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[Materials and Research Notes]

A Sliammon Text: "Birds and Rain", as told by Mary George[*]

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1 Introduction

1.1 About Sliammon

"Sliammon" refers to the people of the Tla'amin (Sliammon) First Nation, which is situated just north of the city of Powell River in British Columbia, Canada. In this paper, Sliammon is also used to refer to their traditional language.[1] Sliammon belongs to the Coast (or Central) branch of the Salishan language family. The most detailed description of the language to date is Watanabe (2003).

1.2 About this text

This text was narrated by the late Mrs. Mary George (1924–2009) on July 16, 1996. It was recorded by me, Honoré Watanabe; I was the only person present in the room. The duration of the text is 1′ 21″. It was subsequently transcribed and translated with the help of Mrs. Marion Harry on August 11–12, 2010 and checked again with her on August 4, 2017. The linguistic analyses (phonological and grammatical) were all done by me.

In this text, Mrs. Mary George talks about a certain kind of bird that calls for rain to come when it chirps. It is not clear from this text, however, which species of bird is being referred to.

The text is stored in and was analyzed using SIL Toolbox.[2] The text as it is presented in §2.3 was converted from the Toolbox format using a Python script and was typeset by X LATEX.

The audio file, along with this text, will be available on the following website:
`http://honorewatanabe.com`

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[1] What to call the language, however, is not a simple matter. The term *ʔayʔaǰuθəm* is sometimes used, but this is not without problems. See Watanabe (2003:2–3), Watanabe (2014:xiii–xiv) for details.

[2] `https://software.sil.org/toolbox/`

1.3 The format

The text is presented in §2, first in Sliammon only (§2.1, in phonemic representation), second in its English translation (§2.2), and third with morphological analysis (§2.3). The line numbers, from 1 to 24 in parentheses, all correspond between these three subsections.

In §2.3, each line of the text is presented in a five-line format. The five lines respectively presents the following:

1. The phonetic transcription in square brackets ([…]).

2. The phonemic representation with segmentation of morphemes.

3. The morphophonemic representation.

4. The gloss for each morpheme.

5. The free translation in English. (This is followed by the line ID in my original data.)

The phonetic transcription (i.e. the first line) is usually not included in presenting a text of this kind; however, it is included here because the 'orthography' used in the Sliammon community basically corresponds to the phonetic level, rather than the phonemic one.

In the morphophonemic representation (i.e. the third line), the root sign ($\sqrt{}$) is placed only where the identificaion of a root is warranted and relevant. Theoretically, all words contain one root in Sliammon. (Aside from a couple of exceptions, there is no root compounding.) However, when it is not entirely clear to me whether one should analyze a word as a root or into a (hypothetical) root plus other morpheme(s), I have left it unmarked in terms of root. One example is *t'it'ist'is* 'bird'. This can refer to either one or more than one bird. One of the means to express plurality explicitly is using $C_1 \partial C_2$ reduplication. The Sliammon word for 'birds' is *t'ǝst'is*, where the root appears to be $\sqrt{t'is}$. This is a bound root, that is, it cannot appear by itself. The word *t'it'ist'is* 'bird' indeed appears to be built on this root with two reduplications; however, the form of this word is lexicalized as such. Hence, I have chosen to leave it unanalyzed without a root sign. This is a somewhat arbitrary choice; it is often not easy to draw a clear boundary between synchronic and diachronic analyses.

The footnotes in §2.3 provides further notes and observations. The speakers are identified by their initials there.

2 The text

2.1 The text in Sliammon

(1) payaʔ ˌʔut tatawθiyam'uɬ šəˬ t͡θˬ kʷukʷpaʔuɬ naʔa ʔəˬ ɬ t'it'ist'is.
(2) qʷaqʷay ˌga ɬ t'it'ist'is.
(3) "yayaɬat ˌk'ʷa kʷˬ č'əɬ," niʔitas.
(4) "č'aʔaɬč'əɬ č'aʔaɬč'əɬ."
(5) "č'aʔaɬč'əɬ," hut ˌk'ʷa ɬ t'it'ist'is.
(6) taʔat x̣ičusθasuɬ kʷˬ šin' t'it'ist'is.
(7) "yayaɬatəm θiʔi t'it'ist'is kʷˬ č'əɬ," natas ˌga.
(8) qʷəl' ˌga gənaxʷ kʷˬ č'əɬ.
(9) č'iʔič'ič'əɬ sˬ ʔuts.
(10) x̣ʷux̣ʷʔux̣ʷ ˌga ʔiy qʷəl' kʷˬ č'əɬ.

