Eagle Chief and Friday song

Sung by Mary Kate Underwood to Andrew Cowell

téénookúúhu’ [téénokúhu’?]
niineecée3ecoot
tohuunih’öö3ouyéítit
‘oh wootii hóó3eih hee3éíhit

thinks of himself as a chief
because he speaks English.
But he looks like a pregnant woman [riding his horse].

Word-by-word translation

teen-ookuu-huu’ teen-oku-hu’
quiet-stand-little quiet-sit-little

nii-neecece-3ecoo-t
habitual-chief-think-he

toh-uu-nih’oo3ouyeiti-t
because-habitual-speak English-he

‘oh wootii hoo3eih hee3eih-t
but like pregnant woman how be-he

Note: This song dates back to the 19th century, when Friday became a prominent chief among the Arapaho due to his ability to speak English. Many in the tribe thought that he was too accommodating to the Whites, however, and mistrusted him – as indicated by this song. The singer’s family was among the faction opposed to Friday, and she sang the song for me on three different occasions with relish.

More generally, when people rose in the morning to greet the rising sun, they would not only say morning prayers, but also sing songs generally related to these political songs. Often they would be songs which would praise their relatives for some good deed that they had done. It was of course hoped that others would hear and repeat the song, thus further advertising the good deed, for which the singer/prayer gave thanks. People could also be ridiculed or criticized on these occasions, much like occurs in the two songs given above.