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INTRODUCTION TO THE SOUNDS OF SOUTHERN POMO

SOUTHERN POMO SPEECH SOUNDS

Southern Pomo, like all languages in the world, forms words through combinations of sounds. These sounds can be easily divided into vowels and consonants. All languages that have ever been spoken use a finite number of sounds with which to make words, but not all languages use the same sounds. Think of the differences between English and other languages. Many people are familiar with Spanish, even if they do not speak it. English has many sounds that Spanish lacks. For example, the English 'sh' in words like 'fish' is a single sound that does not exist in modern Spanish. Similarly, Southern Pomo lacks many sounds that English has and it uses many sounds that English lacks.

All speech sounds can be conveniently divided into vowels and consonants. Vowels are speech sounds that do not involve blocking the air leaving the mouth. In other words, vowels are the sounds that can be held the longest while singing. For example, try to sing the English word 'tap' for as long as possible without taking a breath. Notice that the 'a' is the only part that can be held for any length of time, i.e. 'taaaaaaaap'. English has many vowel sounds (some dialects have more than fourteen). Southern Pomo, on the other hand, has relatively few vowels sounds.

It is important to note that there is a difference, in English, between actual vowel sounds and vowel letters. English has many more vowel sounds than it has letters. The sound 'ee' is spelled in different ways in the words 'leaf', 'be', 'Keith', 'feet', 'key', 'leave', and 'thief'; however, all the spellings (ea, e, ei, ee, ey, ea-e, ie) represent only one vowel sound. Thankfully, this confusing situation is not true of the Southern Pomo alphabet. In Southern Pomo, unlike English, each vowel sound is represented by only one vowel letter and vice versa.

SOUTHERN POMO VOWEL SOUNDS

Southern Pomo has only five vowel sounds. Each of these vowels can be either long or short (of which more will be said later). Though the vowel letters used for Southern Pomo are the same as those of English spelling, they do not always stand for the same sound. Pay careful attention to the descriptions that accompany each Southern Pomo vowel letter.

SHORT VOWELS

The short vowels generally correspond quite closely to the sounds of Spanish vowels. For those who remember a little high school Spanish, the differences should not be too drastic.

- a** This vowel is pronounced as ‘ah’ and never as ‘ay’.
- e** This vowel is pronounced much like the ‘eh’ sound in ‘fed’ and never as ‘ee’.
- i** This vowel is pronounced as the ‘ee’ sound in ‘feet’ and never as ‘eye’.
- o** This vowel is pronounced like the ‘o’ in ‘or’. It is actually somewhere between the sound of ‘o’ in ‘old’ and the British pronunciation of ‘o’ in ‘not’.
- u** This sound is pronounced like the ‘oo’ in ‘boot’.

LONG VOWELS

The long vowels are really just longer versions of the short vowels. To show this, the Southern Pomo alphabet uses a special character, the doubling sign : (which is identical to a colon). The letter : is the last letter of the Southern Pomo alphabet. This letter is very important, so get used to it as a letter and not as punctuation. Think of its two dots as an iconic reminder to double the preceding letter.

- a:** A long ‘ah’ sound as in ‘father’.
- e:** This vowel sound is not found in American English. It is like the sound of ‘ay’ in ‘hay’, but without the ‘y’. Say ‘hay’ aloud. Pay careful attention. Notice that it is pronounced ‘heh-ee’. That final ‘-ee’ on the vowel is characteristic of English. The Southern Pomo vowel **e:** is pronounced like ‘ay’ without the final ‘ee’ sound. It is virtually the same as Spanish ‘e’ in ‘mesa’.
- i:** A long ‘ee’ sound as in ‘feed’.
- o:** A long, pure ‘oh’ sound as in ‘foal’. Some American English speakers do not make a pure ‘oh’ sound. They pronounce ‘oh’ as ‘oh-oo’. The Southern Pomo **o:** has no ‘-oo’ ending. It is identical to the ‘o’ in Spanish ‘solo’.
- u:** A long, pure ‘oo’ sound as in ‘food’. Some American English speakers do not make a pure ‘oo’ sound. They pronounce ‘oo’ as ‘uh-oo’. The Southern Pomo **u:** is a pure vowel sound. It is identical to the ‘u’ in Spanish ‘tu’.

