

Construal of a person in Arapaho complaints

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Gossiping in Arapaho culture



The background of the study

- Preliminary research on person reference terms shows slight deviations from the basic principles (Sacks & Schegloff 1979).
- Preference for kin terms is more significant.
- Dependence on the projected action & on the thematic domain:
 - Praise & positive assertions trigger kin terminology;
 - Sense of cultural pride evokes traditional Arapaho names;
 - English names are mainly used in work-related environments;
 - Complaints never include names and steer towards the “longer” terms of reference, e.g., relative clauses.

Theoretical background

- Speakers rely on structural (1) and cultural (2) premises in formulation of reference:
 - (1) principles of minimization and recognition (Sacks & Schegloff, 1979), relevant role (De Fornel, 1987)
 - (1) reference can negotiate conversational structure (Schegloff, 1996; Fox, 1984),
 - (1) reference often aligns with conversational action (Stivers, 2007)
 - (2) circumspection (Levinson, 2007)
 - (2) association (Brown, 2007)

In general, communities of practice prioritize some principles over others in formulation of reference according to the salient features of person identification (Enfield, 2007).

Main question

- What are the strategies for identity construal in complaints:
 - What are the linguistic devices helping to construct reference?
 - How is vagueness rendered in identifying a person?
 - How is ambiguity avoided?
 - How such terms of reference are understood by the addressees?

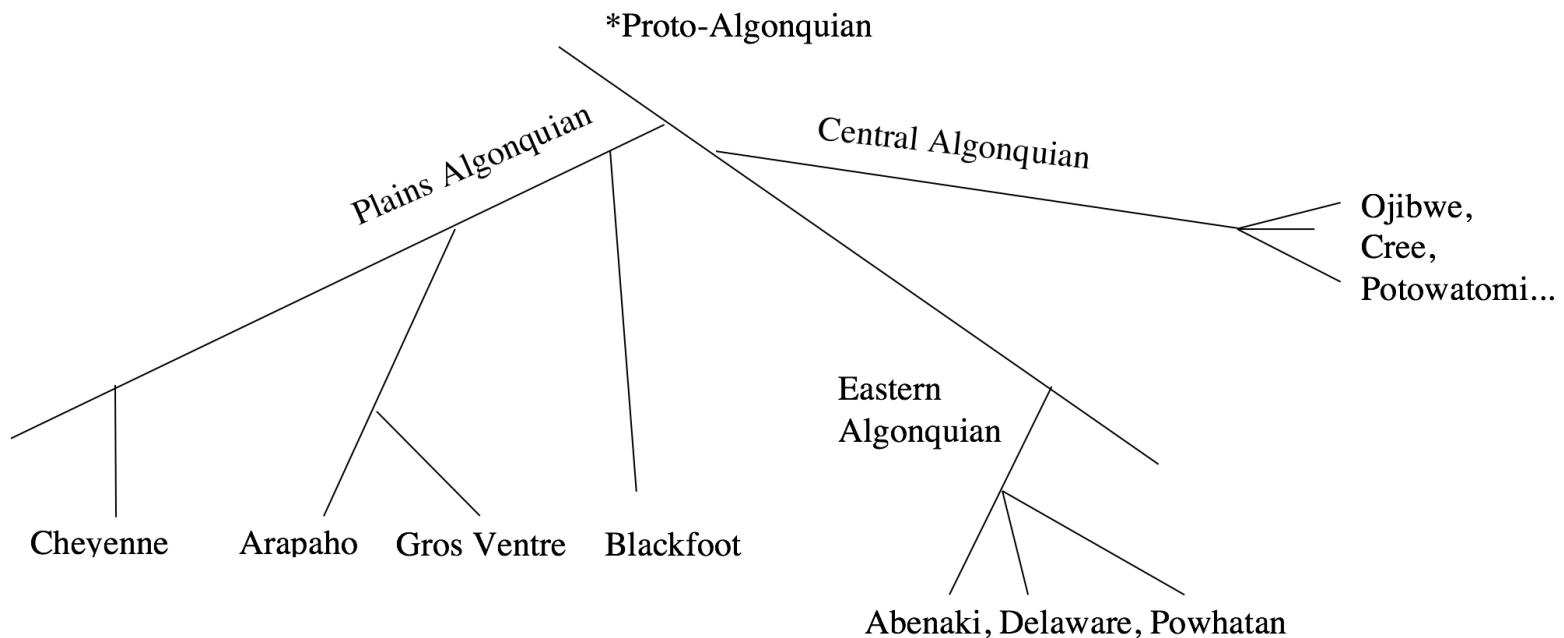
Data

**Endangered Languages
and Documentation
Program** grant to record
naturally occurring
conversations in Arapaho
(2008-2010)

