[v] and [b] in Lipan Apache: An Ethnohistorical Approach to a Phonological Variation

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The first studies of a language may form strong bias for later researches, or the study of one language may occasion a bias in the study of the phonology of the language taken up immediately after.
Franz Boas, *On Alternating Sounds*

1. Introduction

What can we tell of phonological variations in the textual records of a language dimly remembered? Recorded only on sheets of paper and not on audio recording devices? This paper attempts to describe one such phonological variation for Lipan Apache.\(^1\) To date there have been few studies of dialectical variation in Apachen (see Reichard 1945; Hill 1963; Greenfeld 1978, 1999; Jung 2000; de Reuse 2002). This paper attempts to outline a single variation within Lipan Apache phonology. This research is part of what Michael Silverstein (1996) has termed the “ethnohistory of communication” or what Betty Lou Dubois (1977a, 1977b) called “historical sociolinguistics.” It also follows the model of the historical reconstruction of phonological variation in Southern Athabaskan languages begun by Muriel Saville-Troike (1974a, 1974b and Saville 1977). One of the interesting things that Saville-Troike (1974a) noted was the presence of the /t/ and /k/ alternation in the written records concerning Navajo. Again, my research is also based on written texts and attempts to reveal an auditory difference. This discussion is therefore tentative. It is suggestive, not definitive. The focus in this paper is on the orthographic suggestiveness of an alternation between [b] and [v]. In the next section I give a detailed accounting of the occurrences of the alternation.

I also try to understand something of how and why the variation becomes obscured or “corrected” through time (see Opler below). This question has more to do with the linguistic ideology of anthropologists and linguists than it does with any “real-world-phonetic-system” (see Boas 1889; Silverstein 1979; and Rumsey 1990). I argue it has more to do with *post factum* system building and less to do with real-time descriptive practices (see Port and Leary 2005). In this way, I try to give an ethnohistorical analysis of a “non-event” (Fogelson 1989). The *post factum* system-making operates as a way of fitting a real-time variation into a larger phonemic system and thus renders the elicitation session a non-event.

The primary materials examined for this project have been the unpublished notebooks of Harry Hoijer, who collected linguistic data on the Lipan Apache in 1930s. I have supplemented that with a survey of Hoijer’s published writings and representations of the Lipan Apache language. I have also examined the unpublished texts collected by Pliny Earle Goddard at the

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\(^1\) This research was aided by two Graduate Research Grants from New Mexico State University in the late 1990s. I would also like to thank both the Archives of Traditional Music at Indiana University and the American Philosophical Association for providing me with copies of Hoijer’s and Goddard’s notes.
turn of the century. I have also looked at the notebooks of Albert Gatschet held at the National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institute. These notes were taken in the mid-1880s.

Finally, I have surveyed the published articles of Morris Opler, who conducted ethnographic research among the Lipan Apache in the 1930s.

Lipan Apache, like many Native American languages, is no longer actively spoken as a distinct language. Indeed, according to Hoijer (1975), Lipan Apache was already an endangered language in the 1930s when he did research on the Mescalero Reservation. Lipan is a casualty of the larger trend in the United States of indigenous languages shifting towards English. Unfortunately, most of what we know of the language of the Lipan Apache is from the work of Goddard, Hoijer, and Opler. This paper, while critical at times, stands as a testament to the work of these men as well as to the work of the Lipan Apache language experts, who gave of their time and their language, and have left us with a veritable treasure of Lipan poetics. It also reminds us of the uniqueness of each language and the value of each language and of the terrible loss that occurs when a language dies.

