

Thanks to the ICASS IX and the Associated Student of University of Alaska Fairbanks
for travel support to Umeå

Documenting *Nanvarpak* Yugcetun Place Names Using a Community-based Participatory Approach

The International Congress of Arctic Social Sciences IX
in Umeå, June 8th 2017
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Nanvarpak (Iliamna Lake)

Yugcetun (Central Yup'ik Language)

Place Name Project in August 2016

A set of open-ended questions includes:

“Can you tell me a story about any of the Yup'ik place names near the village?”

“Can you tell me more about why this place is called xxx?”

Research Techniques:

- Participant observation
- Respondent interviews
- Mapping exercises using Department of the Interior Geological Survey (USGS) maps

In 2016, Four local assistants, Three Yugcetun translators, and 17 respondents were involved in this project. We recorded over 90 Yugcetun and 19 local English place names

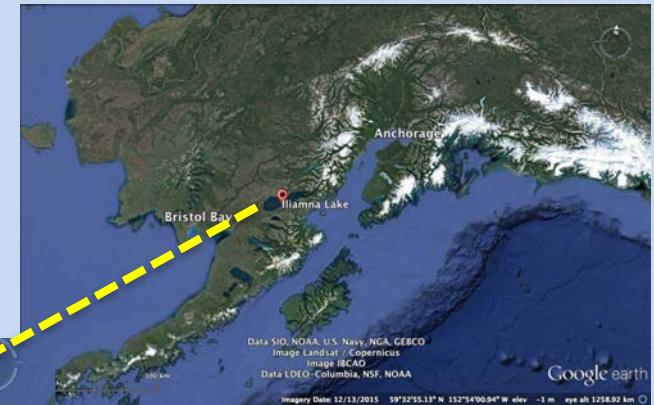
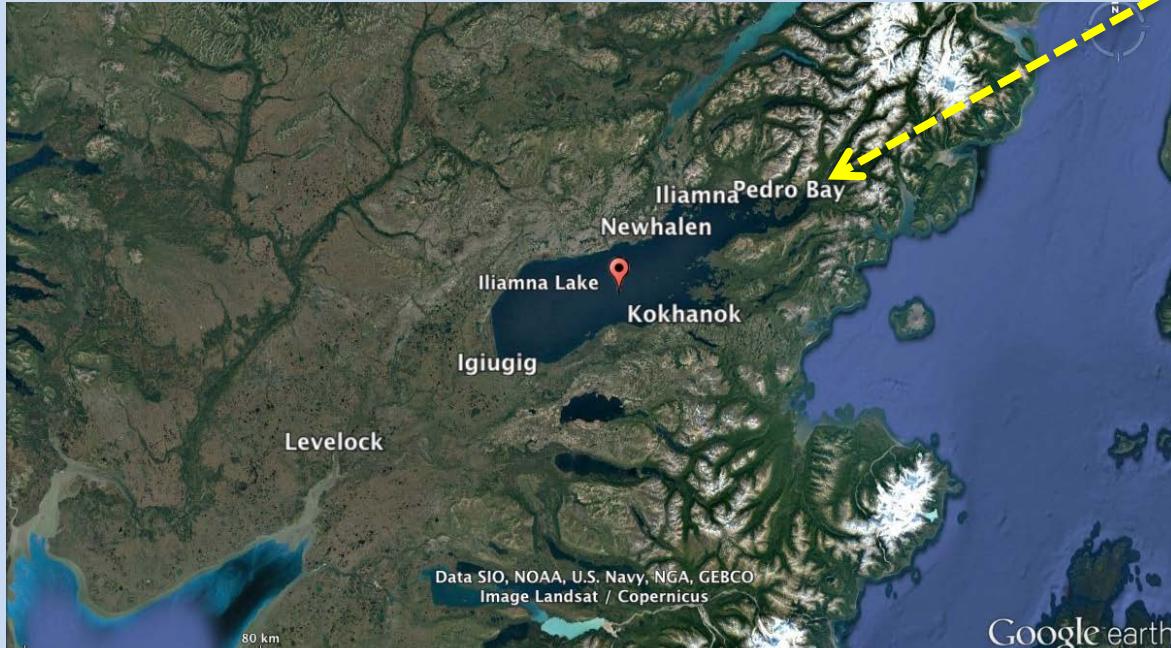
A main goal of this project is to establish a Yugcetun place name map for the community uses

Nanvarpak (Iliamna Lake), Alaska

Iliamna Lake *Nanvarpak* is located 362 km southwest of Anchorage.

The lake is 124 km long and 35 km wide.

Iliamna Lake, Alaska (Google Earth)



Five Communities for the Project

(Photo by Yoko Kugo)



Iliamna



Kokhanok



Newhalen Orthodox Church



Igiugig



Levelock

Place Names from Multiple Perspectives

- Place names are vernacular knowledge because Indigenous people have passed them down orally through generations (Collignon 2006)
- Native classification systems are based on “what is seen most clearly by Native eyes” (Hunn 2006:147)
- Local Iliamna Yup’ik people named places in multiple ways: observations of landscape, seasonal activities, and experiences traveling from place to place.



