

Predicates with sound roots in Umóⁿhoⁿ

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- 3 Other roots denoting sensory perceptions
- 4 Conclusion: Ideophones beyond sound?

Introduction

Sound ideophones: predication
 Other roots denoting sensory perceptions
 Conclusion: Ideophones beyond sound?

The Umóⁿhoⁿ language and the Siouan family

Siouan languages



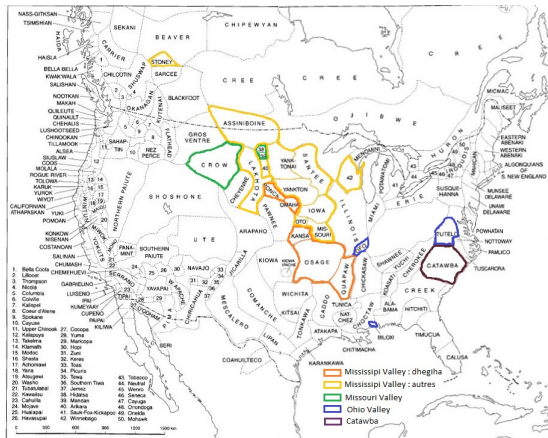
Mississippi Valley



Dhegiha



Umóⁿhoⁿ



(adapted from Mithun 1999)

Data used

→ Corpus-based description

- Works by James DORSEY at the end of the 19th Century (Dorsey 1890, 1891, 1892, no date)
 - “Siouan onomatopes”: description of sound words (D92)
 - Manuscript dictionary (around 15 000 words) (DD)
 - Glossed and translated texts (+900 pages) (DT)
- Textbooks and lexicons for Umóⁿhoⁿ learning (e.g. Swetland & Stabler 1977; Saunsoci & Eschengeberg 2016; ULCC & UNL 2018)

Spelling. Uniformized following the spelling used by the community:

<th> [ð]; <zh> [ʒ]; <sh> [ʃ]; <ch> [tʃ]; <j> [dʒ]; <x>

[ɣ]

<oⁿ> [õ] or [ã]; <iⁿ> [ĩ]

Some phonetic and grammatical features

Phonetics/phonology: under-described

- **29 consonants**; 4 types of occlusives /b/ - /p/ - /p^h/ - /pʰ/
- at least **6 vowels**, including two nasal vowels: /a/ - /u/ - /e/ - /i/ - /oⁿ/ - /iⁿ/
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Relevant morphological features:

- Common (partial) reduplication of the root for iterativity, distributivity, sometimes intensity (Rudin 2012)
- 3rd persons are not encoded on verbs
- Nine “instrumental prefixes”, common across North American languages (Mithun 2015):
 e.g. *ba-* ‘by pushing’; *noⁿ-* ‘with the foot/feet’; *ná-* ‘by extreme temperature’

Words denoting sounds in Umóⁿhoⁿ

túshi 'to pop up with loud noise' (SE), 'snapping sound, crackling of twigs' (D92)

**táxi* 'root formed from the sound *tx +*' (D92)

héch^{hiⁿ} 'to sneeze'

Research question

Is there a category of “ideophones” in Umó^ohoⁿ, relevant to the grammatical description of the language?

Sound symbolism

“the direct linkage between sound and meaning” (Hinton et al. 1994)

≈ “iconicity” in other works (e.g. Dingemanse 2019)

Ideophone

“A member of an open lexical class of marked words that depict sensory imagery.” (Dingemanse 2019:16)

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Words featuring sound symbolism in Umóⁿhoⁿ

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E.g.,

- *héch^{hi}n* 'to sneeze'

Ideophones

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- **táxi* 'root formed from the sound *tx+*' (D92)

Sound ideophones: predication

Dataset

Dataset of **46 roots** denoting sounds (→ sound ideophones)

Morphosyntactic properties

- They are roots, they take no person markers **(46)**
- They can all be derived with at least one instrumental prefix **(46)**
- They refer to sounds produced by inanimate entities **(44)**
- Many of them reduplicate (with and/or without instrumental prefixes) **(22)**
- Some of them can combine with the light verb *t^hígthe* and/or a final *-é* **(9)**

Problem: none of these features is unique to sound ideophones. We find them in prosaic roots as well.

How are they used as predicates?

→ Several sub-categories are identifiable among the ideophone-like roots, according to their degree of syntactic autonomy:

- a. roots used as predicates **(9)**
- b. roots used as predicates together with a light verb **(3)**
- c. roots always used with instrumental prefixes and/or *é* **(34)**

Each root was assigned the highest possible rank

a. roots used as predicates

Examples :

'áxe 'to be squeaky',

za'é 'to make noise, to be noisy' (idea of confusion, bustle...),

túshi 'pop up with loud noise; to make a snapping sound,...'

