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ABSTRACT

Aleut, being a language without a word-stress, forms its rhythmic structure by means of two main things: rhythmic accent and long vowels. There are several main rhythmic accent patterns in Aleut, long vowels "breaking ranks" - then, rhythmic accent is counted from that "break".

INTRODUCTION

Suprasegmental features of three now existing Aleut dialects have not been yet investigated in detail. It is obvious, however; that such information could give new material for typological studies, as well as for comparative Eskimo-Aleut linguistics (cf. the comparison of Eskimo rhythmic accent patterns in [1]).

The work of this kind on Eskimo material has begun some time ago [2]. The purpose of this report is to present rhythmic accent patterns of wordforms in Bering Island Aleut, which is, probably, a conservative form of Atka Island Aleut [3]. The material was obtained during two field trips to Bering Island in 1982 and 1985.

Long Vowels

The three short Aleut vowels /a/, /i/, /u/ have the correlative long vowels. Long vowels can be either included into morpheme signifiers or result from phonomorphological alternations: siching [s'ic:iŋ] "four", sichling [s'ic'i:ŋ] "nine"; aalukux [a:l'uk'ux] "he laughs"; aaluusakux [a:l'u:sak'ux] "he laughs at sb.". The initial /a:/ in the last wordform is a part of the root-morpheme, the second long vowel /u:/ is a result of lengthening /u/ before the transitivizing suffix -sa-. This is one of the suffixes provoking obligatory lengthening of the final stem-vowel. A long vowel in such a position can be treated as two vowels, with a morpheme-borderline between them.

Some word-combinations can also provide conditions for vowel-lengthening; for instance, some ordinal numerals do so: aalax hisix [a:l'ax'ts'ix] "second", cf. alax [al'ax] "two"; qaankus hisix [qa:ankus'i'six] "third",

cf. qankus [q'ank'us] "three".

The Correlation of the Morphemic- and Syllabic Structures

Phonomorphological rules of the syllabic structure of the wordform depend, to a large extent, on the phonetic structure of the root-morpheme. The most typical root structures are CVCV and VCV - two-syllable roots with a final vowel: awa-l [a'w'a:l] "work", asu-i [a'su:i] "pot", chachi-l [tʃ'aʃ'i:l] "cover". One-syllable and two-syllable roots are also possible: qa-i [q'a:i] "fish", sasuli-l [sas'u:l'i:l] "be annoyed". Roots of more than three syllables are rare, and none-syllabic roots is not found in Aleut.

Phonomorphological rules in Aleut are determined by two main principles: 1) all suffixes (numbering about 120) can only begin with a consonant; 2) the way of linking the stem is determined by the phonomorphological type of a suffix. We shall illustrate here three phonomorphological types of suffixes.

1. Suffixes linking the stem through a long epenthetic vowel, e.g. -guta- "again" - imat-ii-guta-ku-i [imat'i:ɣutak'ux] "he is shouting again". Linking a vowel-stem, these suffixes lengthen the final vowel: adalu-guta-ku-i [a'da:lu:ɣutak'ux] "he is telling lies again".

2. Suffixes linking the stem through the epenthesis of normal length, e.g. -da "the imperative" - hum-i-da [hum'i:da] "inflate!"; -gi- "the objective resultative" - chiuug-a-gi-ku-i [tʃiu:u:ɣa:ɣi:ku:i] "is washed". When linking a vowel-stem, these suffixes do not change the length of the final vowel, e.g. chachi-da "cover!" [tʃ'aʃ'i:da].

3. The suffixes whose way of linking depends on the final sound of the stem: in case of a vowel-stem the final vowel becomes long; the consonant-stem links these suffixes through the epenthesis of normal length. One of these suffixes is "the transitivisor" -sa-. A peculiar feature of the epenthesis of normal length is that its quality is not constant. It may be supposed that, in many cases, the choice between different variants of epenthetic vowels is

influenced by the vowel structure of the wordform, e.g. chag-u-sa-ku-i [tʃaɣ'usak'ux] "he is splitting sth. with sth."; ag-u-sa-ku-i [aɣ'usak'ux] "he is passing with"; chaqug-a-sa-ku-i [tʃa'q'usak'ux] "he is chewing sth."; iklug-a-sa-ku-i "he has bumped against" [ik'l'usak'ux]. The first two wordforms include the epenthesis /u/, the second two wordforms - /a/. This distribution is not obligatory but rather preferable, i.e. it is a tendency, not a rule. The choice between /u/ and /a/ depends on the preceding vowel: /u/ follows /a/, and /u/ is followed by /a/. This dissimilation according to the height of the raised part of the tongue) is typical of some suffixes which link the stem through the epenthesis of normal length.

Accent and Rhythmic Structure

Long vowels play an important role in the formation of the rhythmic structure of a wordform. Their distribution, however, does not enable us to treat them as correlating to a word or phrasal stress. The rhythmic structure of a wordform is formed not only due to long vowels but also according to a rule of distribution of accented and neutral (not accented) syllables.

