

Blackfoot is an Algonquian language spoken by about 5000 speakers of the Blood, Peigan, and Siksika tribes in southern Alberta and Northern Montana.

Blackfoot is currently in a transitional period between what is classified by its speakers as "Old Blackfoot" and "New Blackfoot". What is presented here is a 44 year-old male Old Blackfoot Speaker from the Siksika Tribe near Calgary, Alberta.

Blackfoot Consonant Phonemes:

| | | | | |
|-------------|---|----|---|---|
| Stops: | p | t | k | ʔ |
| Fricatives: | | s | x | h |
| Affricates: | | ts | | |
| Nasals: | m | n | | |
| Glides: | w | | j | |

Consonants Encountered:

| | | | |
|-------------|---|----|-----|
| Stops: | p | t | k |
| Fricatives: | | s | ç x |
| Affricates: | | ts | |
| Nasals: | m | n | |
| Glides: | w | | j |

There are no voiced non-sonorant consonants and no liquids. Stops are not aspirated, but they are released. Length is contrastive. [ç] is an allophone of /x/ that occurs near high front vowels.

Frantz (1989) reports that [h] & [ʔ] are contrastive in Blackfoot, however neither are exhibited in this speaker. At the time of the recording of the New Blackfoot speaker it was thought that the loss of these sounds was characteristic of the New Blackfoot, but that does not seem to be the case. Another possible explanation is a dialectal difference between the Siksika Tribe (from which both recordings were taken) and the Blood Tribe (upon which Frantz's Dictionary is primarily based).

Blackfoot Vowel Phonemes:

Vowels Encountered:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| i | | i | u |
| | o | ɪ | ʊ |
| | | e | ʌ |
| | | ɛ | ɔ |
| a | | a | ɑ |

Vowel length is contrastive although it is mostly prevalent on tense vowels. Two homorganic vowels may occur sequentially. Vowel quality changes reported from the New Blackfoot recording (creaky voice, nasalization) do not seem prevalent in this speaker. Vowels are devoiced when they precede /x/.

I. Word ListsConsonants:

| | | |
|-----|--------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. | [pik:s:i] | 'bird' |
| 2. | [pu:ká:] | 'child' |
| 3. | [matápi] | 'person' |
| 4. | [apí:t] | 'sit' |
| 5. | [kitsi:n] | 'I see you' |
| 6. | [níts:ksínip] | 'I know it' |
| 7. | [õxkutu:síksíkími] | 'coffee' |
| 8. | [taká:tsíks] | 'who' |
| 9. | [netõxki:man] | 'wife' |
| 10. | [namanístsu] | 'few' |
| 11. | [né:tãxktaj] | 'river' |
| 12. | [éstud] | 'come' |
| 13. | [istsínit] | 'cut' |
| 14. | [síksínat:sí] | 'black' |
| 15. | [ni:t:õkska] | 'one' |
| 16. | [íski:natsí] | 'night' |
| 17. | [kitsím] | 'door' |
| 18. | [pu:ká:] | 'child' |
| 19. | [íspíki:] | 'thick' |
| 20. | [kitakawakjuk] | 'they're gonna hit you' |
| 21. | [õxkütuk] | 'a big stone' |
| 22. | [u:ká:t] | 'sleep' |
| 23. | [púksí] | 'small' |
| 24. | [a:ní:t] | 'say' |
| 25. | [opí:t] | 'sit' |
| 26. | [íski:natsí] | 'night' |
| 27. | [saa] | 'no' |
| 28. | [níts:ksínip] | 'know' |
| 29. | [síksínat:sí] | 'black' |
| 30. | [nésut:új] | 'five' |
| 31. | [é:sukut:a:] | 'he is spitting' |
| 32. | [õxtú:ki] | 'ear' |
| 33. | [kútsís] | 'give' |
| 34. | [és:ínatsí] | 'it's foggy' |
| 35. | [ís:ukõj] | 'heavy' |
| 36. | [íkíçkininá:psí] | 'dull' |
| 37. | [íníçká:sín] | 'name' |
| 38. | [ánu:m] | 'here' |
| 39. | [nékõxpi] | 'it's swollen' |
| 40. | [õxkats] | 'leg' |
| 41. | [awãxká:t] | 'play' |
| 42. | [tsánístsís] | 'when' |
| 43. | [tsíma:] | 'where' |
| 44. | [kútsís] | 'give' |