(11) tawtumuɫas ˏga.
(12) k'ʷənit ˏčxʷ ɫəˏ yayaɫatam'uɫ ɫəˏ t'it'ist'is.
(13) "č'əɫ ˏk'ʷi," natumuɫas ˏga kʷan'.
(14) hi ˏk'ʷa ˏga kʷaʔin nans kʷˏ naʔa t'it'ist'is.
(15) č'iyìtaxʷ qʷaqʷays.
(16) "č'aʔaɫč'əɫ č'aʔaɫč'əɫ č'aʔaɫč'əɫ," huθut ˏk'ʷa.
(17) qʷəl ˏga gənaxʷ č'əɫ.
(18) hi ˏga ʔəˏ xʷˏ niʔs ˏʔut kʷˏ naʔa ʔəˏ kʷˏ... kʷˏ ʔəx̣tiy kʷan'.
(19) "č'aʔaɫč'əɫ."
(20) niʔ ˏʔut kʷan' qʷay ʔəˏ nimuɫ.
(21) hiɫ kʷan' tuwa kʷˏ ɫəˏ t'it'ist'is sˏ yayaɫats kʷˏ č'əɫ.
(22) hi ˏga xʷˏ č'aʔaɫč'əɫs.
(23) niʔ ˏʔut kʷˏ č'aʔaɫč'əɫ.
(24) hiɫ kʷan' naʔs ɫəˏ t'it'ist'is q'ʷaq'ʷθəm'

2.2   The text in English translation

(1)   'My grandfather was always telling me about the bird.'
(2)   'The bird was singing.'
(3)   ' "She is calling for rain," he said.'
(4)   ' "Rain, rain. Rain, rain." '
(5)   ' "Rain, rain," the bird would say.'
(6)   'He pointed out the bird to me.'
(7)   ' "This bird is calling for rain," he would say.'
(8)   'And the rain did come.'
(9)   'It would be sprinkling at first.'
(10) 'In a little while the rain would come.'
(11) 'He would tell us.'
(12) 'You see what the bird was calling for.'
(13) ' "It's starting to rain," he would tell us.'
(14) 'They say that is why this bird has its name.'
(15) 'You hear it saying,'
(16) ' "Rain, rain, rain," it says.'
(17) 'And the rain really does come.'
(18) 'That is why there is one like that.'
(19) 'Rain, rain.'
(20) 'There is that word with us (in our language).'
(21) 'That's the one about the bird calling for rain.'
(22) 'That's why it rains.'
(23) 'And there is that "rain bird".'
(24) 'That is the tale of the bird.'

2.3 The text with analysis[3]

(1) [páyɛʔot tátuːθeyλʔmoɬ šɪtᶿkʷúkʷpàʔoɬ naː ʔʌɬ t'ét'est'ès]

payaʔ ˬʔut ta~taw-θiy-am'-uɬ ˬšə ˬtᶿ kʷukʷpaʔ-uɬ
√payaʔ ˬʔut CV~√tag-θay-əm-ʔuL ˬšə ˬtᶿ kʷukʷpaʔ-ʔuL
always ˬCLT IMPF~tell-CTR+1SG.OBJ-PASS-PST DET ˬ1SG.POSSˬ grandfather-PST
naʔa ʔəˬ ɬˬ t'it'ist'is.
naʔa ʔəˬ ɬəˬ t'it'ist'is
R.FILLER OBLˬ DETˬ bird

'My grandfather was always telling me about the bird.'[4] (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.001)

(2) [qʷáːqʷaygλ ɬt'ét'est'ès]

qʷa~qʷay ˬga ɬˬ t'it'ist'is.
CV~√qʷay ˬga ɬəˬ t'it'ist'is
IMPF~talk ˬMTG DETˬ bird

'The bird was singing.' (lit. 'talking') (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.002)

(3) [yéyɛɬʌtk'ʷa kʷč'íɬ néːtλs]

"ya~yaɬ-a-t ˬk'ʷa kʷˬ č'əɬ," niʔ-i-t-as.
CV~√yaɬ-V-t ˬk'ʷa kʷˬ √č'əɬ √niʔ-V-t-as
IMPF~call-LV-CTR ˬQUOT DETˬ rain say-LV-CTR-3ERG

' "She is calling for rain," he said.'[5] (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.003)

(4) [č'éɬč'ìɬ č'éɬč'ìɬ]

