a greater issue is preventing the morpheme from being parsed. The spelling of the morpheme is correct according to Harrington's notes, but the morpheme fails to appear in either the online dictionary or Bright's (1957) book. Since it doesn't appear in either of the resources available to me, it remains unparsed. There are a few instances in which this has occurred. While they have been noted properly in the database, there is no real record of these particular morphemes within the resources that are currently available to me. My hope is that with further research of other potential resources, I can finally parse the morpheme.

Furthermore, it is important to note that there was one instance where Harrington wrote a phoneme that was not only incorrect, but also doesn't exist within the Karuk language's phonemic inventory. This was a particularly interesting situation, given that it only happened once.

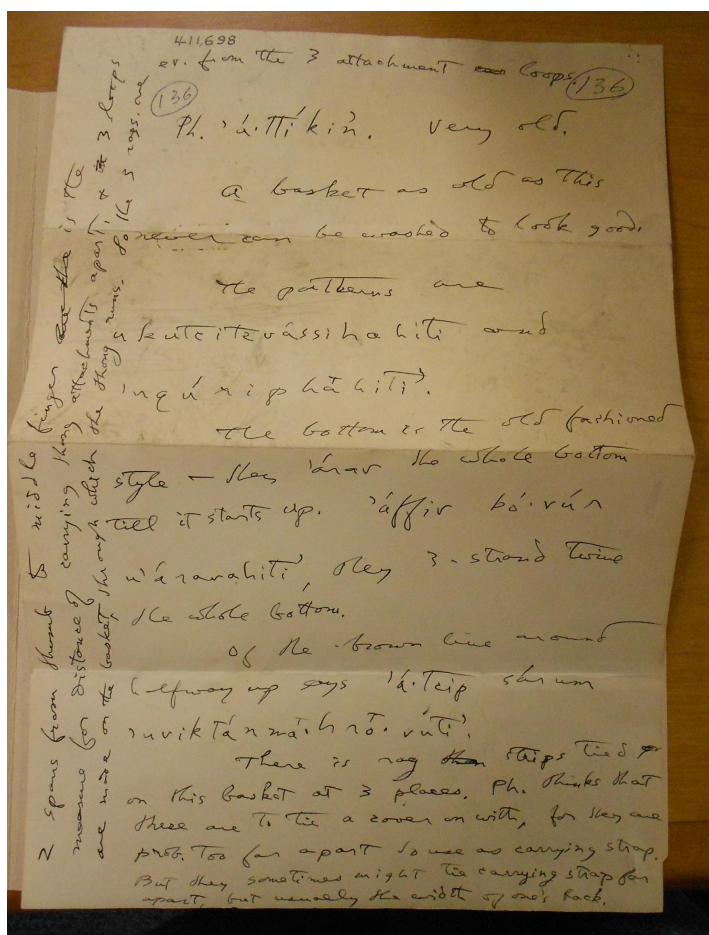


Image 12. National Anthropological Archive, *Papers of John Peabody Harrington, Karuk and Yurok*, Boxes 1279-1282, N.d., Suitland, MD.

In data entry #52, when Mrs. Maddux was talking to Harrington about the basket, Harrington noted a one-morpheme word "boovur," which can be seen above. The phoneme /b/ doesn't exist in the Karuk language, which meant that this spelling was automatically incorrect, or an instance of a loanword. After checking Harrington's handwriting, I decided to change the spelling to "poovur," since /b/ and /p/ are extremely similar in nature, and /p/ exists in the phonetic inventory. However, that morpheme doesn't exist in Karuk, either. Since loanwords can contain

phonemes that don't exist in the language that borrowed the morpheme or word, and the /b/ to /p/ change didn't yield any results, it is safe to assume that this morpheme is most likely a loanword. However, this is another example of a morpheme remaining unparsed, but this is a special instance because this is the only time Harrington recorded a morpheme having a phoneme that doesn't exist within the language. We might not be able to track down the source of this morpheme, but this is an interesting case to consider more thoroughly in the future.