All Southern Pomo vowels can be combined with either **y** or **w**. In these cases, the letters **y** and **w** are pronounced separately.

ay Pronounced as ‘ah-ee’ (rhymes with ‘eye’).

aw Pronounced as ‘ah-oo’ (rhymes with ‘cow’).

ey Pronounced as ‘eh-ee’ (rhymes with ‘hay’, compare with **e:**).

ew Pronounced as ‘eh-oo’ (no English equivalent).

iy Pronounced like **i:** (rhymes with ‘me’).

iw Pronounced as ‘ee-oo’ (not unlike ‘ewe’).

oy Pronounced as ‘oh-ee’ (Rhymes with ‘toy’).

ow Pronounced as ‘oh-oo’ (Rhymes with ‘slow’, compare with **o:**).

uy Pronounced as ‘oo-ee’ (Rhymes with ‘buoy’)

SOUTHERN POMO CONSONANTS

Consonants are speech sounds that involve a partial or complete blockage of the air leaving the mouth. Southern Pomo consonants, unlike its vowels, are quite diverse. It has many consonants that English lacks. However, there is good news. Each consonant in the Southern Pomo alphabet has only one letter representing it. Compare this to the situation in English where one sound can be spelled many different ways. For example, the ‘f’ sound is spelled differently in *if*, *off*, *cough*, and *cipher*.

Southern Pomo consonants can be divided into four classes. This chapter introduces only Class I and Class II consonants. Pay careful attention to each chapter’s description of Southern Pomo consonants! Remember, some of these sounds do not occur in English. Also, many of the Southern Pomo letters have a different pronunciation than they do in English.

CLASS I CONSONANTS

All of the consonants in Class I have English equivalents. These consonants are all quite common.

b Pronounced like the ‘b’ in ‘abound’.

- d** Pronounced like the ‘d’ in ‘adopt’.
- l** Pronounced like the ‘l’ in ‘lead’.
- m** Pronounced like the ‘m’ in ‘men’.
- n** Pronounced like the ‘n’ in ‘need’.
- w** Pronounced like the ‘w’ in ‘want’.
- y** Pronounced like the ‘y’ in ‘young’.

READING EXERCISE

Let’s practice sounding out some words using the vowels and Class I consonants. All of the words are real Southern Pomo words. Their meanings are provided in a list following the exercise. The vocabulary in these lists is divided into two groups: those that must be learned (WORDS TO KNOW) and those that should be committed to memory so that they are passively recognizable (WORDS TO REMEMBER).

EXERCISE (1): VOWELS AND CLASS I CONSONANTS

do:no	le:le	bi:la	na:na
bayawya	wi:yi	do:wi	ba:lay
ma:yu	no:mi	baw:ol	do:lon
la:la	bu:du	duw:e	bim:u

WORDS TO KNOW

bayawya	‘young boy’
ba:lay	‘blood’
do:lon	‘bobcat’
do:no	‘hill, mountain’
do:wi	‘Coyote’ (mythic name)
duw:e	‘night’
le:le	‘forehead’
ma:yu	‘mourning dove’
na:na	‘baby, infant’
wi:yi	‘acorn of the Oregon Oak’ (see inset about acorns)

WORDS TO REMEMBER

baw:ol	'lamprey'
bi:la	'earthworm'
bu:du	'berry of the Toyon'
bim:u	'bulb with purple flowers'
la:la	'wild goose'
no:mi	'rabbit' (not jackrabbit)

THE IMPORTANCE OF ACORNS

The Pomo peoples were not farmers. They raised no crops and had no domestic animals other than dogs. Despite their lack of agricultural technology or animal husbandry skills, the Pomo peoples were able to maintain themselves without resorting to a nomadic lifestyle. They thrived within relatively small tribal areas because their most important food source, the acorns of oak trees, grew all around naturally.

California is blessed with many species of oak tree. In exercise (1) we learned the word **wi:yi** 'acorn of Oregon oak'. The Oregon oak (*Quercus garryana*) is just one of many oak tree species native to the Pomo homeland. Because the various oak species and their acorns were the staff of life for the Pomo peoples, Southern Pomo has many different words for 'oak' and 'acorn'. Each species of tree has its own name along with a completely different word for its acorn. Compare this to the situation in English where the word 'automobile' exists alongside 'car', 'sedan', 'truck', 'van', and 'coupe', among others. Additional words for oak trees and acorns will be introduced in subsequent chapters.

The Pomo knew which species of oak produced the tastiest acorns. The most prized belonged to the tan oak (*Lithocarpus densiflora*), which is not a true oak. The acorns of the coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) were also favored for food. Acorns could be used in several ways. Some acorn species were collected, shelled, dried, ground into flour with a pestle (**dok:o**), leached of tannic acid in water, and, finally, cooked into a mush. The same flour could also be used to make bread (**si:lun**). The acorns of the valley oak (*Quercus lobata*) were not considered suitable for flour, however, the acorns of this tree could be soaked for a period of time and then boiled before being enjoyed as a tasty snack.

