Trends in Linguistics

State-of-the-Art Reports 15

Editor

Werner Winter

Mouton de Gruyter
Berlin · New York 1989

Athapaskan Linguistics

Current Perspectives on a Language Family

Edited by

Eung-Do Cook and Keren D. Rice

Mouton de Gruyter
Berlin · New York 1989

HP020435

Table of Contents

HP020436

Introduction 1
Eung-Do Cook and Keren D. Rice

Problems of Phonemic Representation in Beaver 63
Gillian Story

A Report on the Nature of Carrier Pitch Phenomena: With Special Reference to the Verb Prefix Tonomechanics 99
Gillian Story

Chilcotin Tone and Verb Paradigms 145
Eung-Do Cook

Sekani *ghə*: Conjugation or Mode Prefix? 199
Sharon Hargus

The Phonology of Fort Nelson Slave Stem Tone: Syntactic Implications 229
Keren D. Rice

Conjugation and Mode in Athapaskan Languages: Evidence for Two Positions 265
Keren D. Rice and Sharon Hargus

Aspects of Logical Form in Navajo 317
Andrew Barss, Ken Hale, Ellavina Tsosie Perkins, Margaret Speas

The *bi*-Construction and Pronominal Arguments in Apachean 335
Merton Sandoval and Eloise Jelinek

Lexical versus Syntactic Projection: The Configurationality of Slave 379
Leslie Saxon

Why There is Nothing Missing in Navajo Relative Clauses 407
Mary Ann Willie

Cohesion and Discourse Structure in Three Genres of Navajo Discourse 439
Lynn McCreedy

The Athapaskan First Duoplural Subject Prefix 487
Gillian Story

Some Linguistic Insights into Dena'ina Prehistory 533
James Kari

Directional Systems in Athapaskan and Na-Dene 575
Jeff Leer

Index 623

Introduction

Eung-Do Cook and Keren Rice

HP020437

The last collection of papers on Athapaskan linguistics was published in 1963 (Hoijer, et. al.). Since that time, there has been considerable research on Athapaskan languages, and, one hopes, much progress made in understanding the structure of the Athapaskan languages. This volume represents an attempt to show the state of the art in Athapaskan linguistics in the mid 1980's. It includes papers in diachronic linguistics, phonology and morphology, areas with long histories of study within the field of Athapaskan linguistics. It also includes papers in syntax, discourse, directionals and ethnolinguistics, areas that have been studied in any depth only much more recently.

In this introduction, we discuss several areas that have been of importance in the field of Athapaskan studies in the past twenty-five years. The discussion is not intended to be exhaustive, either in terms of topics or of literature represented. It is meant to give a flavor of the kind of work being done in the field, and will hopefully interest the reader in pursuing Athapaskan studies further.

Section 1 of this introduction deals with diachronic studies in the Athapaskan languages. The remaining studies take synchronic topics as a focus. Section 2 concerns phonology and morphology, section 3 syntax, and section 4 discourse structure.

1. Diachronic studies

A major focus in Athapaskan studies has been comparative/historical research (Sapir, Li, Hoijer, Krauss, and Leer, among others). In this section we examine two issues that have occupied considerable attention in recent diachronic work. The first of these is the question of genetic subclassification: how are the languages within Athapaskan and within the larger grouping Na-Dene related to one another? This issue is discussed in section 1.1. The second issue is one of reconstruction: what is the structure of Proto-Athapaskan? In this area, questions of both phonology and morphology have been pursued. Some of these questions are discussed in section 1.2.

1.1 Genetic classification

The genetic relationships of the languages within the Athapaskan family and of those within the larger classifications of Athapaskan-Eyak and Na-Dene have been topics of major interest within Athapaskan studies. In this section, the literature on genetic classification both within Athapaskan and at the larger levels is reviewed.

1.1.1 Athapaskan

We begin by discussing genetic relationships within the Athapaskan family itself. Three major subgroups are generally recognized, Northern Athapaskan, Pacific Coast Athapaskan, and Apachean. Krauss & Golla (1981) recognize twenty-three languages in Northern Athapaskan, eight in Pacific Coast Athapaskan, and seven in Apachean, giving a total of thirty-eight distinct languages, not all of which are still spoken. While Pacific Coast Athapaskan and Apachean are each more or less homogeneous, there exists extensive diversity in the phonology and morphology among the Northern Athapaskan languages, even between two very close neighbors (see Kari this volume). Hoijer (1963) attempted to account for this diversity with a Stammbaum model of genetic subclassification. This attempt to use a family tree model has generally not produced significant results within the Northern subgroup. As demonstrated by Krauss (1973), Hoijer's (1963) taxonomic classification of Athapaskan based on the development of the Proto-Athapaskan (PA) stem-initial consonants has not resulted in meaningful subclassifications. Krauss & Golla's selection of phonological features based on tonogenesis and the pattern of consonantal and vocalic developments from the PA system and of two grammatical features further demonstrates that strict linguistic criteria such as systematic phonetic correspondences and shared innovation do not provide a satisfactory subclassification for Athapaskan, particularly in the northern group. Krauss (1982:74), in a discussion of classification within Northern Athapaskan, concludes that 'Northern Athapaskan is traditionally not a set of discrete languages but rather a cohesive complex, in which neighbors routinely communicate across dialect and language boundaries through the whole area...'.