## Discussion

The research findings are a direct reflection of tailoring the research to consider the perspectives of interlocutors originally left out of the narrative. The Johnson Collection has a convoluted history that fails to emphasize the rich cultural knowledge of Indigenous community members, which is why I made sure to include the community in my data collection and analysis. Without this perspective, I might not have noticed some of the commonalities throughout the data entries. In fact, I noticed that some one-morpheme words were more common, some categories of morphemes were more common, some types of baskets were more commonly labeled within the collection, and many of those baskets included the idea of animacy as part of the description process.

As mentioned in my findings section, there were certain singular morpheme words that were particularly common throughout the data entries. These terms were more specifically focused on labels of the items in the collection, like the names of the baskets or basketweaving materials. Names for these baskets are extremely important. Names like “átimnam,” “tínvaap,” and “múruk” all connect the Karuk language back to the culture of basketweaving. If the names for the baskets are included in the data entries, then it means that the names themselves are part of the culture. The data entries are meant to highlight the cultural aspects of basketweaving, which means that everything included in the entries are highlighting cultural practices that are deeply important to the Karuk people. My goal was to help reunite the rich cultural practices with the Karuk language. It is parsing and highlighting the names of specific baskets that help connect the culture with the language, which could also be said for the naming of basketweaving materials. Having a name for *hazel sticks*, an important material used in basketweaving, allows for Karuk basketweavers to connect with their language through the use of cultural practices. Using Karuk language to describe basket materials, types of baskets, and basket designs helps weavers keep the language alive. It also shows how often this material is used in baskets, which reveals the cultural importance of the term. Based on the location of where the names are in the data entries, it is clear that Harrington asked for the names of the baskets first. Because he asked for the names of the baskets, basketweavers will know what to call their baskets in their ancestral language. Now, by parsing the Karuk words in the entries, the ancestral language is being reunited with the cultural aspects it describes.

Additionally, the common morpheme categories found within the data entry descriptions are extremely important. It is important to note that while the duratives, subject markers, verbs, and directionals were the most common, there were other morpheme categories that appeared throughout the data entries. These are equally important. However, these common categories yield some interesting results.

The first category that I am examining is the durative category. This category is interesting because, as mentioned before, it considers the continuation of an action. This is the case regardless of the spelling. As mentioned before, Harrington spelled the durative both with and without the /h/ phoneme. I speculate that this change in spelling is completely arbitrary,

rather than intentional. Because /h/ is close to no sound at all, Harrington could have left it off whenever he was taking notes quickly.

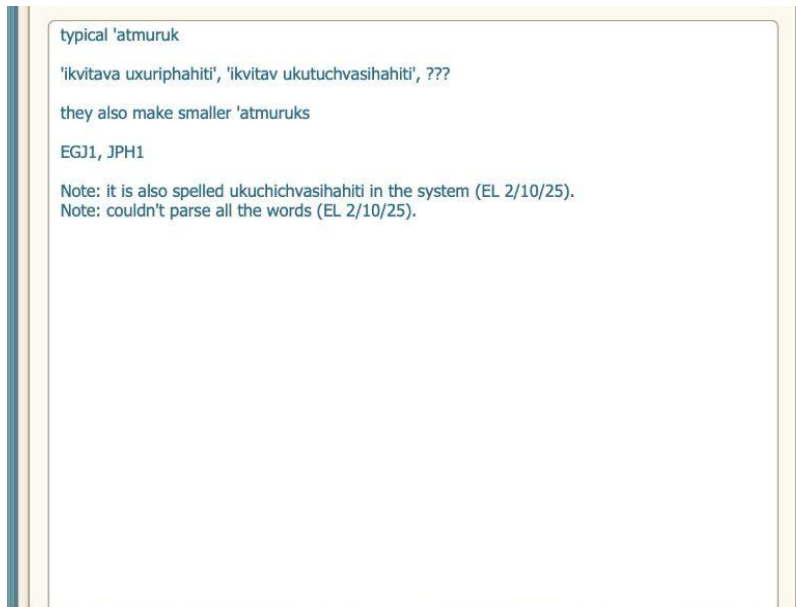


Image 13. Emily Lindsay, *Screen Grab of FileMaker Pro Entry #42*, May 3, 2025, screenshot.

