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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 KWPCL marks its first decade of existence, and we are publishing two numbers. Number one is devoted to theoretical issues, general linguistics 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 Algonquin), 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 KWPCL throughout the year.
SLAVES EXPRESSIVE TERMS:
Synchronic Evidence for Diachronic Change

Mary Pepper

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. 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. 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. Each of the phonemes /i/ and /u/ occur, but there is no /t/ phoneme. This sound is found in ideophones.

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

(2) pʰ'ɪɡ  
"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) hən həн hən  
"sound of a motor starting" (loan?)

(4) tʰ'ɪɡ tʰ'ɪɡ  
"sound of a kicker" (loan?)

(5) ɡɪfɡɪfɡɪfɡɪk  
"frog or toad call"

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

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

(6) oonyu  
"go right!" (dog team command)

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

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

(8) γ'ow  
"boo!"

(9) γ'ɪɡ  
"sound of a duck"

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

(10) pʰ'ɪɡ  
"sound of a 22 rifle"

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

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

The sound [z] is not a phoneme, although there is a phoneme /ʃ/, 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) ṣιk k
    "sound of a knife hitting tree"

(14) dēč k
    "sound of a window breaking"

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

Second, voiceless vowels occurred:

(16) t'īk
    "sound of a clock ticking"

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

(18) ts'i ts'i
    "noise of a mouse"

(19) k'ī'ts
    "sound of breaking twigs"

(20) k'ēd
    "sound of fire crackling"

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

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

(23) k'ī' k'ī'
    "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'ēd "sound of fire crackling", in expressive vocabulary. However, since vowels occur between voiceless or tense consonants are are not devoted in regular vocabulary, it cannot be assumed that there is a devolving 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'i
    "sound of scratching one's head"

(25) ts'i
    "noise of a mouse"
4. Free Variation

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

(26) t'likq  "sound of hitting a tin can"
(27) p'likq  "sound of a 22 rifle"
(28) k'atsa k'ats k'ats  "general staccato or hollow sound"
(29) k'ats k'ats  "sound of chopping wood"
(30) tsk'  "sound of swallowing quickly"
(31) tsk'  "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) 'k  "sound of someone defecating"

Examples of exaggerated high pitch include:

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

Examples of exaggerated vowel length include:

(37) a ūd:  "cry of a wolf"
(38) 'ūle:  "yuck!" (exclamation)
Laryngealization has a mimetic function, as for example in the following words:

(39) t'íč'í  "farting sound"
(40) t'éé  "sound of an old skidoo without a hood"

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

(41) dīl  "sound of a gun being shot"
(42) 'ohrď'or  "uh-oh!" (exclamation which indicates trouble)
(42) 'i'í 'i'í  "whimper (like a dog) of a baby"
(43) hů hů  "sound of a motor not starting"
(44) 'yh 'yh  "owl cry"

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

(45) dēl dēl dēl dēl  "sound of shaking something in a tin can"
(46) 'i'í 'i'í 'i'í 'i'í  "sound of a bell ringing"
(47) di di di di di  "sound of a chicken or ptarmigan"
(48) 'dih di 'dih di 'dih di 'dih  "sound of a drumbeat"
(49) bul bul bul bul bul  "sound of boiling"
(50) dů dů dů dů dů  "sound of a horn"
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 noises which are punctual or abrupt, end in consonants. Some examples include:

(55) tī'wu

"sound of tearing cloth"

(56) tī'c

"noise of frying"

(57) dīkum

"sound of closing a door"

(58) tī'k

"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 [ɦ]. The basic syllable structure then is:

```
  o
 / \    
C  V   C
 / \    /
 C  L
```
However, expressive words yield examples of the violation of the syllable structure constraints in the language. For example:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\sigma & \sigma & \sigma \\
\_ & \_ & \_ \\
C & v & C \\
\_ & \_ & \_ \\
b & v & f \\
\end{array}
\]

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:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\sigma & \sigma & \sigma \\
\_ & \_ & \_ \\
C & V & C \\
\_ & \_ & \_ \\
k' & i & ts \\
\end{array}
\]