The problem of determining genetic classification is not unique to Athapaskan, but one frequently encountered in the application of the family tree model. The fact that the family tree model does not yield a unique classification of the Athapaskan languages does not necessarily mean that an extensive comparative analysis based on phonological and grammatical correlations is without value for the study of comparative Athapaskan. While it may not be easy to determine which features are shared innovations, parallel developments, or borrowings, the identification of unusual semantic contrasts and of grammatical features deeply ingrained in the morphological system as well as of systematic phonological developments will pave the way for a more comprehensive and meaningful subclassification, which will eventually yield information at least about interaction between dialects and languages if not about closer genetic affinity.

HP020438

A major question that one hopes to answer in studying genetic classification is whether all contemporary Athapaskan languages are of the same status genetically, having branched off more or less at the same time from one ancestral language, Proto-Athapaskan (PA), without any well-defined intermediate stage(s). While it is difficult to prove any such stages, it is equally difficult to imagine that the variation within the family stems from one homogeneous parent language. The internal structure of Athapaskan, particularly of the Northern branch, continues to be worthy of study.

1.1.2 Beyond Athapaskan

Genetic classifications at a more distant level than Athapaskan have been proposed. Sapir (1915, 1929) introduced Na-Dene[1] as one of the six language phyla of North America. Sapir included in this phylum the Athapaskan languages, Tlingit and Haida. The probable and confirmed genetic relationships based on more recent findings following Sapir's original proposal are summarized in the family tree shown in (1).

(1)

```
        Na-Dene
        /   \
  Haida     Proto-Tlingit-Athapaskan-Eyak
                /                 \
            Tlingit        Proto-Athapaskan-Eyak
                              /        \
                           Eyak      Proto-Athapaskan
                                   /       |          \
                          Northern   Pacific Coast   Apachean
                             |          |              |
                          Koyukon     Hupa           Navajo
                          Kutchin     Mattole        Apache
                          Sarcee      Wailaki        Lipan
                          Chipewyan   Kato           San Carlos
                          etc.        etc.           etc.
```


Krauss (1964, 1965) presented ample evidence that Eyak, a now extinct isolate, is genetically related to Athapaskan, and proposed Proto-Athapaskan-Eyak (PAE). More recently, Leer (1979) and Krauss & Leer (1981) proposed an intermediate stage, Pre-Proto-Athapaskan (PPA) that is not shown on the tree in (1). PPA falls between the two better known proto-languages, PAE and PA. PPA is suggested based on several phonological processes that occurred between PPA and PA, including palatalization (PPA $*\underset{\smile}{k}^{w}$ > PA $*t\check{s}^{w}$) and vowel constriction, a process transferring laryngeal features of a consonant to a vowel (PPA V? > PA $\mathring{V}$). The proposed level of PPA raises a number of questions. What is the relationship between PPA and PA? What is the relationship between PAE and PPA: how different is PPA from PAE? What is the phonological status of constricted vowels and other segments that appear to differentiate PPA from PA? Some of these questions will be examined in later sections.

Krauss & Leer (1981) have put forward substantial material indicating a positive genetic affinity of Tlingit to Athapaskan-Eyak, although they are cautious not to pronounce that their 'provisionally' established set of 'correspondences' (p. 150) constitute definite proof of common ancestry. In any event, Tlingit's place in Na-Dene is much more positive than that of Haida. Based on evidence provided primarily by Levine (1979) and Krauss (1979), Krauss & Golla (1981:67) consider Sapir's inclusion of Haida within Na-Dene to be 'untenable.' This view is not shared by all scholars. Pinnow has been tenaciously pursuing Sapir's hypothesis and has recently produced a set of monographs in an effort to provide evidence for Haida's genetic relationship to Na-Dene (Pinnow 1985). Pinnow has probably presented the most extensive and positive arguments one can hope for within the limits of available data and methods. Although Haida may not prove to be a parallel case to Wiyot and Yurok of California (another insightful observation by Sapir (1913),

HP020439