1. This paper describes lexical and morphological factors involving the semantics of clothing verbs in the Creek (or Muskogee) language of east-central Oklahoma. In Creek, verbs of wearing are generally more specific than comparable English verbs in describing the manner in which an object of clothing is placed on the body. While English may thus use put on for virtually any type of clothing, Creek uses over a dozen different verbs depending on the type of action involved (for example, putting on a hat as distinguished from putting on a glove). Other distinctions include direction (whether the clothing is being put on or taken off), number, aspect (putting on vs. wearing), and middle vs. active voice (putting on oneself vs. putting on someone else).

Studies of unrelated languages (e.g., McCawley 1978 for Japanese) demonstrate considerable complexity in this verb class, and recent dictionaries of other Muskogean languages (Sylestine et al. 1993, Munro and Willmond 1994, Kimball 1994) suggest classifications which are at once similar to and different from the Creek system. Our research is meant as a contribution to a crosslinguistic description of the verbs in this domain, and to a better understanding of how words and morphological processes in Creek combine to create subtle semantic distinctions.

2. Putting clothes on oneself. There is no general clothing verb in Creek, but the verb vccetv /acc-iti/ is used for any loose item of clothing covering the torso (such as a dress, shirt, skirt, shawl, or blanket): 2

(1) Honvvn acces.  
/hónna-n a:cc-1s/  
dress-ACC put:on:IGR-DCL

Eyokkojketvn acces.  
/i:yokko:fkita-n a:cc-1s/  
shirt-ACC put:on:IGR-DCL

Honnv-lecvn acces.  
/honnalfca-n a:cc-1s/  
skirt-ACC put:on:IGR-DCL

'S/he is putting on a dress.'

'S/he is putting on a shirt.'

'S/he is putting on a skirt.'

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1The data in this paper are based on the speech of the first author. We are grateful to Dr. Akira Yamamoto for suggesting this topic to us, and to participants at the Oklahoma Native American Language Development Institute for their help. Our research is supported by National Endowment for the Humanities. The following abbreviations are used: ACC= accusative; CAUS = causative; DAT = dative applicative; DCL = declarative; DISTR = distributive; FGR = falling tone grade; IGR = incompletive grade; INST = instrumental; LOC = locative; MID = middle voice; PL = plural; RECIP = reciprocal; REDUP = reduplicated; REFL = reflexive.

2Vccetv also has a nominal reading meaning 'blanket'.
Verbs of Wearing in Creek (Muskogee)

In this paper, traditional Creek spelling is given in italics. The phonemic transcription is enclosed in slashes and follows Haas’s (1940, 1977) conventions. Verbs are cited in their infinitival forms (ending in -etv /-ita/). Example sentences are generally in the incomplete grade, signaled by level pitch on the verb stem and, often, lengthening of the stem-final syllable. In (1), the stem vcc- /ace-1 appears in the incomplete grade as acc- /a:cc-1.

The verb vpiketv /apeyk-itá/ is a general verb meaning ‘to put in’ or ‘to be in’. Vpiketv is used for clothing into which a body part is inserted (such as a glove, sock, or shoe): fourth-grade nouns have a -ik- prefix.

(2) ‘Stenke-huten vpikes. /istinkih6ti-n apeyk-fs/ glove-ACC put:in:IGR-DCL
‘S/he is putting on a glove.’

‘S/he is putting on a bracelet.’

(4) Hvtekpikvn vpikes. /hati.kp6yka-n apeyk-fs/ pants-ACC put:in:IGR-DCL
‘S/he is putting on pants (one pair).’

Hvtekpik-kucökni vpikes. /hatikpeykkocökni-n apeyk-fs/ shorts-ACC put:in:IGR-DCL
‘S/he is putting on shorts (one pair).’