Of course, we will never know for certain, since he never reflected on his note-taking decisions in his journals. Regardless, because of the nature of Harrington's tags, the discussion of actions makes sense. I found that when Mrs. Maddux chose to talk about the type of pattern involved, for example, she often chose to include a durative if that pattern happened multiple times.

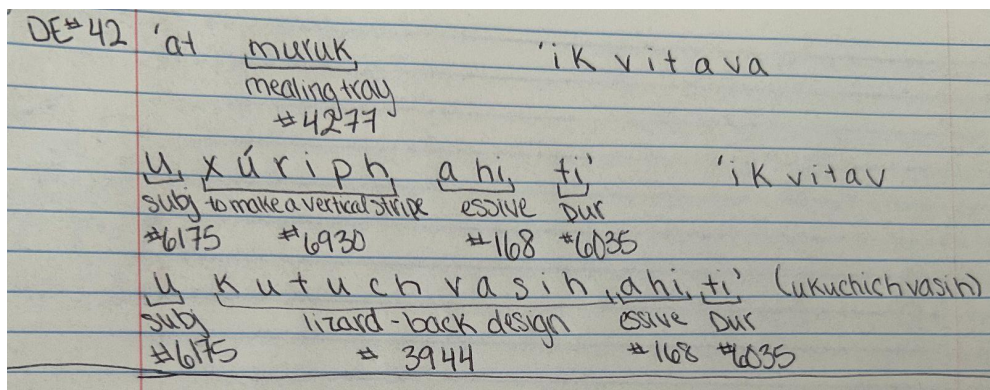


Image 14. Emily Lindsay, *Screen Grab of Notebook Data Entry #42*, May 3, 2025, screenshot.

As seen with data entry #42, Mrs. Maddux included the durative to elaborate on the fact that the pattern she is describing happens multiple times. In fact, this data entry has two instances of this happening. “Uxúriphahiti” and “ukuchichvasihahiti” both include the “ti” durative in the word. For “uxúriphahiti,” this roughly means *the subject makes a vertical stripe continuously*. For “ukuchichvasihahiti,” this roughly means *the subject makes a lizard-back design continuously*. Because of the durative, we understand that these design features associated with this particular basket happen continuously. The “action,” that is, the type of weave or pattern involved, happens

continuously on this particular basket. This is an important distinction to make. While Karuk basketweavers are familiar with the different types of baskets, their purposes, and how they are made, having the language to describe them is equally important, but there is a dearth of basketry design terms. Currently, there are 122 “basket” related terms in the online dictionary. This is a start, but the dictionary is definitely incomplete. Parsing the words in the Johnson Collection adds to the way we understand basket patterns, and helps add more richness to the way we can understand baskets in Karuk language. By parsing the words on the original tags, we are describing these rich cultural practices and reuniting them with the people.

The subject markers are particularly interesting to consider. I mentioned within my findings that “u,” “ku,” and “nu” were the most common subject markers, each surrounding the idea of a *subject acting on an animate object*. The *subject* aspect isn’t quite as interesting, but the *acting on an animated object* is incredibly fascinating. As seen within the examples from the other common morpheme categories, subject markers are fairly common throughout the data entries. Another example can be seen in data entry #28.

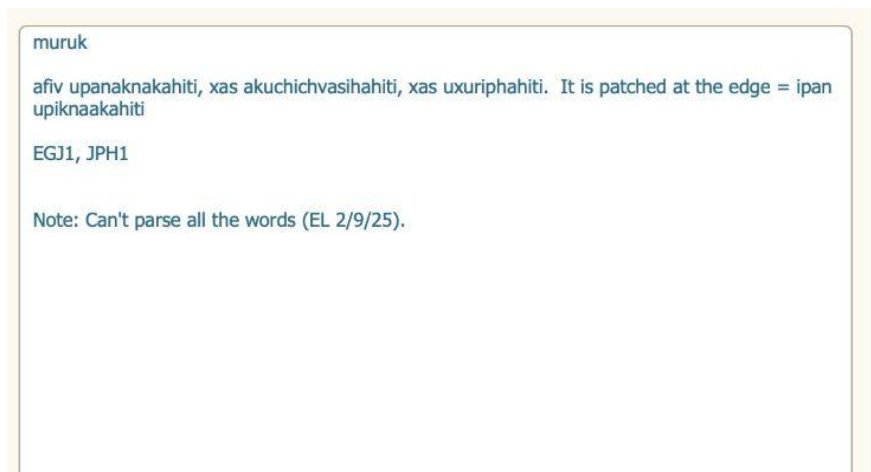


Image 15. Emily Lindsay, Screen Grab of FileMaker Pro Entry #28, May 3, 2025, screenshot.

