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FOREWORD

It is indeed gratifying to recognize the degree of acceptance the *Kansas Working Papers in Linguistics* has come to enjoy, and this is especially true for the series of *Studies in Native American Languages*. Even before the call for papers went out in the fall, we had received inquiries from prospective contributors, and the response to the call itself was remarkable in quality as well as diversity.

This year the *KWPL* marks its first decade of existence, and we are publishing two numbers. Number one is devoted to theoretical issues, general linguistcs and old-world languages, while number two is the fourth in the *Studies in Native American Languages* series. This number includes articles representing seven different language families from all over North America (Uto-Aztecan, Muskogean, Yuman, Siouan, Otomanguan, Athabaskan and Algic), and a great deal of original scholarship.

We wish to thank the contributors, both those whose papers appear in this volume, and those whose papers we did not include. We also wish to thank the faculty of the Linguistics department of the University of Kansas for their support and encouragement for the *KWPL* throughout the year.

SLAVEY EXPRESSIVE TERMS:
Synchronic Evidence for Diachronic Change

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Abstract: Slavey, an Athapaskan language, has a rich expressive vocabulary which exhibits many of the traits discussed in Mithun (1982), but which violates the syllable structure constraints of the language. These syllable structure constraint violations are evidence for the resistance to sound change found by Mithun in this subset of the lexicon.

1. Introduction

Mithun (1982) discusses several traits of expressive vocabulary. Expressive words are not inflected, and are usually one or two syllables. Reduplication is a frequent process. All of the sounds found in regular vocabulary are found in expressive vocabulary, and the phonological rules of the language apply to expressive vocabulary. Expressive vocabulary often includes additional sounds which are not part of the phonemic inventory of the language, but which fill gaps in the phonemic system. The function of sounds in expressive vocabulary is imitative rather than distinctive, so that free variants are found more frequently. Expressive vocabulary includes suprasegmental features such as expressive length, pitch and pharyngealization. Sound symbolism occurs in onomatopoeic words. Finally, as Mithun demonstrates, expressive vocabulary can fail to undergo historical sound change.

Data from Southern Slavey, an Athapaskan language, both support and refute Mithun's generalizations.[1] Southern Slavey expressive vocabulary exhibits many of the traits enumerated, but also violates the syllable structure constraints of the language. However, these syllable structure constraint violations are further evidence for the resistance to sound change found by Mithun in this subset of the lexicon.

There is accent (high pitch and stress) in Slavey. See Appendix 1 for charts of the consonant and vowel phonemes.[2]

2. Filling Gaps

Ideophones contain a number of sounds which are not found in the phonemic inventory of Slavey. These sounds have a gap-filling function. Both of the phonemes /m/ and /n/ occur, but there is no [ŋ] phoneme. This sound is found in ideophones:[3]

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(1) dǫ́ɬ́ŋ "sound of a spring being sprung"

(2) p'ɬ́ɬ́ŋ "sound of a 22 rifle"

Although Howard (1963) states that [r] is infrequently found in Slavey, occurring mostly in loanwords, it was found in expressive vocabulary:

(3) hr̥n hr̥n hr̥n "sound of a motor starting" (loan?)

(4) t'ŕ̥ŕ̥ t'ŕ̥ŕ̥ "sound of a kicker" (loan?)

(5) gríkgríkgrík "frog or toad call"

There is a phoneme /w/, but [y] occurs only in alternation with [ž] or in expressive terms:

(5) eyaw "ouch!" (cry of pain)

(6) ooyú? "go right!" (dog team command)

There are no labiovelar stops or fricatives in Slavey, but these sounds occur in expressive vocabulary:[4]

(7) ɣʷǫ "sound of a moose rubbing his antler on a tree to call mate"

(8) ɣʷoxʷ "boo!"

(9) gʷɛɛ "sound of a duck"

There are glottalized consonant phonemes /t'/ and /k'/ but not the corresponding labial consonant [p'] which is however, found in expressive vocabulary:

(10) p'ɬ́ɬ́ŋ "sound of a 22 rifle"

The sound [f] is not part of the phonemic inventory, but is found in expressive terms:

(11) bʊf bʊf bʊf "sound of an automatic gun"

The sound [x] is not a phoneme, although there is a phoneme /ɣ/, but this sound is also found in expressive vocabulary:

(12) dix dix dix "scary noise of heavy footsteps"

All of the non-distinctive segments which were found in expressive vocabulary fill gaps in what is otherwise a skewed consonantal system. Most of the distinctive segments in Slavey

occurred in expressive vocabulary, with the exception of the interdental affricate series, and pre-nasalized stops.