Finally, vpiketv is used when an item of clothing is placed inside a body part. Dentures take this verb, though the instrumental prefix es (or ‘s-) is also needed:

3The classic study of this phenomenon is Haas (1940).
4A more literal translation of (2) would be ‘S/he is putting it in a glove.’
(5) Nute-eshakvn 'svpikes.
    dentures-ACC put:in:IGR-DCL
'S/he is putting in his/her dentures.'

The instrumental prefix has several uses. In (5), the instrumental is used because the object of the verb contains something (teeth).

Kvpotoyetv /kapotoy-itá/ is used for putting clothing on the head (a hat, cap, crown, etc.):

(6) Kvpotokvn kvpotoyes.
    hat-ACC put:on:head:IGR-DCL
'S/he is putting on a hat.'

Historically, this verb includes ekv /iká/ ‘his/her head’.5

Another verb, enucetv /inoc-itá/, is used for clothing relating to the neck:

(7) Kunavvn enoces.
    bead-ACC put:around:neck:IGR-DCL
'S/he is putting on a necklace.'

The prefix oh (meaning ‘on top of’) is added for neckties:

(8) Oh enockvn oh enoces.
    necktie-ACC on:put:around:neck:IGR-DCL
'S/he is putting on a necktie.'

The locative prefix is used in (8) because ties are worn on top of shirts.

There are three verbs related to the verb wvnvyetv /wanay-itá/ ‘to tie’. The verb es wvnvyetv /is-wanay-itá/ is used for a headscarf or a ribbon:6

(9) Estekv-swvnakvn ekv es wvnayes.
    headscarf-ACC head INST-tie:IGR-DCL
'S/he is putting on a headscarf.'

The verb 'swvnvyetv /is-a-wanay-itá/ is used for a watch:

(10) Hvsse-eskerkucen 'svwvnayes.
     watch-ACC INST-at-tie:IGR-DCL
'S/he is putting on a watch.'

The verb 'svwvnvketv /is-i:-wanak-itá/ is used for a belt:

(11) 'Sewvnvketvn 'sewvnakes.
     belt-ACC INST-REFL-tie-MID:IGR-DCL
'S/he is putting on a belt.'

As the example in (6) shows, nouns referring to clothing are often derived from verbs. In this example, kvpotokv /kapotóka/ ‘hat’ includes the nominalizing suffix -kv /-ka/.

5A more literal translation of (9) is ‘S/he is tying a headscarf to her head.’
Each of these verbs includes the instrumental prefix es /is-/ used here to indicate attachment. The first verb es wvnvvetv /is-wanay-itá/ means 'to tie (e.g., a rope) to (something)'. The second verb šwvnvvetv /is-a-wanay-itá/ means 'to tie (someone, an object) to (something)'. The third verb šešwvnvvetv /is-i:-wana-k-itá/ literally means 'to get oneself tied to (something)'.

Ribbons may be 'tied' on, but they may also be 'set' on. The verb 'svlicitv /is-a-ley-c-itá/ (derived from liketv /leyk·iW 'to sit (of one)' is thus also appropriate:

(12) Tvkfulwv 'svlices.
/takfo:la-n is-á-ley-c-fs/
ribbon-ACC INST-at-sit-CAUS:IGR-DCL

Vvkvhěcetv /acakhi-c-itá/ 'to stick in' is used for sticking a comb in the hair:

(13) 'Skaskvn cvkvhčes.
/iská:ska-n acákhi-c-fs/
comb-ACC stick:in-CAUS:IGR-DCL

The verb vtvretv /atal-itá/ is a general verb meaning 'to hang (something)'. It is also used for putting on an earring, a nose-ring, etc.:

(14) Hvck-vtarkvn vtares.
/hackata:lka-n atal-fs/
earring-ACC hang:IGR-DCL

The verb 'svkkayetv /is·ak-ka:y-ita/ is used for putting on glasses:

(15) Tur-svkkakvn 'svkkayes.
/tolsakkli:ka-n is-ák-ka:y-fs/
glasses-ACC INST-LOC-set:IGR-DCL

This verb is apparently derived from kayetv /ka:y-itá/ 'to set (two)'. The initial 's- is the instrumental prefix. The prefix vk- /ak-/ can be glossed 'down there' (generally referring to location in water or a low place): here it implies that glasses are worn 'down in' the eye sockets.