Mithun (1982) stated that low level phonological rules and syllable structure constraints would apply to expressive vocabulary. 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-final (syllable) final consonants and consonant clusters. Historically, zero to, with suffixes, perhaps four consonants occurred but finally, but no modern Athapaskan languages except Koyukon have surface consonant clusters. In Slavey, stem-final consonants 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 mnemonic 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. K.-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:

\( ^{\wedge} \) falling pitch
\( ^{\vee} \) rising pitch
\( ^{\wedge} \) high pitch and stress
\( ^{\wedge} \) exaggerated stress (placed at beginning of stressed syllable)
\( \mathrm{V} \) nasal vowel
\( \mathrm{V} \) voiceless vowel
\( \mathrm{V} \) (high pitch)
\( \mathrm{V} \) exaggerated pitch
\( \mathrm{V} \) exaggerated vowel length
\( \mathrm{V} \) 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:

\[ y \rightarrow n / \begin{array}{c} -\text{cons} \\ +\text{syll} \\ +\text{nas} \end{array} / \begin{array}{c} -\text{cons} \\ +\text{syll} \\ +\text{nas} \end{array} \]

This rule would apply to derive words such as t'\( \text{ffy} \) "sound of hitting a tin can". However, there are also counterexamples to this rule:

\( g'\text{ffy} \) "crunching sound"
\( g''\text{ff} \) "sound of a duck"
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:

\[ \text{C} \rightarrow \text{[+round]} \]

This would yield underlying and surface forms like:

\[ /\text{oax}/ \rightarrow \text{[y"ox"]} \]

The problems with this analysis lie in restricting the rule to apply only before mid round vowels, to account for words like y9 "sound of chewing ice" and g99 "crunching sound", and more importantly, in the fact that counterexamples to the rule are found:

\[ \text{yoch} \]

"sound of a far away owl"

\[ \text{k'o k'o k'o} \]

"sound of drinking"

Krauss (1973) has reconstructed */k/ series in Proto-Athapaskan. *k' merged with *tš in Slavey. The labial consonants p(ə) and k' found in some Slavey dialects are derived historically from *t's (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.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX 1

Vowels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>front</th>
<th>back</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>high</td>
<td>i ɪ</td>
<td>u ʊ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mid</td>
<td>e ɛ</td>
<td>o ɔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low</td>
<td>a ɑ</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Consonants

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<th>labial</th>
<th>interdental</th>
<th>alveolar</th>
<th>lateral</th>
<th>palatal</th>
<th>velar</th>
<th>glottal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stops</td>
<td>nasal</td>
<td>m mb mnd</td>
<td>n nd</td>
<td>q k k'</td>
<td>k'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>asp.</td>
<td>t t'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>glott.</td>
<td>t'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affricates</td>
<td>plain</td>
<td>d ʒ dз dʃ dʒ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>asp.</td>
<td>t ʒ tз tʃ tʃ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>glott.</td>
<td>t' ʒ t'з t'ʃ t'ʃ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fricatives</td>
<td>voiceless</td>
<td>o s ɻ ɻ k h</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>voiced</td>
<td>ʒ z l ɻ ɻ k y</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glide/Liquid</td>
<td></td>
<td>r</td>
<td></td>
<td>w</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Howard 1943)

APPENDIX 2

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

"q" sound of a boogie rubbing his antler on a tree to call mate
γ'qiq'
woh
γ'oax'
būh
dih
'dri:0
'dun'o
yiūh
yiūh
tē'uu
zoh zoh
zo zo
diŋ' ciŋ'
diūh dīlh
t'ĆĆ₂
p'ĆĆ₂
k'at k'tat k'tam
gō gā gum
'-dom "'āum
(ŋ̪al̊q u insults)
k'ĆĆ₂ts
udēn'
coyū'
tīcē
tse' ts'is ts'is
sound of scraping moosehide
sound of scraping moosehide
bool
bool
sound of a rock falling
reverberating noise
sound of a big object falling
sound of a tree falling
sound of a tree falling
sound of tearing cloth
sound of someone skating
sound of someone skating
noise of a squirrel
noise of a squirrel
sound of hitting a tin can
sound of a 22 rifle
sound of a crane
imitation of a crane sound
sound of knocking
sound of breaking twigs
go left! (dog team command)
go right! (dog team command)
frying noise
sound made when scratching one's head
ts'ff (high pitch) squeaky noise

