THE ARAPAHO LANGUAGE ALPHABET

1993
REVISED 1999
THE ARAPAHO LANGUAGE ALPHABET
UTILIZING THE ZDENEK SALZMANN SYSTEM
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REVISED 1999

ARAPAHO LANGUAGE AND CURRICULUM MATERIALS AND LESSONS HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED UTILIZING THE SALZMANN SYSTEM BY TITLE V, VI, & VII BILINGUAL AND CULTURAL ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS, 1979-1993, WYOMING INDIAN SCHOOLS, ETHETE, WYOMING. SINCE 1979, MANY INDIVIDUALS HAVE CONTRIBUTED AND WORKED WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF THESE MATERIALS.
ABOUT ZDENEK "DENNY" SALZMANN

Although no alphabet can match the spoken word perfectly, many people feared that the Arapaho language would die out completely in a few years if some writing system were not adopted for preserving it, especially the older and less common words. The Arapaho language teachers were also concerned about adopting one overall writing system for all the reservation schools.

Since the Arapaho alphabet now in use across the reservation was devised by Dr. Zdenek Salzmann, you might be interested in knowing how it came about that a pipe-smoking professor with a Czech accent living in Massachusetts should be working on the Arapaho alphabet and dictionary!

Born in Prague, the capital city of Czechoslovakia, in 1925, Zdenek Salzmann came to the United States by himself in 1947. He was 22 years old at that time. He had been invited to serve for half a year as the traveling secretary of the World Student Service Fund, raising money for European universities destroyed during World War II. When that time was up, he decided to stay here for graduate studies.

In February of 1948, he enrolled at Indiana University in Bloomington, and stayed until he’d finished his Master’s Degree. Meeting an attractive young lady graduate student (in English) at I. U. gave him even more reason to stay!

At that time, the well-known linguist Carl F. Voegelin was editor of the International Journal of American Linguistics, which is the only journal in the world devoted exclusively to American Indian Languages. When Denny asked him to suggest a research topic for a Ph.D. dissertation, Voegelin told him that nothing was known about Arapaho grammar—except by Arapahos—so he should go to Wyoming and find out something about it.

In the spring of 1949, Denny received a $400 grant for the summer; that $400 had to cover his transportation, living expenses, and consultant fees for the entire project. Since tape recorders had not yet been invented, he borrowed a wire recorder for his trip to Wyoming: The reels of hair-fine wire recorded voices magnetically.

In June, Denny boarded a Greyhound Bus to Rawlins, then a shuttle bus to Riverton. He stayed at the Teton Hotel the first night, and bought a full dinner for only $0.99 --- complete with soup, salad, meat, potatoes, vegetables, bread and butter, ice cream, and coffee! Denny began hitchhiking and caught a ride on a milk truck delivering around the reservation. The dairy truck stopped at the Arapaho Tribal Co-op Store at Ethete to
unload (where the parish hall is today). Denny sized it up and decided it was the right place for him to stay. Coach Wilson was head of the Mission, and rented him a room. Denny stayed here until August 15, 1949, renting a horse for $0.25 a day whenever he needed one. His Arapaho informants were mostly John B. Goggles (husband of Agnes) and Ralph Grass Hopper.

After a very fast trip back to Indiana, Denny married Joy (that graduate student in English) on August 18. That didn’t give them much time to change their minds!

The next summer Denny and Joy drove to Wyoming; some I. U. students rode with them to Cheyenne, sharing expenses and driving responsibilities. Denny worked with John Goggles again, and then took him with them to visit Joy’s parents, who had retired to Florida.

In 1952, Denny came out to Wyoming again, this time to convince John Goggles to accompany him back to Indiana University: I. U. was offering a Linguistics Field Methods course on how to study unwritten languages using consultants, and Denny needed his help. When he arrived here, Denny learned that John Goggles had died just that spring, so he found William Shakespeare and took him back to Bloomington.

Later, he and Joy moved to Connecticut so he could take a job as editor and translation supervisor, until the government cut funds and he lost his job. To make matters worse, his wife was about to have their first baby and didn’t want to leave Connecticut right then. He looked around for another job, and started teaching high school chemistry, physics, and biology.

In 1956, he took a job as head of the science department in a Sedona, Arizona high school oriented towards anthropology. The students and staff took field trips, etc., onto the Navajo-Hopi reservation, staying in homes there. This area was especially beautiful to Denny, and he and Joy still own land there.

Denny completed his Ph.D. in 1963. (It can take a long time when you’re doing field research and writing and holding down a responsible job all at the same time, but it can be done!)