The tradition of harvesting acorns continues among the surviving Southern Pomo communities. However, today's acorn lover can forgo pounding her own flour and use an Osterizer instead.

For more information on California's oaks, please consult *Oaks of California* by Bruce M. Pavlik and others (ISBN 0-9628505-1-9)

CLASS II CONSONANTS

The Class II consonants are critical. They are the base forms, letter-wise, for the remaining classes. All of the Class II consonants have some similarity to English sounds; however, they are not spelled with letters that match up exactly with the English sounds. Pay special attention!

- c** This sound is pronounced like the 'ts' in 'pints'. Note that this letter is always pronounced as 'ts'. This is a single sound in Southern Pomo and it therefore has a single letter. It can come at the beginning of a word. Though English does sometimes allow 'ts' to begin in spelling (like 'tsunami'), most English speakers do not pronounce the 'ts'. This sound is not common in Southern Pomo, but it does occur in some very important words.
- č** This sound is a soft 'ch' sound that is somewhere between the 'j' in 'misjudge' and the 'ch' in 'mischief'. Do not pronounce it as a normal English 'ch' sound! It is most similar to the 'ch' of Spanish 'muchacho'.
- k** This sound is pronounced like the 'k' in 'skin' and not the 'k' in 'kin'. It is very close to English 'g' in 'give'. Say 'skin' aloud. Now say 'kin' aloud. Notice how the 'k' in 'skin' sounds almost like a 'g'. Try saying 'sgin'. That soft 'k/g' sound is the same as the **k** of Southern Pomo.
- p** This sound is pronounced like the 'p' in 'spin' and not the 'p' in 'pin'. This sound is identical to Spanish 'p' in 'papel'. This is not a common sound.
- s** This sound is pronounced exactly like English 's'.
- š** This sound is pronounced exactly like English 'sh' in 'ship'. Notice that this is a single sound and therefore has a single letter.
- ṭ** This sound is found in English, however, it has a very restricted distribution. Say the English word 'stop' aloud. Now say 'top'. Notice that the 't' in 'stop' is softer than the 't' in 'top'. The 't' in 'top' has a puff of breath, whereas the 't' in 'stop' does not have a puff of breath. Southern Pomo **ṭ** is pronounced like the 't' in English 'stop' and not like the 't' in 'top'.
- ṭ̃** This sound is not found in all dialects of English; however, it is easily pronounced. Say the word 'eighth' aloud. Notice that it is pronounced as 'ait-th' and not 'aith'. The 't-' part of the 'ait-th' pronunciation is made with the tongue pressed flat against the upper front teeth. Those familiar with Spanish will recognize this sound is like the 't' in 'tengo'. Some speakers pronounce the 'th' in English 'thing' like this, too. Again, do not worry about this sound. It is easily produced by any English speaker.

THE DOUBLING SIGN : AND CONSONANTS

We have already seen that the letter : can make a vowel long (doubling it). The doubling sign can also be placed after consonants. Consonants with the letter : following are long. In English spelling, double consonants rarely mean that the consonant is long. For example, 'manner' is not actually pronounced 'MAN-ner', rather, it is pronounced 'MA-ner'. There are, however, some special cases in English where two identical consonants are long. Say 'thinness' aloud. Notice how it is pronounced 'THIN-ness'. The '-nn-' in 'thinness' is actually long. For those familiar with Italian, the doubled consonants in words like 'bella' and 'notte' are truly long, i.e., 'bel-la' and 'not-te'.

READING EXERCISE

Let's practice reading more Southern Pomo words. Remember, some letters look like English letters but have very specific, even different, pronunciations.

EXERCISE (2): VOWELS, CLASS I, AND CLASS II CONSONANTS

mis:i:bo	tu:šo	ce:me:wa	bu:ṭaka
colo:pa	kac:i	ma:či	ko:ṭolo
dok:o	pol:o:ša	si:ka	šak:a:ka
si:lun	tu:le	ka:nemay	še:bay
ka:wi	su:le	ča:may	ma:buc:a

WORDS TO KNOW

bu:ṭaka	'bear'
dok:o	'stone pestle for grinding acorns'
kac:i	'cold'
ka:nemay	'kin'
ka:wi	'child'
ma:či	'day'
mis:i:bo	'three'
si:ka	'man with power from a feather costume'
si:lun	'(acorn) bread'
su:le	'rope'
šak:a:ka	'California quail'
še:bay	'young woman'
tu:šo	'five'

WORDS TO REMEMBER

ce:me:wa	'wolf'
colo:pa	'headdress made of flicker feathers'
ča:may	'tumpline' (used to tie burden basket to the head)
ko:ṭolo	'tadpole'
ma:buc:a	'ghost, evil spirit, little people'
pol:o:ša	'oak ball'
ṭu:le	'hummingbird'

KINSHIP

In exercise (1) we learned the word **na:na** 'baby, infant'. In exercise (2) we learned the words **ka:nemay** 'kin' and **ka:wi** 'child'. Nothing was (or is) more important to the Southern Pomo people than family. Not surprisingly, this aspect of the culture is reflected in the language.

