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Karajá Men's-Women's Speech Differences with Social Correlates

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0. Introduction

Many languages have slight differences between men's and women's speech. Mary Haas has described those found in Kosati and Muskogee, Edward Sapir those in Yana, and Doris Blood those in Cham.¹ Some of our colleagues report slight differences in the languages they are studying. Mura-Pirahã for example has a vowel quality difference in the two forms of speech.² Kinship terms nearly always reveal some difference in useage between the sexes. This has been reported for Kaingang and other languages of the Jê, Tupi, Carib, and Arawak families. It would be suprising to find a language that did not have some difference in this area. Mother and Father words are usually different although someone has reported a language that has only a word for parents.

In the Karajá language³ however these differences are extensive. One word in two or three spoken in sequence reveals some difference and identifies the speaker as male or female. On the other hand it is curious to note that there is only one third person pronoun which refers to he, she, or it at the same time, making no distinction in gender. Only the sex of the person speaking is revealed.

Even naive linguistic observers notice some of the differences. A voiceless velar stop /k/ occurs with high frequency in women's speech while this stop is relatively infrequent in the corresponding words in men's speech.

1. Phonological rules explained

In formulating generative phonological rules for Karaja it is necessary to order the rules and since the women's speech forms are almost identical to base forms, it is easier to generate the men's forms from the women's. In this paper the Women's forms are considered basic and the derivation is done in this direction.

Unless a hypothetical base form is needed to account for phonological differences that cannot be explained otherwise, women's speech is considered to be the underlying base.

A k-dropping rule is needed to derive the proper forms for men's speech. All occurrences of /k/ in women's speech are not dropped by this rule as the phoneme occurs in some words of men's speech. Most of these words to which the k-dropping rule does not apply belong to a small closed class of deictics, yes-no words or pronouns. To exclude these forms from the k-dropping rule there are at least two alternate possibilities. In a full grammar, one would surely use such features as [+Deictic] to

exclude these from the rule. This would be in a certain sense analogous to Chomsky's use of [+Foreign] to exclude certain words from the application of the regular phonological rules. In this paper, however, these forms were all given a special hypothetical base form with/kk/. Thus one /k/ remains after the k-dropping rule has applied once.

Application of the k-dropping rule results in certain vowel sequences that are not permitted in the language. In the case of a + u, an impossible sequence a rule is formulated to coalesce the two to a vowel quality halfway between the two. Example: wakurəθəN 'soul of the dead' (women's speech) becomes worəθəN (men's speech).

The /č/ of women's speech remains in some words of men's speech, drops in other words, and changes to /j/ in other words. ičətere 'he is crazy' is the same in both forms of speech. Women's speech raričare 'he walked' becomes rariare in men's speech. ičoi 'men's group' becomes ijoi in men's speech.

The /n/ occurring between /ā/ and /ō/ in women's speech is always dropped in men's speech. Women's speech anobo 'what' is aōbo in men's speech.

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2. Social Correlates

It is important to note that in spite of several generations of permanent contact with civilization, the distinctions between men's and women's speech are rigorously observed by all age groups of the Karaja today. This is in contrast to the Koasati situation where it is reported (Haas 1964) that owing to culture contact the younger groups observe the distinction much less rigorously than the older.

At about age three, mothers start insisting in the Karaja tribe that boys use only men's speech. This is the beginning of the socialization process which continues until the adult male is admitted to the men's house where no young initiate would ever use women's speech.

Only in direct quotation such as the telling of a folk tale is the speech of the opposite sex used. Thus if a woman is narrating, she will use men's forms when quoting a male character. The converse is true if a man is quoting a female character.

In the following examples the men's speech form is totally different from the women's. In almost all other cases men's speech can be derived from the women's speech by the rules formulated in section 4. of this paper.

<u>women</u>	<u>men</u>	
-bu-	-hi-	'cry'
-sira-	-bu-	'to be angry'
bebe!	mi!	'surprise'
wu	ku	(calling form)

The difference in language forms correlates with the quite different functions of crying among the women and among the men. The women cry or chant daily if a child is travelling or hurt. Women also cry for a period of a lunar month: the death chant. In contrast, men cry only during the death chant and even then less than the women.

