

Interrogative Verbs in Takic

A Google Scholar search for "interrogative verbs" brings up mostly references to verbs of asking, verbs with interrogative affixes, or verbs used in questions. In this paper I will examine three Uto-Aztecan languages that, in contrast, have special verbs that include a semantic *wh* or indefinite element (in addition to their other more typical question words). Such verbs have not been extensively described (despite discussion (c. 2001) on the Association for Linguistic Typology list), although Hagège (2003) suggests they are more common than most linguists realize.

In Uto-Aztecan, at least the Cupan (Takic) languages Cahuilla and Cupeño and the related Takic language Gabrielino/Tongva/Fernandeño have interrogative verbs. Jacobs (1975: 121f) presents a brief description of the Cupan verbs (meaning variously 'be how'/'have what happen'/'(what) happen'/'do what'), as illustrated by Cupeño (1):

- (1) nə'ə=n m-iyā-qa
 1s.pron=1s indef-cop-act
 'What happened to me?' (Jacobs 121: 2 and 160:40, slightly adapted)

As Jacobs notes, however, such verbs also have non-interrogative (122) and indefinite (161) uses.

Available documentation of Gabrielino/Tongva/Fernandeño (primarily by J. P. Harrington) reveals a possibly cognate question verb *miyii* 'say what' (unrelated to the usual verb for 'say', *chwee'*) that can be used with or without a complement 'what'. The status of this word is shown by its use in (4) with the future suffix *-ro*, which occurs only on verbs:

- (2) Miyii=ha?
 say.what=Q
 'What does he say?'

(3) Hitaa='a miyii 'ooma'
 what=2s say.what you
 'What do you say?'

(4) Miyii-ro='a maay-ro?
 say.what-fut=2s do-fut
 'What are you going to do? ('What will you say you are going to do?')

Tongva *miyii* also has derived uses as a non-verb interrogative 'how' and as a greeting, but aside from this last use never appears as a non-interrogative.

I've only just started to look, but I have not found any other interrogative verbs in UA, although the neighboring Yuman languages (which have influenced Takic in other ways) have a much richer system of interrogative verbs.