2. The Evidence for a [b]/[v] Variation.

In 1975, Hoijer published an extended narrative by the Lipan Apache Augustina Zuazua. In this text he retains the alternation between [v] and [b]. The notebooks show that the form was recorded as a both [v] and [b]. In other articles, Hoijer only represented a phonemic /b/ at the exclusion of phonetic [v]. This seems logical when we consider that Hoijer believed that, and I would agree, there was no phonemic /v/ in Lipan Apache. However, an examination of the unpublished notebooks suggests that Zuazua and another Lipan Apache consultant Lisandro Mendez did indeed pronounce a [v] on a number of occasions. If one thing should be clear from what follows, we can at minimum, I believe, suggest that /b/ in Lipan Apache had at least two allophones: [b] and [v]. Below I present every occurrence from Zuazua’s text that Hoijer transcribed as a [v]. In order to keep track with the published version (Hoijer 1975), I will include the sentence number from the published version. It is to Hoijer’s credit that the variation is retained in the 1975 article. Consider the following examples from Hoijer 1975:

1) A. Zuazua (Hoijer 1975: 8: 20)  
góviina’niistáná  ‘years passed with them, it is said’

A. Zuazua (Hoijer 1975: 10: 57)  
da’áivi  ‘with those’

A. Zuazua (Hoijer 1975: 10: 57)  
biinaavidaaajtichih  ‘they bought with it’

A. Zuazua (Hoijer 1975: 19: 218)  
dábivi’iddi’i  ‘their own clothes’

The next set of examples come from the unpublished Lipan notebook housed at the American Philosophical Society. These are from three narratives told by Lisandro Mendez. Mendez was crucial in aiding Hoijer’s understanding of the longer and more complex narrative of Augustina Zuazua. Mendez told two narratives concerning his experience at school in California and Arizona. The third narrative—actually the first narrative Mendez told Hoijer—is a Coyote story (see Webster 1999 for a discussion of that narrative). [v] is far more common in Mendez’s narratives than in Zuazua’s narrative. Zuazua’s narrative is significantly longer than Mendez’s three narratives combined. For a gross estimate of this difference one can look at the total of numbered sentences that Hoijer indicated for each. There are roughly 310 numbered lines

2 A few Lipan Apache lexical items were recorded in the Mescalero Dictionary published in 1982 (see Breuninger et al. 1982).
in Zuazua’s narrative. Mendez’s three narratives total around 76 lines. Compare the four examples in Zuazua’s narrative to the eight examples in Mendez’s narratives, shown in (2). However, age may be a factor, since Mendez was clearly much younger than Zuazua. Zuazua was an older Lipan Apache woman (gender might be of importance as well, but see the Opler example below). Mendez was a younger Lipan Apache man. Zuazua was born prior to the Lipan relocation to the Mescalero Reservation (1903, see discussion below). Mendez, on the other hand, had spent some of his youth in California attending boarding schools.

2) L. Mendez (Hoijer nd: Text 1: 7) chishivii ‘with a stick’
   L. Mendez (Hoijer nd: Text 1: 18) vidii ‘his horns’
   L. Mendez (Hoijer nd: Text 2: 1) vaagoshni ‘I tell about it’
   L. Mendez (Hoijer nd: Text 2: 14) viki’go ‘after it’
   L. Mendez (Hoijer nd: Text 2: 17) vinaadaagojiit’ai ‘they learned about it again’
   L. Mendez (Hoijer nd: Text 2: 25) vidaagojool’ai ‘they learned it’
   L. Mendez (Hoijer nd: Text 2: 26) viida’shidakah ‘they usually played with it’
   L. Mendez (Hoijer nd: Text 2: 32) vóosiddo ‘I learned it’

At this point, one could rightly suggest that the supposed variation or alternation of [v] and [b] was not due to any real world phenomenon, but rather Hoijer’s inability to hear the correct sound, one that may have rested on the edge of what he was familiar with (see Boas 1889). This is certainly a possibility. However, I would make two arguments to the contrary. First, Hoijer had done linguistic work on the Mescalero Reservation in the early 1930s. He was quite familiar with the Apache languages. I find it hard to accept that Hoijer, with such a wealth of training, could not hear the difference between [v] and [b]. Hoijer (1943) had already shown an ability to distinguish the pitch accent in Apache languages. Second, and by way of independent confirmation, Morris Opler also recorded the variation. In two pieces written about the Lipan Apache, Opler cites the Lipan Apache word for ghost. In one example he writes the word with a ‘v’ and in the other example (the later example) he uses ‘b.’ Here are the two forms (I have updated the orthography, but have not changed the [v]/[b] alternation).

