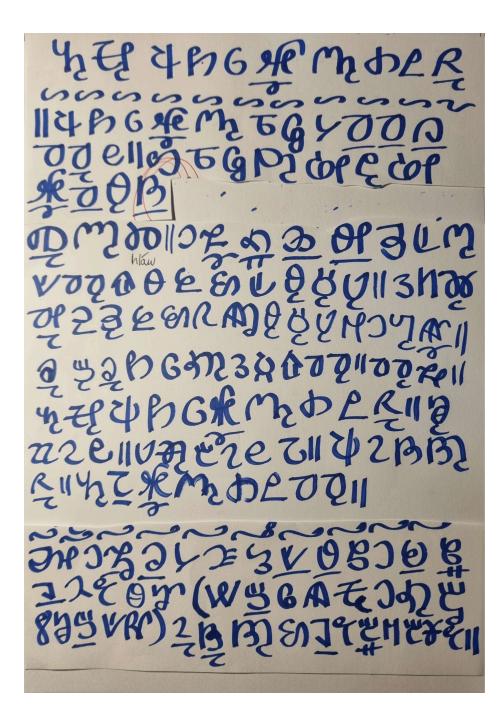# LTS Relay #1 Yaatláw Full Torch

The Torch

Chįplį́ yu títsaw síílį sayshu pę́ę́?

yu títsaw síílį fífyi tsáw maamaafúa mamą̨ąyaw. tlá fífyi ę́bu'ų́bu síí maa pątsáá shą̨ąfę́ hláw. guy sáw hlía plaatú su sų́tsú mamą áypa lawtsí saw pą̨sąlą. kaw tsapą́w bą̨ątu tų́ lawtsí ikyi pą̨sąlą sáw ndlą̨wkíí. yą̨ą chų̨yą̨ą títsaw sę́kaw u'áy mamą: mamą klu chį́plį́ yu títsaw síílį sayshu pę́ę́: ayaw. tą̨yśu (tuu) ayaw. la hlę́fa ayaw fu. yu atsę́ę́tsę́ pę́ę́. chį́fua síílį sayshu mam tą.

shlí gyuayaa tsáw kúńi tsúa paa ńu ndlua tlúú Shááluta Káwti (michúafi kaypį́ nzą́fya witaychua tsúkí) ą̨ątsę́ę́tsę́ Tsíshááta Nuucháánuhláta.

Why are we still looking for berries?

A mother and daughter were out in the mountains looking for maqui berries. They see a tree with a lot of berries and stop to collect them. The mother accidentally stepped on a beehive, so bees flew out. They ran and hid until the bees went away, dropping their

berries. They carried on looking for berries in the mountains. The daughter asked, 'why are we still looking for berries?'. The mother replied 'be quiet my daughter! We are bonding and I still want berries.'

The above text is based on a story by Charlotte Coté (2022) of the Nuu-Chah-Nulth community of Tseshaht.

Language Documentation

Lątláw Culture

The Yaatláw speaking people, called Lątláw, believe that they were salmon in a mythic previous time. Their climate and environment is shaped by an oceanic river valley, similar to that of the Pacific Northwest or Valdivian rainforest.

Phonology and Romanization

Yaatláw phonology is summarized below:

Consonants

	bilabial	alveolar	palatal	retroflex	velar	glottal
Stops	p b	t d			k g*	ʔ
Fricatives	f v*	s z*	ɕ, ʑ*	ʂ, ʐ*		
Affricates		ts dz*, tɬ, d͡ʒ*	tɕ, d͡ʑ*	t͡ʂ, d͡ʐ*		
Nasal	m	n	ɲ		ŋ	
Approximants	w	l, ɬ, ɹ*	j			

*These voiced consonants surface in combination with homorganic nasals as allophones of their unvoiced counterparts.

Romanization which does not follow the IPA is outlined below:

tɬ <tl>, ɬ <hl>, ɮ <(n)l>, d͡ʒ <dl>, ŋ <ng>, ŋg <g>, j <y>, ʔ <'>*

*The glottal stop is only written as <'> intervocalically. Word-initially the glottal stop is assumed before vowels.

	palatal		retroflex	
	voiceless	voiced	voiceless	voiced
fricative	ś	ź	sh	zh
affricate	tś	dź	ch	j
palatal	ń			

Vowels

Yaatláw distinguishes between the following vowels:

	front	mid	back
high	i ĩ	ɨ̃	u ũ
central			
low		a ã	

Vowel Qualities:

	short	long
plain	a i u	aː iː uː
nasalized	ã ĩ ũ ɨ̃	ãː ĩː ũː ɨ̃ː

Short vowels can be followed by an off-glide y or w or a non-nuclear a̧, although only ã operates as nucleus in nasal diphthongs, as in ãj and ãw; off-glides must be of a

different quality to the nucleus, i.e. *ij and *uw do not occur, although on-glide vowel sequence /ji/ does.

