

THE RISE AND FALL OF ASPIRATED FRICATIVES

RADU CRAIOVEANU
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

AN UNEXPECTED GAP

- Of languages with voiceless aspirated phonemes, 97% have aspirated stops, 66% have aspirated affricates, but only 3% have aspirated fricatives

TABLE: SEGMENT FREQUENCY (UPSID)

Total	Asp.	Manner
100%	26.6%	all
98.9%	25.7%	stops
91.6%	0.9%	fricatives
62.5%	17.5%	affricates
1.1%	0.9%	clicks

- GOALS: determine whether aspirated fricatives conform to synchronic and diachronic predictions, and investigate their origins

DEAFFRICATION

$$*ts^h \rightarrow /s^h/$$

- Burmese & Karen: $*ts \rightarrow /s/$ $*ts^h \rightarrow /s^h/$

DEGEMINATION

$$*ss \rightarrow /s^h/$$

- Southern Subanen: $(*gs \rightarrow) *ks \rightarrow *ss \rightarrow /s^h/$
- Degemination to an aspirate occurs synchronically in some languages (e.g., Chumash, Icelandic)

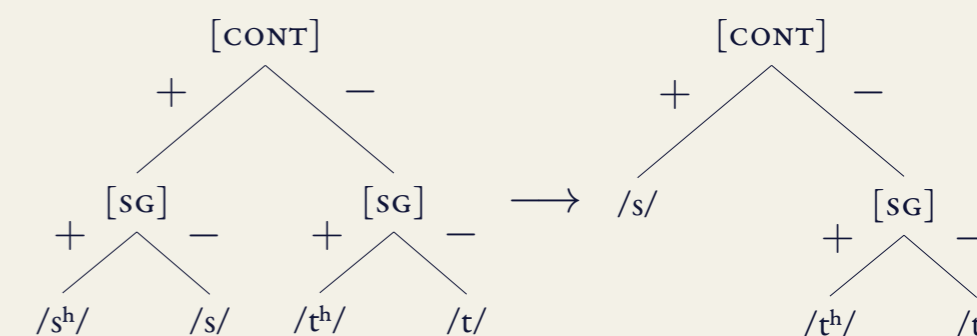
CHAIN SHIFT

$$*s \rightarrow /s^h/$$

- Cone & Kami Tibetan
 - $*sa \rightarrow /s^h/$ 'earth, land'
 - $*zag \rightarrow /s^h/$ 'to shed (tears)'
 - $*bsad \rightarrow /s^h/$ 'to kill'
 - $*bzi \rightarrow /s^h/$ 'to be drunk'

LOSS OF PHONEMIC STATUS

- Reports of younger speakers of Burmese losing /s~/s^h/ contrast
- Burmese dialects of Pwo & Sgaw Karen have the contrast, while Thai dialects have lost it

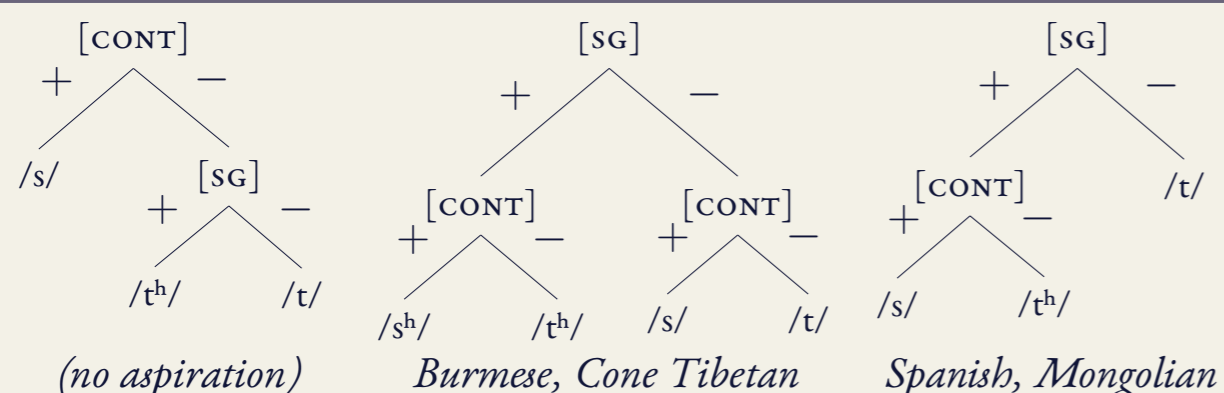


- Possible historical aspirated fricatives:
 - Not usually posited, but could have appeared as an intermediate form
 - Historical sibilant degemination ($*ss \rightarrow /s/$) is not uncommon: Greek, Arbore (Cushitic), Paamese (Austronesian), and Klamath (Penutian)

CLEAR ASPIRATION CONTRASTS

- Burmese
- S. Subanen
- Mazahua
- Ixcatec
- Palaynchi, Sgaw, & Pwo Karen
- Cone, Kami, & Melung Tibetan
- Pumi

PREDICTIONS



- No phonological reason to avoid this class
- Therefore restrictions must be articulatory (↑ airflow) & perceptual (fuzzy VOT)
- Thus rarity of aspirated fricatives is due to diachronic instability

REFERENCES

- Applegate, R. B. (1972). *Ineseño Chumash grammar*. PhD thesis, University of California Berkeley.
- Blevins, J. (2004). Sibilant degemination in Klamath. *International Journal of American Linguistics*, 70(3), 279–289.
- Chirkova, K. (forthcoming). Phonological profile of Kami, the Tibetan dialect of Muli. In J. T.-S. Sun (Ed.), *Special issue of Language and Linguistics on lesser known dialects of Tibetan*.
- Jacques, G. (2011). A panchronic study of aspirated fricatives, with new evidence from Pumi. *Lingua*, 121, 1518–1538.
- Jacques, G. (2012). *A phonological profile of Cone*. Manuscript draft.
- Lobel, J. W., & Hall, W. C. (2010). Southern Subanen aspiration. *Oceanic Linguistics*, 49(2), 319–338.
- Maddieson, I. (1984). *Patterns of sounds*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.