This data entry features the word “uxúriphahiti,” like in the data entry above. The rough translation is that *the subject (third person singular) makes a vertical stripe continuously (acting on the object)*, with the “object” being in relation to the basket itself having vertical stripes, which can be seen below.

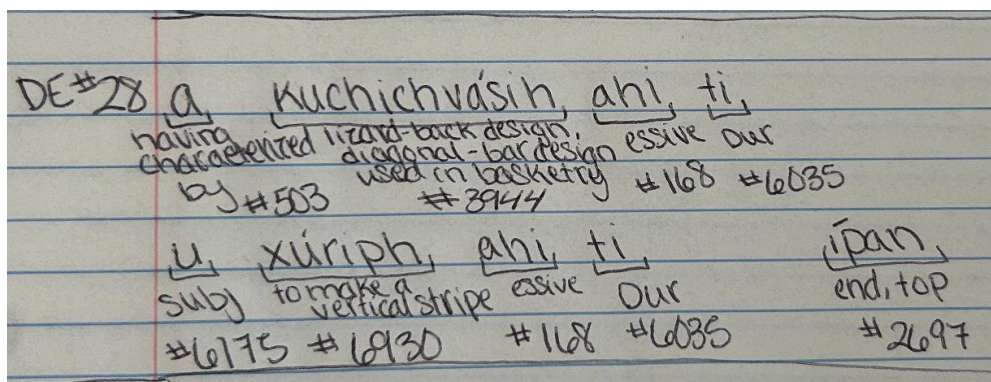


Image 16. Emily Lindsay, Screen Grab of Data Entry #28, May 3, 2025, screenshot.

It is important to note that Mrs. Maddux wasn't instructing anyone on how to make the design; rather, she was pointing out the design of the basket. This reveals how Karuk basketweavers describe the baskets they weave, and how the community views the baskets themselves. To include the aspect of animacy for baskets, it is clear the Karuk people mold their language to fit the cultural needs of the community. The community values the role of the baskets in supporting their lifeways, which is why their language allows for this association of animacy with baskets. Baskets are life. In American culture, we view baskets as objects that serve very specific purposes. In Karuk culture, baskets are part of the people in a way that is interconnected with the weaver and the weaver's purpose. The basket is a living thing that deserves the respect of the living (Smith 2016). Unfortunately, Harrington never asked Mrs. Maddux questions regarding the idea of animacy associated with the baskets in the collection. However, I hope to continue looking at how the Karuk people view their baskets. This categorization of animacy could help describe how to better reunite the baskets with the community. The baskets aren't just the product of the community's hard work, but actually a continuation of the community itself. It must be treated as such, with the respect it deserves.

Much like the duratives, the verbs also exhibited some variation in their spellings that Harrington never explained in his notes. However, the commonness associated with the presence of verbs is worth noting. Verbs, at least in how they appear in this context, are associated with actions pertaining to the baskets within the collection. This can be seen directly below.



Image 17. Emily Lindsay, *Screen Grab of FileMaker Pro Entry #72*, May 3, 2025, screenshot.

They are meant to describe the patterns and designs created, the technique of weaving, the style of basket, and other important details that make the baskets unique. This, mixed with the role of the subject markers, highlights the role of animacy within the baskets. The community emphasizes, in multiple ways, the role of baskets and basketweaving within the community. For example, in data entry #72, the word "ixaxroon," meaning *to make stripes upriverward from here*, shows the role of verbs in describing the baskets.