3. Non-Gap Filling Sounds

New segments which did not have a gap-filling function were also found in expressive vocabulary. First, lax vowels occurred:

(13) ðɪk "sound of a knife hitting tree"

(14) dɛ́ɛ́l "sound of a window breaking"

(15) bʊf bʊf bʊf "sound of an automatic gun"

Second, voiceless vowels occurred:

(16) t'i̲k "sound of a clock ticking"

(17) ts'i̲ ts'i̲ ts'i̲ "sound of scratching one's head"

(18) ts'i̥ ts'i̥ "noise of a mouse"

(19) k'i̲ʔts "sound of breaking twigs"

(20) k'e̲d "sound of fire crackling"

(21) ša̲ ša̲ ša̲ "sound of shuffling feet"

(22) sah sah sah "sound of a bear walking unseen not far from camp"

(23) k'i̥ʔ k'i̥ʔ "sound of a grasshopper rubbing its legs together"

Voiceless vowels are only found between two voiceless consonants, either two tense consonants or lax voiceless consonants as in k'e̲d "sound of fire crackling", in expressive vocabulary. However, since vowels occur between voiceless or tense consonants are are not devoiced in regular vocabulary, it cannot be assumed that there is a devoicing process which accounts for the voiceless vowels in expressive terms. The distinctive contrast between oral and nasal vowels is maintained even when vowels are voiceless, as in:

(24) ts'i̲ "sound of scratching one's head"

(25) ts'i̥ "noise of a mouse"

4. Free Variation

The Slavey data does not support a strong tendency toward lack of lexical discreteness within an ideolect. Only a few examples of free variation were found, for example: 'dom ~ 'dum "sound of knocking", and otherwise phonemic contrasts were important. Some of the many minimal pairs which were found include:

(26)	t'ɬ́ɬ́ŋ	"sound of hitting a tin can"
(27)	p'ɬ́ɬ́ŋ	"sound of a 22 rifle"
(28)	k'áts k'áts k'áts	"general staccato or hollow sound"
(29)	k'ats k'ats	"sound of chopping wood"
(30)	tš'ɪ́d	"sound of swallowing quickly"
(31)	tš'ɪ̀d	"sound of swallowing a bigger object slowly"

5. Suprasegmental Features

Suprasegmental features such as accent (high, falling or rising pitch and stress), exaggerated stress, exaggerated pitch, exaggerated vowel length, laryngealization, and a rhythmic beat are all important as onomatopoeic devices in Slavey. Examples of exaggerated stress include:

(32)	'dom	"sound of knocking"
(33)	'?ɛ	"sound of someone defecating"

Examples of exaggerated high pitch include:

(34)	eyáá?	"cry of pain"
(35)	kákáká	"call of a crow"
(36)	ts'íí	"squeaky noise"
(37)	íí	"exclamation made when scared or amazed"

Examples of exaggerated vowel length include:

(37)	a úú:	"cry of a wolf"
(38)	?ú:ù:	"yuck!" (exclamation)

Laryngealization has a mimetic function, as for example in the following words:

(39) tɬ'íḭ́ "farting sound"

(40) t'éḛ́ "sound of an old skidoo without a hood"

Accent has an imitative function, as for example in the following items:

(41) dî "sound of a gun being shot"

(42) ʔəhə̀:ə́ "uh-oh!" (exclamation which indicates trouble)

(42) í̗ʔ í̗ʔ "whimper (like a dog) of a baby"

(43) r̗̂r̗̂ r̗̂r̗̂ "sound of a motor not starting"

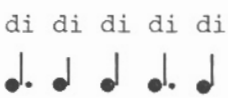
(44) m̓́h m̓́h "owl cry"

Several expressive words were pronounced with a rhythmic beat, and the word glossed "sound of a chickadee" was sung. These words are given below:

(45) dɛ́l dɛ́: dɛ́l dɛ́l dɛ́:l "sound of shaking something in a tin can"

(46) lí lí lí lí lí "sound of a bell ringing"

