A SHORT MODERN WINNEBAGO TEXT WITH SONG

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O. Hymes (1981) discusses a number of cases of hitherto overlooked implicit structuring in Amerindian narratives and song texts. His principles of analysis themselves remain largely implicit, but in general the approach seems to be to search for organizing principles which are multiply justified. Insofar as such principles can be discovered by any properly motivated investigator they are not merely the results of individual ingenuity. On the other hand the degree of objectivity that can be attained is surely no greater than, and probably less than, that attained in the study of grammar and semantics.

Here I attempt to determine the structure of a short Winnebago narrative, a sacred story in origin but nearly stripped of all such traces, taped in 1974 from Mr. John Greengrass, an elderly speaker then living in Madison, Wisconsin. The text is found to segment itself at various levels into threes. I give special attention to the role of the hiri-words, or connectives, and to the importance of the melody in arriving at a proper analysis of the song text (a source of weakness in the studies of Hymes).

I give on the following pages: first (1.) the text transcribed phonemically and representing the results of various sandhi rules applying at normal speed of utterance; then (2.) an explanation of the connectives, which are underlined in (1.); then (3.) a line-by-line English translation minus the connectives; and finally (4.) a morphemic analysis, also minus the connectives. The text in (1.) is organized according to the analysis which I justify in (5.).

It should be emphasized, for the sake of a correct understanding of this Siouan language, that between the levels of analysis represented by (1.) and (4.) there properly belongs a stylistic level representing slow, careful speech--the tempo of dictation--at which the sandhi rules do not apply. For example rookjiطولjookekewze at line 20 (the macron denotes vowels that are rhetorically lengthened as well as being phonologically long) at dictation tempo would be rookji تطja hokeweze, 'deep-inside there he-entered--they-say'. For any purpose but the present one, the more analytic type of transcription would probably be appropriate. It does occlude, however, the actual rhythm of the language.

Some translators would ignore the hearsay suffix /-tze/ which is merely a marker of narrative and is attached to all main verbs in the text proper (note its absence in the song).

Lines 11-13, 25-27, and 37-39 are sung. But I have accented them as they would be if spoken; in singing accent and length are lost.

1. Text "The Bugged Racoon".

1 hagoréʔa wakeníka éejowe'úák̓g̓uní.
2 múʔg̑osgáʔa éejowe'úák̓i,
3 hagoréegú, éeja raheł̓é,
4 hagoréegu, waažánaná ná̱xgú ʔeegú,
5 heegú ná̱ží kirijeánągá,
6 heegú waanác̓gu̱xgú geegú,
7 heegú gu̱gé ees̓áʔe.
8 gu̱gé waažánaná ná̱xgúgi,
9 hagoréʔa geegú,
10 heegú weežé:

11 wakéjgro̱, wakéjgro̱, wakenígra,
12 wakenígra: múʔg̑osgá jaanánąg̓ré hąk̓iʔa
n̓ihehán̓įiná,
13 hé hé wakéjgro̱, wakéj.

14 éegí heegú nuy̓uwaḵse.
15 heegú nuy̓ugíwakį́į́ʃe.
16 gu̱ł huuksíkjaʔa éeja miʔki,
17 huuksíguʔan̓ąká éeja hii.
18 hagoréʔa éeja hiiʔe.
19 heegú hąk̓e nígeo̱áɬe pinígi,
20 éejeegú rookjiέjookeweže.
gůy xatabrá hakirūčačás.

hagoreě ᑭeja miináke.

miináki, heegů zaanánaká higé nąxgů;

higé nąxgůgi, higé eeže:

wakéigro, wakéigro, wakenígra,

wakenígra: huuskík jaanasgré hakiizá

nihehanįńa,

hé hé wakéigro, wakěik.

hů, higėegů nuuwakše.

gůu nuugówakįįže.

tēegů xėįžą.

éejāŋakí nițį pógiá ᑭeja jeegí rookįįjeja hagioikéweği,

hagoreegů hokawaš roogéja,

heegů ᑭeja,

jujeegů miikše.

hagoreįge waazánaną žigeąnąxgųže.

žigė eeże:

wakéigro, wakéigro, wakenígra,

wakenígra: nițį póox jaanągągré hakiizá

nihehanįńa,

hé hé wakéigro, wakěik.
2. Explanation of connectives.

2.1 Higú-words.

higú 'perhaps'\(^3\)

gúu = higú

žeegú = žée 'this, that' + higú

heegú = žeegú" 

güge = gaá 'that' + heegú

hige + žige 'again'\(^4\)

teegú = tée 'this' + higú

2.2 Other connectives.

hagoré 'occasion' = hagá 'time, occurrence' (past or future) + horé 'place, n.'

hagorės, hagorėža = hagoré + hiža 'one'\(^5\)

3. English translation (minus connectives).

1 ...That little racoon must have been going around there.