Southern Pomo has many different words to express different relations within families. These words are called *kinship terms*. Because we all have relatives, kinship terms are some of the first words learned. They are also some of the most frequently used words in any language. As a result of their frequency, the kinship terms of many languages show complexity and irregularity. For example, in English we have 'child' and its irregular plural 'children'. Southern Pomo kinship terms also have irregularities.

Southern Pomo kinship terms differ in other ways, too. In English, we do not distinguish between our paternal grandparents and our maternal grandparents, rather, we call both sides 'grandfather' and 'grandmother'. In Southern Pomo, on the other hand, there are different words for 'mother's mother' and 'father's mother' and also different words for 'father's father' and 'mother's father'. There are also different words for 'mother's older sister' (English 'aunt') and 'mother's younger sister' (English 'aunt').

Southern Pomo kinship terms also differ from English (and other Southern Pomo word classes) in a number of other ways. For example, most Southern Pomo kinship terms have slightly different forms depending on their role in a sentence, just as English words like 'I', 'he', 'she', 'they' have different forms depending on their role in a sentence ('he hit me/him/her/them')

Subsequent chapters will introduce the kinship system and its special aspects in greater detail.

PRONUNCIATION PRACTICE

Several new symbols have been introduced thus far. The examples in this exercise are all phony words. They have been created to help the learner recognize the new symbols' appearances and sounds. Please listen to the recording that accompanies this book while looking at each example. For those who do not have access to the recording, try to say these nonsense words aloud.

EXERCISE (3): PRONUNCIATION PRACTICE

ka:ka ča:ka ʔa:ka da:ka ʔa:ka pa:ka ba:ka

ka:ča ča:ča ʔa:ča da:ča ʔa:ča pa:ča ba:ča

ka:ʔa ča:ʔa ʔa:ʔa da:ʔa ʔa:ʔa pa:ʔa ba:ʔa

ka:ʔa ča:ʔa ʔa:ʔa da:ʔa ʔa:ʔa pa:ʔa ba:ʔa

ka:pa ča:pa ʔa:pa da:pa ʔa:pa pa:pa ba:pa

THE SUPERNATURAL: COYOTE, LITTLE PEOPLE, AND FEATHER COSTUMES

The Southern Pomo homeland is one of the most beautiful regions in North America. The valleys of the Russian River and its tributaries complement rolling hills covered in oak trees and low mountains draped in redwood forests. The winters never get too cold (no snow) and the summers never get too hot. It is not surprising that such an enchanted land would have enchanted characters in the myths and legends of its people.

A number of supernatural characters figure into the surviving texts. In exercise (1) we learned the word **do:wi** 'Coyote'. This is the word for Old Man Coyote, the supernatural character of some traditional narratives. Southern Pomo employs a different word for the common animal. Coyote, the supernatural creature, was more godlike than not. One Southern Pomo text, *Rolling Bread*, has **do:wi** as an important character. The neighboring Kashaya Pomo borrowed Southern Pomo words meaning 'Big Man Coyote' to use as their word for God. This word was applied to the Christian god after contact.

In exercise (2) we learned the word **si:ka** 'man with power from a feather costume'. Certain people donned a feather costume of sorts to obtain great power. These **si:ka** purportedly operated at night and were not necessarily doers of good. An elder from the Dry Creek Rancheria reported seeing a **si:ka** as a child. She described the **si:ka** as wearing a costume with blue coloration that made noise. He walked without having his feet touch the ground. The late Robert Oswalt, who worked extensively on Southern Pomo in addition to writing a grammar of Kashaya Pomo, related his observation that all societies of the world have murderers. In his opinion, some killers among the Pomo donned the feather costume of a **si:ka** as opposed to the more mundane choice of killing others without a terrifying outfit.

We have also learned the word **ma:buc:a** 'ghost, evil spirit, little people'. The late Abraham Halpern, who collected more Southern Pomo texts than any other linguist, recorded a story about **ma:buc:a** from Elsie Allen, a Cloverdale dialect speaker. According to Elsie, she and her brother encountered some **ma:buc:a** near Hopland while they crossed a field at night. As they crossed the field, the **ma:buc:a** came out ahead of them. The **ma:buc:a** were dark from the waist down, light from the waist up. Elsie and her brother began to run, but the **ma:buc:a** stayed in front of them. Eventually, the **ma:buc:a** passed through a fence. They apparently looked like little people.

