"One Did Not Just Say Anything": Chiricahua Apache War-Path Vocabulary as Linguistic Ideology

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Introduction

In 1940, Morris Opler and Harry Hoijer provided a useful semantico-referential (See Silverstein 1979) analysis of Chiricahua Apache (Athapaskan) Raid and War-path vocabulary for pre-extensive Anglo-American contact by interviewing three elder Chiricahua men.[2] This paper will outline a second type of analysis that should be applied to the same material, namely one concerned with the pragmatic-indexical function (2) of the vocabulary. By pragmatic-indexical, I mean the context creating discursively emergent meanings of words that gain meaning in the immediacy of an utterance, ie.e., the deictic ability of language to "point" (see Hanks 1990).[3] I adopt Silverstein's (1976, 1979, 1985) distinction between the purposeful action or goal-oriented function, function (1), and the indexical or pragmatic function, function (2), that occurs in real-time interaction. Following Silverstein (1979), I will suggest how this

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2. This paper owes a great debt to the memory of Morris Opler and Henry Hoijer. They provided the most extensive ethnographic work on Chiricahua Apache language and culture (See Opler 1937, 1941, 1942; Hoijer 1938 for a sample) and more generally on Apachean culture. The Chiricahua now reside around Ft. Sill, Oklahoma and on the Mescalero Reservation in New Mexico. Originally, they lived along the Arizona-New Mexico-Mexico border (Opler 1941). The language is dying and in a way this paper is also dedicated to reviving interest in Chiricahua Apache. Chircahua Apache is a Southern Athapaskan language closely related to Mescalero and Western Apache and more distantly to Navajo, Jicarilla, Kiowa-Apache, and the now dead Lipan Apache. I follow the standard Athapaskan orthography with these distinctions: For vowels I use the following: a = oral; ą = nasal. á = high tone; a = low tone. Voiceless alveolar lateral = ɬ. Voiceless velar fricative = x. ń is a syllabic nasal with high tone. ' is a glottal stop. Ch = voiceless palatal affricate; j = voiced palatal affricate; sh = voicelsess palatal fricative; gh = voiced velar fricative. Hoijer (1946) calls fricatives "spirants" but I have opted for the more common terminology. Jules Henry was able to located a fourth Chiricahua man who knew the vocabulary (opler and Hoijer 1940). However, this man was unable to add any new lexical items. I would like to thank Eric Morgan and Rachael Stryker, who read and commented on various drafts of this paper. Mistakes are the responsibility of the author.

vocabulary indexed and helped perpetuate a specific linguistic ideology of the Chiricahua at the time under consideration by Opler and Hoijer (1940). In particular, I will describe a linguistic ideology that concerned the importance of proper language usage and helped to perpetuate a certain type of language conservatism -- a hesitancy to borrow foreign words.

A pragmatic-indexical analysis of the Chiricahua Apache War-path vocabulary is an important contribution. While Opler and Hoijer's work is an exemplary semantico-referential study, it fails to address the discursive and pragmatic realities of the vocabulary (Silverstein 1976; Urban 1991). Although Hoijer (see 1945a, 1945b, 1946a, 1946b) has provided linguists with excellent descriptions of Southern Athapaskan languages, he largely ignores the context in which narratives or other verbal phenomenon occurs. This is an understandable fact, due to Hoijer's emphasis on salvage linguistics,[4] but it precludes an examination of language as motivated and intentional action (Hymes 1974, 1985; Rushforth 1981). Likewise, Opler, who was not a linguist, was more concerned with the behaviors associated with young Apache warriors than with the way their vocabulary discursively situated them, both at the time the vocabulary was in its traditional use and during the ethnographic interview.

In what follows below, I will briefly outline the nature of the Chiricahua Apache Raid and War-path vocabulary. This includes a discussion of who was to use the vocabulary and when. From there I will discuss the indexical functions of the vocabulary. Finally, I will place the vocabulary in the larger Chiricahua Apache linguistic ideology of the time.

