

A SHORT MODERN WINNEBAGO TEXT WITH SONG*

Kenneth L. Miner
University of Kansas

0. 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.¹ The text is found to segment itself at various levels into threes. I give special attention to the role of the high-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 ročkjîéjookewežé at line 20 (the macron denotes vowels that are rhetorically lengthened as well as being phonologically long) at dictation tempo would be rookjî ééja hokewéže, 'deep-inside there he-entered-they-say'. For any purpose but the present one, the more analytic type of transcription would probably be appropriate.² It does occlude, however, the actual rhythm of the language.

Some translators would ignore the hearsay suffix /-že/ 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.

Kansas Working Papers in Linguistics. Vol. 7, 1982. pp. 91-103.

1. Text "The Bugged Raccoon".

- 1 hagoréa wakeníka éeǰowe'ųákšguní.
 2 máaǰosgáižá éeǰowe'ųáki,
 3 hagoréegu, éeǰa rahežé,
 4 hagoréegu, waazánańá ńaaxgú žeeǰú,
 5 heegú ńaǰǰí kiriǰeánaǰá,
 6 heegú waanáxguxgú geegú,
 7 heegú gúǰge ees'áže.
 8 gúǰge waazánańá ńaaxgúgi,
 9 hagoréa geegú,
 10 heegú weežé:
 11 wakéǰgroō, wakéǰgroō, wakenígra,
 12 wakenígra: máaǰosgá ǰaanánaǰré ńakíižá
 ńiheháńińa,
 13 hé hé wakéǰgroō, wakéǰk.
 14 éegi heegú ńuųwákše.
 15 heegú ńuǰgiwákǰižé.
 16 gúǰ huuksíkǰaižá éeǰa mǰíkí,
 17 huuksíǰuǰanáká éeǰa híi.
 18 hagoréa éeǰa híižé.
 19 heegú ńaké ńigoowáire pǰińǰgi,
 20 éeǰeeǰú rookǰiéǰookewežé.

- 21 gúy xatabrá hakirúčačas.
- 22 hagoréa éeja mĩnákše.
- 23 mĩnákĩ, heegú zaanáńaká higé naaxgú;
- 24 higé naaxgúgĩ, higé eeže:
- 25 wakéıgroō, wakéıgroō, wakenıgra,
- 26 wakenıgra: huuksık jaanáńagré hakııža
niheháníńa,
- 27 hé hé wakéıgroō, wakéık.
- 28 há, higéegü nuwákše.
- 29 gúy nuıgıwákjıže.
- 30 téegü xéıža.
- 31 éejanákı niıžópoğıá éeja jeegı rookjıéja hagioıkéwegı,
- 32 hagoréegü hokawás roogéja,
- 33 heegú éeja,
- 34 éejéegü mııkše.
- 35 hagoréıge waazánańá žıgeánaaxgúže.
- 36 žıgé eeže:
- 37 wakéıgroō, wakéıgroō, wakenıgra,
- 38 wakenıgra: niıžópox jaanáńagré hakııža
niheháníńa,
- 39 hé hé wakéıgroō, wakéık.

- 40 wakegá éeĵa naaxgúgaĵá.
 41 naačáwa hopoĝréĵa horučgágaĵá,
 42 tée žeeĝú čaarásgapkéižā éeĵanaĵí, hé!
 43 woogítek heĝuṇígugí heĝuṇááč rugagásse!

2. Explanation of connectives.

2.1 Higú-words.

higú 'perhaps'³

gúu = higú

žeeĝú = žée 'this, that' + higú

heegú = žeeĝú⁴

geegú = ga'á 'that' + heegú

higé ~ žigé 'again'⁴

gúige = gúu (=higú) + žigé⁴

teegú = tée 'this' + higú

2.2 Other connectives.

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

hagoréā, hagoréižā = hagoré + hižā 'one'⁴

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,

6 ...he listened and listened...

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

8 ...again when he heard the noise,

9 ...

10 ...it said, they say:

11 Little racoon, little racoon, little racoon,

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

13 he he little racoon, little racoon.

14 Then...he ran, they say.

15 He ran very fast, they say.

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

17 He went there where the hazel bushes were.

18 ...He reached there, they say.

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

20 ...He went deep inside, they say.

21 ...The thicket was criss-crossed.

22 ...There he sat, they say.

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

24 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!

4. Gloss by morpheme.

Abbreviations:

AUX	auxiliary verb	úy	'do, make, have, be'
CAUS	auxiliary verb	hii	'cause or allow'
CONJ	conjunctive suffix	-anaga	
CONT	continuative suffix		
DECL	declarative sentence final, length +	-na	
DEM	demonstrative suffix	-ga	
DUB	dubitative suffix		
EMPH	emphatic	-gi-	
GN	gnomic suffix	-gaJa	
INTENS	intensivizer	-xji	
INTR	intransitivizer	wa-	
LOC	locative suffix	-eJa	
NEG ₁	negative particle	hiké, həké, ké	
NEG ₂	negative suffix	-ni	
NOM	nominalizer		
PASS	passivizing suffix	-(h)ire	
PN	personal name suffix	-ga	
POS	positional continuative		
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 | éeJa- | howé- | úy- | ək- | šguni |
| | <i>there</i> | <i>go (about)</i> | AUX | POS:horizontal | DUB |
| 2 | máax- | hosgá- | hižá | | |
| | <i>field</i> | <i>open, clear</i> | <i>one</i> | | |
| | éeJa- | howé- | úy- | ək- | gi |
| | <i>there</i> | <i>go (about)</i> | AUX | POS:horizontal | SUB |
| 3 | éeJa | rahé- | že | | |
| | <i>there</i> | <i>be on the way going</i> | HS | | |
| 4 | waazánaná | naaxgú | | | |
| | <i>noise</i> | <i>hear</i> | | | |
| 5 | naaží | kiriJé- | anaga | | |
| | <i>stand</i> | <i>stop</i> | CONJ | | |
| 6 | wa- | hanaxgú + RED | | | |
| | INTR | <i>listen, hear</i> | | | |
| 7 | ée- | s'a- | že | | |
| | <i>speak, say</i> | <i>cont</i> | HS | | |