In 1966, Denny was asked to start a new anthropology program at Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire, but after two years there he wanted more freedom. He went to the University of Massachusetts (in Amherst) in 1968 as a professor in the anthropology department. He teaches linguistic anthropology, folklore, primitive art, ethical problems in anthropological field work, anthropology of Eastern Europe, etc. He has almost as much freedom as Indiana Jones in “Raiders of the Lost Ark”! It must suit him just fine, because he has vacations for field work. He goes back to Europe once or
twice a year, especially to Romania and Czechoslovakia, for as long as 5 months at a
time. This spring he spent one semester as a professor on a “flying university”--a ship
where students study on board, then visit interesting places whenever the ship docks at
a foreign city.

Denny has published both high school and college text books on general
anthropology, a book on life in a Czech village, and 50 or 60 articles on linguistics,
Arapaho nouns and verbs, etc.

Meanwhile, over the years, many different methods of writing down Arapaho had
come into use; each school and church had its own way, and nobody could read anybody
else’s Arapaho. This meant that a lot of work was being wasted. It was also hard on the
students: Some one who transferred from Mill Creek to St. Stephens and then graduated
to Wyoming Indian High School had to start over again three times!

In 1979, Tupou Pulu invited Zdenek Salzmann, Marguerite Spoonhunter, and William
James C’Hair to Anchorage, Alaska, where she is director of the National Bilingual
Materials Development Center. They worked together and came up with a modified
system of spelling Arapaho, based on Denny’s original system. They also published a
book of Arapaho stories collected by Denny back in 1950; the book is dedicated to the
memory of John B. Goggles, “who made a lasting contribution to our understanding of
the Arapaho language”.

When they returned to Ethete, Marguerite Spoonhunter and Wm. J. C’Hair held a
workshop at WIHS, with Denny’s help, to introduce the new system to other people on the
reservation. Although they were using their own systems, Pius Moss of St. Stephens and
Hiram Armajo of Mill Creek wanted one that would be common to all the schools, and
Denny’s system worked well. Since so many Arapaho legends and general vocabulary
words had already been collected and written down by Denny in his work over the years,
they felt it would be wisest to accept his systems.

And so the work continues. More vocabulary is being collected, and more language
lessons are being developed. This is a very important process, and takes a lot of time.
There is no one person left alive who is fully fluent in Arapaho, and knows the entire
vocabulary and grammar of this rich language. This means that preservation is a
co-operative effort, with many knowledgeable people contributing words and
information so that it can all be put together in one source. Elders, community people,
teachers, and students of the Arapaho language can all draw from that greater pool of
knowledge, so that the living language may grow.

(Writer anonymous)
ARAPAHO LANGUAGE

If you want to study a language, you should be able to write it and devise an alphabet for the sounds of the language.

Arapaho has some sounds English doesn't.  (x: wox)
English has some sounds Arapaho doesn't.  (r: rat)

ARAPAHO ALPHABET ---- 16 SYMBOLS

B C E H I K N O S T U W X Y ' 

CONSONANT STOPS:  B T C K ' 

SEMI - STOP:  H 

CONSONANT FRICATIVES:  3 S X H 

VOWELS:  E I O U 

SEMI - CONSONANTS:  W Y 

NASAL:  N 

VOWEL COMBINATIONS:
A long vowel is a combination of two or more same vowels.

Example:  EE II OO UU EEE III OOO UUU 

DIPHTHONG:
A dipthong is a combination of two or more different vowels.

Example:  EI is the long A vowel sound as in day.

OE is the long I vowel sound as in pie.

OU is the long O vowel sound as in glow.
ARAPaho Alphabet

Pronunciation Key ---- Consonants

B: is between the voiced B and the blown P. Usually more like a B at the beginning and middle of a syllable and more like a P at the end of the word.

C: is between the voiced J and the blown CH. Usually more like a J at the beginning and middle of a syllable and more like a CH at the end of the word.

H: is just breathed at either end of a syllable.

K: is between the voiced G (as in gum) and the blown K. Usually more like the voiced G at the beginning and middle of a syllable and the blown K at the end of a word.

N: as in noon.

S: is always pronounced as in sing, and never like the Z sound in trees or closet.

3: as in three, thin, and bath.

T: is between the voiced D and the blown T. Usually more like the voiced D at the beginning and middle of a syllable and the blown T at the end of the word.

W: as in water.

X: is the sound not heard in English, but similar to the German Machen or the Greek XI. To say the X sound, start to say the K sound, but breathe out hard enough to make the back of your throat (your glottis) vibrate a little.

