



Catching up



photo Suzi Richards/SU Drum

A group of Southern Ute tribal elders enjoy a lunch together at the Multi-purpose Facility on Tuesday, March 13.

This is your language

'ícha-'ara mæni 'apaghapi 'ura-'ay

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4. The sounds and writing of Ute: Consonants

púupa-aqh núuchi pø'ø-ta-vaa-na

Unlike vowels, which are open sounds with relatively no obstruction of the air passage, consonants are typically pronounced with some obstruction of the air passage in the mouth. Consonants are classified by four phonetic features.

First, the location of the obstruction, or **point of articulation**, this could be anywhere from the very front (lips) to the very back of the air passage, the voice-box itself (glottis). Going from front to back, Ute consonants can be produced with closure at the lips ('**labial**'), teeth ('**dental**'), hard palate ('**palatal**'), soft palate ('**velar**'), back palate ('**uvular**') or the glottis itself ('**glottal**'). Obstructions inside the mouth are produced by the front, middle or back of tongue coming up towards the roof of the mouth.

Second, consonants are classified by the **degree of obstruction** ('degree of closure') of the air passage. Such closure could be **complete**, producing consonants that are called '**stops**'. It could be only **partial**, with the tongue or lips creating a rasping air turbulence with consonants that are called '**fricatives**'. Or it could be very **slight**, producing consonants that are called '**glides**'.

Third, the air stream can move through the nose rather than through the mouth, in which case the consonant is a **nasal** one.

Lastly, consonants may be '**voiced**' or '**voiceless**'. A voiced consonant is produced when the voice-box ('glottis') vibrates simultaneously during the articulation ('closure') of the consonant. A voiceless consonant is produced without such vibration.

The inventory of all Ute consonants classified by the four phonetic features is given in the table below.

UTE CONSONANTS point of articulation

manner	labial	dental	palatal	velar	uvular	glottal
voiceless stop	p	t	ch	k	[q]	'
voiceless fric.		s		[kh]	[qh]	
voiced fric.	v	r		g	[gh]	
nasal	m	n				
glide	w		y			

In the space below we will describe all Ute consonants, with examples of common Ute words in which these consonants are found.

/p/ (voiceless bi-labial stop)

/v/ (voiced bi-labial fricative)

The consonant **/p/** can be seen in Ute words such as: *páa* 'water', *'áapa-chí* 'boy', *tøvø-pø* 'earth', *píá-n* 'my mother', *'ipi-chí* 'red clay'. Historically, **/p/** used to be found only in word-initial positions, alternating with **/v/** in mid-word positions.

initial/voiceless

píá-pí 'female'

pagø 'fish/trout'

páa-n 'my kin'

medial/voiced

kava-víá-pí 'mare'

sá-vagø 'white fish'

núu-váa-n 'my Ute kin'

However, at both word-medial and word-final – that is, before a silent final vowel – both **/p/** and **/v/** can be found now, and can indeed form minimal pairs. Thus compare:

voiceless

'ipi-chí 'red clay'

'áapa-chí 'boy'

píá-pí 'female'

páa-pø 'blood'

voiced

'ivi-chí 'stick'

'áavas 'haba beans' (Sp.)

pa'a-ví 'insect'

'ávø 'now'

/t/ (voiceless dental stop)

/t/ (voiced dental tap)

The consonant **/t/** can be seen in the Ute words such as *tua-chí* 'child', *tøi-yø* 'deer', *'avatø* 'big', *túu-kwa-rø* 'black', *táa* 'shirt', *tøghoy-aqh* 'it is good', 'thank you'. Like **/p/**, above, **/t/** used to appear, historically, only in word-initial positions, and alternated with the sound **/t/** in mid-word positions. To this day, **/t/** is not found at the beginning of words. It is pronounced like the Spanish **/t/** in words such as *para* ('for') or *volver* ('return').

Examples of **/t/** in common Ute words are: *sari-chí* 'dog', *'uru* 'that' (obj.), *karø-napø* 'chair', *sá-gha-rø* 'white' *pøri* '(they) are walking'. Traces of the old variation between **/t/** and **/t/** are still seen in examples such as:

initial/voiceless

tuachí 'child'

tøi-yø 'deer'

táa 'shirt'

medial/voiced

núu-ruachí 'baby'

sá-røi-yø 'white deer'

'aka-ráa 'red shirt'

/k/ (voiceless velar stop)

/g/ (voiced velar fricative)

The consonant **/k/** can be found in Ute words such as *kani* 'house', *'aka-gha-rø* 'red', *puku-n* 'my horse' *kuchu-pukú* 'cow', *káchí* 'no'. Historically, **/k/** used to appear only in word-initial positions, and alternated with its voiced counterpart **/g/** in word-medial positions.

Traces of this old alternation can be still found in examples like:

initial

kani 'house'

kwana-chí 'eagle'

kava 'horse'

medial

núu-gan(i) 'tipi'

si-gwana-chí 'hawk'

sá-gava 'white horse'

To this day, the consonant **/g/** still cannot appear in word-initial position. In midword in Ute, it is pronounced as in the Spanish words *pagar* ('pay') or *luego* ('then').

[kh] (voiceless velar fricative)

This consonant is a less-common variant of **/k/**, and can be found in Ute words such as *ma-vaa-tukhwa* '(going) that-a-way', *'uwa-vaa-chukhwa* '(going) towards him/her', *kani-rukhwá* 'under the house'.