Nasal vowels are marked with the ✨ charming ✨ little diacritic known as the ogonek in Polish, literally a little tail.

Tone

Yaatláw has a register tone system with two phonemic tones. These are mostly used in the lexical domain. Note that the central high vowel only emerges with a high tone. Low tone is unmarked, and high tone is romanised with

Loan Words

Loan words ending in consonants will have a paragogic /a/ in most cases.

Yaatláw Grammar

The Yaatláw language follows a VOS word order with noun-genitive, noun-possessive, and noun-adjective order.

Tyąpú pá yąsú. → climb mountain woman → The woman climbs the mountain.

Adpositional phrases use prepositions to express these relationships. The language has a broadly isolating analytic typology, where verbs are much more so than nouns.

Nouns can take some modifying affixes both derivationally and to indicate number on animate nouns. What distinguishes these affixes is that they assimilate to the noun they are modifying. Nouns also have a set of particles which precede their associated noun or noun phrase to mark information usually provided through non-core cases.

Verbs can be modified by a small class of verbs which, as part of their general usage in serial verb constructions (SVCs) have been grammaticalized into particles, though many still retain their original meaning and usage as verbs elsewhere.

Nouns, Pronouns, Classifiers and Other Noun Morphology:

Pronouns

Yaatláw has eight personal pronouns, with half of these being regularly derived plural forms. The four base forms follow a traditional 1st 2nd 3rd person split, while the 4th

person is what is otherwise known as an inclusive we in that it refers to both the speaker and the listener, as well as anyone else. Because of this, *fulų* is used as an exclusive we as the 1st person does not include the listener. The 4.PL pronoun *pę́ę́lą* emphasizes the plurality of the 4th person, and is thus used to refer to everyone in a more general way.

	Singular	Plural
1 (+ speaker -listener)	fu	fulų
2 (-S + L)	tśi	tśilį
3 (-S -L)	hlá	hlálą
4 (+S +L) (inclusive we)	pę́ę́	pę́ę́lą

Note that pronouns in the subject / word final position may be dropped when unambiguous.

Directions and Locative Cases:

There are a number of ways of expressing position in time and space in Yaatláw.

The most basic way is using the spatial locative **tsáw** and the temporal locative **yąą,** the latter also functioning as a comitative. These particles precede the location of the event being described.

>   Ą́tą́ **tsáw tlą́y** kúúnu

>>   The man swims **in the river.**

>   Ą́tą́ **yąą kupú** kúúnu

>>   The man swims **at night.**

The Conditional and the Locative

In place of these locative particles, when flagging a clause which conditions the primary verbal construct (i.e. is related to the main clause but is not part of it) you should use the conditional particle, which replaces these case markers:

>   **Tlua sáw síyį** ą́tą́ kúúnu

>>   **If/when it rains(,)** the man swims**.**

When this is not a conditional or hypothetical situation a construction using *sekaw* 'time' as a pronoun is employed. It functionals as a pronoun which can then be modified by a verb:

Á̧tá̧ **yą́ą sȩ́kaw sáw síy̧į** kúúnu

The man swims when it rains**.**

Direction Marking

In Yaatláw body parts were grammaticalized into direction marking, both as nouns and grammaticalized into prepositions which function similarly to case particles.

Direction Nouns

Body parts are used to indicate direction in Yaatláw. As they arise from inalienable nouns they simply precede the noun that is being described:

yadi ya - the front of the house

fua yą - the inside of the hole

Direction nouns are outlined in the table below:

Root	Direction	Origin
ų̧tla	back , behind	buttocks
yadi	front	chest
if̧į́	(be)side	shoulder
kúńi	up / over	crown (of head)
mvyȩ́	down / under	foot
hláy	out (side)	skin
fua	in (side)	heart

Local Cases

Local cases in Yaatláw express the ideas of 'to', 'from' and 'through' as they appear in English as prepositions. In Yaatláw they function as cases in themselves, meaning that they do not need another case unlike the nouns above.

paa - ablative

The noun 'mouth' *paa* was gramaticalised into the ablative, equivalent in English to 'from'.

