Kayla Carpenter
June 26, 2014

EXAMINING SOCIOLINGUISTIC VARIATION IN HISTORICAL HUPA TEXTS:
CONSERVATIVE STYLE REINTERPRETED

I.   INTRODUCTION

This paper examines several optional phonological rules labeled as 'free-variation' in Hupa-Chilula. Today any variation is often ascribed by remaining speakers to dialectal difference between the historic Redwood Creek regional dialect and that of the Hoopa Valley. In this paper argue that free variation found in historical Hupa texts that is the weakening of certain word-initial consonants /kʸ/, /n/ and /y/ to glottal stop /ʔ/ better correlate with a sociolect patterning of variation than that of regional dialect.

II.   DIALECTS

As many as six potential distinct but intelligible dialect regions of Hupa-Chilula language once existed, corresponding to the Hoopa Valley, Bald Hills, Redwood Creek, North Fork Mad River, South Fork Trinity River and New River regional territories. By 1914 Goddard noted dialect differences in one informant of Redwood Creek who use /kʸ/, where Hupa used /x/ (p. 291).

III.   VARIATION

The variation examined in this paper are word-initial consonants /kʸ/, /n/ and /y/ which either optionally delete or undergo lenition to glottal stop /ʔ/. Examples include:

(1) niɬtaq ~ ʔiɬtaq   'black oak' ['the ones that are between each other' i.e. grow in clumps) < niɬ-, reciprocal postpositional object + P -tʰaq + i 'that which, relative enclitic.] (Sapir and Golla 2001:956)

(2) ninisʔaːn - ʔinisʔaːn – 'world, land, country, surface of the earth, mountain' [contracted from nini-saʔaːn-i 'the ground that lies there' < nini-, combining form of ninʔ 'earth ground', + si-ʔaːn stative neuter '(a round) lies there' + I 'that which relative enclitic] (Sapir and Golla 2001:957)

(3) yineh-tʰaw ~ ʔineh-tʰaw – 'potatoe, edible bulb' ['what is among (things) underground' < yiniw (<nin-yiw 'undergrown') + P-tʰaw-I 'at, among P' +i 'that which, relative enclitic.]

(4) kʸ'isiyaːn ~ ʔisdiyaːn – 'old person' [kʸ'i- indefinite 3ʳᵈ person subject + si thematic prefix + d classifer prefix, thematic prefix + yaːn 'someone who is old']

A contemporary speaker identified the full forms with /n/ as Redwood Creek dialect. This led to my examination of possible dialectal and sociolectal explanations for the otherwise 'free variation' demonstrated in words such as (1) – (4).

IV. METHODS

Corpus study 92 texts from Sapir and Golla (2001) texts, and texts collected by Golla in 1962-1963 featuring 8 speakers. 57 of those texts produced 181 tokens. I coded presence of the initial consonant as 1 and lenition/deletion as 0 in my data.

I compared this with sociolinguistic variables of individual speaker, ancestral village, tribelet (defined by –*xwe* type), speaker sex, known leadership roles in ceremony or rituals, text genre, obviative subject marking and whether the same form precedes the token. I also used morpheme form as a variable. I did not include speaker age as ages were not available for all speakers.

Text Genres
1) Ceremonies   13 texts
2) Traditional Life   34 texts
3) Doctoring and the Spirit World   10 texts
4) Medicine Formulas   10 texts
5) Prayers   1 text
6) Myths and Tales   10 Texts
7) Legends and Traditional History   7 texts
8) Recent History   3 texts

After coding each variant and variable, I used the program R to do a logistic regression to determine if any particular variable could predict the occurrence of either variant. Upon a first pass and determining which variables were the most predictive, I did a second pass with only those that were the most predictive. Those variables were Speaker, Morpheme and Genre.

V. RESULTS

The single most important variable in both logistic regressions was the variable of speaker, and in particular the speaker Emma Frank, an Indian Doctor who was born in Redwood Creek. In the first logistic regression Frank produced the most glottal stop initial variants with a p-value of 5.67e-05 and co-efficient value of -3.435. Morpheme 6, Genre 3 and Morpheme 5 were also the most predictive.

Table – Significant Variables – Logistic Regression

Variable	P-Value	Coefficient Value	Standard Error
Speaker- Emma Frank	5.67e-05	-3.435e+00	8.532e-01
Morpheme 6 - *nis*	.049	-2.976e+00	1.515e+00
Genre 3 – Traditional Life	.02	-2.301e+00	1.025e+00
Morpheme 5 – *nin? > nis*	.08	-2.431e+00	1.395e+00

VI. CONCLUSION

The results are confounding, but run counter to the characterization that Hoopa Valley speakers lenite more. Overall Emma Frank lenited 30/45 or 67% of tokens. The other informant who had significant numbers of lenited forms was Sam Brown of Hoopa Valley with 13/99 or 13% of tokens. Emma Frank was considered a conservative speaker. Today those who use these forms are also considered conservative speakers.

For references, email kaylarae@berkeley.edu