3) vakosh ‘ghost’ (Opler 1940: 4)
   bak’osh ‘ghost’ (Opler 1945: 134)

Again we see a variation. I think it is important to realize that the “correct” form is the later form. Opler’s later form, with the initial /b/, matches Hoijer’s (1938a) phonological description of Lipan Apache. Here I believe Opler may have adjusted what he heard to match the sound system he expected. This is a form of after the fact system building, the kind of system building that linguist often make when creating phonological inventories. I will return to this issue below.

The third corpus of data, narrative fragments collected by Goddard at the turn-of-the-century, do not show the [v]/[b] alternation. In the texts there does appear a /b/, but nowhere in the dozen pages does Goddard transcribe a [v]. It is important to realize that, in all likelihood, the narrator of Goddard’s Lipan Apache texts was neither Zuazua or Mendez (possibly Antonio Apache). Mendez would not have been old enough to have been of any use to Goddard. And the

\[^{3}\] Antonio Apache would have been roughly the right age in 1909 to have been interviewed by Goddard. Also, considering that only 19 Lipan Apaches moved to the Mescalero Reservation, Antonio Apache, who was a respected
narrative style of Goddard’s narrator differs significantly from Zuazua’s style (see Jung 2000: 98). For example, Zuazua fronts the noun kónitsqaẖí ‘the Lipan’ before discourse particles (conjunctions) such as ‘dasht’aa and ‘diko’aa ‘then’ to create a higher degree of parallelism within her narrative (see Jung 2000: 98). This stylistic device is not used in the Goddard fragments.

It is worth noting that the [v] and [b] alternation does not occur in the 1880s Gatschet notes either. It does not appear then in the single Coyote narrative recorded by Gatschet, there is also no use of the narrative enclitic –ná. Gatschet does note that he had to elicit some of the Lipan Apache forms through the Tonkawa language. Elsewhere, I have suggested that there was a fair amount of bilingualism between Lipan Apaches and Tonkawas. It appears that the Lipan Gatschet worked with in 1884 were bilingual in Tonkawa, but not in Spanish or English.

Gatschet, as Savile-Troike (1974b: 198) notes, seems to have a reliable ear when it comes to many consonantal sounds such as /l/. It should be noted that Tonkawa does not have a phonemic /v/ and there appears to be little phonological influence from Tonkawa to Lipan (see Mithun 1999 on Tonkawa phonology). This lack of influence from Tonkawa phonology on Lipan Apache phonology, even where there was clearly bilingualism, appears to conform with other examples of Athabaskan bilingualism discussed by Keren Rice (2004).

What can we discern from the [v]/[b] alternation? Are there any generalizations we can make from the incidences of this variation? Are there environments where [b] predictably becomes [v]? That is, can we write a phonological rule for this variation or is it an occurrence of “free variation?” We should begin by noting that [v] and [b] share the following distinctive features: [+ consonantal], [- sonorant], [+ labial], and [+ voice]. They differ only in regards to continuation, where [b] is a stop and therefore [− continuant] and [v] is a fricative and [+ continuant]. In Zuazua’s case [v] never occurs in word-initial position. The alternation also occurs only before [i] and [I]. However, there are numerous examples of Zuazua using a [b] before an [i] or [I]. For example, sentence 176 in Hooijer 1975: 17, has this form yildaagoyildibish. In the notebook, this form is clearly a [b]. The voiceless lateral that precedes the [b] seems to have no effect on the realization of the phoneme. Note that in the final example from Zuazua, dábívì idi í ‘their own clothes’, [v] and [b] occur in the same word. Note further that in Zuazua’s examples, the [v] is always preceded by a vowel ([ó], [á] (a diphthong), [i] and [a]). However, I am unable to discern a pattern. /ó/ is a high back vowel with high tone, /á/ is a front vowel with high tone again and a diphthong and /aa/ is a low mid vowel, long and with default tone. Perhaps it is the voiced quality of the vowel that effects the /b/? Counterexamples like ‘ibqq’í ‘buckskins’ abound. It could also be argued that it is the vowel feature as [+continuant] themselves that allows [b] –> [v] \ V ______ V. Again, counterexamples exist (see above). This again suggests that the variation may be a “free variation.” However, as William Labov (1963,
1964) has noted, such “free variations” are not always “free,” in that they are informed by gender, class, and power relations.