The distinction between men and women's speech correlates with other institutions for maintaining the social distance between the sexes. Residence is matrilocal; thus the daughters always bring their husbands to their mother's house to live. Women are never allowed in the men's mask house. Also the women are never allowed to speak the names of the male dancers while they are dancing.

Words borrowed from Portuguese into Karajã assimilate into the Karaja sound patterns, thus:

women		men	Portuguese
kawaru	---	awaru	from cavalo 'horse'
karik ^o branykre	---	ari ^o branykre	from comprar 'I will buy'
nobiku	---	nobiu	from domingo 'Sunday'

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3. Corpus of Data Including Base Forms

(Base form is the women's speech form unless otherwise noted)

<u>Women's speech</u>	<u>Base form</u>	<u>Men's speech</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
1. kətorə		ətora	fish
2. anobo	adoNbo	aobo	what
3. ričoko		ričoo	doll
4. hawəkɔ	haNwəkɔ	hawɔ	canoe
5. ričore		riɔre	child
6. ičɔɔɔθə	igčɔɔɔθə	ijɔɔɔθə	dog
7. maki	baNki	mai	corn
8. nawiki	daNwiki	nawii	bird
9. dešiki		dešii	armlets
10. wilabikæ		wilabiæ	grandfather
11. təkɪ	tiki	tii	him
12. karičakre		ariakre	walk
13. hətoku		həto	house
14. ijadɔkɔma	ijadɔkɔbaN	ijadɔma	girl
15. hokə	hokəN	hoə	breast
16. ikɔlɔ		ikɔlɔ	king
17. rəkuni	rəkudiN	ruuni	melon
18. karirakušikre		arirošikre	eat
19. karoikre		aroikre	lie down
20. karihokɔtekre		arihoɔtekre	borrow
21. kɔluku		ɔluku	labret
22. ikohimə	ikoNhiNbɔN	iohimə	festive food
23. itɔtəkæ		itɔtəæ	hot
24. təkɪ	tiki	tii	bark

<u>Women's speech</u>	<u>Base form</u>	<u>Men's speech</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
25. wakurəθə̃	wakurəθə̃N	worəθə̃	ghost
26. wəkirihibɔ		wərirɪbɔ	boy
27. nobikuč ^v	doNbikuč ^v	nobiuč ^v	Sunday
28. kə̃nə̃ra	kə̃Ndə̃Nra	ṅnəra	sand
29. kɔlɔkuna	kɔlɔkudaN	ɔlɔna	feather
30. dohokudəkə̃du	dohokudəkə̃Ndu	dohodə̃ṅdu	counselor
31. kətara		ətara	shell
32. kɔtu		ɔtu	turtle
33. kihɪ		ihɪ	wind
34. bikuhekɔtɪ		biuheɔtɪ	airplane
35. ičoi	igčoi	ijoi	men's group
36. reləkɪra		relɪɪra	tell
37. ilu ^v kure		iluure	like
38. koworuku		oworu	plantation
39. išikura		išɪura	necklace
40. anona	əoNdaN	aona	thing
41. haloko	haNloko	haloo	hole
42.	iččə̃Ntere		crazy
43.	KKohe		yes
44.	KKai		you
45.	KKaa		that
46.	KKowa		there
47.	-kki		in

4. Distinctive Features and Phonological Rules

The underlying phonemes of Karaja in terms of their distinctive features are listed in the following chart. They are indispensable for understanding the ordered rules which follow below. The distinctive feature analysis basically follows (Jakobson 1952) but some new features are incorporated from recent transformational grammar studies. See (Chomsky and Halle 1968).