The Kashaya Pomo, who lived to the west of the Southern Pomo speakers, allowed Robert Oswalt to record many myths and legends in great detail. Consult Robert Oswalt's out-of-print *Kashaya Texts* (1964, volume 36, University of California publications in linguistics) for more information.

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MORE CONSONANTS

CLASS III CONSONANTS

In chapter 2 we learned all Southern Pomo vowels and all of the Class I and Class II consonants. In this chapter we will learn the remaining consonants. Class III consonants have the sound **h** as their head letter. Each Class III letter is a combination of a Class II base and **h**. Though these letters might appear unfamiliar, most of them are actually sounds in English. In other words, these sounds are easy to get right.

h This sound is exactly like the ‘h’ in the English word ‘help’. Souther Pomo **h** is never silent. As previously mentioned, the letter **h** is the head letter for all other Class III consonants.

č^h This sound is pronounced exactly like the ‘ch’ in the English word ‘church’. Compare **č^h** with the Class II consonant **č**.

k^h This sound is pronounced exactly like the ‘k’ in the English name ‘Kirk’. Compare **k^h** with the Class II consonant **k**.

p^h This sound is pronounced exactly like the ‘p’ in the English word ‘pie’. Compare **p^h** with the Class II consonant **p**.

t^h This sound is pronounced exactly like the ‘t’ in the English word ‘tie’. Compare **t^h** with the Class II consonant **t**.

t̥^h This sound has no exact English equivalent, however, it is quite easy to mimic. It is simply the Southern Pomo sound **t̥** with a puff of air following it. Compare **k** and **k^h** and observe the puff of air that accompanies **k^h**. To make the **t̥^h** sound, place the tip of the tongue against the upper front teeth, as for **t̥**, and release a puff of air (like a weak ‘h’) as the tongue moves away from the teeth. Listen to the recordings that accompany the exercises for more practice.

READING EXERCISE

This exercise introduces new words that utilize all the sounds we have learned thus far. Remember, each letter in the Southern Pomo alphabet represents only one sound.

EXERCISE (4): VOWELS, CLASS I, CLASS II, AND CLASS III CONSONANTS

hi:mo	beh:e	hay:u	ho:popon	čuh:uyaw
k ^h a:ma	č ^h uy:e	t ^h o:yo	t ^h a:na	p ^h oc:i
k ^h a:le	č ^h i:lan	laɬ ^h k ^h o	ma:k ^h a	nup ^h :e

WORDS TO KNOW

čuh:uyaw	‘food’
hay:u	‘dog’
hi:mo	‘hole’
k ^h a:le	‘tree, shrub’
k ^h a:ma	‘foot’
laɬ ^h k ^h o	‘seven’
ma:k ^h a	‘salmon’
nup ^h :e	‘striped skunk’
t ^h a:na	‘hand’

WORDS TO REMEMBER

beh:e	‘nut of California laurel’ (known locally as ‘bay’ or ‘pepperwood’)
č ^h i:lan	‘net for carrying burdens’
č ^h uy:e	‘pinenut’ (especially of the sugar pine)
ho:popon	‘smoke-hole’
p ^h oc:i	‘cat’
t ^h o:yo	‘Sacramento sucker’ (a native freshwater fish)

THE CONSONANT **h** AFTER VOWELS

Both English and Southern Pomo have the sound ‘h’. In English this sound is quite common. It occurs in words like ‘help’, ‘head’, ‘hand’, ‘he’, ‘heart’, ‘happy’, ‘hit’, ‘hat’, ‘hold’, etc. Notice that ‘h’ in English only occurs before vowels (the ‘h’ in combinations like ‘ch’, ‘ph’, ‘sh’, ‘th’ is not a true ‘h’).

In Southern Pomo, unlike English, the sound **h** can occur both before and after vowels. When **h** occurs after vowels, it has a soft, breathy quality. Listen carefully to the accompanying recording to mimic this. Note that every **h** in Southern Pomo is always pronounced. There are no silent **h** letters!

Many world languages also allow an ‘h’ sound after vowels. For example, Icelandic, Khmer (Cambodian), and dialects of Arabic all allow an ‘h’ sound after vowels.

READING EXERCISE

In addition to paying attention to the letters, pay close attention to the recording and try to mimic each word multiple times.