"č'aʔaɬ~č'əɬ č'aʔaɬ~č'əɬ"
CVʔVC~√č'əɬ CVʔVC~√č'əɬ
RDPL~rain RDPL~rain

' "Rain, rain. Rain, rain." '[6] (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.004)

(5) [č'éɬč'ìɬ hótk'ʷa t'ét'est'ès]

"č'aʔaɬ~č'əɬ," hut ˬk'ʷa ɬˬ t'it'ist'is.
CVʔVC~√č'əɬ √hut ˬk'ʷa ɬəˬ t'it'ist'is
RDPL~rain say ˬQUOT DETˬ bird

' "Rain, rain," the bird would say.' (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.005)

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[3] Symbols and abbreviations used are: ˬ = clitic boundary, ~ = reduplication boundary, 1 = first person, 2 = second person, 3 = third person, CLFT = cleft, CLT = clitic, CNJ = conjunctive, CTR = control transitive, DAT = dative, DEM = demonstrative, DET = determiner, ERG = ergative, IMPF = imperfective, INDC = indicative, INDP = independent form, LV = link vowel, MTG = mitigator, NMLZ = nominalizer, OBJ = object, OBL = oblique, PASS = passive, PL = plural, POSS = possessive, PST = past, QUOT = quotative, R.FILLER = rhetorical filler, RDPL = reduplication, SBJ = subject, SG = singular, STV = stative. + is used to connect glosses of morphemes that are merged as a single morph.

[4] *tataw...* sounds like [tátuː...] presumably as a result of fast speech phenomenon. The expected Oblique marker is omitted before *šə tᶿ kʷukʷpaʔuɬ*. Although there is a word, *niniji*, which means 'about, as regards to', ɬ *t'it'ist'is* 'the bird' is preceded simply by the Oblique marker *ʔə*.

[5] The third person Ergative (transitive subject) suffix -*as* is omitted before the Quotative clitic *k'ʷa*, as expected.

[6] Although the glottal stops are inaudible, MH confirmed that the forms are *č'aʔaɬ~č'əɬ*.

(6) [tʌʔt x̣ɛ́čusθàsoɫ kʷšín' t'ét'est'ès]

    taʔat   x̣ič-us-θ-as-uɫ   kʷ˯ šin' t'it'ist'is.
    √taʔat √x̣ič-us-θ-as-ʔuL   kʷ˯ √šin' t'it'ist'is
    DEM   point-DAT-CTR+1SG.OBJ-3ERG-PST DET˯ DEM bird

    'He pointed out the bird to me.' (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.006)

(7) [yéyɛɫatàm θɛʔ t'ét'est'es kʷč'ɪɫ ná:tʌsgʌ]

    "ya~yaɫ-a-t-əm   θiʔi t'it'ist'is kʷ˯   č'əɫ," na-t-as   ˯ga.
    CV~√yaɫ-V-t-əm   √θiʔi t'it'ist'is kʷ˯ √č'əɫ √na-t-as   ˯ga
    IMPF~call-LV-CTR-PASS DEM bird   DET˯ rain say-CTR-3ERG ˯MTG

    ' "This bird is calling for rain," he would say.' (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.007)

(8) [qʷúl'gʌ gʌ́nəxʷ kʷč'íɫ]

    qʷəl' ˯ga   gənaxʷ kʷ˯   č'əɫ.
    √qʷəl' ˯ga   √gənaxʷ kʷ˯ √č'əɫ
    come ˯MTG   true   DET˯ rain

    'And the rain did come.' (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.008)

(9) [č'í·ʔi·č'ì·č'ìɫ s?ot͡s]

    č'iʔi~č'i~č'əɫ   s˯   ʔut-s.
    Ciʔi~CV~√č'əɫ   s˯   √ʔut-s
    RDPL~RDPL~rain NMLZ˯ long.ago/first-3POSS

    'It would be sprinkling at first.' (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.009)

(10) [x̣ʷóx̣ʷʔox̣ʷgʌ ʔi· qʷúl' kʷč'íɫ]

    x̣ʷux̣ʷʔux̣ʷ ˯ga ʔiy qʷəl' kʷ˯   č'əɫ.
    x̣ʷux̣ʷʔux̣ʷ ˯ga ʔiy √qʷəl' kʷ˯ √č'əɫ
    short.time ˯MTG and come DET˯ rain

    'In a little while the rain would come.' (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.010)

(11) [táwtòmoɫasgʌ]

    taw-t-umuɫ-as   ˯ga.
    √tag-t-umuɫ-as   ˯ga
    tell-CTR-1PL.OBJ-3ERG ˯MTG

    'He would tell us.' (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.011)