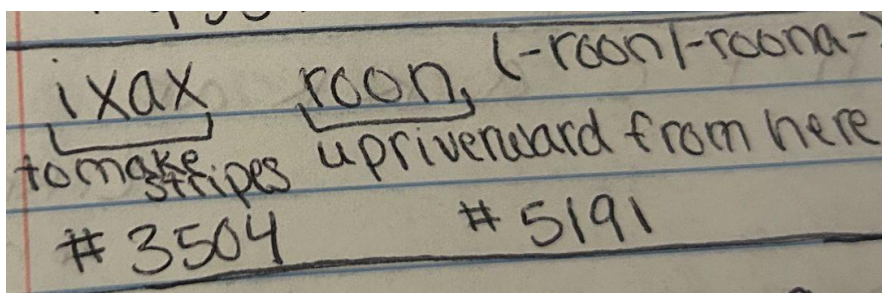


Image 18. Emily Lindsay, *Screen Grab of Data Entry #72*, May 3, 2025, screenshot.

“Ixax” is the verb for *to make stripes*, which is important in describing the basket itself. This particular basket features stripes that are heading towards the top of the basket, which is why that particular directional is featured as well. There is a certain extent of animacy when a verb, specifically an action verb, is used to describe a basket. Only things that are classified as alive can have an action associated with them. This is why the role of verbs is so interesting and deserves to be studied more. Based on the role of verbs here, it is fitting to say that the Karuk people firmly believe that the baskets are alive, and they deserve to be treated as such. While Harrington never makes note of this, it is an interesting concept to consider for future directions.

Directionals, like the subject markers, yielded results that are worth examining further. As mentioned before, the Karuk language features directionals that center around nature terms, like the idea of a pattern associated with the river. This can be seen in data entry #35, where the term “ukuchichvásihroon” is used to describe a basket.



Image 19. Emily Lindsay, *Screen Grab of FileMaker Pro Entry #35*, May 3, 2025, screenshot.

It roughly translates to *the subject weaves a lizard-back design upriver*, which can be seen below.

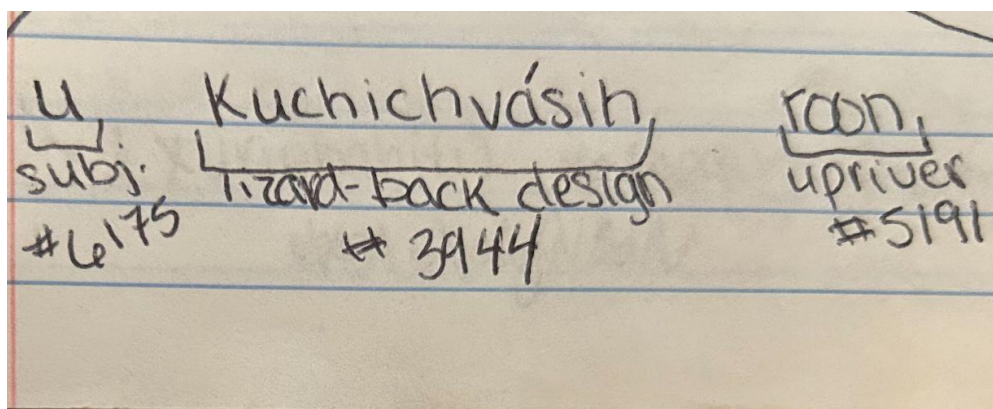


Image 20. Emily Lindsay, *Screen Grab of FileMaker Pro Entry #35*, May 3, 2025, screenshot.

The Karuk people rely heavily on the Klamath River for their food, directions, and basketweaving materials. To include the Klamath River in the word used to describe the pattern on the basket itself is very important. The Klamath River is interwoven in the fabric of the

culture, and for the Karuk people it is a way of life; therefore, the river will also be interwoven throughout the language itself. We see that the use of “roon” implies that this *lizard-back design* happens plurally rather than singularly, but it is the inclusion of the *upriver* part that reveals how the Karuk view their natural environment. While Harrington never noted this aspect of the language, it is important to consider nature’s role further. In order to properly reunite the language with the culture, it is important to understand and question the importance of the natural environment on the Karuk’s culture. We know that the Karuk people gather their basketweaving materials from around the Klamath; we also know that they rely heavily on salmon for food. These are important details of the culture that can help advise us on how the environment directly impacts not only the language, but other aspects of the culture. It is a feedback loop, and one that must be explored further, even if there is little prior documentation.