Turning to the examples from Mendez we see that the alternation can occur either word initially or word medially (this is often due to the morphology of Lipan and the position of the affixes). However, the majority of the examples from Mendez are word initial (7:1, and the only non-word initial form is the postposition –ívii ‘with’). Thus Mendez’s variation seems to differ from the variation found in Zuazua’s text. In the Mendez examples we see that [v] can occur before /o/, /i/ or /a/, and like Zuazua, the only vowel that it does not seem to occur with, from this limited corpus, is /e/. In Mendez’s example, the variation is often connected to the third person pronoun bi- (be it the 3rd person object or 3rd person possessive). Hoijer (1938a: 79) describes the third person pronominal in Lipan Apache as bi-. Thus vi- alternates with bi- for Mendez. Unlike the famous yi-/bi- alternation in Navajo (see Hale 1973, Thompson 1996, among many others), there does not appear to be a syntactic element to this alternation. It appears to be solely a phonological variation. So far, however, one could argue that this alternation is based on some morphophonemic environment. Most of the forms in both Zuazua’s and Mendez’s corpus are prefixes or suffixes. Specifically, the most common morphemes where the alternation occurs are the 3rd person possessive (vi-), the 3rd person object (vi-), and the postposition –ívii ‘with’.

4)  dâ’aívii
    dâ’á-  -ívii
    those  with (postposition)

5)  chishívii
    chísh-  -ívii
    stick  with (postposition)

6)  vidíi
    vi-  -díi
    3 POSS  horns

7)  vídaagójool’aa
    vi-  -daa-  -go-  -jool’aa
    3O  DIST  3S  to learn (perfective)

The Opler example pushes the question further because here we have the alternation occurring on the same word. It does not appear, either in this example or in the previous examples, that a “minimal pair” is created. While Opler developed a better understanding of Apache as he worked with the people over the years, I do not think we can dismiss Opler’s transcription as merely erroneous. It matches too well with Hoijer’s work.

3. The Ethnohistorical Context: Lipan Apache in a Changing World

I pointed out earlier that Gatschet did his work in the mid-1880s, Goddard’s work was done at the turn of the century and Hoijer and Opler did their work in the 1930s. I believe this may be important. The Lipan Apache resided in Texas during most of the historical period. They often interacted with Mescalero Apaches who also spent time in what is today Texas. Such
interactions focused on intermarriages, co-operative raiding and hunting parties, trading, and other types of intercultural exchanges (Sjoberg 1953, Webster 1999a). They were mostly fleeting interactions. After a hunting or raiding party returned, Lipan and Mescalero Apaches would go their separate ways. Contact was irregular and often individual to individual. It is not unreasonable to suggest that there was a level of individual bilingualism between Mescaleros and Lipans (see DuBois 1977a, 1977b).