gwaad sound of a kicker hitting a rock on the bottom of shallow water

t'sff farting noise

t' t' sound of a motor not starting

t's'éé sound of a power saw

?ee sound made when wishing

q'q sound of spilling a pail of water on someone, or the sound of a male having an orgasm

d'éé sound of a spring being sprung

zaa a rubbing noise (e.g. trouser legs rubbing together or skirling or snow)

a's' (high pitch) howl of a wolf

eyaw ~ eya' (high pitch) ouch! (cry of pain)

diš sound of something falling down

šik sound of a knife hitting a tree

t'coč sound of hitting with a fist

gr'gr'gr' gr' sound of a frog or toad in swamp

k'ó k'ó k'ó k'ó a drinking sound

k'óli k'óli a drinking sound

té'i? té'i? té'i? a swallowing sound

té'lo sound of swallowing quickly

té'lo sound of swallowing a bigger object slowly

z'll a fast noise
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>z</td>
<td>a fast noise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s</td>
<td>a really fast noise (e.g. a bullet whizzing past)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td>sound of an egg splattering (a slow noise)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td>sound of a pancake hitting something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td>sound of a fast splattering noise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td>sound of a soft slap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td>sound of a slap on the face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td>sound of an old skidoo without a hood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t’</td>
<td>sound of a phone ringing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>scary noise of heavy footsteps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>sound of pulling a kicker that won’t start</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s</td>
<td>cry of a baby</td>
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<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>cry of a baby</td>
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<td>W</td>
<td>cry of a baby</td>
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<td>m</td>
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<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s</td>
<td>sound of a duck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l</td>
<td>sound of a phone ringing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l</td>
<td>sound of a phone ringing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l</td>
<td>sound of bells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l</td>
<td>sound of rain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
k'ats k'ats
ff (high pitch)

?e'eh
?ee?
diyum
t'ik
t?ik
tsuuh
t'shiko'
?o'ohi'
?o'ohi'
reedu
?ooih
t's'om
t's'o'om
t's'oom
l?oom (high pitch)

sound of rain
sound of shooting
sound of diving into water
sound of an automatic gun
sound of a window breaking
sound of woodpecker pecking wood
or high heels hitting cement or
hitting someone on the head
(hollow sound)
sound of chopping wood
exclamation made when scared or
amazed
sound made when exasperated
sound made when bemoaning the fact
sound of a door closing
sound of a clock ticking
sound of a lock snapping shut
fizzling noise
a kissing sound
uh-oh:
a scary sound
a scary sound
vuck!
sound of water (e.g. shopaddling)
plop! (something falling in water)
something falling in deep water
something falling in shallow water
diff

diff

dih?i

yoh

mán mán

wah wah

'2xi

pees

bhâbhâ

bii

bî? (dindi?)

zzz

kâkâkâ (high pitch)

sah sah sah

nà nà nà

k'è k'è? k'è?

?ché

?senj

hîhi

tila'see?

tê'ê

gàï (high front sound vowel)

sound of a gun being shot

sound of an explosion

a reverberating sound such as an explosion or thunder

sound of an owl far away

sound of an owl

amazing!

sound of someone defecating (said to a child when toilet training)

pee! (said to boy when toilet training)

pee! (said to girl when toilet training)

sound of urinating

"say that word buzzily" (expression used in toilet training for urinating)

buzz of a bee

call of a crow

sound of a bear walking unseen not far from camp

sound of shuffling feet

sound of a grasshopper running its legs together

"yes"

"I don't know"

sound made when expressing doubt

darn it!

arctic tern

a crunching noise