This page intentionally left blank
CALIFORNIA INDIAN LANGUAGES

VICTOR GOLLA
To my colleagues, past, present and future
Tillotson was trying, mostly in vain, to make me understand Yuki grammar. Teaching me the language was not to be thought of in the same sense as everyday ethnography—it was a special gift of a magical nature which he made to me as a token of friendship. Just as the ability existed for a famous singer to pass on his songs to a protégé at his death, so could a man pass on his knowledge of language to a student from another culture. For the present I would learn a little Yuki, but not very much. But in a few years he would die, and his knowledge of the language would pass on to me. Then I would think about it, have it on my mind constantly, and if I should be in company with other Yuki, could join right in “just natural like”. . . . Though a man might instruct several people in the art of Yuki conversation, only the one to whom he passed on the power would ever really understand it.

GEORGE M. FOSTER, A Summary of Yuki Culture, 1944