In 1903 all this changed. The few remaining Lipan Apaches were relocated to the Mescalero Reservation. I should add that this was not the ideal situation for the Lipan Apache. Essentially, they were being removed from their traditional homelands and placed in a foreign environment among peoples who, while similar, were still different culturally and linguistically. For example, as Harry Hoijer (1942) noted there was a general /t/ —> /k/ shift in Eastern Apachean languages like Jicarilla Apache and Lipan Apache. Thus in Mescalero you find the form tú ‘water’ and in Lipan the form is kó. Lexical differences also occur, such as the above-mentioned form for ghost in Lipan (bak’osh) which differs from the Mescalero form (ch’indee). Another example concerns the lexical item for ‘dog.’ In Lipan Apache the form is neelj and in Mescalero the form is chiüme (Breuninger et al 1982; see also Young 1983).

The story of the Lipan Apache resistance to Texas and later the United States government’s attempts to “pacify” them can be read as an attempt to exterminate the Lipan Apache. During this time there was a Lipan Apache diaspora. By the time the Lipan Apache finally agreed to US demands, there were only around 19 individuals who made the trek from Texas and Mexico (where some had fled) to the Mescalero Reservation in south-central New Mexico (Sjoberg 1953). The Lipan spoke a minority language, surrounded by Mescalero speakers and later Chiricahua Apache speakers. And, of course, the Mescalero Reservation was surrounded by both Spanish and English speakers.

As I pointed out above, the [b]/[v] variation does not appear in the Goddard corpus, collected contemporaneously with the arrival of the Lipan Apaches on the Mescalero Reservation and before the Chiricahua arrival. In 1913, over 200 Chiricahua Apaches (former prisoners-of-war) would be relocated to the Mescalero Reservation as well (see Webster 1999b). By the time Hoijer collected his data, 1938, the Lipan Apaches had been living on the reservation for thirty-five years. As Opler (1975) noted, all three groups (Chiricahua, Lipan and Mescalero) still identified themselves as distinct peoples during the time Opler and Hoijer did their fieldwork. Thus the Lipan Apaches Hoijer worked with had spent 35 years or their entire lives living with Mescalero and Chiricahua Apaches. Here the interactions were not as irregular; they were more frequent and intermarriage increased during this time.

Neither Chiricahua Apache nor Mescalero Apache have a phonemic /v/ (see Hoijer 1938b). I should add that the [v]/[b] alternation does not appear in Hoijer’s notes for either the Chiricahua or Mescalero Apache. Likewise, Breuninger et al (1982: 4) do not describe any allophonic relations for /b/. In Hoijer’s (1938b) collections of Mescalero and Chiricahua texts, there is no evidence of an alternation between [b]/[v] as we find in his published text for Lipan Apache (1975). While I cannot state for certain that Mescalero and Chiricahua Apache did not have an alternation between [v]/[b], I do find it suggestive that this alternation was not found in Hoijer’s notebooks.4

Such complex communicative interactional scenes—such as found with the Lipan Apache (or practically any linguistic situation)—seem to suggest “acts of identity” (LePage and

Tabouret-Keller 1985). That is, we may want to understand this alternation, which I have again not been able to find in Hoijer’s Chiricahua and Mescalero notebooks, as a way for Lipan Apaches to index their identity. Thus the variation may have had sociolinguistic functions. Lipan Apaches, perhaps, used [v] instead of [b]. It would be a relatively salient feature, salient enough to be noticed but not to impede understanding. It could therefore index the identity of a speaker. Other ways of indicating one’s status as Lipan Apache vis-a-vis Mescalero or Chiricahua can also be cited. For example, Opler (1945: 134) writes of a conversation between two Lipan women and a Mescalero woman. When the women hear a strange sound one Lipan woman states that they must have heard bak’osh ‘ghost.’ The Mescalero woman does not understand this point, because she does not know the Lipan word for ‘ghost’ (bak’osh). The Lipan women “correct” themselves and then use the Mescalero word ch’idn (ch’idnee). Note that it is an overt lexical item that indexes the status of the two Lipan women as Lipan and different from the Mescalero woman. Note also that it is the Lipan women who know both the Mescalero and Lipan words. As a distinct minority on the reservation, this should not be terribly surprising. While it may have been possible for a Mescalero Apache to get around with knowledge of only Mescalero, the same could not be said for the numerically small Lipan Apaches. It appears that Mescalero was the default Apache language on the Mescalero Reservation during Opler’s fieldwork in the 1930s. The alternation of [b]/[v] in Lipan Apache may thus be ethnohistorically interesting.