2 While he was going around in an open field,

3 ...he was going along there, they say,

4 ...a noise he heard...

5 ...he stopped short,
...he listened and listened...  

...again it continued to speak, they say.

...again when he heard the noise,  

...it said, they say:

Little racoon, little racoon, little racoon,  

Little racoon: no matter how many open fields, I have not missed one,  

he he little racoon, little racoon.

Then...he ran, they say.  

He ran very fast, they say.

...Since a line of hazel bushes was lying there,  

He went there where the hazel bushes were.  

...He reached there, they say.  

...Since it was not possible to go through,  

He went deep inside, they say.  

...The thicket was criss-crossed.  

...There he sat, they say.

As he sat...he heard that noise again;  

When he heard it again, again it said, they say:
25 Little racoon, little racoon, little racoon,
26 Little racoon: no matter how many hazel bushes,
       I have not missed one,
27 he he little racoon, little racoon.
28 Ha...again he ran, they say.
29 ...he ran very fast, they say.
30 ...A hill [was there].
31 Since there was a cave there he went deep inside,
32 ...it was dark inside,
33 ...there,
34 ...he lay, they say.
35 ...Again the noise, again he heard it, they say.
36 Again it said, they say:
37 Little racoon, little racoon, little racoon,
38 Little racoon: no matter how many caves, I have not
       missed one,
39 he he little racoon, little racoon.
40 Racoon understood now, of course.
41 Of course when he picked into his ear,
42 then...a tick was in it, he!
43 Angry...he was, and chewed it to pieces!

Abbreviations:

AUX auxiliary verb úy 'do, make, have, be'
CAUS auxiliary verb hìi 'cause or allow'
CONJ conjunctive suffix -anąga
CONT continuative suffix
DECL declarative sentence final, length + -ną
DEM demonstrative suffix -ga
DUB dubitative suffix
EMPH emphatic -gi-
GN gnomic suffix -gąją
INTENS intensivizer -xįį
INTR intransitivizer wa-
LOC locative suffix -eja
NEG₁ negative particle hìkè, hakè, ké
NEG₂ negative suffix -ną
NOM nominalizer
PASS passivizing suffix -(h)ire
PN personal name suffix -ga
POS positional continuing
RED reduplication
SUB subordinating suffix

The morphemes are, if free, accented as they would be if used as words. Morphemes showing no accent mark are bound.

1  ėėja- howe-  ūy- ąk-  şguni ė
   there go (about) AUX POS:horizontal DUB

2  màx- hosgá-  hìzį ėėja- howe-  ūy- ąk-  gi
   field open, clear one

3  ėėja  rahé-  że
   there be on the way going HS

4  waazáńągą  nąxgù
   noise hear

5  nąžį kirijė- anąga
   stand stop CONJ

6  wa- hanąxgù + RED
   INTR listen, hear

7  ěe-  s'a- że
   speak, say cont HS
8 waazanané naaxgu- gi
noise hear SUB

9 ...

10 wa- ee- že
INTR speak, say HS

11 (see below)

12 máax- hosgá jaanága- ak- re
field open, clear how many POS: horizontal SUB

haké- hižá nihé- ha- ni- ná
NEG₁ one exist; be thus CAUS (Ip sq) NEG₂ DECL

13 (see below)

14 éegi nuwák- že
then run HS

15 nuw- gi- wák- xji- že
run EMPH run INTENS HS

16 huuksík- (ho)já- hižá éeja mík- gi
hazel bush line, row one there lie SUB

17 huuksík- (ho)já- nak- ga éeja híi
hazel bush line, row POS:squat DEM there arrive going

18 éeja híi že
there arrive going HS

19 haké nígé- howé- (h)ire píí-
NEG₁ somewhere go PASS good, all right, possible

ni- gi
NEG₂ SUB

20 róok- xji- éeja- hokewé- že
inside, n. INTENS there enter HS

21 xatápa- ra hakirüčačás
brush, growth NOM be criss-crossed, like scissors

22 éeja mënák- že
there sit HS
23 mi'įnáki- gi zaanána- ąk- ga
sit SUB noise POS:horizontal DEM

higé naaxgú
again hear

24 higé naaxgú- gi higé ēe- že
again hear SUB again say, speak HS

25 (see below)

26 huuksik, etc.

27 (see below)

28 nuwák že
run HS

29 nuu- gi- wak- xji- že
run EMPH run INTENS HS

30 xee- hişä
hill one

31 ēeja- nák- gi níiš- ho- pox- hişä ēeja
there POS:squat SUB rock in hole one there

jée- gi róok- xji- ēja hagi- hoikéwe- gi
POS:vert.SUB inside,n. INTENS LOC ? enter SUB

32 hokawás róok- ēja
be dark inside,n. LOC

33 ēeja
there

34 miįk- že
lie HS

35 waazánaná žigé- hanaxgú- že
noise again hear HS

36 žigé ēe- že
again say, speak HS

37 (see below)

38 niįžópox, etc.