> la **paa tsúkí -** to go away from the clan.

úlu - allative

The allative marks movement towards a location.

> du sá̜ plá faw ń źí **úlu pá** tśi - you ride **towards the mountain**

ba̜w - perlative

The perlative indicates the thing through which someone or something moved. It is derived from the word 'stomach'

> Guy ya̜á̜ **ba̜w maamaa** lá̜lá̜ hlá.

>> They lead the people **through the forest.**

Other Case Marking:

Yaatláw uses particles to distinguish between other roles nouns can play in the sentence outside of possession or locative/lative relationships. An indirect object or a benefactor of an action is marked using *tuu* 'to help'.

> Kaw shú kia **tuu áw** fu
> I gave the fish **to the puffin**.

> Kaw shá̜á̜fé̜ ífuylí̜ **tuu klá̜ta fu** kúúnu.
> The man gathered mushrooms **for my brother**.

Yaatláw also distinguishes between the instrumental 'with' (using X) and comitative 'with' (alongside X). The former is marked using *są́* while the latter is marked using *yą́ą*.

> Adi **są́** klama yą̨sú.
> The man walks **with a stick.** (using it as a cane)
>
> Adi **yą́ą** klama yą̨sú.
> The man walks **with a stick.** (holding it in his hands)

A similative marker is also used to mean 'as a…, like…' and can be used with both nouns and stative verbs. It is derived from *pula* 'stain' and heavily used in a derivational manner as well.

> plá ndzú → 'like honey' = 'to be yellow'
> plá śíí → 'like something sharp'

Particles Summary

PARTICLES				
CASE		**DIRECTIONAL**		
Form	**Use**	**Form**	**Use**	
plá	similative*	tsáw	(spatial) locative	
ńu	genitive	paa	ablative	
yą́ą	comitative; temporal locative	úlu	allative	
tuu	dative / benefactive	bą̨w	perlative	
są́	instrumental			

*use is not limited to nouns, but is also used with verbs.

Animate Plural Affix

The Yaatláw plural affix assimilates in quality to the last vowel or semivowel of the word it modifies. For example:

ngaw 'animal'> ngawlų 'animals'

ąą 'duck'> ąąlą 'ducks'

shii 'eel' > shiilį 'eels'

The exception to this rule is nouns which have the vowel 'ę́', as this only occurs with high tone. These nouns follow the same pattern as ą:

ngę́ 'goose' > ngę́lą 'geese'

It is important to remember that plural marking is only used with animate nouns, and even then, only in cases where plurality is not otherwise marked.

Possession

The genitive particle ńu is used for alienable possession. For inalienable possession, the nouns are placed in apposition where the possessed noun comes before the possessor:

mvyę́ kúúnu → the man's foot (attached to his body)

ńu mvyę́ kúúnu → the man's foot (detached from his body)

Demonstratives

The demonstratives in Yaatláw make a three-way distance distinction: proximal, medial, and distal. Below is the table showing their forms and interpretations.

	Form	interpretation
proximal	śę́	this
medial	mi	that
distal	nlika	that there yonder / over there

Classifiers

Classifiers observe quite general usage in Yaatláw. Not only do they come between nouns and demonstratives and numerals, but also are required between nouns and following modifiers other than particles, which while still transparent in meaning have for the most part taken on grammatical function. For example:

Kaw shąąfę̨ **ífuy chę̨ nzę̨ witaypį́** kúúnu

The man gathered twenty mushrooms.

Kaw shąąfę̨ **ífuylį chę̨ sę̨** kúúnu

The man gathered these mushrooms.

Kaw shąąfę̨ **ífuylį chę̨ ráykį́** kúúnu

The man gathered white mushrooms.

Note that in cases where inalienable possession is used, classifiers are not required. The noun being modified can be treated as a single unit. The list below is a small subset of classifiers that are found in the text.