A second example concerns the appearance or absence of a narrative enclitic (-ná’a or –ná ‘they say’) in Coyote stories (see Webster 1999a, b, 2004). In Chiricahua and Mescalero Coyote stories, as recorded by Hoijer, narrators use the narrative enclitic either as a line marker (Chiricahua) or verse marker (Mescalero) (Webster 1999b). Thus it serves a crucial poetic function (see Hymes 1981). The narrative enclitic also acts as an epistemic distancing device, indicating that the narrator does not have primary knowledge of the events described. Rather, the narrator is placing the story in the words of the ancestors. That is the use of the narrative enclitic places the narratives within “tradition”: “These are the stories I heard from others who presumably, heard them from others.” Thus “tradition” is created and indexed via the narrative enclitic.

The Lipan Apache Coyote narrative lacks the narrative enclitic (see Webster 1999a). This is not, however, to suggest that Lipan Apache does not have a narrative enclitic; it does (-ná). Rather, the narrative enclitic is not used in the same way as in Chiricahua or Mescalero. People listening to Coyotes narratives could—potentially—ascertain the identity of the narrator by tuning in to the use of or absence of the narrative enclitic. In such ways, language indexed identity. The [v]/[b] alternation may be a similar instance. The occasional use of [v] might have been a way to index Lipan Apache identity. This is especially true considering that Lipan Apache

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5 I note here that the Coyote narrative was told by Lisandro Mendez. It was most likely told during the day and during the summer. This would be against Lipan Apache genre restrictions for Coyote narratives. Furthermore, Mendez does not use the narrative enclitic in any of the three narratives he told Hoijer. Two of the narratives were recollections about boarding school in California (an interesting topic for Mendez to choose) and the third was a Coyote narrative about reciprocity (Webster 1999a). Since the two narratives concerning Mendez’s own experience at boarding school, one would not expect to find a narrative enclitic used. They are, after all, Mendez’s personal experiences. It is surprising to not find the enclitic used with the Coyote story, which does fall outside firsthand experience. Goddard’s Lipan Apache fragments of Coyote narratives do not appear to include the narrative enclitic either. Zuazua, on the other hand, does use the narrative enclitic. She uses it when she frames certain stretches of her narrative concerning the history of the Lipan Apache as being from the description of an old Lipan Apache woman. At such points in the narrative the enclitic is used quite regularly by Zuazua and clearly works to place the narrative within a frame of “tradition.”
was converging towards Mescalero Apache. Overt lexical items that once indexed separate identities were becoming less common. Mescalero words were gaining a foothold in Lipan Apache. Hoijer had this to say about the language situation circa 1938. "The few remaining Lipan have lived with the Mescalero for the past twenty or thirty years and now speak Mescalero oftener than they do their own language (Hoijer 1938: 85-86)."