EXERCISE (5): READING PRACTICE

bahša	behše	mihča	kahle
čahti	kahča	muhča	čahnu

WORDS TO KNOW

bahša	‘buckeye nut’
behše	‘deer; meat; girlfriend (slang)’
čahnu	‘word; to talk’
čahti	‘bed’
kahle	‘white’
mihča	‘four’

WORDS TO REMEMBER

kahča	‘flint; arrowhead’
muhča	‘grain’ (general term)

THE CONSONANT **h** BETWEEN CONSONANTS

In addition to allowing **h** to occur after vowels, Southern Pomo also allows **h** to occur between certain consonants. Specifically, the **h** sound can come after any Class I consonant except **b** and **d**, and before any consonant except **b** and **d** and the Class IV consonants (which we are yet to learn). In order to pronounce **h** between consonants, hold the mouth in position for the consonant before **h** and simply make the sound breathy before continuing on to the following consonant.

READING EXERCISE

Below are three words that best demonstrate **h** between consonants. As will be learned later, many instances of **h** between consonants are the result of compounding words (‘ocean’ is actually a compound of ‘west’ and ‘water’).

EXERCISE (6): READING PRACTICE

k^homhča

mih:ilhk^ha

bayhanhna

WORDS TO KNOW

k^homhča 'eight'
mih:ilhk^ha 'ocean'

WORD TO REMEMBER

bayhanhna 'elbow'

THE IMPORTANCE OF NUMBERS

Numbers were important to Southern Pomo speakers. The number four, in particular, was considered sacred. In many of the extant traditional texts, important things happen four times. Traditional dancers, at least in some dances, might dance around four times. The importance of four can also be seen in the very nature of the numbers: **k^homhča** 'eight' is composed of **?ak^h:o** 'two' and **mihča** 'four' – literally 'two fours'.

Southern Pomo speakers were able counters. They made shell jewelry that was traded throughout the region. Large numbers of such shells were counted using an advanced numbers system. Sadly, few of the original Southern Pomo numbers remained to be recorded by twentieth-century linguists.

CLASS IV CONSONANTS

All languages have certain sounds that characterize them as different from all others. For example, Spanish has rolled ‘r’s and a simple vowel system; French has its famous ‘j’ sounds and nasal vowels; English has ‘th’ sounds and a complex vowel system. For Southern Pomo, the Class IV consonants are its most characteristic sounds. These sounds are also some of the most fun to learn.

As we learned previously, the head letter for Class III is **h**. For Class IV, the head letter is **ʔ**. This letter represents an important sound in Southern Pomo and is not a regular sound in Standard English; however, the sound of **ʔ** does occur in some dialects of English and in two non-standard words in all English dialects.

Imagine a normal conversation wherein one speaker asks, “Is this your bag?” and the other speaker responds in the affirmative. If this were a truly colloquial conversation, the responding speaker might say ‘uh-huh’ while nodding his head instead of saying the more formal ‘yes’. Now, imagine the responding speaker answers in the negative. In this case, the responding speaker might say ‘uh-uh’ while shaking his head instead of saying the more formal ‘no’. These two non-standard English words, ‘uh-huh’ (meaning ‘yes’) and ‘uh-uh’ (meaning ‘no’) are differentiated solely by the sound **ʔ**. The negative word, ‘uh-uh’, is really pronounced ‘uh-ʔuh’.

If the previous hypothetical conversation failed to help, the **ʔ** sound can also be heard in the speech of most lower class speakers in the south of England. For these speakers, the words ‘bottle’ and ‘little’ are pronounced ‘boʔle’ and ‘liʔle’.

The technical name for **ʔ** is ‘glottal stop’. It is basically a closure of all escaping air in your throat. Some people describe it as a ‘catch’ in the throat. Actually, all English words that begin with a vowel can potentially have **ʔ** at the beginning. We, as English speakers, do not pay attention to the sound **ʔ** in our own language because, as was said, it is either peripheral to other sounds or it is associated with non-standard varieties of speech. However, in Southern Pomo at least, the sound **ʔ** is extremely important. It begins many words and tends to pop up after vowels. In fact, there are no words in Southern Pomo that actually begin with a vowel. Each word that might sound vowel-initial to English speakers really has **ʔ** as the first sound.

Remember, though the symbol for it might appear strange at first, this sound is not only easy to produce, it is found somewhere in almost all dialects of English.

READING PRACTICE

The words in the exercise below are all quite common. Notice that **ʔ** can occur before **b** and **d**.