Form	Use
chę̨	edible mushrooms; words
ę̨sa	small areas, sentences, small collections of things
tśų́	mountains; large areas
kúú	people
hláw	small round things
ńźí	mammals, frogs + toads, land reptiles
ńiw	Long thin things
nzę̨	pairs of things

tsúa	pages; texts

Numbers

Number	Root	origin	Number	Root
1	tay	'thumb'	7	nday kaypį́
2	nzę́	'pair'	8	ąsę́ kaypį́
3	wita	'knuckle'	9	mita kaypį́
4	kuy	'finger(s)'	10	guy kaypį́
5	chu	'hand'	11	nju kaypį́
6	kaypį́	'fist'	12	nzáypį́

Number	Root	Number	Root
6	kaypį́ 'fist'	72 (2×36)	nzą́fya
12	nzą́ypį́	144 (12^2)	ką́wtlú 'catch of fish'
18	witaypį́	216 (6^3)	ichua 'village'
24	kuypį́	288 (2×144)	nzą́wtlú
30	chuapį́	1296 (6^4)	tsúkí 'clan'
36 (6^2)	áfya 'canoe'	*1728 (12^3)*	*súlį 'school of fish'*

Numbers in Yaatláw are seximal, or base-6. The words for 'one' to 'six' are partially derived from terms relating to hand gestures. For example, *nzę́* 'two' is a 'pair' (of fingers), five is a 'hand' (*chu*) and six is a 'fist' (*kaypį́*), directly inspired by a closed fist as one way of marking 10 in Chinese hand gestures.

To form numbers not of multiples of six a prenasalized variant of the numbers 1-5 is employed. This is derived from a reduced form of *ʎə̃ə̃, 'follow', which also became the comitative particle "yą́ą̧".

Multiples of six are were historically compounds of the form 'two six', though these have since reduced, i.e. *nzą́ypį́* 'twelve' 10_6. Powers of six were derived from other lexical roots: 100_6 (36) from canoe, 1000_6 (216) from village. Specific words for powers of 12, like *ką́wtlú* 'catch of fish' (144) and *súlį* 'school of fish' (1728) arose from the regional use of base 12 in counting fish, but their use is generally limited to this cultural sphere.

Like Malagasy, the order of the digits in a number in Yaatláw are ordered from smallest to largest. In other words, the number 3235_6 (743_{10}) is expressed as 5 + 6×3 + 36×2 + 216×3, rather than the reverse.

	×1	×2 *ese	×3 *uita	×4 *gui	×5 *ju
6^1	kaypį́	nzą́ypį́	witaypį́	kuypį́	chuapí
6^2	áfya	nzą́fya	witáfya	kúafya	chúafya
6^3	ichua	nzį́chua	witaychua	kiichua	chuy
6^4	tsúkí	ndzúkí	witsúkí	kutsúkí	chutsúkí

Verbs n'at:

Yaatláw verbs act as predicates without the use of copulae mya (past) and táńi (non-past).

Táńi kia tíaku.
[A] salmon is a fish.

Páátsu tíaku.
[The] salmon jumps.

These copulae can be used to indicate future and past tense, but this is more usually done through the use of aspectual marking using auxiliary verbs.

Táńi páátsu kia.
The fish will jump.

Mya páátsu kia
The fish jumped. (at an earlier time)

Kaw páátsu kia.
The fish jumped. (and the action is complete)

Other aspectual and modal distinctions are marked through auxiliary verbs in a similar fashion. The remaining aspects are presented below. The imperfective aspect highlights an action that is ongoing or continuous.

Yu shąąfę́ ífuylį yąsú.
The woman is gathering mushrooms.

The inchoative and terminative aspects mark the beginning state and final state of an action.

Ishį́ shąąfę́ ífuylį yąsú.
The woman is starting to gather mushrooms.

Kúchu shąąfę́ ífuylį yąsú.
The woman is finishing gathering mushrooms.

The iterative aspect marks a verb in the habitual sense or that an action occurs over multiple instances

Fą shąąfę́ ífuylį yąsú.
The woman usually gathers mushrooms / gathers mushrooms often.

The imperative and prohibitive moods govern commands only differing by polarity, the imperative in the positive while the prohibitive in the negative.

La bąątu mvyę́ maa!
Hide under the tree!

Tśaw bąątu mvyę́ maa!
Don't hide under the tree!

The compound *nzhua nji* expresses what we have called a hortative mood. It can be used with or without pronouns to express a range of things which ought to be done, and combined with the imperative and prohibitive to express stronger commands:

Nzhua nji bąątu mvyę́ maa tśi.
You should hide under the tree.