4. Historical Speculation: Phonological Variation and Dying Languages

As I noted above, during Hoijer’s fieldwork Lipan Apache was already a dying language and speakers were shifting to Mescalero Apache or English. Lipan Apache, in these circumstances, was an unstable language and such phonological variations would be more likely (Cook 1989). As Eung-Do Cook (1989) notes for Northern Athabaskan languages, phonological variation tends to increase with the decrease in the relative health of a language. As a language dies, increased phonological variation and/or alternation occur. It is possible that the reason that we see the higher frequency of variation between [v]/[b] in Lisandro Mendez’s speech is due to his youth as a speaker of Lipan Apache. It may also reflect the nature of language shift occurring on the Mescalero Reservation in the 1930s. The variation is less common in the elder Augustina Zuazua’s speech. This may be the result of her greater command of Lipan Apache, with only traces of the alternation in her speech. Again, Mendez went to boarding school in California (not an ideal situation for a young speaker acquiring a minority language) and Zuazua learned Lipan prior to settlement on the Mescalero Reservation. The variation does not occur in the lexical items, phrases, and narrative collected by Gatschet in the 1880s. Here it seems clear that this may be due to the greater fluency and command of the Lipan speakers that Gatschet worked with in Texas. The variation also does not occur in the narrative fragments recorded by Goddard at the turn of the last century. This may be the result of that speaker’s greater command of Lipan Apache and the relative recentness of the Lipan move to the Mescalero Reservation. Finally, the variation found in Opler’s ethnographic work may, again, be the result of the language shift occurring on the Mescalero Reservation in the 1930s. Let me state this hypothesis explicitly here: The allophonic relation between [v] and [b] for phonemic /b/ may be a result of the fact that Hoijer and Opler documented the language at a point when the language was dying. Because of this factor, there was increased variability within the phonological system. As Cook (1989: 253) states, “the linguistic structure of a dying language is characterized by a wide variety of variations.”

5. Conclusion: Celebrating Leakage

I began this paper by suggesting that Hoijer and Opler at times corrected what appeared to them as errors in their own hearing. That is, there seems to be a suggestion that they misheard or re-analyzed [v] for a [b]. The problem—if there was one—lay with the hearer and not the speaker (Hoijer maintained the phonetic distinction in his 1975 work, but elsewhere did not treat the allophonic variation as significant). It was an “error” of perception and not pronunciation. And, of course, it was “clearly” an “error” that was corrected. This may all be true. However, I think we should at least entertain the idea that the alternation did occur. And by Hoijer recording it we can get a sense of the allophonic relations in Lipan Apache. Such information may not produce a clean phonemic orthography, but it may be useful in historical reconstructions. We may also look to the alternation that occurred for sociolinguistic reasons, namely the indexing of
identity. The alternation, as I showed above, is relatively "messy." It does not easily fit into a set of rules whereby we could predict when [v] would replace [b]. For some this may be troubling.

In the late 1930s both Hoijer and to a lesser extent Opler knew enough about Athabaskan languages to expect a certain phonological inventory. They were predisposed to hear certain sounds and omit others. [v] was a sound that did not fit into this "system." Hoijer and Opler, realizing that [v] held the place of the expected /b/, "corrected" their transcriptions and descriptions in their published form by replacing [v] with /b/ (though not in Hoijer's 1975 piece). They made them fit into the system. However, and thankfully, Hoijer left his original notebooks to the American Philosophical Society. In those notebooks we get a glimpse of the real-time moment of elicitation and transcription, what we might call the "messy" part, before we analyze our "data" and create clean systems. In a way, we can still "hear" the voices of Lisandro Mendez and Augustina Zuazua.

Jane Hill and Bruce Mannheim (1992) have pointed out that Boas' article "On Alternating Sounds" is one of the clearest and most convincing examples of what has become known as the "Sapir-Whorf hypothesis." Essentially what Boas argues for is that the sounds of our language predispose us to categorize novel sounds within our preconceived framework. Hoijer and Opler did something similar I think (though in the opposite direction). Grounded in a specific ideology about the systematic nature of language, they could only accept [v] as a misheard /b/. The variation is corrected away. It is—in a word—unheard. This tells us more about our language ideologies than it does about Lipan Apache phonology. Lipan Apache phonology, as constructed by Hoijer, is a useful fiction (see Port and Leary 2005). But it is a fiction that places constraints on us. In this case, the phonetic sounds were distinguished first (as is the tradition), then a system was created (the phonemic inventory) and the messiness was "corrected." The system then "post-disposes" us to re-evaluate novel sounds into constraints of our own making. This is all perfectly normal phonological work (see Port and Leary 2005). However it obscures actual phonological variation which may have sociolinguistic meanings (think /r/ deletion in English dialects) or historical linguistic ramifications (see Woodbury 1987). We are lucky—and it is to Hoijer's credit—that the remnants of a phonological alternation may have been preserved in Hoijer's notebooks and in at least one published example.6