The verb 'svkvhayetv /itakahay-fta/ is used for loincloths or diapers:

(16) 'Tvkhukvn 'tvkhayes.
/itak hashCode:n itdkhay-y-fs/
loincloth-ACC gird:with:IGR-DCL

The verb oh pvcetv /oh-pac-fta/ 'to overlay (gold, asphalt, etc.)' is used for an apron:

(17) 'Sohpacvn oh paces.
/isohpá:cka-n óh-pác-fs/
apron-ACC on-overlay:IGR-DCL

The verb es źeckoyetv /is-i:-coko:y-itá/ 'to put (something containing something else) on the back' is used for a sack or backpack:

(18) Sukvn 'zteckoyes.
/sókca-n is-f-coko:y-fs/
sack-ACC INST-REFL-put:on:back:IGR-DCL
3. Number in verbs of wearing. \textit{Vccetv} is the only clothing verb having a special form for a plural subject:

(19) \begin{tabular}{ll}
\textbf{Honnnv} & \textit{acces.} \\
\textbf{Honnnv} & \textit{vchoyes.} \\
/\textit{h\text{\textbar}onna-n} & \textit{ác-ho:y-fs/} \\
dress-ACC & put:ton-PL:IGR-DCL \\
\end{tabular}

'S/he is putting on a dress.'

'They are putting on a dress/dresses.'

This use of the plural suffix in this transitive verb is unusual.

It is more common to indicate a plural theme (the element undergoing motion). Thus, \textit{vpiketv} /apeyk-\textit{it}á/ 'to put in' has a suppletive form \textit{viehetv} /atih-\textit{it}á/ used when more than one body part is inserted into an item of clothing:

(20) \begin{tabular}{ll}
\textit{Stenke-huten} & \textit{vpikes.} \\
\textit{Stenke-huten} & \textit{vtehes.} \\
/\textit{istinkhióti-n} & \textit{atih-fs/} \\
glove-ACC & put:in:IGR-DCL \\
\end{tabular}

'S/he is putting on a glove.'

'S/he is putting on gloves.'

If the clothes are layered, however, \textit{viehetv} may not be used. Instead, \textit{'setoh pvcetv} 'to layer (clothes on one another)' is used:

(21) \begin{tabular}{ll}
\textit{Hvtekpi2vn} & \textit{'setoh paces.} \\
/\textit{haustképya-n} & \textit{is-it-\text{\textbar}oh-pac-fs/} \\
pants-ACC & INST-RECIP-on-overlay-DCL \\
\end{tabular}

'S/he is putting on pants (two or more pairs).'

Several verbs form plurals by reduplication (often accompanied by distributive -\textit{ec-} /-\textit{ic-}):

(22) \begin{tabular}{ll}
\textit{'Skaskyn} & \textit{vcvkhe:ces.} \\
\textit{'Skaskyn} & \textit{vcvkgyh:sces.} \\
/\textit{iská:ská-n} & \textit{aca\text{\textbar}ckah-\text{\textbar}ic-fs/} \\
comb-ACC & stick:in:REDUP-CAUS:IGR-DCL \\
\end{tabular}

'S/he is sticking in a comb.'

'S/he is sticking in combs.'

(23) \begin{tabular}{ll}
\textit{Tvkfulwvn} & \textit{svwmnaye:s.} \\
\textit{Tvkfulwvn} & \textit{svwmnaya:
ices.} \\
/takf61wa-n & \textit{is-a-wan:We-yc-fs/} \\
ribbon-ACC & INST-at-tie:REDUP-DISTR:IGR-DCL \\
\end{tabular}

'S/he is putting on a ribbon.'