Nzhua nji bąątu mvyę́ maa fulų!
Let's all hide under the tree!

Nzhua nji bąątu mvyę́ maa.
One should hide under the tree; it's good to hide under trees.

La nzhua nji bąątu mvyę́ maa tśi!
You must hide under the tree!

Tśaw nzhua nji bąątu mvyę́ maa tśi!
You mustn't hide under the tree!

The conditional and potential moods govern actions that might occur depending on the relationship to another action or circumstance, the conditional needing to be while the potential may stand alone. The optative and dubitative moods govern some irrealis circumstances, where the optative details wants and desires while the dubitative details doubts or reservations.

Tlua śę́ę́ wala.
The boy may be strong (if…).

Nday śę́ę́ wala.
The boy can be strong.

Chį́ śę́ę́ wala.
The boy wants to be strong *or* may the boy be strong!

Shu śę́ę́ wala.
The boy doubts he is strong.

The lexical sources for many of the aforementioned aspects and moods can be found in the table at the end of the verb section.

Other Verbal Marking:

The valency of the verb may be decreased through the passive, using the auxiliary verb *nzhua* 'to suffer'.

Uńį ngę́lą chabą.
The girl hates geese.

Nzhua uńį ngę́lą.
The geese are hated.

The auxiliary verb *guy* 'to take' can be used/interpreted in one of two ways: either as a causative to increase the valency of the verb by one or as a resultative, to mark the result of the action; the latter is the way *guy* is understood when used derivationally.

Áypa ngę́.
The goose floats.

Guy áypa ngę́ chabą.
The girl makes the goose float.

Kaw ųfú ngę́
The goose laid eggs.

Kaw **guy** ųfú ngę́.
The goose was made to lay eggs.

Verb Negation:

Negation of verbs in Yaatláw is done primarily through a combination of a transitive auxiliary verb and the light verb *nji* meaning 'to do', but this has been semantically eroded.

The auxiliary verb *faa* 'to miss' indicated that something was not done involuntarily, through inability or inopportunity. As such the construction "faa nji V" means "to not V involuntarily".

The prohibitive mood is expressed with the verb *tśaw* 'avoid', which can be considered the companion to *la* 'go' which marks the imperative.

Serial Verb Constructions:

Yaatláw can use serial verb constructions to form new words. Some of these patterns are more frequent than others, and are outlined below

Verb 1	Verb 2	
verb of motion	yą́ą́ 'follow'	To move through somewhere for the sake of it
verb of motion	są́ 'use	To go through somewhere to somewhere else.
tų'á 'hunt'	action verb	to plan to do something; to do something with determination/good reason
ichay 'hunt'	action verb	to do something sparingly, specifically out of necessity; to do something in reverence

Verbal Marking Summary:

Form	Use	Root
TENSE		
mya	past copula	*mʌa 'to be downstream'
táńi	non-past copula / general future	*tani 'to be upstream'

ASPECT		
kaw	perfective / general past	*gau 'to stand'
yu	imperfective	*iu 'to come'
ishį́	inchoative	*iʃə̃ 'to be born'
kúchu	terminative	*kud͡ʒu 'to die'
fą	iterative	*və̃ 'to return'
MOOD		
la	imperative	*la 'to go'
tśaw	prohibitive	*d͡ʒʌau 'to avoid'
tlua	conditional	*dlua 'to say'
ndáy	potential	*ə̃tai 'to know'
chį́	optative	*t͡ʃiə̃ 'to want'
shu	dubitative	*ʒu 'to doubt'
nzhua nji	hortative	*ə̃ʒua ə̃d͡ʒi 'to be done'
OTHER VERB STUFF		
guy	resultative	*ə̃gui 'to take'
nzhua	passive	*ə̃ʒua 'to suffer'
faa	negative	*vaa 'to miss'
plá	similative	*pula 'stain'
DEVERBATIVE PARTICLES AND AFFIXES		
-kú	agentive	*kuunu 'man'
-*i	nominaliser	*i (goes back to proto-lang)

Yaatláw uses correlative conjunctions in places where simple apposition does not sufficiently express the relationship between two phrases. See the following:

Resultative: guy sáw … áypa … lit. 'drop x and y will float'

This takes the place of single word conjunctions as are used in English, where we might be able to say X, so Y.

A number of these expressions came about through early agricultural metaphors, and as such the following segment varies based on the outcome.

