Discovering Uncompahgre (2)

Northern Ute language  (Uto-Aztecan family, Southern Numic branch)

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1.1 A visitor

1  – Hey, you!  Who are you?  
2  I don’t know you.  
3  – Well, you don’t know me, but I know you.  
4  _ — How come?  How do you know me?_  
5  
6  – I’ve heard about you;  
7  and I’ve seen your picture.  
8  I even saw you on TV the other day.  
9  Everybody knows you!  
10  
11  You’re the leader of this community, right?  
12  _ — That’s correct._  
13  But who are you?  
14  – Oh yes, sorry, I haven’t introduced myself.  
15  _ I’m a foreigner here._  
16  _ I want to learn about the language here._  
17  
18  I’d like to help the community maintain it.  
19  
20  – Oh really?  But who sent you here?  
21  – I’m a friend of Billy’s, in Salt Lake.  
22  _ I think he’s your cousin._  
23  _ — Yes, that’s right._  

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— He said the people wanted to revive their language and that I should come here and try to help.

— Oh OK. *In that case, welcome to our community!* There’s a lot of work to do!

— Let’s do it together.

You will teach me the language, and I will help you write a dictionary or a book of old stories, in the language.

— Good idea! *Come in, let’s sit and talk together.*

### 1.2 Wildcat gets a new face

A Uintah–Ute story

Adapted from Stith Thompson, 1995, *Folk tales of the North American Indians*, p.68.

Once upon a time, Wildcat.

In those times, he had a long nose and tail.

One day, he was sleeping on a rock, when Coyote came along.

He pushed Wildcat’s nose and tail in,

At noon, Wildcat woke up,

and noticed his short nose and tail “What’s the matter with me?” he asked.

Then he understood what had happened.
“Oh, it’s surely Coyote again!”

“He’s the one who did it”, he said.

So he began to hunt for him.

Now, Coyote was sleepy and had lain down.

Wildcat saw him sleeping over there, he came closer and sat down beside him.

Then suddenly he pulled out Coyote’s nose and tail.

They were short before, and he made them long.

Then he ran off.

After a while, he woke up,

and he saw his long nose and tail.

He understood that Wildcat has played a trick on him

just like he had done to him before.

This is why coyotes have a long nose and tail, until today.

1.3 Notes