The Dikǫǫhé Vocabulary

Opler and Hoijer (1940) have expertly discussed the features of the vocabulary of the **dikǫǫhé**, or novice warrior. The general information needed for this discussion, however, is as follows. First, the vocabulary consisted of at least 78 terms. Second, these terms were all nouns, created through verb abstractions, and referred to items likely to be encountered during a warring or raiding party. Thus one finds words such as: **bágózhóné**, 'that which is good for one' which means 'bow', **beexąhé'igáné**, 'that by means of which one is quickly killed' or 'spear', and **ditliidé**, 'that which discharges wind' or 'gun'. Third, as can be seen from the above examples, they were often circumlocutions or metaphorical in nature. For instance, **gołndidé**, 'that which tells a story' understood as 'fire' is a prime example of the metaphorical nature of the vocabulary.[5] Fourth, many of the nouns included an archaic relative enclitic "**é**",

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3. Deictics, or those linguistic devices that act as pointers to person relations (pronouns), spatial relations ("here" and "there"), temporal relations (tense), and the like, are indices. Let me add that deictics, and indices in general, do not point out "things in the world." Rather, they point out relations to things in the world. These relations to "things" are cultural, in that they are discursively circulated and made meaningful. See also Silverstein, 1976.

4. See Hoijer, 1972, on the now-dead Tonkawa language and 1975, on Lipan Apache language.

5. See Basso (1976) for a discussion of the logic behind certain Western apache metaphors.

like **gołndidé** and **ditliidé**. Fifth, the vocabulary was to be used by only two sets of people -- male elders or shamans, and the **dikǫǫhé** on their first four warring or raiding parties. Finally, the vocabulary was to be used, ideally, by the **dikǫǫhé** only during the raiding and war parties and by the shaman or elder while teaching the **dikǫǫhé**.[6]

Discussion

Obviously, the use of the vocabulary by a **dikǫǫhé** pragmatically indexed that they were **dikǫǫhé**. It also indexed that they were on a raiding or warring party. Further, due to the referential nature of the vocabulary, it was often called upon, and thus, continually indexed a **dikǫǫhé** as occupying a specific cultural identity within a specific cultural occupation. Proper use also indexed an ability and willingness to learn the vocabulary and to accept that there were indeed appropriate and inappropriate types of speech.

For the shaman or elder teaching, function (1) or purposeful act, indexed, function (2), a certain asymmetrical knowledge relationship, specifically language knowledge. Likewise, the nouns, with the archaic relative enclitic **"-é"** also indexes a prior discourse. For the archaic relative **"é"** is also familiar to nouns in traditional narratives. Thus one finds, for example, **gólizhnłchiné**, 'tip beetle' as a character in a Coyote narrative told by Sam Kenoi (Hoijer 1938: 116; see Webster 1997). It should also be noted that these traditional narratives, like Coyote narratives, were told with a specific narrative enclitic **-ná'a**, 'so they say' and in specific situations, Coyote narratives needed to be told at night and during cold weather (See Opler 1941: 438). Thus a specific discourse marker, **-ná'a**, and specific speaking restrictions, at night and in the cold, indexed that a specific type of narrative was being told. The archaic relative enclitic '?' indexically links these two discourse events, war path vocabulary and traditional narratives, and these discourses index that specific language forms are to be used in specific situations. For example, they were not used in everyday speaking (See Hoijer 1938). Thus we find function (2) influencing function (1), as has been argued by Silverstein (1979, 1985).