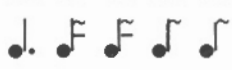
(47) di di di di di di "sound of a chicken or ptarmigan"



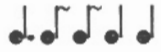
(48) 'dih di 'dih di 'dih di 'di "sound of a drumbeat"

(49) bu bul bul bul bul "sound of boiling"

(50) dú dú dú dú dú "sound of a horn"



(51) tataratatat (trill [r]) "sound of a flat rock skipping on the top of the water"



(52) tšɪgədídí (sung) "chickadee sound"

1 1 5 3 (indicates musical pitch)

6. Reduplication and Inflection

Reduplication of syllables is a productive process, as illustrated in the following examples:

(53) k'ó k'ó k'ó k'ó "sound of drinking"

(54) k'a k'á k'om "sound of a crane"

Expressive words in Slavey do not inflect, and are generally one or two syllables in length.

7. Sound Symbolism

Words which describe noises which are prolonged or involve extension in time, end in vowels, while words which describe noies which are punctual or abrupt, end in consonants. Some examples include:

(55) tš'uu "sound of tearing cloth"

(56) tɬéé "noise of frying"

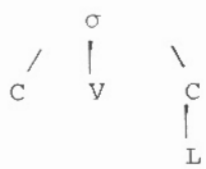
(57) dlu̧m "sound of closing a door"

(58) tɬ'ik "sound of a lock snapping shut"

See Appendix 2 for a list of Slavey expressive vocabulary.

8. Synchronic Evidence for Diachronic Change

Syllables in Slavey have the canonical structure (C)V(L), that is, are either an open syllable or a syllable closed by a laryngeal consonant which is either [ʔ] or [h]. Thebbasic syllable structure then is:



However, expressive words yield examples of the violation of the syllable structure constraints in the language. For example:

These words have the shape CVC where the final C is not a laryngeal consonant.

There is a constraint against CC clusters in Slavey, but there are examples of expressive terms containing consonant clusters. For example:

Mithun (1982) stated that low level phonological rules and syllable structure constraints would apply to expressive vocabulary. The Slavey data refute this claim. However, Mithun provided evidence from Iroquoian showing that sounds in expressive vocabulary can be exceptions to sound change. The Slavey data support and extend Mithun's claim that this subset of the lexicon is resistant to historical phonological change. Proto-Athapaskan had stem (syllable) final consonants and consonant clusters. Historically, zero to, with suffixes, perhaps four consonants occurred stem finally, but no modern Athapaskan languages except Koyukon have surface consonant clusters. In Slavey, stem final obstruents have been lost, with the ensuing development of tone, diphthongs, vowel clusters and stem initial consonant palatalization (Cook 1981; Krauss 1973). The violations of the syllable structure constraints in Slavey which are found in expressive vocabulary provide further evidence for the historical loss of syllable final consonants and consonant clusters.[5]

9. Conclusion

Since expressive terms are used in special contexts, such as story-telling, such words are less subject to lexical innovation and semantic drift. This vocabulary is doubtless learned early by children. Since expressive terms often have a metonymic connection with the noises which they signify, it is expected that within a language, there would be little variability between speakers.

Therefore, this lexical set would retain older phonological features as a result of less innovation and borrowing, The Slavey data show that in this domain, older forms with syllable final consonants are retained, although the loss of final consonants has occurred elsewhere in the lexicon.

NOTES

1 Laura Sabourin (Fort Providence, N.W.T.), Eleanor Bran (Fort Simpson, N.W.T.) and Andy Norwegian (Jean-Marie, N.W.T.) provided the data for this paper. I would like to express my gratitude to them, and to Dr. E.-D. Cook for his advice and criticism. Any inaccuracies in either the data or interpretation are entirely my responsibility.