| | | |
|-----|---------------|--------------|
| 45. | [ʊxkʰats] | 'leg' |
| 46. | [ʌmska:pʊxts] | 'south' |
| 47. | [sɔɔxts] | 'outside' |
| 48. | [sɪksɪnat:sɪ] | 'black' |
| 49. | [ɪs:i:nat:sɪ] | 'it's foggy' |
| 50. | [pɪsʌtseski] | 'flower' |
| 51. | [mʌmi:] | 'fish' |
| 52. | [matʌpi] | 'person' |
| 54. | [ɔxtsimɪt] | 'hear' |
| 55. | [sɔjsksɪ:sɪ] | 'fly' |
| 56. | [nu:m] | 'husband' |
| 57. | [nu:m] | 'husband' |
| 58. | [nɪn(ə)] | 'father' |
| 59. | [ɪjɪn:ɪs] | 'hold' |
| 60. | [nɪnɑ:] | 'man' |
| 61. | [ɔxkɔkɪn] | 'neck' |
| 62. | [ɪski:natsɪ] | 'night' |
| 63. | [ake:nɪw] | 'he's dead' |
| 64. | [ɪn:ujɪ] | 'long' |
| 65. | [mʊkuwʌn] | 'stomach' |
| 66. | [akʊxsimʌt] | 'making tea' |
| 67. | [pu:kɑ:] | 'child' |
| 68. | [ɪ:mɪtɑ:] | 'dog' |
| 69. | [ɪjɪn:ɪs] | 'hold' |
| 70. | [ksɪstʊjɪ] | 'warm' |
| 71. | [ʊmʌxkʊj] | 'big' |
| 72. | [mɔxsɔkʊj] | 'road' |

Vowels:

| | | |
|-----|--------------|------------------|
| 1. | [ɪkʊ:pʊxsɪn] | 'fear' |
| 2. | [sɔjsksɪsɪ] | 'fly' |
| 3. | [ɪm:ɪtɑ:] | 'dog' |
| 4. | [ɔxtsimɪt] | 'hear' |
| 5. | [mɪs:ts:ɪs] | 'stick' |
| 6. | [matʌpi] | 'person' |
| 7. | [ɪksɪmɑ:t] | 'hunt' |
| 8. | [sɔjsksɪsɪ] | 'fly' |
| 9. | [mʌmi:] | 'fish' |
| 10. | [ɪs:tʊjɪ] | 'cold' |
| 11. | [ɛs:i:natsɪ] | 'it's foggy' |
| 12. | [kʊtsɪs] | 'give' |
| 13. | [tsɪmɑ:] | 'where' |
| 14. | [pɪk:sɑ:kɪt] | 'splitting wood' |
| 15. | [sɪm:ɪs] | 'stab' |
| 16. | [ɪn:i:] | 'buffalo' |
| 17. | [ani:t] | 'say' |
| 18. | [ake:tapi] | 'many' |
| 19. | [ʊtsɪnɑjɪ] | 'tongue' |

| | | |
|-----|----------------|-------------------------|
| 20. | [namanístɪm] | 'few' |
| 21. | [nuúkska] | 'three' |
| 22. | [tomaná:sɪ] | 'is that right?' |
| 23. | [a:ki:] | 'woman' |
| 24. | [pina:pɔxts] | 'east' |
| 25. | [taka:] | 'who' |
| 26. | [sɪkstakɪt] | 'bite' |
| 27. | [estú] | 'come' |
| 28. | [nesak:suɟɪ] | 'they burnt themselves' |
| 29. | [nɛ:kɔxpɪ] | 'it's swollen' |
| 30. | [ɛsuk:ut:a:] | 'he is spitting' |
| 31. | [nɪtsɪ:nɪp] | 'I see it' |
| 32. | [pɪsats:ɛs:ki] | 'flower' |
| 33. | [kɪtákwakɟuk] | 'they're gonna hit you' |
| 34. | [sɪkstakɪt] | 'bite' |
| 35. | [ukstakɪt] | 'count' |
| 36. | [apɔt:skina] | 'cow' |
| 37. | [apɪ:t] | 'sit' |
| 38. | [ʌn:ɪm] | 'there' |
| 39. | [atana:kɪt] | 'dig' |
| 40. | [mami:] | 'fish' |
| 41. | [ukstakɪt] | 'count' |
| 42. | [ɛsɪmɪ:pɟakɪ] | 'bartender' |
| 43. | [ɪçtɔ:ɟɔp] | 'fork' |
| 44. | [mu:kɔwʌn] | 'stomach' |
| 45. | [mu:tsɪs] | 'hand' |
| 46. | [ɪsukɔɟ] | 'heavy' |
| 48. | [mɔxtɔki] | 'ear' |
| 49. | [ni:suɟ] | 'four' |
| 50. | [nistú] | 'eye' |
| 51. | [pɪs:tɔxts] | 'insides' |
| 52. | [kɔtsɪs] | 'give' |
| 53. | [nit:úkska:] | 'one' |
| 54. | [nistú] | 'I' |
| 55. | [nitɔxtsɪn] | 'hear' |
| 56. | [mɔxkɔkɪn] | 'neck' |
| 57. | [mɔxsɔɟɪs] | 'tail' |
| 58. | [ʌn:um] | 'here' |
| 59. | [saqɔxsts] | 'outside' |