That a specific linguistic ideology, understood by Silverstein as "sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use" (1979: 193), was circulating can be revealed by looking at some of the explanations given by Opler and Hoijer's consultants. First, there was a belief among the men who had been **dikǫǫhé**, that the language they had used was "a sacred language (Opler and Hoijer 1940:623)" or "a certain ceremonial set of words" (Opler and Hoijer 1940: 623). Second, there was a belief that this language made one different and was restricted to a certain activity. Consider the words of Opler and Hoijer's consultants: "These language terms are used only by the **dikǫǫhé** . . . the **dikǫǫhé** just uses the special terms when on the war-path." (Opler and Hoijer 1940: 624), or, "One who is **dikǫǫhé** is different from others on the war-path. . . he uses a war-path speech", and finally, "We were called **dikǫǫhé** during the period. We were taught a certain ceremonial set of words to use on the war-path. Women did not know them" (Ibid.).

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6. See Goodwin and Basso (1971) for a discussion of the Western Apache raiding and war-path vocabulary.

Clearly, a particular linguistic ideology existed about the use of the war-path vocabulary. Likewise, a belief about the compartmentalized nature of this vocabulary was also manifested in the opinion that the vocabulary was "used only on the war-path" (Opler and Hoijer 1940:623). In the words of Kroskrity, "a distinctive linguistic variety . . . (was) dedicated to a well demarcated arena of use" (1992a: 303; see also Kroskrity 1992b).

That Chiricahua Apache had other such compartmentalized linguistic rules, using the polite form with relatives-through-marriage (See Opler 1937: 214-224 for the relevant discussion), the prohibition of using the name of the dead and on a specific fourth person pronominal (deictic) when talking about the deceased (See Opler 1941: 475-476; see also Hoijer 1938), and the specific narrative enclitic and setting of traditional narratives (as I outlined above; see also Opler 1941:438 for discussion), should not be surprising. This Chiricahua linguistic ideology about the power of words was contributed to or perpetuated by the pragmatic indexes of compartmentalized linguistic forms such as the war-path vocabulary (See Webster 1997). Or as one of Hoijer's consultants stated: ". . .one did not just say anything to someone. If one spoke in that way to someone they hated, it happened exactly that way. For that reason, one did not say just anything. . ." (1938: 18).

Certain linguistic forms, specifically the war-path vocabulary, were understood as having specific roles. Using these forms, function (1), indexed that the speaker held a certain socio-cultural position and that they were occupied with certain culturally-defined activities, function (2).

A final indexical relation occurs in the ethnographic interviews conducted by Hoijer and Opler. The three elderly Chiricahua men, by producing raid and war-path vocabulary, indexed or indicated to Opler and Hoijer that they had been dikǫǫhé and more than likely, that they had been warriors. Thus, in the interaction between Opler, Hoijer, and their consultants, the elderly men were able to pragmatically situate themselves in a place of cultural authority (function 2), even after the vocabulary had fallen out of use.

Conclusion

I would like to suggest, following Kroskrity (1992a) concerning the Arizona Tewa, that it was this linguistic ideology that helped maintain a Chiricahua linguistic conservatism (See Sherzer 1976) that had incorporated only "nineteen words . . .of Spanish origin (Hoijer 1939:110)" in over three hundred years of Spanish-Chiricahua contact. This ideology, understood as compartmentalized language forms and settings, pragmatically indexed, helped create a situation where Spanish was not incorporated into Chiricahua Apache but was, rather, kept as a distinct entity, much like the war-path vocabulary.

In conclusion, it should be clear that the raid and war-path vocabulary was pragmatically meaningful. It indexed a speaker's socio-cultural position as well as reinforced a linguistic ideology about the compartmentalized nature of linguistic forms. A semantico-referential analysis, while useful, narrows the range of meaning and therefore a pragmatic-indexical analysis can help to understand the full range of meanings that were evoked by the raid and war-path vocabulary. Stated in a different way, the vocabulary was more than a collection of words; it was a way individuals could position themselves in on-going discourse. To use the

vocabulary was to do more than refer to a "bow" or a "spear"; it was to make a statement about one's socio-cultural position and one's willingness to behave in a culturally appropriate manner. It was, in effect, to become a Chiricahua Apache.

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