

LANGTIME CHAT, EPISODE 56

A Posteriori Challenge

Wikaimé'ich!

GROUP 1: Tsik Muf "The Non-Committee-ers"

My speakers are Committee-Abhorring Kangaroo Rats, who left before any major changes occurred in the Primordial Squeak language. They lived near a burrow of friendly rabbits, and they admired the rabbits for their dedication to nurturing nature. Thus, they adopted the name *Wikaimelu* for themselves, a compound borrowed from Engála that refers to a rabbit-mouse (i.e. a hopping mouse, who is much more rabbit-y than a mouse-mouse). Their language name is based on this term.

Sound changes

- Liquid changes: This sound change encompasses three different smaller changes, all of which amount to the proto $*ɹ$ being lost.
 - $*ɹ > l / _ [o, u]$
The $*ɹ$ becomes *l* in front of round vowels.
 - $*ɹ > r / _ [i, e, a]$
The $*ɹ$ becomes a flapped *r* in front of all other vowels.
 - $*Vɹ > V: / _ \#$
A coda $*ɹ$ is lost, resulting in a lengthened vowel.
- Glide loss: Glides were lost in front of similarly placed vowels.
 - $*ji, *je > [i, e]$
The $*j$ is lost before a front vowel.
 - $*wu, *wo > [u, o]$
The $*w$ is lost before a back round vowel.
- Coda glide shift: $w, j > u, i / V_ \#$
Coda glides $*w$ and $*j$ become *u* and *i*, creating diphthongs.

4. Gliding vowels: u/o, i/e > w, j / _V
High vowels become glides before another vowel. For instance, *ua becomes *wa* and *ia becomes *ya*.
5. Palatal stop affrication: *c > tʃ, *c' > tʃ'
The palatal stops *c and *c' become affricates *ch* and *ch'*.
6. Voicing of non-ejective stops and fricatives: [+obstruent, -ejective] > [+voice]
Voiceless oral stops, fricatives, and affricates voice.
7. Ejective loss: C' > C
Ejective consonants lose their ejectivity, becoming voiceless stops, fricatives, and affricates.
8. Word-boundary devoicing: [+obstruent] > [-voice] / #_ _#
Word-initial and word-final voiced stops, fricatives, and affricates devoice.
9. Voice assimilation: [+obstruent] > [-voice] / _[-voice]
Voiced stops, fricatives, and affricates devoice when they occur before a voiceless consonant.

Stress

Stress is assigned to the penultimate syllable. However, if the final syllable is heavy, stress is pulled to the ultimate syllable.

Grammar

Wikaiame'ich is an SVO language, yet has head-final tendencies due to its older SOV orders.

Grammaticalized Nominal Inflections

Number

- Inanimate Plural: *kejen "knot" > -ke/-ge
- Animate Plural: *woɾup "litter" > -lu
- Dual: *soɾsa "cherry" (*archaic*) — While this form may occur in ancient texts, it is lost in the modern language.

Cases

- Ablative: *nik "to come" > -ni
- Locative: *k'ow "to sit" > ko
- Comitative: *mem "to hug" > -me

The comitative case used to be part of the applicative construction in the Primordial Squeak. That construction shifted in this language to a separate case marker, patterning like the locative or ablative.

Grammaticalized Verbal Inflections

Indexing

- Pluractional (to indicate non-singular subject): final vowel reduplication on verb root, which may create a long vowel or diphthong
 - ... CV-V
 - ... VC-V
 - ... C₁VC₂-V
 - ... CV₁V₂-V₁
- Argument indexing prefixes are required:
 - *w *third-person* (whether subject or object)
 - *a *non-proximal* (the more widely used vowel for third-person and only one presented in the data for this challenge)

Negation

- Negation Suffix: *(i)f > -if > -i / -'i
- Negation Prefix/Liquid: *p'ep "raindrop" > pe-
- Negation Prefix/Solid: *s'ou "crumb" > su-

NOTE: When a transitive verb is negated, the direct object occurs in the ablative case and is not represented with any verb indexing markers. The negation prefix is treated as the object of the verb and is incorporated into the verb structure.