2 Examples are given in phonetic transcription. The following diacritics are used:

ˆ	falling pitch
ˋ ˊ	rising pitch
ˊ	high pitch and stress
ˈ	exaggerated stress (placed at beginning of stressed syllable)
V̨	nasal vowel
V̥	voiceless vowel
V̄ (high pitch)	exaggerated pitch
V:	exaggerated vowel length
V̰	laryngealized vowel

3 One might wish to argue that there are conditioning factors involving the segment [ ] since it is found after nasal long vowels or diphthongs. One might posit an insertion rule of the type:

$$\emptyset \rightarrow \text{ŋ} / \begin{bmatrix} -\text{cons} \\ +\text{syll} \\ +\text{nas} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} -\text{cons} \\ +\text{syll} \\ +\text{nas} \end{bmatrix} \_\_\_\_$$

This rule would apply to derive words such as t'ííŋ "sound of hitting a tin can". However, there are also counterexamples to this rule:

gỹỹ	"crunching sound"
g^{w}ɛ̨ɛ̨	"sound of a duck"

lį́ŋ lį́ŋ	"telephone sound" (Borrowing from English 'ring')

Historically, nasal vowels are derived from Vn sequences occurring before a consonant or word boundary. Another suprasegmental feature, high tone in Slavey and low tone in Dogrib, is historically derived from V$^{?}$ sequences (Cook 1981).

4 One might wish to posit underlying forms without labialized consonants which would be related to surface forms via a (mirror image) assimilation rule of the type:

$$C \rightarrow [+\text{round}] \; / \; \_\_\_\_ \begin{bmatrix} -\text{cons} \\ +\text{syll} \\ +\text{mid} \\ +\text{round} \end{bmatrix}$$

This would yield underlying and surface forms like:

/ɣox/	→	[ɣ^{w}ox^{w}]

The problems with this analysis lie in restricting the rule to apply only before mid round vowels, to account for words like gu̧ "sound of chewing ice" and gỹỹ "crunching sound", and more importantly, in the fact that counterexamples to the rule are found:

ɣoh	"sound of a far away owl"
k'o k'o k'o	"sound of drinking"

Krauss (1973) has reconstructed a *k̂^{w} series in Proto-Athapaskan. *k̂^{w} merged with *tš̆ in Slavey. The labial consonants p(f) and k^{w} found in some Slavey dialects are derived historically from *ts (Cook 1981).

5 As the reviewer of this paper has pointed out to me, some of the expressive terms in Slavey refer to items which belong to the post-contact culture, and these terms would have either been innovations or borrowings from European languages, and therefore not have undergone historical sound changes such as the loss of stem final obstruents.

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APPENDIX 1

Vowels

	front		back	
high	i	ɨ	u	ʉ
mid	e	ɘ	o	ɵ
low			a	ɐ

Consonants

	labial	interdental	alveolar	lateral	palatal	velar	glottal
Stops							
nasal	m mb		n nd				
plain	b	d				g	
asp.			t			k	
glott.			t'			k'	ʔ
Affricates							
plain		dð	dz	dɬ	dž		
asp.		tθ	ts	tɬ	tš		
glott.		tθ'	ts'	tɬ'	tš'		
Fricatives							
voiceless		θ	s	ɬ	š		h
voiced		ð	z	l	ž	ɣ	
Glide/ Liquid			r			w	

(Howard 1963)

APPENDIX 2

The following vocabulary is transcribed in broad phonetic transcription. Dialectal, but not ideolectal variants are given separate citations.

ɣʷɵ	sound of a moose rubbing his antler on a tree to call mate

γʷǫɨŋ	sound of scraping moosehide
wóh	sound of scraping moosehide
γʷoxʷ	boo!
búh	boo!
dih	sound of a rock falling
'dɪɪθ	reverberating noise
'duuθ	sound of a big object falling
γiíh	sound of a tree falling
yiih	sound of a tree falling
tš'uu	sound of tearing cloth
zoh zoh	sound of someone skating
zo zo	sound of someone skating
dlí? dlí?	noise of a squirrel
dlih dlih	noise of a squirrel
t'ɬ́ɬ́ŋ	sound of hitting a tin can
p'ɨ́ɨ́ŋ	sound of a 22 rifle
k'a k'á k'om	sound of a crane
gu gá gum	imitation of a crane sound
'dom ~ 'dum *(said quickly)*	sound of knocking
k'i?ts	sound of breaking twigs
udža?	go left! (dog team command)
ooyú?	go right! (dog team command)
tɬéé	frying noise
ts'i ts'i ts'i	sound made when scratching one's head