'S/he is putting on ribbons.'

(24) \begin{tabular}{ll}
\textit{Hvek-vtar:kwyn} & \textit{viare:s.} \\
\textit{Hvek-vtar:kwyn} & \textit{vnrij:ces.} \\
/hakatá:ki\text{\textbar}ka-n & \textit{atá\text{\textbar}ig-yc-fs/} \\
earring-ACC & hang:REDUP-DISTR:IGR-DCL \\
\end{tabular}

'S/he is putting on an earring.'

'S/he is putting on earrings.'

One verb uses reduplication for the dual, but has a suppletive form for three or more:

(25) \begin{tabular}{ll}
\textit{Tvkfulwvn} & \textit{sviljes.} \\
/takf61wa-n & \textit{is-a-\text{\textbar}ley-c-\text{\textbar}fs/} \\
ribbon-ACC & INST-at-sit-CAUS:IGR-DCL \\
\end{tabular}

'S/he is putting on a ribbon.'

'S/he is putting on (two) ribbons.'
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TVkfu:lwvn 'svhpyoyes.
/takfo:lw-n is-åh-apo:y-ls/
ribbon-ACC INST-at-sit:IGR-DCL

'S/he is putting on (three or more) ribbons.'

If there are no more specific plural forms of the type discussed above, a verb may indicate a plural subject or object by adding a suffix -vk- /-ak-:

(26) 'Stenke-huten vëhes.
'S/he is putting on gloves.'

'S/he is putting on (three or more) ribbons.'

4. Wearing clothes. Level pitch on the verb indicates that the action is ongoing or habitual. Falling pitch on the last syllable of the stem indicates the action has been performed:

(27) Honvn acces.
/höönna-n acc-ls/
dress-ACC put:on:IGR-DCL

'Honnvn acces.'

'S/he is putting on a dress.'

(28) 'Stenke-huten vpi:kes.
/glove-ACC put:in:PL:IGR-DCL

'S/he is putting on a glove.'

'S/he is putting a dress on him/her.'

'S/he is putting on a hat.'

'S/he is putting on a hat on him/her.'

'S/he is putting on a necklace.'

'S/he is putting a necklace on him/her.'

The difference in pitch is not normally spelled in the traditional orthography. We use a circumflex (') here to indicate the contrast.

5. Putting clothes on someone else. When an item of clothing is being placed on someone else rather than on oneself, a verb must either have a causative suffix or a dative applicative prefix. The following verbs take the direct causative suffix -ec- /-ic-:

(29) Honvn acces.
Honnvn acc-es.
/höönna-n acc-G-ls/
dress-ACC put:on:CAUS:IGR-DCL

'Honnvn acc-es.'

'S/he is putting on a dress.'

'S/he is putting a dress on him/her.'

'S/he is putting on a hat.'

'S/he is putting a hat on him/her.'

'S/he is putting on a necklace.'

'S/he is putting a necklace on him/her.'

The difference in pitch is not normally spelled in the traditional orthography. We use a circumflex (') here to indicate the contrast.
Oh enockvn oh enoces.
Oh enockvn oh enoces.
/ohhinó:ck-a-n ohh-inóce-yk-ys/
necktie-ACC on-put:around:neck-CAUS:IGR-DCL

'Sëwvnuketvn 'sëwnakes.
'Sëwvnuketvn es wvnukéges.
/ist:wanákitá-n is-wana-kó-yk-ys/
belt-ACC INST-tie-MID-CAUS:IGR-DCL

'Tvkhu'ven 'tvkhayes.
'Tvkhu'ven 'tvkhvyéges.
/itakhaká-n itákhayi-':'ys/
loincloth-ACC gird:with-CAUS:IGR-DCL

Sukcvn 'söcokoyes.
Sukcvn 'söcokoyéges.
/sök-c-a-n is-i-cóko:ye-yk-ys/
sack-ACC INST-REFL-put:on:back-CAUS:IGR-DCL