Vowel hiatus is marked with an apostrophe in the romanization (e.g. *mai* [sai] versus *ma'i* [sa.i]). The negation suffix never creates a diphthong.

Selected vocabulary

chai, chaya, pejai'i ['tʃai] *cai (v.) to boil

cheugi, -lu ['tʃeu.gi] *c'ewki (n.) mouse

kobigon, -ge [ko.bi.'gon] *kopik "to buy" + *on "to sell" (n.) marketplace

kos, kozo, sugozi ['koz] *kos (v.) to stack

mawe, -lu ['ma.we] *mawe (n.) owl

minii, -lu [mi.'ni:] *minij (n.) turtle

mip, mibi, sumibi ['mib] *mip (v.) to eat

naada [ˈna:.da] *naɾa (n.) water

oide, -lu [ˈoi.de] *woite (n.) rabbit

sidzi, -ge [ˈsid.zi] *sitsi (n.) barley corn


sooza, -ge [ˈso:.za] *soɾsa (n.) cherry

Wikai-me, -lu [wi.ˈkai.me] < Engála *imé-wika* “mouse-rabbit” (n.) kangaroo rat


Wikai-me’ich [wi.kai.ˈme.itʃ] < Engála *imé-wika* “mouse-rabbit” + *ic “squeak” (n.) kangaroo rat language


yara, -a, iyara’i [ja.ra] *jiaɾa (v.) to sing

Sentences for Translation

 C’ewki w-a-jiaɾa. “The mouse is singing.”


 *Cheugi wayara.*

 [ˈtʃeu.gi wa.ˈja.ra]

 C’ewki-sorsa w-a-jiaɾa-ɾa. “The two mice are singing.”

 *Cheugilu wayaraa.*


 [tʃeu.ˈgi.lu wa.ja.ˈra:]


 C’ewki-worup w-a-jiaɾa-ɾa. “The mice are singing.”

 *Cheugilu wayaraa.*


 [tʃeu.ˈgi.lu wa.ja.ˈra:]


 C’ewki kopikon-k’ow w-a-jiaɾa. “The mouse is singing in the marketplace.”

 *Cheugi kobigonko wayara.*


 [ˈtʃeu.gi ko.bi.ˈgon.ko wa.ˈja.ra]

 C’ewki w-a-woite-mem-jiaɾa. “The mouse is singing with the rabbit.”
















 *Cheugi oideme wayara.*

 [ˈtʃeu.gi oi.ˈde.me wa.ˈja.ra]

 C’ewki sitsi w-a-w-mip. “The mouse eats the barley corn.”

 *Cheugi waumip sidzi.*

 [ˈtʃeu.gi wau.ˈmip ˈsid.zi]

-  C'ewki sitsi-nik w-a-s'ou-mip-if. "The mouse doesn't eat the barley corn."
 *Cheugi wasumibi sidzini.*
 ['tʃeu.gi wa.su.'mi.bi sid.'zi.ni]
-  Mawe naɾta w-a-w-cai. "The owl is boiling water."
 *Maɾwe waujai naada.*
 ['ma.we wau.'dʒai 'na:.da]
-  Mawe naɾta-nik w-a-p'ep-cai-if. "The owl is not boiling water."
 *Maɾwe wapejai'i naadani.*
 ['ma.we wa.pe.'dʒai.i na:.'da.ni]
-  Minij-woɾup sorsa-keɾen w-a-w-kos-os. "The turtles are stacking cherries."
 *Miniilu waugozo soozage.*
 [mi.'ni:.lu wau.'go.zo so:.'za.ge]
-  Sorsa-keɾen-uj-nik minij-woɾup-uj-nik w-a-w-kos-os. "The cherries are stacking turtles."
 *Soozage waugozo miniilu.*
 [so:.'za.ge wau.'go.zo mi.'ni:.lu]