Tommy Point, near *Tagyaracuar*, Iliamna Lake, August 2016. Photo: Yoko Kugo

A Community-Based Participatory Approach in Oral History



Anesia Newyaka and Marsha Wassillie
in Kokhanok, August 2016 Photo: Yoko Kugo



Grandma Katie Olympic and Gladys Askoak
in Newhalen, August 2016 Photo: Yoko Kugo

They would also recognize the project is “their own” project and feel a responsibility for dealing with equipment and keeping to a timeline.

Oral history contains what researchers *hear* during the interviews and what the researchers *say* or *write* about it.

(Portelli 1997)

A Community-based Participatory Approach in the *Nanvarpak* Place Name Project

- Local translators and assistants revising research questions from local perspectives
- Translators interpreting local English dialects-Yugcetun-Japanese accent English
- Local translators prompting respondents to talk about their stories during the interview
- Strong local interest involvement
- USGS map exercise

(Kokhanok group meeting at the Kokhanok Village Council Building, from left to right, Marsha Wassillie, Mary Nelson, Anesia Newyaka, and Annie Parks, August 2016. Photo: Yoko Kugo)



Working on Yugcetun transcript at the Askoak's home in Newhalen, from left to right, Yoko Kugo, Gladys Askoak and Father David Askoak, March 2017. Photo: Kaleah Anelon



USGS Mapping Exercises



Qengaq

(Lookout Mountain on the USGS map)



Viewing Lookout Mountain (*Qengaq*) from the mainland
In March 2017, Photo: Yoko Kugo

Names Originated from Historical Events and Activities

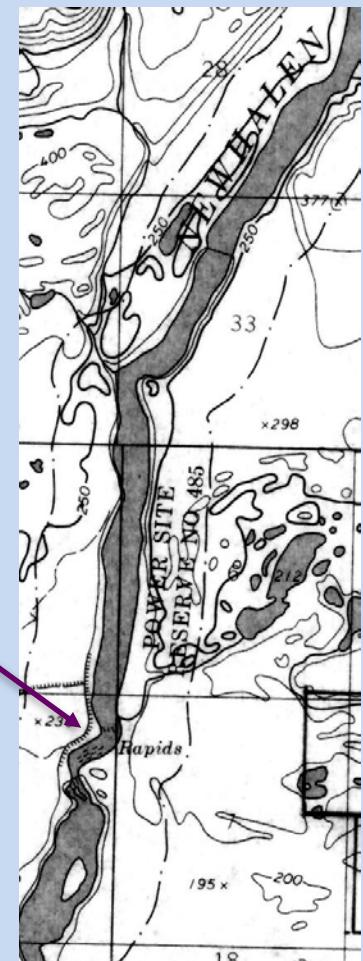
Igcenaq

(Place tend to cause one to fall)

“Rapid”

“They used to put up fish [up there]. They don’t fish... they don’t seining or just use *aggsuun* (harpoon) like this, then they catch fish. One day, [her cousin] was [fishing], that he was happened to fall. *Igcenaq*... doesn’t come back, just fall.... And they couldn’t find a body.... We got to move out of there from that *Igcenaq*.”

(Personal communication an Iliamna Lake resident, August 2016)



Further Research

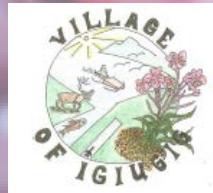
- Yup'ik people named some places based on landscape, abundance of resources, historical events, and personal accidents
- Establishing *Nanvarpak* Place Name Committee in 2017
- Based on the preliminary data, our research team will go to and record the locations using GPS, GIS, and photography in summer 2017
- Our goals are to publish a Iliamna Lake Yugcetun place name map and to establish Yugcetun place name database for the communities for sustaining community well-being

Quyana arigato cakneq

Acknowledgement

Dalia Andrew in Igiugig, Myrtle Anelon, Ethel Adcox, Johnny and Flora Johnson, Tinny Hedlund, Lary Hill, and Sharelle Anelon (local assistant) in Iliamna, Evelyn Anelon, Elena Balluta, Grandma Katie Olympic, Fedusia Balluta, and Father David and Mother Gladys Askoak (local Yugcetun translators) in Newhalen, and Gary and Shirley Neilsen, Mary Nelson, Anesia Newyaka, Nick Newyaka, Steve Nowatak, Annie Parks, Mary Wassillie, Wassie Wassillie, Alina Cobbs (local assistant) and Marsha Wassillie (local Yugcetun translator) in Kokhanok, and Gabriel Aaciangaq and Eva Evelyn Yanez for Yugcetun translation.

This project is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation under Grant No. 1640812 and the University of Alaska Fairbanks Center for Global Change Grant. Bristol Bay Native Corporation also funded the Iliamna Village Council and Newhalen Tribal Council for their place name projects.



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