[q] (voiceless uvular stop)

[qh] (voiceless uvular fricative/affricate)

[gh] (voiced uvular fricative)

These three consonants are, historically, predicted variants of **/k/** or **/g/**. None of them exist in English or Spanish, but **[qh]** and **[gh]** can be found in either German (*ach*) or French (*Paris*), respectively. These 'harsh' sounds can be found in Ute words such as *pana-qa-rø* 'shining', 'money', *'aka-gha-rø* 'red', *sá-gha-rø* 'white' (inan.), *qoqh* 'bull-snake', *tøghoy-aqh* 'thanks', 'it's good', *tøghoavi* 'rattlesnake', *páaqhachi* 'hole', *'agho-cí* 'dish'.

In the next column we will continue describing the rest of the Ute consonants.

Tøghoy-aqh. 'øvøsa-gha.

The purpose of this column is to share with the tribal membership Ute language materials from the Ute 102 classes sponsored by the Cultural Preservation Department.

Núu-'apaghapi 102 class notes: Ute words and phrases

WORDS

'avachí 'Apache'
kukwachí 'Spanish'
kømachí 'Comanche' ('other')
møøkáchí 'White/Gringo'
navayh-tø-mø 'Mixed-Blood'
núuchi 'Ute', 'Indian', 'person'
pagha-wiichí 'Navajo' ('walking-knife')
túu-nigichí 'Black'
pínu 'Ignacio' (Sp. *pino*)
pínu múuchi 'Southern Ute'
pá-núuchi 'Southern Paiute'
sari-tøka-chí 'Shoshone' ('dog-eater')
nøøtaay-'ay 'be sad'
sivaatuchi 'goat' (Sp. *chivato*)
túu-kwa-rø 'black' (inan.)

'áa-tawa-y 'yawning' (?)
'avi(y) 'lying', 'sleeping', kwavi(y) (PL form)
mø-søvø-n 'my finger'
tø-søvø-n 'my toe'
páana 'bread' (Sp. *pan*)
pariyø-gumaavi 'bull elk'
pøø 'road', 'trail', 'path'
puku-gwa-tø 'horse-owner'
sá-gha-rø 'white' (inan.)
sá-gha-rø-mø 'white' (an. sg.)
sá-gha-qa-tø-mø 'white' (an. pl.)
satiya 'watermelon' (Sp. *sandía*)
kanyeeruchi 'sheep' (Sp. *carnero*)
tøgy 'be hungry'
tøvøpø-vwa-na 'on earth'

PHRASES

nøøtaay-'ayi-n 'I am sad'
tøø-'ayi-n 'I'm OK'
núu-ruachí 'avi-'napø-vwa-na 'avi(y) 'the/a baby is lying on the bed'
kuchu tøkuavi tøka-'ini-kh 's/he is cooking buffalo meat'
páa-y 'ivi-kwa-y 's/he is drinking lots of water' (?)
'ava'na 'ivi-mi 's/he drinks a lot (liquor)'
na'achichí pøra-av qøpoqh-ti-kya 'the girl broke her arm'
nú' pachø-av kani-vaghay-kwa-vaani 'I'm going to visit my daughter'
nø' pagø chüra-qa-tø tøø-'ásti'i 'I like fried fish'
núu-ruachí tukwiy-'ay 'the baby is bashful'
píschí-u nana-chigya-gha-y '(the) kids are racing'
tøvøvø-n, 'ømø-aa núu-sumay? 'My friend, are you thinking in Ute?'
máas 'aka-paa-y 'ivi(y) 's/he (vis.) is drinking pop' (lit. 'red water')
'uwas táa-y chagha-y 's/he (invis.) is sewing a shirt'
tøvøpø pøni-kyari '(s/he) is sitting & watching the land'
núu-ruachi-u yagha-qa-y 'the babies are crying'
kwi-yaghatø-mø pagø tøka-gha-y 'the bears are eating fish'
táa-ta'wachi-u píschí-u-wa kava-miya-qa-chi-m kiyasi-kya-y 'the men and the boys are playing with the horse-doll'
píschí-u kwavi(y) 'the boys are lying (down)'
sü-gya-rø-mø pøi(y) 'the grey one (an.) is sleeping'
tøø-tøka-ghari '(s/he) is sitting & eating well'

Powwow Trails

Hozhoni Days Powwow

March 30 – 31

Whalen Gym, Fort Lewis College • Durango, CO

Contact: Myra Britton

Phone: 970-247-3251 or 970-247-7221

Web: www.fortlewis.edu/hozhoni-days-powwow/home.aspx

Easter Powwow

April 6 – 8

99 Great Plains Road • Arapahoe, WY

Contact: Claudette C'Bearing

Phone: 307-840-4185

Email: dchair1201@gmail.com

Spring Contest Powwow and Indian Art Market

April 20 – 22

CSU Moby Arena, Elizabeth and Shields intersection • Fort Collins, CO

Contact: Northern Colorado Intertribal Powwow Assoc.

Phone: 970.498.0290 or ncipa@fortnet.org

Web: www.fortnet.org/PowWow/NCIPA_powwow.html

Gathering of Nations Powwow

April 26 – 28

University of New Mexico's University Arena • Albuquerque, NM

Phone: 505-836-2810

Web: www.gatheringofnations.com