As seen through the different morpheme categories, the most common categories show the connection between where language and culture intersect. With duratives and verbs, both are interesting because of their spelling variations by Harrington, as well as how they relate to the idea of action and animacy. Both subject markers and directionals connect to the idea of animacy as well, and also connect back to this idea of nature and how the Karuk people connect with their environment. The Karuk people have a culture deeply rooted in their environment and immediate surroundings. Because their culture is so environment-driven, it makes sense that their language reflects their cultural and environmental priorities, which is seen in the types of morphemes used to describe the baskets in the collection.

Throughout the data entries, we see instances of lizards being referenced as a design, or the river being referenced as a direction. These are concrete examples of the surrounding environment being directly connected to the language itself, which is a direct reflection of the Karuk culture. This is an important observation because it shows that previous studies on Karuk basket designs did not really recognize this. Alfred Kroeber once noted in *Basket Designs of the Indians of Northwestern California* (1905), that he never observed the names of designs resembling animals or objects; instead, he only noticed geometric or descriptive terms (Kroeber 1905, 106). He made this declaration regarding Yurok, Karuk, and Hupa baskets, which means that his observations could be incorrect. I am working with a smaller part of the Johnson Collection right now, but the data entries do illustrate that the language features terms that aren’t merely descriptive of their shapes, but are directly tied to the environment, which highlights the interconnectedness between language, culture, and the environment.

As mentioned in my findings, there were instances where two different meanings could be associated with the same morpheme spelled the same way. This shows the complexities of the Karuk language’s grammar and the nature of parsing languages. In fact, there are multiple layers of complexity to consider. It is important to consider that despite Bright (1957) coining it as a stative passive, it is labeled as an essive in the online dictionary. This can be confusing, since an essive is a grammatical case describing *a definite period of time where something happens, or during which a continuous action was completed*. Bright’s (1957) description of the stative passive is slightly different. Even though the dictionary labels it as an essive, the grammatical

case is never assigned to this morpheme. The modal also added complexity to this situation, since the modal only appeared in the circumfix. This relied on knowing what the circumfix actually was. With the help of Dr. Mikkelsen, I was able to better understand the complexities of this particular morpheme and when to assign each category.

Based on the observations I made, however, I believe my next steps will be to look further into two areas. First, I would like to look into the types of weaves used in Karuk basketry. I will need to look further into O'Neale (1932) and Kroeber's (1905) works. This will help me better understand the nuances associated with Mrs. Maddux's words, and the choices she made in describing the baskets. Second, I would like to examine the role of animacy concerning basketweaving terminology further. This is something that has little previous research, but directly connects back to the collection. Since my project is concerned with the intersection of culture and language, looking at how animacy is represented in basketweaving terminology is a perfect next step. This is a small sample size, but it is important to note that some words lack the animacy marker, like in data entry #72 (see Images 17 and 18), when the next morpheme starts with a vowel. By parsing further terms from this collection, I can explore this avenue further.

Right now, I only have Harrington's notes to go off of, and what he wrote down from his conversations with Mrs. Maddux. There is a certain level of uncertainty regarding the animacy of the baskets because of the nature of my current data. Because of this, my hope is to reach out to current community members who work with baskets today. I suspect that the idea of animacy in baskets goes beyond language and is actually rooted in the cosmology and epistemology of baskets, which means I need to speak with community members who could advise me on this. Furthermore, Mrs. Maddux was a fluent speaker of Karuk. It is entirely possible that her fluency allowed for her to employ animacy in relation to the baskets at certain times. This is also an aspect I would like to consider. Therefore, I would like to conduct more ethnographic research in my next steps.