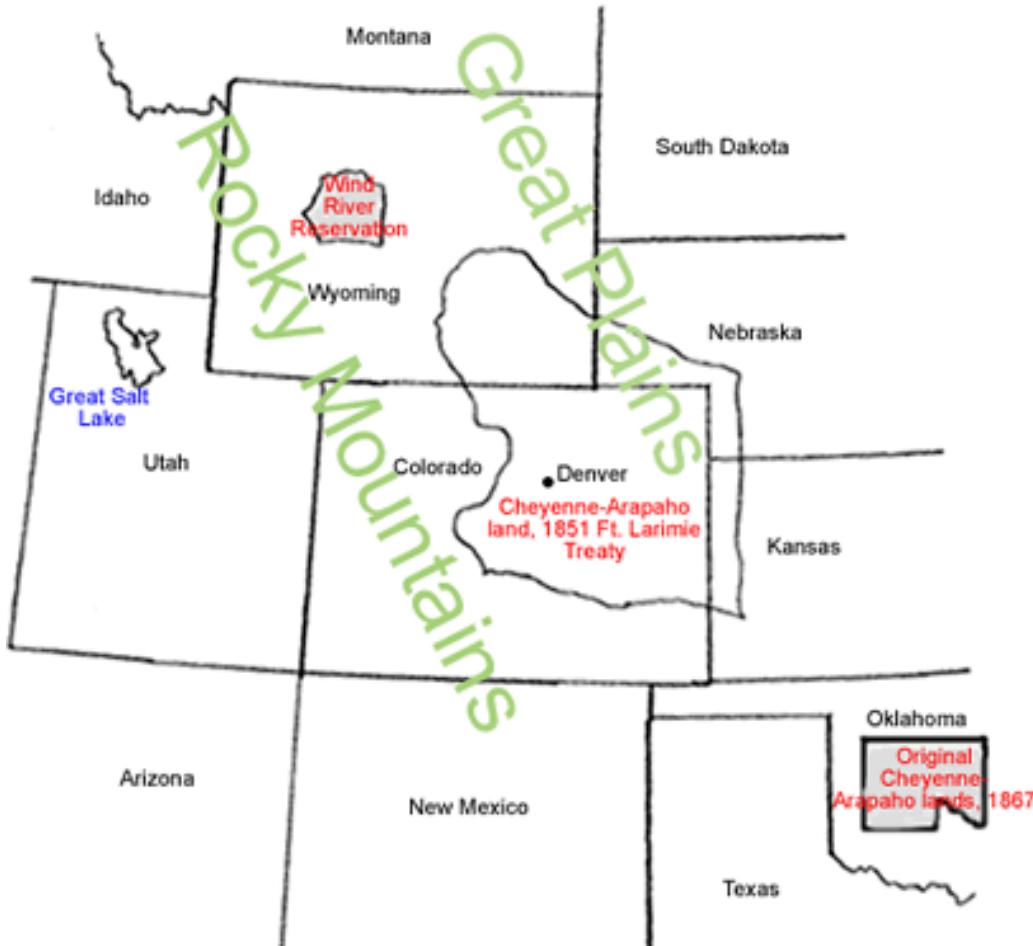
Data recorded,
transcribed, and translated
by the **Center of
Indigenous Languages of
the West** at the University
of Colorado Boulder.

Data available in
**Endangered Languages
Archive.**

Arapaho



Arapaho



Wind River Indian Reservation
Wyoming, USA
< 5,000 enrolled
<100 native fluent speakers

Linguistic note

- Poly-synthetic agglutinating language
- NP's are infrequent
- Most references can be done with verbal inflections
- References can also be done by:
 - Names (Anglo, Arapaho)
 - NP (membership categorization)
 - Relative Clause (descriptor, membership categorization)
 - Determiners (anaphoric)
 - Pronominal elements (anaphoric)
 - Verbs (anaphoric)
 - Inflections (anaphoric)

Complaint problem

- Multi-turn & multi-speaker engagement.
- “complaints cannot simply be defined as particular expressions of discontent that are produced unilaterally by one of the participants” (Heinemann, 2009, p. 2382)
- Don’t always exhibit marked expressions.

Methodology

- Used 5 hours of naturally-occurring conversations about people.
- Complaints were extracted on the base of negative assertions and response (agreement/disagreement/sympathy) of the addressee.
- Total of 12 complaints about third party.
- The form of person reference is recorded, also recorded previous mention of same person, if any.

Types of Person References

- Targeted individuals:
 - Specific unnamed people deduced from the context of talk.
- Targeted “others”:
 - Named group of people to whom neither of the speakers belong.
- Everyone in the community:
 - Generalized people of the whole community based.

Targeted individuals

Example (1). 47a (04:01-04:07)

- 1 Ann: Howoo **nehe' nih'oo3oo** niico'oncihno'useet.
also **this White person** IMPRF-always-to here-arrive-**3S**
And this White guy is always coming here.
- 2 Ann: heh .hhh
- 3 (0.5)
- 4 Bri: .mm Niico'on@coo'u3ei'i@t.
IMPERF-always-bother-**3S**
He is always bothering folks.
- 5 Ann: nii@co'on@coo'u3 [@ei'it.
IMPERF-always-bother-**3S**
He is always bothering folks.
- 6 Bri: [.hh hh .hh



Targeted individuals



Example (2). 21b (06:50-07:00).

