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Where does *r* come from and what does it tell us about Fort Good Hope Dene morphology?

In the past 150 years, the Fort Good Hope dialect of Dene (Slavey) has undergone several phonological shifts. I focus on the change of nasals to *r*, addressing two issues. First, not all nasals shift to *r* in the appropriate environment, and it appears that the factors that determine what shifts are largely non-linguistic, involving frequency. Second, and of interest in terms of the phonology of endangered languages, sometime during the period in which the exposure to and use of English greatly increased, processes have been introduced that strengthen the evidence for a strong word-internal boundary. Athabaskan languages are often thought to demonstrate ongoing polysynthesis, with morphemes becoming more closely bound within the word. In as much as the recently introduced /*r*/ is involved in strengthening this boundary, it is interesting that greater morphological transparency of this part of the word has evolved rather than the increased morphological opacity that might be expected.