EXERCISE (7): READING PRACTICE

baʔ:ay
ʔahk^ha

heʔ:e
hiʔbu

ʔahčahčay
ʔam:a

biʔdu
miʔdiš

WORDS TO KNOW

ʔahčahčay	‘Indian’
ʔahk ^h a	‘water’
ʔam:a	‘earth, ground; thing’
baʔ:ay	‘woman’
biʔdu	‘acorn’ (general term)
heʔ:e	‘hear’ (on the head)
hiʔbu	‘potato, wild tuber’
miʔdiš	‘edible nut(s)’

THE SOUND ʔ BETWEEN CONSONANTS

Some Southern Pomo words allow ʔ to occur between certain consonants. In all cases, the sound ʔ, when it does occur between consonants, can only occur after a Class I letter. In most cases, the presence of ʔ between consonants is the result of a compound word or similar processes.

To pronounce this combination, simply cut the sound before ʔ short before fully pronouncing the sound following ʔ. Some English dialects do this in special situations. Say ‘lamb back’ quickly. Now say ‘lamp back’ quickly. Many English speakers do not actually pronounce the ‘p’ in ‘lamp back’ when they say it quickly; rather, they pronounce it as ‘lamʔback’.

The exercise below gives the commonest Southern Pomo word with this feature.

EXERCISE (8): THE SOUND ʔ BETWEEN CONSONANTS

hi:lamʔda

WORD TO KNOW

hi:lamʔda ‘nose’

THE REMAINING CLASS IV CONSONANTS

All of the remaining consonants in Class IV are based on the Class II letters. These sounds do occur in some varieties of English, but it is impossible to describe this in print. The Class IV consonants all have a soft popping sound. These sounds are best learned through imitation. Pay careful attention to the accompanying recording. For those who do not have access to the recording, these sounds are found in many of the world’s languages. They are especially important in Amharic (the principal language of Ethiopia), Georgian (the language of the nation of Georgia), and all the languages of the Maya in Mexico and Central America.

- č This sound is pronounced as a ‘ts’ sound with a popping release.
- č’ This sound is pronounced as a soft ‘ch’ (or Class II č) sound with a popping release.
- ķ This sound is pronounced like a ‘k’ sound with a popping release.
- ṗ This sound is pronounced like a ‘p’ sound with a popping release.
- ṭ This sound is pronounced like an English ‘t’ (or Class II ṭ).
- ṭ’ This sound is pronounced like the Class II consonant ṭ with a popping release.

READING EXERCISE

EXERCISE (9): ALL SOUNDS

čihṭa	č’a:ʔa	ka:yan	ṗeʔye	daʔfofo
ṭek:e	č’heʔ:efmay	ʔehp ^h ef	č’anʔuyaw	čaʔca

WORDS TO KNOW

ʔehp ^h ef	‘fart’
č’anʔuyaw	‘beautiful’
čihṭa	‘bird’
čaʔca	‘green’
č’a:ʔa	‘one’
č’heʔ:efmay	‘basket’ (general term)

WORDS TO REMEMBER

daʔfofo	‘hoot owl’
ka:yan	‘duck’
ṗeʔye	‘fish scale’
ṭek:e	‘beaver’

OWLS AND THE POMO

Southern Pomo speakers recognized several species of owls, some of which played an important role in the beliefs and stories of local and neighboring cultures. The great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*) was known as **muhčutu**, and the tales of the neighboring Kashaya credited this powerful animal with the ability to physically harm humans. The owl known as **weč:e**, the barn owl (*Tyto albo*), was a prominent character in traditional stories. In the story of **liklis** and **weč:e**, the barn owl fights with **liklis** (a type of hawk) over a wife. Perhaps the most interesting of the owls was the one known as **daʔtofo** 'hoot owl' (*Megascops kennicottii*), which was believed to serve as a messenger for shamans.

4

SECTION REVIEW

THE ENTIRE SOUTHERN POMO ALPHABET

We have now learned all thirty-four letters of the Southern Pomo alphabet. These letters have a specific order. This order is similar in many ways to the order of the Roman alphabet used for English, though many of the actual letters are different. It is a good idea to become familiar with the order of the alphabet, as it is the order used in the glossary at the back of the book and in the forthcoming *A Textual Dictionary of Southern Pomo* (in progress). The entire alphabet is given below.

THE SOUTHERN POMO ALPHABET IN ORDER

ʔ	a	b	c	č	č	č'	č ^h	d	e	h	i
k	k̤	k ^h	l	m	n	o	p	p̤	p ^h	s	š
t̤	t̤'	t̤ ^h	t̤	t̤'	t̤ ^h	u	w	y	:		

VOCABULARY PRACTICE

Congratulations! We have completed the entire alphabet. The rest of this chapter is a review. All of the WORDS TO KNOW and WORDS TO REMEMBER are repeated in the end of the chapter in alphabetical order. However, before consulting the vocabulary review list at the end of this chapter, try to complete the following exercises.