- (1) *Tizhébe t^{he} 'áxe = noⁿ.*

door DEF:VERT **squeak** = HAB

The door is squeaky. (Saunsoci & Eschenberg 2016:140)

- (2) *"Koⁿhá, gá-ama za'é amá eát^hoⁿ = i a,"*

grandmother.VOC DEM-DEF:PX.PL **make.noise** DEF:PX.PL why = PL Q

á-biamá.

say-REPORT

At last the Orphan said, "Grandmother, why do they make such a noise?" (Dorsey 1890:587.1)

b. roots used as predicates together with a light verb

t^hígthe 'to become' → 'suddenly'

t^híthe 'to begin, to come forth'

- (3) *bthóⁿxe* *t^hígthe*
 crunching.sound become (=suddenly)
 to make a sudden crunching sound (DD)

- (4) *tíde* *t^hígthe*
 drumming.sound become (=suddenly)
 (guessed: to make a sudden drumming sound) (DD)

t^hígthe is regularly associated with sound roots in DD, but is also found combined with regular verbs, especially in texts.

c. roots used as predicates with a derivational morpheme

**táxi* “root formed from the sound tx” (D92)

+ *ga-* “by striking, throwing” (+ “by effect of wind/water”...)

+ *noⁿ*- “with the foot/feet”

+ *ba-* “by pushing”

c. roots used as predicates with a derivational morpheme

**táxi* “root formed from the sound tx” (D92)

+ *ga-* “by striking, throwing” (+ “by effect of wind/water”...)

→ *gatáxi* “to make the sound *tx* heard when a tree is stuck with an ax in cold weather” (D92)

- (5) *xthabé thé-xchi thóⁿdi zhóⁿ gá-sa-i, ga-táxi,*
 tree this-INTENS there wood INS:force-cut-PL INS:force-IDEO
ái.
 say-PL

“At this very place they cut wood, for they make the sound ‘Taxi’, said he.” (Dorsey 1890:456.2-3)

+ *noⁿ* “with the foot/feet”

→ *noⁿtáxi* (“refers to the sound of a horse’s feet on hard, but not frozen, ground”) (D92)

+ *ba-* “by pushing”

→ *batáxi* (“[refers to] the sound heard when one pushes suddenly against a bone”) (D92)

Other roots denoting sensory perceptions

Compare what is comparable: the lexemes and roots the instrumental prefixes attach to.

Category	Number	Percentage
non-autonomous root	133	60.7%
adverb	3	1.4%
noun	12	5.5%
verbs	71	32.4%
intr. active	8	3.6%
intr. stative	57	26%
bivalent stative	2	0.9%
transitive	4	1.8%
Total	219	100%

Table 1. Categories the instrumental prefixes attach to
(from Marsault 2021)

Roots denoting states 1) intransitive predicates

Many roots denote states for shapes, visual patterns, movements, textures.

E.g.: *diⁿdíⁿ* 'to be stiff'; *kúwiⁿxe* 'to turn around' *btháska* 'to be flat'

→ intransitive verbs applying to inanimate entities; depictive meanings

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(6) *úxpe tóⁿga théde btháska móⁿ.*

bowl large bottom flat A1SG.use

I use a large bowl with a flat bottom. (OLCDP)

Derivations: *bibtháska* (by pressing), *gabtháska* (by striking), *thibtháska* (with the hands), *noⁿbtháska* (by stepping).

Light verb: *btháska t^hígthe* 'to become flat suddenly' (DD)

Roots denoting states 2) non-autonomous roots

Many non-autonomous roots denote states for shapes, visual patterns, movements, textures.

**btháze* 'ripped open'; **zhoⁿzhoⁿ* 'shaken'; **wiⁿx̣e* 'round and round', 'spirally'

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Derivations from **wiⁿx̣e*:

- *gawíⁿx̣e* 'to fly/sail round and round' (DT, DD), 'to tilt, to bank' (UNL)
- *thiwíⁿx̣e* 'to make {x} spiral' (SLW)
- *thiwíⁿwiⁿx̣e* 'to pull a bow string, sending an arrow (...) that turns round and round, wobbling as it goes' (DD)
- *náwiⁿx̣e* 'a firebrand' (DD)

Conclusion

Conclusion

The roots *btháska*, **wíⁿxe*, **zhoⁿzhoⁿ*... have the same morphosyntactic properties as sound ideophones, and they also refer to sensory perceptions.

→ Could they be considered as ideophones too?

Problem to answering this question:

- none of the morphosyntactic features is restricted to sound ideophones or to roots denoting sensory perceptions
- expressivity, depiction, are subjective notions;
- reduplication is an expressive morphological process;
- instrumental prefixes are depictive, they create verbs with compact information

→ Is the “expressivity” perceived in these verbs arise from the morphology rather than the roots themselves?

Conclusion

Future investigations

Investigating whether sound ideophones can be recognized on formal bases

→ From this: check whether there might be ideophones covering other semantic domains, e.g. *diⁿdiⁿ* 'stiff'; **wiⁿxe* 'round and round'; *p^húshiⁿ* "swollen"...

- relative frequency of some consonants and vowels in sound ideophones vs. other words
- relative frequency of consonant clusters
- in-depth study of reduplication

Thank you

Wíbthahoⁿ

References

Abbreviations for primary sources are shown in red.

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Semantic extensions

With the root *dáze*

- Sound:
thidáze ‘to make the sound *zzzz* once, as thunder does’
- Extension:
nádaze ‘sparks’; *nádadaze* ‘{fire} to send sparks’

With the root *p^huki*

- Sound:
p^huki: “a popping sound (...), or a deadened sound (...)”
- Extension:
náp^huki: “to be made soft and light by the action of yeast, as bread (*wamuske nap^huki*)”