Contrastive: although x, but y → guy tlii … tśuy nji [POS] / kúchu nji [NEG]

tśuy → "to sprout, to be green" yields a positive result
kúchu → "to die" yields a negative result

To compare with English again, you could just use a conjunction like 'but' in this situation in translation but Yaatláw requires both elements.

The Yaatláw Script

The Yaatláw script is a complex syllabary in which every syllable has a base glyph which can be modified by the addition of diacritics. The base glyphs are outlined in the PDF provided alongside the torch.

It will help the reader to know a few extra details:

1. the series of voiced stops in Yaatláw emerged from the clusters of nasals and laterals in Yaachay, the proto-language. As such, *ba* is written <mla>
2. The vowel ę́ę́ is in complementary distribution with ąą, though ę́ and ą́ are not.

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Yaatláw to English Lexicon

Yaatláw uses the following word classes, provided below with their abbreviations:

Noun (n.): (pron.) pronoun ; (p. n.) proper noun;

Verb (v.): (vi.) intransitive verb; (vt.) transitive verb; (vs.) stative verb

 Classifier (cl.): the definition is the things that are classified. See above.

(p.) particle; (dem.) demonstrative; (num.) numeral

_____

A

ąątséétsé (n.) community
atséétsé (vt.) to bond (emotionally)
ayaw (n.) daughter
áypa (vi.) to float

B

bąątu (vt.) to hide

C

chį́fua (vt.) to want
chį́plį́ (pron.) why
chųyąą (vi.) to continue; to carry on doing something

E

ębu'ų́bu (vt.) to be rich in something; to have a lot of something

F

fífyi (n.) *maqui*, a berry producing tree
fu (pron.) first person singular ; "I"

G

guy (vt.) to take (p.) RESULTATIVE - see documentation; this is similar to the function of a causative in other languages.
gyuayaa (n.) text, writing

H

hláw (cl.) small round things - see relevant documentation
hlę́fa (vs.) to be quiet
hlía (vi.) to slip

I

ikyi (vs.) to be far

K

kaw (v.) to stand (p.) PERFECTIVE, PAST (general)
Káwti (p. n.) Coté (a surname)
kaypį́ (n.) fist (num.) six (decimal), 10 in seximal
klu (p.) 1. EMPHATIC (used at the end of a sentence) 2. VOCATIVE (following nouns)

L

la (vi.) to go (p.) IMPERATIVE
lawtsí (vi.) to leave; to go out

M

maa (n.) tree (cl.) plant taller than a human
maamaa (n.) forest
maamaafúa (n.) cloud forest
mamą (n.) mother
mamą̧yaw (n.) mother and daughter
michúafi (n.) year

N

ndlą̧wkíí (n.) basket
ndlua (n.) story
ńu (v.) to grasp; to hold (p.) GENITIVE
Nuucháánuhláta (p. n.) Nuu-chah-nulth (Nuučaańułʔatḥ)
nzą́fya (num.) 200 in seximal

P

paa (n.) 1. mouth 2. source of a river (p.) ABLATIVE
pą̧są (n.) honeybee
pą̧tsáá (vi.) to stop, to pause

pę́ę́ (pron.) we, inclusive (see relevant section for details)
plaatú (vi.) to step

S

saw (vi.) to fly
sáw (vi.) to fall ; to drop
      guy sáw (vt.) to drop sth.
sayshu (adv.) still
sę́kaw (n.) time; when
síí (n.) berry
shąąfę́ (vt.) to gather, to collect
Shááluta (p. n.) Charlotte
shlí (vi.) 1.to flow 2. to be based on (with ablative particle *paa*)
su (vt.) to crush
sų́tsú (n.) (a natural) beehive

T

tąyśu (vt.) to answer; to reply
títsaw (vt.) to look for
tlá (vt.) to see
tlúú (n.) honorific form of address for an older woman
tsapą́w (vi.) to run
tsáw (v.) to sit; (p.) LOCATIVE - see relevant documentation
Tsíshááta (p. n.) Tseshaht (ċišaaʔatḥ)
tsúa (n.) bark (cl.) pages, texts
tsúkí (n.) clan (num.) 10000 in seximal
tų́ (prep.) until

U

u'áy (vt.) to ask

W

witaychua (num.) 3000 in seximal

Y

yąą (vt.) to follow (p.) see documentation for use as particle
yu (vi.) to come (p.) IMPERFECTIVE - see verb section