ts'íí (high pitch)	squeaky noise
gwaad	sound of a kicker hitting a rock on the bottom of shallow water
tɬ'íí ~~	farting noise
ɬɬ̀ ɬɬ̀	sound of a motor not starting
tɬ'éé	sound of a power saw
ʔee	sound made when wishing
gu̧	sound of
žoo	sound of spilling a pail of water on someone, or the sound of a male having an orgasm
dǫ́i̧ɪ̨	sound of a spring being sprung
zaa	a rubbing noise (e.g. trouser legs rubbing together or skiing on snow)
a úú: (high pitch)	howl of a wolf
eyaw ~ eyááʔ (high pitch)	ouch! (cry of pain)
diš	sound of something falling down
ðɪk	sound of a knife hitting a tree
t'ooš	sound of hitting with a fist
gríkgríkgrík	sound of a frog or toad in swamp
k'ó k'ó k'ó k'ó	a drinking sound
k'ól k'ól	a drinking sound
tš'ɪʔ tš'ɪʔ tš'ɪʔ	a swallowing sound
tš'íd	sound of swallowing quickly
tš'ɪ̀d	sound of swallowing a bigger object slowly
zí̧í̧	a fast noise

zɬɬŋ	a fast noise
zɬ̀ɬ̀	a really fast noise (e.g. a bullet whizzing past)
tɬó̀ò̀tš	sound of an egg splattering (a slow noise)
tɬótš	a fast splattering noise
tɬo?	sound of a soft slap
tɬʌ́k	sound of a pancake hitting something
tɬæk	sound of a slap on the face
t'éé (high pitch) ~~	sound of an old skidoo without a hood
dix dix dix (said slowly)	scary noise of heavy footsteps
tálálá	sound of pulling a kicker that won't start
?ɨɣɥą	cry of a baby
ɥ wę́h	cry of a baby
ɥwą́	cry of a baby
hɹn hɹn hɹn ' ' '	sound of a motor starting
t'ɾ́ɾ́ t'ɾ́ɾ́ '' ''	sound of a kicker
k'ed	sound of fire crackling
ɬ́? ɬ́?	whimper (like a dog) of a baby
gʷɛɛ	sound of a duck
líŋ líŋ (high pitch)	sound of a phone ringing
líí	sound of a phone ringing
líí líí (extended pause between words)	sound of bells
lɬ́ɬ́ŋ	sound of rain

lį́į́	sound of rain
bʊʔʊtš	sound of shooting
dža̱af	sound of diving into water
bʊf bʊf bʊf	sound of an automatic gun
dɛ́ɛ́l (high pitch)	sound of a window breaking
k'áts k'áts k'áts	sound of woodpecker pecking wood or high heels hitting cement or hitting someone on the head (hollow sound)
k'ats k'ats	sound of chopping wood
íí (high pitch)	exclamation made when scared or amazed
ʔééh	sound made when exasperated
ʔeeʔ	sound made when bemoaning the fact
dlųm	sound of a door closing
t'i̱k	sound of a clock ticking
tł'ik	sound of a lock snapping shut
tsuh	fizzing noise
ts'į́ų̀	a kissing sound
ʔəhə̀:ə́	uh-oh!
ʔedúʔù	a scary sound
zedúù	a scary sound
ʔú:ù:	yuck!
tš'om	sound of water (e.g. dogpaddling)
tš'oʔom	plop! (something falling in water)
tš'úùm	something falling in deep water
tš'úm (high pitch)	something falling in shallow water

dí̀ì	sound of a gun being shot
díí	sound of an explosion
dihí?i	a reverberating sound such as an explosion or thunder
ɣoh	sound of an owl far away
m̀h m̀h	sound of an owl
wáh wée̋	amazing!
'?ɛ̨	sound of someone defecating (said to a child when toilet training)
psss	pee! (said to boy when toilet training)
šššš	pee! (said to girl when toilet training)
šii	sound of urinating
ši? (dindi?)	"say that word bodily" (expression used in toilet training for urinating)
zzz	buzz of a bee
kákáká (high pitch)	call of a crow
sa̲h sa̲h sa̲h	sound of a bear walking unseen not far from camp
ša̲ ša̲ ša̲	sound of shuffling feet
k'i̲?̣ k'i̲?̣	sound of a grasshopper rubbing its legs together
?ehé	"yes"
?ehsi̲	"I don't know"
hí̲h	sound made when expressing doubt
tɬ'asee?	darn it!
tš'é̋ę̨	arctic tern
gỹỹ (high front round vowel)	a crunching noise