Distinctive Features

	N	b	d	dʳ	ə	č	š	ʝ	k	l	r	h	w	i	ɨ	u	e	ə	o	ɔ	a	ɔ	
vocalic	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
consonantal	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
(compact)	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	+	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+
diffuse					+		-						+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
periferal													+	-	+	+	-	+	+	-	+	-	+
back (grave)	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	+
interrupted	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	+	-	+	-	+										
voiced	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	-	+													
implosive (checked)	-	-	-	+																			
nasal	+	-	-	-																			

The Phonological Rules

Nasalization of Vowels (Rules apply throughout)

$$1. V \rightarrow +nasal / \left\{ \begin{array}{c} N \\ \overline{V_1} \end{array} \right\} \quad (\text{where } V_1 \text{ is } \begin{bmatrix} +com \\ -dif \\ -per \end{bmatrix})$$

$$2. N \rightarrow \emptyset$$

$$3. \begin{bmatrix} +int \\ -com \\ -imp \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} -int \\ -nas \end{bmatrix} / \begin{bmatrix} V \\ +nas \end{bmatrix}$$

The preceding three rules apply throughout the phonology. The following rules are elaborated specifically to derive men's speech from women's.

4. k-dropping rule

$$\begin{bmatrix} +con \\ +com \\ +gra \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \emptyset / \left\{ \begin{array}{c} * \\ \underline{V _ V} \end{array} \right\}$$

5. Vowel Ellipsis rule

$$\begin{bmatrix} V \\ -com \\ +dif \\ +gra \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \emptyset / \begin{bmatrix} V \\ -com \\ -dif \\ +per \\ +gra \end{bmatrix} -$$

6. Vowel metathesis rule

$$\begin{array}{c} V \\ \left[\begin{array}{l} +com \\ -per \end{array} \right] \end{array} + \begin{array}{c} V \\ \left[\begin{array}{l} +gra \\ -com \end{array} \right] \end{array} \rightarrow \begin{array}{c} V \\ \left[\begin{array}{l} -com \\ -dif \\ +per \\ +gra \end{array} \right] \end{array}$$

7. Voicing rule (č becomes j)

$$\begin{array}{c} \left[\begin{array}{l} +con \\ -com \\ -gra \\ +int \\ -vcd \end{array} \right] \end{array} \rightarrow [+vcd] \begin{array}{c} g \\ \left[\begin{array}{l} -voc \\ +con \\ +com \\ +gra \\ +int \\ +vcd \end{array} \right] \end{array} -$$

8. g-dropping rule

$$\begin{array}{c} \left[\begin{array}{l} +con \\ -voc \\ +com \\ +gra \\ +int \\ +vcd \end{array} \right] \end{array} \rightarrow \emptyset$$

9. Syllable in isolation develops identical syllable

$$CV_1 \rightarrow CV_1V_1 \quad / \ * \ _*$$

10. Geminates \rightarrow Simplex

11. n-dropping rule

$$\begin{array}{c} C \\ \left[\begin{array}{l} -com \\ -gra \\ +int \\ +vcd \\ -imp \\ +nas \end{array} \right] \end{array} \rightarrow \emptyset / \begin{array}{c} V \\ \left[\begin{array}{l} +com \\ -dif \\ -per \end{array} \right] \end{array} \text{ --- } \begin{array}{c} V \\ \left[\begin{array}{l} -dif \\ -com \\ +gra \end{array} \right] \end{array}$$

Symbols and abbreviations

- C consonant
 com compact
 con consonantal
 dif diffuse
 g hypothetical base form
 gra grave
 int interrupted
 imp implosive
 nas nasalized, nasal
 per periferal
 V vowel
 vcd voiced
 voc vocalic
 -- is rewritten as
 ∅ zero, is deleted
 / in the environment of
 * word initial, final, silence

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Footnotes

¹See References Cited: Haas 1964, Sapir 1949, and Blood 1960.

²Private communication V. Heinrichs

³Karaja is spoken by approximately 1000 Indians who live on or near the Bananal Island of the Araguaia River in Northern Goiás.

This analysis is based on data collected during field trips since 1958 under the auspices of the Summer Institute of Linguistics under contracts with the National Museum of Rio de Janeiro and the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI).

The principal male informant who collaborated in this study was Mahau Maturu. Kaxiwe and Hãwyyna were the female informants who collaborated primarily with linguistic information. All informants were from the village at Macauba thus spoke the principal dialect called Karajá. In the Javae dialect, the rules would not always apply as men's-women's speech differs to a lesser degree in that dialect. The major rules, however, do apply in the Xambioa dialect.