Y: as in yes and young, unless it is blown following U or I.

 estão called the glottal stop, and doesn't make a sound; it shows that the sound or breath is cut off suddenly.
ARAPAHO ALPHABET

B C E H I K N O S T U W X Y '

VOWELS (V): E I O U

CONSONANTS (C):

STOPS: B T C K '

SEMI-STOP: H

FRICATIVES: S X H

NASAL: N

SEMI-CONSONANTS: W Y

ACCENT: High level pitch with greater loudness over vowels, consonants, and vowel combinations. (not occurring in parentheses)

BE BI BO (BU)
CE CI CO (CU)
HE HI HO HU
KE KI KO KU
NE NI NO NU
SE SI SO (SU)
3E 3I 3O (3U)
TE TI TO TU
WE WI WO WU
XE XI XO (XU)
YE YI YO (YU)
'E 'I 'O 'U
## Arapaho Alphabet

12 Consonants and 4 Vowels

### Vowels:

**Short:**
- E: nec - water
- I: his - liver
- O: ho3 - arrow
- U: nooku - rabbit

**Long:**
- EE: nees - my husband
- II: hiit - here
- OO: toot - where
- UU: woxuu - bears

**Accent:**
- Nówó' - fish
- Wónó' - ankle

### Consonants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIRST</th>
<th>MIDDLE</th>
<th>LAST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Be' - blood</td>
<td>Neb - fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Cec - year</td>
<td>Neic - arrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>His - liver</td>
<td>Noh - and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>Ketee? - Is it your heart?</td>
<td>Seenook - rope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Noon - egg</td>
<td>Yein - four</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Sitee - fire</td>
<td>Niis - two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3io'tox - nine</td>
<td>He3ebii - dogs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Toot - where</td>
<td>Wote' - hat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Woow - now</td>
<td>Hiit - here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Xouu - skunk</td>
<td>Hitotiiw - his car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Yoo3on - five</td>
<td>Ceesey - one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>' '</td>
<td>'00 - yes</td>
<td>Hisi' - tick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wo'oo3 - leg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**ARAPAHO ALPHABET**

**CONSONANT CLUSTERS:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>H B</th>
<th>Kuhbii3?</th>
<th>Did he eat it?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T S</td>
<td>Betson</td>
<td>Elbow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H '</td>
<td>Biisnii'hoo3oo</td>
<td>Monkey (hairy whiteman)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N T</td>
<td>3oonteeec</td>
<td>Crown of head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X H</td>
<td>Woxhoox</td>
<td>Horse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H K</td>
<td>Beihko'</td>
<td>Squash</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**VOWEL CLUSTERS:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>E I</th>
<th>Hoseino'</th>
<th>Meat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I I I</td>
<td>Iiii</td>
<td>Snow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O U</td>
<td>Hohou</td>
<td>Thank you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O O O</td>
<td>Hooo</td>
<td>Bed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O'O O O</td>
<td>Wo'ooo</td>
<td>Cat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E I</td>
<td>Nei</td>
<td>My son (vocative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O E</td>
<td>Wo3onohoe</td>
<td>Paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I O</td>
<td>Hisio</td>
<td>His uncle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I E</td>
<td>Wotie'noo</td>
<td>Clean it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E E E</td>
<td>Niinebeh'eeet</td>
<td>Kingfisher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U U U</td>
<td>Cih'oxuuu</td>
<td>Chips</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ARAPAHO ALPHABET

GRAMMAR - NOUN:

Dog He3
My dog Nete3ebiib
Your dog Hete3ebiib
His dog Hite3ebiiw
On my dog Nete3ebiibe'
On your dog Hete3ebiibe'
On his dog Hite3ebiibe'

VERB: (present tense)

I see you Nonoohobe3en
I see him Nonoohowo'
I see you (pl.) Nonoohobe3enee
You see me Nonoohowun
You see him Nonoohowot
You see us Nonoohobei’een
You see them Nonoohowotii
He sees him Nonoohowoot
He sees himself Nonoohobetit
ARAPAHO LANGUAGE (MORPHOLOGY)

1. CONSONANT AND SHORT VOWEL COMBINATION

Nebi  My older sister
Nesi  My uncle
Bexo (pl) Wood
Nisice Antelope
Hixono Bones

2. CONSONANT AND LONG VOWEL COMBINATION

Niicii River Neecee Chief
Ceetee Smoke Heeniii Ants
Biisee Bug Siisoowoo Tobacco
Hoocoo Devil

3. CONSONANT WITH A SHORT AND LONG VOWEL COMBINATION
   [A] SHORT - LONG

Sitee Fire (fire place)
Betee Heart
Betii Mouth
Woxuu (pl.) Bears
Notoo (voc.) My daughter
(B) Long - Short

Wooxe       Knife
3ooxe       Glove

(C) Short - Short - Long

Hebesii     Beavers
Hite3oo     Crane
Tecenoo     Door
Cebitee     Grease (gas-oil)
He3ebii     Dogs

(D) Short - Long - Long

Heneecce    Buffalo bull
Woxuusoo    Bear cub
Bexookeee   Cougar

(E) Long - Short - Short

Niitoni     Hear me

(F) Long - Short - Long

Beenenoo    I am drinking

(G) Short - Short - Long - Long

Nebesiiwoo  Grandfather (voc.)
OTHER RESOURCES USING THE SALZMANN SYSTEM:


The Arapaho Language Alphabet