In wordforms of CVCVC-structure (if they do not include long vowels), the first syllable is generally accented, e.g. tuxix [t'uxi:ɣ] "dot", hatix [h'at'i:ɣ] "lips", chaliɣ [tʃ'a:l'i:ɣ] "fishline". Accented/neutral syllables do not coincide with the opposition long/short vowels: the vowel of an accented syllable is shorter than the corresponding long vowel.

A characteristic feature of accent is its influence on the quantity of the consonant following the accented syllable. If a consonant follows a long vowel in a wordform of similar structure, it does not change its quantity, e.g. taachiɣ [ta:ʃ'i:ɣ] "elbow bone", hachiɣ [h'aʃ'i:ɣ] "back". The first word shows an intervocalic /c/ of normal length, the second one demonstrates the corresponding long consonant. This phenomenon can be seen most clearly if the consonant following the accented syllable is an obstruent or sonant.

In three-syllable isolated wordforms the second syllable is accented, e.g. hyutikux [ɣut'ik'ux] "he is pouring (water)", kidunax [ki'du:nax] "he helped sb.", samisix [sami'sis] "numeral". The consonant following the accented syllable is also lengthened but this is not so obvious as in two-syllable wordforms and is certain only for sonants. Consonant clusters appearing in none-syllabic positions do not influence the rhythmic structure of the wordform.

Four-syllable wordforms (with no long vowels) have two accented syllables - the first and the third, the third one being

marked more distinctly, e.g. haɣsatikux [h'aɣsat'ik'ux] "he is getting ready", awazunax [a'waz'unax] "he worked well". The accent on these syllables cause lengthening of the following sonant (at least, it is surely so in the position after the third syllable).

In multi-syllable wordforms a rule of rhythmic accent puts an accent on every second syllable, except in the cases when a long vowel appears and breaks the rhythmic structure; then, rhythmic accent is counted from that "rhythmic break".

The distribution of accented/neutral syllables given above is of probability character. Accent is closely connected with the syntactic context of wordforms, or, rather, with their syllabic structures, e.g. hlang haqakux [h'lang'haqak'ux] "my son is coming up". The one-syllable word hlang and three-syllable word haqakux give a four-syllable stretch (syntagm), which is accented as a four-syllable wordform. The rhythmic structures of the words do not contradict to the rhythmic structure of the stretch, and, so, they are not changed. When two "notional" ("independent") words form a three-syllable stretch, their own rhythmic structures inevitably contradict to the rhythmic structure of the stretch, e.g. hlang snukuɣ "I have sent my son" [h'lang'snukuɣ]. A three-syllable structure tends to have the second syllable accented - but not in this case (the first and third syllables are accented). It can be explained by a rule of obligatory accent of the only syllable in the first, "notional", word. Because of this, the three-syllable stretch is accented as a multi-syllable structure (every second syllable). If a three-syllable stretch is formed of a "dependent" ("not notional") word and a "notional" word, the first syllable of the stretch is not accented, e.g. wan suda [wan'suda] "take this one!"; cf. qax suda [qax'suda] "take the fish!". In these examples the "pointing word" wan does not prevent the speaker from putting the "right" accent, and the "notional" word qax is "a starting point" for the rhythmic accent structure of the second stretch.

Let us take the multi-syllable stretch chiganax qatukux [tʃiɣan'axqat'uk'ux] "the river is rich with fish". The first wordform has a "right" accent on the second syllable. In the second wordform, our informants put an accent either to the first or to the second syllable. It depends on the type of pronunciation: the "full" type requires the second syllable to be accented, i.e. the rhythmic structures of both wordforms are preserved in the stretch. However, the second wordform can be uttered in a "reduced-type" pronunciation - then, the accent is put to the first syllable of the second wordform. It is important that if in the wordform the second syllable is accented, it produces a quasi-homonym, cf. qaatukux "he wants to eat". Long and accented vowels

differs enough the two words not to be mixed, but speakers often put an accent to the second syllable "to be on the safe side".

The rhythmic structure of a stretch is connected with the vocalic structures of the wordforms. It can be illustrated by wordforms with the epenthesis of normal length. For instance, there exist two variants of the imperative from the verbs with consonant-stems, e.g. aḡ-a-la "give!" and aḡ-a - same meaning. The choice between them depends on the rhythmic structure of syntactic context, e.g. ngus qai aḡ-a [ʔʔaʔʔa] "give me the fish!", or. qai aḡ-a-la [qaiʔʔaʔʔa] "give the fish!". In the first stretch the accent is put to the first syllable, and the epenthesis is deleted. In the second stretch the accent is put to the epenthesis, and it can, by no means, be deleted.

The rhythmic structure of a wordform is generally preserved in two cases: 1) if it does not contradict to the rhythmic structure of the syntactic context; 2) if it belongs to the first "notional" word of the stretch. The study of rhythmic accent structures of wordforms in different syntactic contexts shows that there are no prosodic means in Aleut which provide conditions for the wordform as an independent unit.

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