Other verbs use the dative applicative prefix en /im-/ (or its preconsonantal form en /in-/):

(30) 'Stenke-huten vpikes.
'Stenke-huten em vpikes.
/istinkihóti-n im-ápëyk-fs/
glove-ACC DAT-put:in:IGR-DCL

'Hvse-eskerkucen 'suvnaves.
'Hvse-eskerkuce 'sém vnavyés.
/watch-ACC head INST-DAT-tie:IGR-DCL

Tvkmulwvn 'svlices.
Tvkmulwvn 'sém vlices.
/takfolwa-n is-im-á-lec-c-ys/
ribbon-ACC INST-DAT-at-tie:IGR-DCL

The noun 'tvkhvkv also means 'diaper', so this sentence could be translated 'S/he is putting a diaper on him/her.'
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'Skaskvn  
vcvkhēces.

'Skaskvn  
em  
vcvkhēces.

'iská:ská-n  
im-ācā:ki-:c-:fs/
comb-ACC DAT-stick:in-CAUS-IGR-DCL

'Hvck-vtarkvn  
vtares.

'Hvck-vtarkvn  
im vtares.

/hackatá:ka-n  
im-āta:-c-:fs/
earring-ACC DAT-hang:IGR-DCL

'Tur-svkkakvn  
'svkkayes.

'Tur-svkkakvn  
'sem  
vkkayes.

/totsakká:ka-n  
is-īm-āk-ka-y-:fs/
glasses-ACC INST-DAT-LOC-set:IGR-DCL

'Sohpackvn  
oh paces.

'Sohpackvn  
em  
oh paces.

/isohpá:cka-n  
im-ō-:h-pac-:fs/
apron-ACC DAT-on-overlay:IGR-DCL

We have not been able to determine why the verbs in (29) take -ec- /-ic-/ and those in (30) take em /im-/, except that those in (29) seem to be more basic clothing verbs.

6. Taking clothes off oneself. The two main verbs referring to the removal of clothes are  
roketv /lok-:ita/ (for a singular object) or its reduplicated form  
rokrueces /lokō-yc-:ita/ (for a plural object):

(31) Honnvn  
rokes.

/hónná-n  
lok-:fs/
dress-ACC take:off:IGR-DCL

Honnvn  
rokrueces.

/hónná-n  
kōko-yc-:fs/
dress-ACC take:off:REDUP-DISTR:IGR-DCL

These verbs may be used for most clothes, including shirts, dresses, coats, pants, shorts, gloves, shoes, socks, hats, necklaces, ties, belts, and scarves.

Shoes and socks differ, however, in that a more specific verb  
ťeřtæ  /ti:f-ita/ may also be used for removing these:

(32) 'Svhocackvn  
těřes.

/isahocá:cka-n  
ti:f-:fs/
sock-ACC take:off:foot:IGR-DCL

In the singular, roketv is used.

With a few items of clothing,  
estæ  /is-:ita/ 'to take' or its plural object form  
cvwertv /caw-:sta/ may be used:

(33) 'Skaskvn  
ěses.

/iská:ská-n  
is-:fs/
comb-ACC take:IGR-DCL

'S/he is sticking a comb in.'
'S/he is sticking a comb in him/her.'
'S/he is putting on an earring.'
'S/he is putting an earring on him/her.'
'S/he is putting on glasses.'
'S/he is putting glasses on him/her.'
'S/he is putting on an apron.'
'S/she is putting an apron on him/her.'
'S/he is taking off a dress.'
'S/he is taking off dresses.'
'S/he is taking off his/her socks.'
'S/he is taking out a comb.'
(34) Hvck-vtarkvn əsəs.
/hɔkːətɑːkə-n ɨ:s-ɪs/
earring-ACC take:IGR-DCL

'S/he is taking off earrings.'