## Conclusion

As seen throughout this thesis, I have looked closely at the intersection between the Karuk language and culture. I have placed an emphasis on the knowledge of community members of past and present generations, and helped to decolonize the Johnson Collection from the Eurocentric perspectives that were forced upon it. The purpose of this project was to return the language to the community through material culture, which meant that I relied on those who deeply cared to share their language with researchers for over 100 years. I understood the motivations and information collected by past researchers, but also remembered the people who had a vested interest in the survival of their language. I have considered the background of the Tribe, the Johnson Collection, and the interlocutors who have made this work possible. Most importantly, through this research, I have observed the use of animal and environment-based morphemes to describe baskets, and observed a pattern of animacy when describing those baskets. In the end, my work not only concerns the parsing of morphemes, but also ensuring that future generations of Karuk people have the opportunity to use their beautiful language to describe their unique cultural practices, while actively engaging with their environment.

With this in mind, it is important to remember why this work is so important. Parsing basketweaving terms that have been previously unparsed enriches the Karuk language. In the English language, we have these words, or at least have the ability to create them at a moment's notice. As of right now, the Karuk lack that privilege. The Karuk people lack the privilege of being fluent in their language, with the ability to use and implement basketweaving terms at a moment's notice. While there are individuals dedicated to revitalizing the language, it is important to remember that there are privileges of fluency that the Karuk people lack. This is why this work is so important. Not only does this work aid in the overall work towards language revitalization, but it aids in giving the Karuk basketweavers the power to communicate about their culture, in their language.

Mrs. Maddux, when she worked with Harrington, spoke in both English and Karuk. It is possible that some words that Mrs. Maddux chose to say in English are now lost in Karuk. Mr. Davis chose to speak predominantly in Karuk in the audio recordings. Similarly, it is possible that some of Mr. Davis's words might be lost. But, imagine what it could be like to preserve, at least to some extent, their words. It isn't just their words that might be lost, but also the important ideas and concepts that are expressed by those words. In the data entries, we see countless basketweaving terms being reunited with the culture through this parsing process. While those terms have remained unspoken for decades, they are being awoken and reunited with the objects these terms are meant to describe. We might not be able to recover everything, but we can recover some words, some previously unknown morphemes, some basketweaving terminologies. We can breathe life into the terms that have been sleeping all this time.

By using her basket-weaving terminology, Mrs. Maddux's memory lives on. By using Karuk generally, Mr. Davis's memory lives on. While it is important to remember them as Karuk community members, it is also important to remember their own forms of community work.

Both actively chose to share their language with outsiders in order to help keep the language alive. This, in addition to who they were as individuals, is important to remember. It was Mr. Davis who decided to work with UC Berkeley on the online dictionary. He decided to work with the UC Berkeley linguists, which meant that he decided to speak in the audio recordings in Karuk. It was his courage to share his language that we must remember. It was Mrs. Maddux who told Harrington she knew that even after she would pass away, her words would live in this archive. Both Mr. Davis and Mrs. Maddux made conscious decisions to share their language with the world. That is why it is important to do this community work, because their language deserves to be returned to the people.

Because this community work is important and because the language and culture deserve to be reunited, I will continue this community work for my Master's Thesis at the University of Chicago. My next steps are to consider the ideas surrounding animacy in terms of basketweaving terminology more specifically. I would like to conduct ethnographic interviews with present-day basketweavers and speakers who work with the materials and might shed some light on when animacy might be employed. This will help answer my questions regarding ideas of fluency and if it is deeper than the language, but part of their belief system. My goal is to continue helping reunite the language with the cultural practices, as well as reunite these basketry terms with the people. That means I will continue parsing the remaining data entries as well. Additionally, I will revisit Kroeber (1905), O'Neale (1932), and Bright's (1957) works to verify findings further. There is also the future goal of uploading the parsed morphemes into the dictionary. By uploading my parsed morphemes into the dictionary database, I would be helping to repatriate the knowledge that could be gained through the original tags. Before this point, there has been little knowledge from the Johnson Collection shared with the community. Now, I hope to give this knowledge to the community, so they can use the basketweaving terminology however they see fit. Finally, with Dr. Smith's blessing, I will continue to give back to the Karuk community by providing them with the knowledge I have gained. This work is for the community, so I will only help with the community's blessing.

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