In this paper, I have not tried to explain away the messiness of the alternation. Instead, I have tried to give a culturally and linguistically sensitive interpretation of why the alternation may occur. I have suggested that we might understand it as a way for Lipan Apaches to index their Lipan Apache-ness. This may help us understand why Mendez uses the [v] form more frequently than does Zuazua. Mendez is younger, his positionality is more likely to be full of ambiguities and his command of Lipan may not be as strong or self-assured as Zuazua's. She knows the old place names and the like (Webster nd). He tells stories of going to boarding school. She tells the history of the Lipan Apache. She uses a narrative enclitic, placing her narrative within Lipan "tradition" as indexed by the enclitic. Because Hoijer was explicitly interested in recording Lipan Apache, Mendez may have been performing Lipan Apache. One way to indicate that one was speaking Lipan Apache and not Mescalero or Chiricahua—

6 I have attempted to go through all of Hoijer's published writings on Lipan Apache and the 1975 article is the only example that presents a [v] as a possible sound in Lipan Apache. In Anthony Webster (1999a), I also revised the transcription of Mendez's Coyote narrative, replacing the phonetic [v] with phonemic /b/. I did this for ease of reading. I also included a discussion of the change, making clear to indicate that the notebook form was [v] (Webster 1999a: 18-19). In this way, I tried to produce a phonemically accurate version of the narrative and also preserve the phonological variation. This paper is a result of my continued uneasiness at the success of that attempt.
especially given the linguistic shift—would be to use [v]. Zuazua, perhaps, did not feel a need to prove her Lipan Apache-ness and thus uses the form less frequently.

An alternative view focuses on the variation as a part of a larger language shift occurring on the Mescalero Reservation of Lipan Apache speakers shifting to Mescalero Apache within a larger lingual-environment of a shift to dominant English. The alternation, then would index Lipan Apache speakers, but it also is an indicator of the lack of relative health of Lipan Apache (recall the variation was not found in the notebooks of Chiricahua or Mescalero Apache). In such a case, both the relative weakness of Lipan Apache as a language and the desire of Lipan Apaches to assert an independent identity (see Webster 1999a) may have been contributing factors in the [b]/[v] alternation. Hoijer then, in eliciting texts from the elder Zuazua and the younger Mendez, caught evidence of the decline of Lipan Apache. Thus, Hoijer’s synchronic snapshot of Lipan Apache may reveal the diachronic attrition of the Lipan Apache language when compared to Goddard and Gatschet’s synchronic snapshots.

All of this is speculation. But it is speculation based on the notebooks of Harry Hoijer. We are lucky to have such primary sources. This paper is dedicated to Hoijer’s rigor as a linguist and to the charm of finding a phonological alternation in his notebooks. In this respect, Hoijer’s inclusion of the [v]/[b] alternation in his notebooks makes real Edward Sapir’s (1921: 38) axiom, “All grammars leak.” This article has attempted to celebrate that leakage. This article has also attempted to pay tribute to Lisandro Mendez and Augustina Zuazua and more generally to Lipan Apache.

Future research on other Athabaskan languages may strengthen or weaken the suggestions made in this article. Indeed, future research on dialectal differences in Athabaskan languages seems warranted. Such research may lead to important revelations concerning the history of Apachean peoples concerning migration patterns, language contact, language change, the relative strength of Apachean languages when faced with language shift, and language separations (the stuff of historical linguistics). As Gladys Reichard (1945: 167) suggested many years ago:

A great many features of phonology are emphasized . . . The speech diversities suggest that in Navaho there survives a cross-section of history, that it is the repository of various forms and mechanisms to which they are due.

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