In some contexts, the instrumental prefix es /ɪs-/ may be added:

(35) Hvse- eskərkuən əs rokəs.
/hɔsɨtskɨɾkʊtʃə-n ɨs-ɬʊ:k-ɪs/
watch-ACC INST-take:off:IGR-DCL

'S/he is taking off a watch.'

'S/he is taking off an apron.'

'S/he is taking off a ribbon.'

'S/he is taking off ribbons.'

In the first two examples (as in (5)), the instrumental indicates that the item of clothing contains something. The instrumental prefix is added in the first example in (35) because a watch has parts. The instrumental was offered in the second example because a context was imagined in which the apron had something on it (food, for example), and thus in need of being taken off. It is not clear why the instrumental is used with a ribbon, though it may signal that a part of the ribbon is grasped.

7. Taking clothes off someone else. When clothes are removed from another person, the dative applicative prefix en /ɪm-/ is added to the verb:

(36) Honvn rokəs.
/hɔnˈnə-n ɬʊ:k-ɪs/
dress-ACC DAT-take:off:IGR-DCL

Honvn en rokəs.
/hɔnˈnə-n ɬʊ:k-ɪs/
dress-ACC DAT-take:off:REDUP·DISTR:IGR-DCL

Honvn rokrueces.
/hɔnˈnə-n ɬʊkədɔ-ɬɨ-ɪs/
dress-ACC DAT-take:off:REDUP-DISTR:IGR-DCL

'Honvn rokəs.
/hɔnˈnə-n ɬʊ:k-ɪs/
dress-ACC DAT-take:off:IGR-DCL

'Honvn rokəs.
/hɔnˈnə-n ɬʊ:k-ɪs/
dress-ACC DAT-take:off:REDUP·DISTR:IGR-DCL

'Honvn rokrueces.
/hɔnˈnə-n ɬʊkədɔ-ɬɨ-ɪs/
dress-ACC DAT-take:off:REDUP-DISTR:IGR-DCL

'Honvn rokəs.
/hɔnˈnə-n ɬʊ:k-ɪs/
dress-ACC DAT-take:off:IGR-DCL

Honvn rokrueces.
/hɔnˈnə-n ɬʊkədɔ-ɬɨ-ɪs/
dress-ACC DAT-take:off:REDUP-DISTR:IGR-DCL
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(37) 'Svhocackvn tēfes.  
'Svhocackvn en tēfes.  
/isa:ho:ck:na-n fn-ti:f-fs/  
sock-ACC DAT-take:off:foot:IGR-DCL

'S/he is taking off his/her socks.'  
'S/he is taking his/her socks off of him/her.'

(38) Hvse-eskerkucen es rokes.  
Hvse-eskerkucen 'sēn rokes.  
/hasi:tiski:koc-n is-fn-to:k-fs/  
watch-ACC INST-DAT-take:off:IGR-DCL

'S/he is taking off a watch.'  
'S/he is taking a watch off of him/her.'

(39) Tvkfulwv'n 'sēses.  
Tvkfulwv'n 'sēm ēses.  
/takfu:lwa-n is-fn-is-fs/  
ribbon-ACC INST-DAT-take:IGR-DCL

Tvkfulwv'n es cawes.  
Tvkfulwv'n 'sēn cawes.  
/takfu:lwa-n is-fn-ca:w-fs/  
ribbon-ACC INST-DAT-take:IGR-DCL

'S/he is taking off a ribbon.'  
'S/he is taking a ribbon off of him/her.'

'S/he is taking off ribbons.'  
'S/he is taking ribbons off of him/her.'

8. Conclusion. We have attempted to describe various dimensions among verbs of wearing in Creek. These include:

- the specific type of action (for example, putting on a hat vs. putting on a glove)
- direction (putting on vs. taking off)
- number
- aspect (putting on vs. wearing)
- middle vs. active voice (putting on oneself vs. putting on someone else)

The first two dimensions are distinguished by using different verbs in Creek, while the other dimensions are distinguished primarily through affixation.

REFERENCES


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