Blackfoot Consonant Clusters:

| | | |
|----|---------------|-----------|
| 1. | [ksɪstɔɟɪ] | 'warm' |
| 2. | [sɪkstakɪt] | 'bite' |
| 3. | [pɪɟɔxts] | 'far' |
| 4. | [sɔɟskɪsɪ] | 'fly' |
| 5. | [pɪs:tɔxts] | 'insides' |
| 6. | [nitɔxtsɪn] | 'hear' |
| 7. | [nɪts:ksɪnɪp] | 'know' |

| | | |
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| 8. | [ɪst:siksʊpukwɪ] | 'salt' |
| 9. | [ɪs:ɪststɛn] | 'wash' |
| 10. | [ɪnakstsɪm] | 'young' |
| 11. | [ɪçtsɪs:u] | 'he's ahead' |
| 12. | [ʌmskɑ:pɔxts] | 'south' |
| 13. | [pɪnɑ:pɔxts] | 'east' |

Voiceless Vowels

| | | |
|-----|----------------|----------------------------|
| 1. | [ʊmɑxkʊj] | 'big' |
| 2. | [kɪçkina:psi] | 'dull' |
| 3. | [iku:pʊt] | 'fear' |
| 4. | [nɛkɔxpɪ] | 'it's swollen' |
| 5. | [netʊx:ki:mɛn] | 'wife' |
| 6. | [mɔxtu:kɪs] | 'ear' |
| 7. | [ɪçtsikɪmskɑ:] | 'it's floating that way' |
| 8. | [nɔxtu:ki:sts] | 'hear' |
| 9. | [ɑxkɑnɑ:kɪt] | 'sew' |
| 10. | [ɪs:pɪki:] | 'thick' |
| 11. | [sʊpɔ] | 'wind' |
| 12. | [ksɪstʊjɪ] | 'warm' |
| 13. | [ɛsɪksʊpʊ] | 'the wind is calming down' |

Pitch Accent:

| | | |
|-----|--------------------|--|
| 1. | [ɑ:ki:] | 'woman' |
| 2. | [nɪtɑ:kɪm] | 'sister' |
| 5. | [nɑɑxs] | 'elder relation' |
| 6. | [ɑkɑjɪm] | 'many' |
| 7. | [ɑkɛ:sɪ] | 'old' |
| 8. | [ɔxki:] | 'water' |
| 9. | [ɔxpɪkɪnɑkɪm] | 'corn' |
| 10. | [ɑps:i] | 'bow' |
| 11. | [ɑps:i] | 'white buffalo berry, snow berry' |
| 14. | [ɪnɑ:kɪt] | 'be thirsty!' |
| 15. | [nɔxkʊmɪxkɑ] | 'he caught a fish' |
| 16. | [ɑtʊki] | 'animal skin' |
| 17. | [ʊtʊ:k] | 'kidney' |
| 18. | [mɪstɑ:ki] | 'mountain' |
| 19. | [mɪstɑpu:t] | 'go away' |
| 20. | [ʊk:ɪn] | 'collar bone' |
| 24. | [pɪnɑ:pɪsʊnɛ:kʊɑn] | 'Sioux Tribe (East Cree)' |
| 25. | [ʊmɑxksɪksɪmɪ] | 'Atlantic Ocean (body of water to the east)' |

Other Phenomena:

| | | |
|----|--------------|---------|
| 1. | [ʊxkɑts] | 'foot' |
| 2. | [ɪksɪmstɑ:t] | 'think' |
| 3. | [ɑ:pɑn] | 'blood' |

| | | |
|-----|--------------|-------------------------|
| 4. | [nooʃ] | 'mouth' |
| 5. | [iski:natsi] | 'night' |
| 6. | [mu:tsis] | 'arm' |
| 7. | [utsisit] | 'smoke' |
| 8. | [maka:pi] | 'bad' |
| 9. | [kakatu:s] | 'star' |
| 10. | [matsit] | 'take it' |
| 11. | [ne:saksuji] | 'they burnt themselves' |
| 12. | [natu:kaj] | 'two' |
| 13. | [asu:pats] | 'chair' |
| 14. | [ʌnja] | 'is that right' |
| 15. | [axkanakit] | 'sew' |
| 16. | [ijim:it] | 'laugh' |
| 17. | [sim:a] | 'stab' |
| 18. | [esaji] | 'lie' |
| 19. | [ake:sɪ] | 'old' |
| 20. | [man:i] | 'new' |
| 21. | [manstuji] | 'new year' |

II. Spontaneous Speech

References:

- Bortolin, Leah and McLennan, Sean. 1995. MS Blackfoot. University of Calgary, Linguistics 421, W95
- Frantz, Donald G. 1989. Blackfoot Dictionary of Stems, Roots, and Affixes. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.