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A NOTE ON HOPI CONSONANT GRADATION

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Abstract: Residual exceptions to Heath’s generalizations about i-ablaut in Uto-Aztecan languages from Hopi are examined. A -i- to -ts- alternation with shifting the final vowel of a CVVC root to i leaves some alternating pairs in Hopi.

In Heath’s (1977, 1978) reconstruction of Proto-Uto-Aztecan (PUA) verb morphophonemics, a consonant gradation is reconstructed when a final vowel of a CVVC root is ablauted to /i/. This shift (-CV# to -ts#) is induced by certain verb derivational suffixes (Heath 1977:32).

The remaining i-ablauted verb stems in Hopi generally follow Heath’s reconstruction.

-aptu ‘adequate’ aptsí-wta ‘be equal amount’
hoota ‘back’ (noun) hootsí-wṭa ‘go along zigzagging’
cf., hootsí-na ‘be flexing’)
hōtsí ‘1. open 2. hole’
hōtsí-wa ‘doorway’
hōtsí-wṭa ‘ajar’
iita ‘hold it in front of self’
iittsí-wṭa ‘be sticking out’
ko’lta ‘store it away’
koltší ‘shelf’ (noun)
kuuta ‘overturn container’
kutsí-psí ‘underarm’
kutsí-tsanta ‘take it under one’s arm’
kweta ‘brush it aside’
kwetsí-ta ‘move dirt’
kwuwsu ‘bring’
maks-kuwstí ‘grasp in hand’
leeta ‘lay it across’
leetsí ‘1. bolt/bar 2. line/row’
maatsí-kna ‘display it’
maatsí-wa ‘be called/named’
maatsí ‘waterfall’
maatsí-kna ‘cause to burst’
pitsi ‘arrive’
pitsí-na ‘attain/seek’
pitsí-wta ‘reach as far as’
qatú ‘sit/stay/remain’
qatsí ‘life’
uita ‘close it’
uwitstí ‘closure device’
uwitstí-wta ‘be closed in’
wutsí-ta ‘ball it out’
wutsí-wta ‘be closed in’

In these examples, either i-ablaut occurs by itself to produce nouns, or it is the consequence of one of the i-ablauting suffixes: -(i)wa ‘static’, -(i)wa ‘desiderative’ (from -(i)pa), -(i)na ‘punctual’ (in Hopi, causative), and perhaps the suffix.

-(i)liti 'become'. The -k- and -n- intermediate suffixes are thematic class markers.

There are a handful of exceptions to Heath's reconstruction. In two cases, we find roots with i-ablaut applied, but without a medial -i- in the input.

nawus 'must' (modal) nawutsi 'take a long time'
nawuts-ni 'pass a long time'
oopo-kna 'fill to capacity'
ootso-kna 'fill up'

In two other cases, it seems that i-ablaut has not been applied, even though the -ts- gradation is evident.

tsdvu 'elbow' (from *to 'curve + *p4 'participle')
moomtsa 'bite all over'
moots-i-kna 'grip in teeth'

In the first root, which has cognates in Yaqui-Mayo and Cora-Hoichol (Miller 1965:337), /i/ has become /t/ without i-ablaut. This is also true of the example with oopo 'full' above. Moomtsa points to a root moomtsa (unattested), which must underlie mootsikna.

In a single stray form, given below, i-ablaut appears in the first member of a compound noun.

puvwits-tawi 'lullaby'

The first member is related to puv-ya 'go to sleep' (puuwí 'sleep' with -ya 'inceptive'); the i-ablauted gradation -ts- in puvwits- probably comes from -ta 'durative'. The element tawi is the combining form of taawi 'song'.

It remains to be seen whether this residue is due to a psychological extension of the i to ts gradation, or whether, at earlier times, the gradation was independent of i-ablaut though generally co-occurring with it, and/or consonants other than -t- could be changed to -ts-, much as final vowels */i/ o o a/ could change to */a/.

REFERENCES