- 1 Doris: Hiikoot **hi'in** (.) **beh'eihehi'**,
moreover **that** **old man**
- 2 niicebkoo^huutii**t**, hoo'eino'.
IMPRF-run s.t.-**3S** gather up-**3S**
What's more, that old man who ran it, he gathered up.
[The person who ran the Sun Dance acquired the knowledge and didn't
share it.]
- 3 (0.5)
- 4 Doris: .hhhhh Tohcooh'e:ntoot. wo'ei3
since-no longer-located at-**3S** or
- 5 hoowucebenowuun**ee** he'iiteihini3i.
NEG-pass on to s.o.-**3S/4** someone-4S.ITER
Because he's no longer here. Or he didn't pass on to anyone
- 6 (1.0)
- 7 Doris: .hhh hi'in niinii3iyoo.
that IMPRF-thing possessed
what he possessed.

Targeted “others”

Example (3). 35b (10:06-10:23)

- 1 Eva: 'oh >**hoowuuni**< kohtowunihi3eihino',
but no anything-s.t. said to s.o.-pers.PL
But they can't be corrected/even spoken too harshly,
(0.6)
- 2 Iris: ['oo
yes
Yes.
- 3 Eva: [**hinee wonooniii'oo3i'**
that IC.young generation-3PL
these young people.
(0.4)
- 4 Iris: 'oo?
yes
Yes.



Targeted “others”

Example (3). 35b (10:06-10:23)

- 7 Eva: ne:yeyitooototou:beihi>**3i'** 'oh<,
try-REDUP-warned-**3PL** but
(0.4) niice'ee:neti**3i'** wo'eis (0.8) kookon
IMPRF-back-speak-**3PL** or just any
9 niibi'-,
IMPRF-just-
People try to correct them, but they talk back, or they just-
10 (1.5)|
11 Iris: .h kookon ne'nii'wonnonsih'@ebi**3i'**@?
just any that-when. IMPERF-ALLAT-drunk-**3PL**
That's when they just go and t drunk.
12 Eva: .hh hh Ne'nii:stoo**3i'**.
that-do-**3PL**
That's what they do.



Targeted “others”

Example (4). Data 46a.

- 1 Carl: no'oto^hookeeni **3i**'.
a lot-be crazy-**3PL**
They are really crazy.
- 2 (0.8)
- 3 Eva: heeyou?
what
What?
- 4 (0.4)
- 5 Carl: >nuhu'< (.) tei'yoono^h'o'.
this children
These children.
- 6 (0.8)
- 7 Eva: kooxhiitoustoo**no**'?
yet again-3S. IMPERF-what do?-**pers.PL**
What are they doing this time?
- 8 (0.5)
- 9 Carl: °nooxeihī' nih° 3oo3o'ohou'u °huni'° windows.
maybe PST-REDUP-shatter with tool-**3PL** that windows
Maybe they shattered those windows.
- 10 Eva: tootiino?
where at?
Where?
- 11 Carl: Senior Citizens.
- 12 Eva: 'iiheihoowun!
golly e whiz!
Oh you don't say!



Everyone

Example (5). Data 35b (00:08-00:22).

- 1 Eva: wo'ei3 nih'iibisniiteheibet **iitooni'** howoo?=
or PST. IMPRF-all-people are helping each other-**OS** also
Or they just all helped each other too.
- 2 Iris: =oh ^yeah.
- 3 (.)
- 4 Eva: yeah nihbisniiteheibe [**tii**tooni'].
yeah PAST-all-people are helping each other-**OS**
Yeah, they all helped each other.
- 5 Iris: [yeah?
- 6 (1.4)
- 7 Iris: **hih'**ow3o'noonouutonet **iitoon**
OS.PST-never-REDUP-people send s.o. away without helping them
They never turned someone down/away when they needed help.
- 8 Eva: yeah. **hih'**ow3o'uuni.
OS.PAST-never-DETACH
They never did that.
- 9 (1.3)
- 10 Iris: nihii **hih'**ow3o'nee'eesiini.
well **OS.PAST**-never-be thus
Well... it was never like that.



Conclusion

- Full singular NP form for complaining about individuals
 - No names or unique descriptors
 - Deducible from the context
- Relative Clause or NP with 3PL inflections
 - For complaining about another group of people
 - No names, but RLCL provides enough info
 - These referents are not known to speakers
- Impersonal forms to complain about community
 - Depersonalizes the main offender
 - Lifts responsibility
 - Requires no solution of a complained matter

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Go raibh maith agat!

Hohou!

Thank you!

Cnacudo!

Kiitos!