39 (see below)
5. Discussion. In the song, the words wakeníka, wakenígra, wakenígro6, and wakeník (wakeník) are all variants of the same word, wakeník 'little racoon'. The diminutive suffix is -nik but it has a metathesized variant as shown in wakeník. The stem for 'racon' is wake. The nominalizer -ra is used in direct address. A word-final vowel is changed to an overlong -oo under certain conditions, including the need to attract someone's attention by calling him. The form -lakeníka contains -ga (demonstrative).

Due to these possibilities of variation (and the language affords even more possibilities) the original song lacks the monotony of the English translation. Similarly the connectives are quite varied (2.) and present even more of a translation problem. I have therefore not attempted a literary translation.

The connectives tend to mark boundaries of lines, especially beginning points. There is no non-circular argument here; other than the positions of the connectives, some pauses by the narrator, and my own instinct, I have no reason to divide the lines as I have. However there is an exact numerical parallel between lines 14, 15 and lines 28, 29; and another between lines 23, 24 and lines 35, 36; these match the parallel content of these sections.

The use of wakegá in line 40 for 'racon', rather than any of the other forms for 'racon', is the only trace of the waiké or sacred story behind this tale. It lacks the diminutive suffix and has instead the personal name suffix -ga; this would be translated 'Racoon' in a waiké. I take it to have been a slip. Lavina Thorud, who helped me prepare a transcription, said that in the original story Grandmother Earth (usually an Algonquian feature) put the tick in Racoon's ear, and he had to go to her to have it removed.

I find the story to fall fairly readily into threes. The song (which is formally sophisticated, being the same each time but for the location of the fleeing racoon) is sung three times and seems itself to have three lines (see discussion of the tune below). Before each rendition of the song the voice is heard three times. Finally, there are three parts to the story (but for the song) each having itself three parts. Thus we have:
I. a. introduction 
   b. noise heard 
   c. repeated to 3x

   Song: a. address 
   b. threat 
   c. address

II. a. racoon runs 
   b. finds hiding place 
   c. voice 3x

   Song: a. address 
   b. threat 
   c. address

III. a. racoon runs 
   b. finds hiding place 
   c. voice 3x

   Song: a. address 
   b. threat 
   c. address

IV. conclusion

The song is as follows:

\[ \text{\textit{The song is as follows:}} \]

[Music notation]
Notice that the fourth repetition of 'little racoon', according to the tune, goes with the second line and not with the first, leaving only three repetitions in the first line, in accord with the general tripartite scheme.

The conclusion (IV) seems to me to be an abrupt secularization of the story; also the occurrence of threes rather than fours and the modality of the tune I take to be marks of modernity. To verify this we would need an older version.

Finally we may note the play on ną̨xgù with its double meaning 'hear' and 'understand' (cf. line 40 with lines 4, 23, 35, etc.); also the fact that after each hearing of the voice Racoon hides inside something, first a hazel thicket, then a cave, while all the time the source of the voice is inside him—inside his own ear.

6. Conclusion. Hymes (1981) leads one to believe that most of the attention to poetic structure of Amerindian texts has been lavished (if "lavished" is a proper word for a still largely untouched area) upon the Pacific Northwest. It will be interesting to see what can be done in regions less known for their art.

NOTES

* Thanks to Dale Kinkade for discussions and a talk on this topic to the KU Anthropology Department in Spring, 1982. He was right, it is addicting.

1 See Charney 1980 and Miner 1981 for some background on the Greengrass stories and the connectives. The taping was done by Jeanette Harries. Lavina Thorud, a Black River Falls speaker, prepared an initial transcription, but edited out most of the connectives, remarking that they seemed unnecessary and too repetitious. I later returned to the tape and restored the connectives.

2 Arriving at this level is however beset with uncertainties, which is one factor that is delaying a fuller account of Winnebago on my part.

3 This is the best gloss of hīgù I can muster. It has regular uses but in connectives it seems to be quite idiomatic.

4 There is an alternation h ~ ə in a few forms; the sibilant also alternates with ə.
5 The song has a contemporary modality and does not seem to present the sorts of problems that usually call for special qualifications; however I had better say that what I have transcribed is the tune as I sing it rather than the tune as Mr. Greengrass sang it. This transcription should be good enough to make the point I want to make (5.)

6 Occurring in many languages; cf. the situation in which A calls to B and B responds "I can't hear you", which of course makes no sense if taken literally.

REFERENCES