- 8 waazáana ná naaxgú- gi
noise hear SUB
- 9 ...
- 10 wa- ée- 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- na
NEG₁ one exist; be thus CAUS (1p sg) NEG₂ DECL
- 13 (see below)
- 14 éegi nuwák- že
then run HS
- 15 nu- gi- wák- xji- že
run EMPH run INTENS HS
- 16 huuksík- (ho)já- hižá éeja mīk- gi
hazel bush line, row one there lie SUB
- 17 huuksík- (ho)já- nač- ga éeja hii
hazel bush line, row POS:squat DEM there arrive going
- 18 éeja hii že
there arrive going HS
- 19 haké niǵé- howé- (h)ire pīi-
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 xatáp- ra hakirúčačas
brush, growth NOM be criss-crossed, like scissors
- 22 éeja mīnák- že
there sit HS

- 23 miinák- gi zaanána- ak- ga
sit SUB noise POS:horizontal DEM
- higé naaxgú
again hear
- 24 higé naaxgú- gi higé ée- že
again hear SUB again say, speak HS
- 25 (*see below*)
- 26 huuksík, etc.
- 27 (*see below*)
- 28 nuuwák že
run HS
- 29 nuu- gi- wák- xji- že
run EMPH run INTENS HS
- 30 xee- hižá
hill one
- 31 éeja- nak- gi niš- ho- pox- hižá éeja
there POS:squat SUB rock in hole one there
- jee- gi róok- xji- eja hagi- hoikéwe- gi
POS:vert.SUB inside,n. INTENS LOC ? enter SUB
- 32 hokawás róok- eja
be dark inside,n. LOC
- 33 éeja
there
- 34 mijk- že
lie HS
- 35 waazánaná žigé- hanaxgú- že
noise again hear HS
- 36 žigé ée- že
again say, speak HS
- 37 (*see below*)
- 38 nižópox, etc.
- 39 (*see below*)

40	waké-	ga	éeja	nəəxgú-		gajə
	<i>raccoon</i>	<i>PN</i>	<i>then</i>	<i>hear, understand</i>		<i>GN</i>
41	nəəčáwa	ho-	pox-	re-	eja	ho- ručgá- gajə
	<i>ear</i>	<i>in</i>	<i>hole</i>	<i>NOM</i>	<i>LOC</i>	<i>in pick GN</i>
42	tée	čaarásgapké-	hižə	éeja-	nək-	gi
	<i>this</i>	<i>tick</i>	<i>one</i>	<i>there</i>	<i>POS: squat</i>	<i>SUB</i>
43	woogítek	hanígú-		gi	hanəəč	rugagás- že
	<i>be angry</i>	<i>take, bring out</i>		<i>SUB</i>	<i>all</i>	<i>tear HS</i>

5. Discussion. In the song, the words wakeníka, wakenígra, wakéigroō, and wakéik [wakeĩpk] are all variants of the same word, wakeník 'little racoon'. The diminutive suffix is -ník but it has a metathesized variant as shown in wakéik. The stem for 'raccoon' is waké. 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 wakeníka 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 'raccoon', rather than any of the other forms for 'raccoon', is the only trace of the waiká or sacred story behind this tale. It lacks the diminutive suffix and has instead the personal name suffix -ga; this would be translated 'Raccoon' in a waiká. 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 Raccoon'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	1-2
b. noise heard	3-7
c. repeated to 3x	8-10
Song: a. address	11
b. threat	12
c. address	13
II. a. racoon runs	14-15
b. finds hiding place	16-22
c. voice 3x	23-24
Song: a. address	25
b. threat	26
c. address	27
III. a. racoon runs	28-29
b. finds hiding place	30-34
c. voice 3x	35-36
Song: a. address	37
b. threat	38
c. address	39
IV. conclusion	40-43

The song⁵ is as follows:

wa kee gro — wa kee gro — wa kee ni gra

wa kee ni gra {ma go oja} — na. ja gro ha li za ni he ha ni na

he he wa kee gro — wa kee k *{ha kee k}

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 *naaxgú* with its double meaning 'hear' and 'understand'⁶ (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 *higú* I can muster. It has regular uses but in connectives it seems to be quite idiomatic.

4 There is an alternation $h \sim \check{z}$ in a few forms; the sibilant also alternates with \emptyset .

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

- Hymes, Dell H., 1981. "In Vain I Tried To Tell You": Essays in Native American Ethnopoetics. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Charney, Jean, 1980. Style in Winnebago narratives. Siouan and Caddoan Linguistics 3.2-4.
- Miner, Kenneth L., 1981. Comment on Charney's "Style in Winnebago Narratives," SCL 3. Siouan and Caddoan Linguistics 4.3-4.