EXERCISE (10): VOCABULARY RECOGNITION

Draw a line between the correct English and Pomo words

(1) water	biʔdu
(2) tree	ʔahk ^h a
(3) woman	bu:ʔaka
(4) acorn	mis:i:bo
(5) foot	k ^h a:le
(6) bear	baʔ:ay
(7) three	k ^h a:ma

EXERCISE (11): PASSIVE VOCABULARY RECOGNITION

Write the correct English word on the line next to the Pomo word

ʔahčahčay	_____	behše	_____
čahnu	_____	čaḥṭi	_____
do:no	_____	heʔ:ə	_____
ʔam:a	_____	kahle	_____
ka:wi	_____	hi:mo	_____
ʔehp ^h eṭ	_____	č'a:ʔa	_____
č ^h eʔ:əṭmay	_____	duw:e	_____

EXERCISE (12): RECALLING VOCABULARY

Write the correct Southern Pomo word next to the English (don't worry about handwriting)

beautiful	_____	dog	_____
buckeye nut	_____	bobcat	_____
bird	_____	potato	_____
green	_____	ocean	_____
food	_____	hand	_____
pestle	_____	day	_____
cold	_____	five	_____

ALL VOCABULARY FOR SECTION I (CHAPTERS 1-4)

The words we have learned so far are given below. The WORDS TO KNOW have been kept separate from the WORDS TO REMEMBER. When looking for words in alphabetical order, remember that the vowels (a, e, i, o, u) and : cannot begin a word.

WORDS TO KNOW

ʔahčahčay	'Indian'	hi:mo	'hole'
ʔahk ^h a	'water'	kac:i	'cold'
ʔam:a	'earth, ground; thing'	kahle	'white'
ʔehp ^h eʔ	'fart'	ka:nemay	'kin'
baʔ:ay	'woman'	ka:wi	'child'
bahša	'buckeye nut'	k ^h a:le	'tree, shrub'
bayawya	'young boy'	k ^h a:ma	'foot'
ba:lay	'blood'	k ^h omhča	'eight'
behše	'deer; meat'	laʔ ^h k ^h o	'seven'
biʔdu	'acorn' (general term)	le:le	'forehead'
bu:ʔaka	'bear'	ma:či	'day'
čanʔuyaw	'beautiful'	ma:k ^h a	'salmon'
čihʔa	'bird'	ma:yu	'mourning dove'
čaʔča	'green'	miʔdiš	'edible nut(s)'
čahnu	'word; to talk'	mihča	'four'
čaḥṭi	'bed'	mih:ilh ^h a	'ocean'
čuh:uyaw	'food'	mis:i:bo	'three'
č'a:ʔa	'one'	na:na	'baby, infant'
č ^h eʔ:efmay	'basket' (general term)	nup ^h :e	'striped skunk'
dok:o	'stone pestle'	si:ka	'man with power from a feather costume'
do:lon	'bobcat'	si:lun	'(acorn) bread'
do:no	'hill, mountain'	su:le	'rope'
do:wi	'Coyote' (mythic name)	šak:a:ka	'California quail'
duw:e	'night'	še:bay	'young woman'
hay:u	'dog'	ʔu:šo	'five'
heʔ:e	'hair' (on the head)	ʔ ^h a:na	'hand'
hiʔbu	'potato, wild tuber'	wi:yi	'acorn of the Oregon Oak'
hi:lamʔda	'nose'		

WORDS TO REMEMBER

bayhanhna	'elbow'	kahča	'flint; arrowhead'
baw:ol	'lamprey'	ko:ɬolo	'tadpole'
beh:e	'nut of California laurel'	ka:yan	'duck'
bim:u	'bulb with purple flowers'	la:la	'wild goose'
bi:la	'earthworm'	ma:buc:a	'ghost, evil spirit, little people'
bu:du	'berry of the Toyon'	muhča	'grain' (general term)
ce:me:wa	'wolf'	no:mi	'rabbit' (not jackrabbit)
colo:pa	'headdress made of flicker feathers'	pol:o:ša	'oak ball'
ča:may	'tumpline' (used to tie burden basket to the head)	p^hoc:i	'cat'
č^hi:lan	'net for carrying burdens'	ɬ^ho:yo	'Sacramento sucker' (a native freshwater fish)
č^huy:e	'pinenut' (especially of the sugar pine)	tu:le	'hummingbird'
da?fofo	'hoot owl'	ɬek:e	'beaver'
ho:popon	'smoke-hole'		