(12) [k'ʷʌnčxʷ ɫə yéyɛɫatàʔmoɫ ɫə (ɫ) t'et'est'es]

    k'ʷən-i-t   ˯čxʷ   ɫə˯ ya~yaɫ-a-t-əm-uɫ   ɫə˯ t'it'ist'is.
    √k'ʷən-i-t   ˯čxʷ   ɫə˯ CV~√yaɫ-V-t-əm-ʔuL   ɫə˯ t'it'ist'is
    see-STV-CTR ˯2SG.INDC.SBJ DET˯ IMPF~call-LV-CTR-PASS-PST DET˯ bird

    'You see what the bird was calling for.'[7] (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.012)

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[7] [k'ʷʊnčxʷ] is shortened from [k'ʊnɛtčxʷ]. The expected Oblique marker before ɫə t'it'ist'is 'the bird' is omitted; it is the agent of the Passive predicate of the relative clause. A more literal translation of the relative clause would be 'the one(s) that are being called by the bird'.

(13)   [č'íɬkʷi· nátò·moɬʌsgʌ kʷán']

  "č'əɬ ᴗkʷi," na-t-umuɬ-as   ᴗga   kʷan'.
  √č'əɬ ᴗkʷi √na-t-umuɬ-as   ᴗga   √kʷan'
  rain CLT   say-CTR-1PL.OBJ-3CNJ.SBJ ᴗMTG DEM

  ' "It's starting to rain," he would tell us.' (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.013)

(14)   [hɛ́k'ʷagʌ kʷáʔèn náns kʷnɑ: t'é·t'əst'ès]

  hi ᴗk'ʷa ᴗga kʷaʔin nan-s   kʷᴗ naʔa   t'it'ist'is.
  hiL ᴗk'ʷa ᴗga kʷaʔin √nan-s   kʷᴗ naʔa   t'it'ist'is
  it's ᴗQUOT ᴗMTG DEM   name-3POSS DETᴗ R.FILLER bird

  'They say that is why this bird has its name.' (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.014)

(15)   [č'í:yɪtʌxʷ qʷáqʷays]

  č'iy-ì-t-axʷ   qʷa~qʷay-s.
  √č'iy-ì-t-axʷ   CV~√qʷay-s
  hear-LV+STV-CTR-2SG.ERG IMPF~talk-3POSS

  'You hear it saying,' (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.015)

(16)   [č'ɛ́ɬč'ɪɬ č'ɛ́ɬčɪɬ č'ɛ́ᵊɬč'ɪɬ hóθotk'ʷà]

  "č'aʔaɬ~č'əɬ   č'aʔaɬ~č'əɬ   č'aʔaɬ~č'əɬ," huθut ᴗk'ʷa.
  CVʔVC~√č'əɬ CVʔVC~√č'əɬ CVʔVC~√č'əɬ huθut ᴗk'ʷa
  RDPL~rain   RDPL~rain   RDPL~rain   say   ᴗQUOT

  ' "Rain, rain, rain," it says.' (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.016)

(17)   [qʷúlgʌ gʌ́nəxʷ č'íɬ]

  qʷəl ᴗga   gənaxʷ č'əɬ.
  √qʷəl ᴗga   √gənaxʷ √č'əɬ
  come ᴗMTG true   rain

  'And the rain really does come.' (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.017)

(18)   [hɛ́gʌ ʔʌxʷ nɛ́ʔsʔot kʷnɑ: ʔʌkʷʔʌx̣ ... kʷʔʌ́x̣ti: kʷán']

  hi ᴗga ʔə ᴗ xʷᴗ niʔ-s   ᴗʔut kʷᴗ naʔa ʔə ᴗ kʷᴗ ...
  hiL ᴗga ʔə ᴗ xʷᴗ √niʔ-s   ᴗʔut kʷᴗ naʔa ʔə ᴗ kʷᴗ ...
  it's ᴗMTG CLFTᴗ NMLZᴗ be.there-3POSS ᴗCLT DETᴗ R.FILLER OBLᴗ DETᴗ (pause)
  kʷᴗ ʔəx̣tiy kʷan'.
  kʷᴗ √ʔəx̣tiy √kʷan'
  DETᴗ similar   DEM

  'That is why there is one like that.' (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.018)

(19)   [č'ɛ́ᵊɬč'ìɬ]

  "č'aʔaɬ~č'əɬ"
  CVʔVC~√č'əɬ
  RDPL~rain

  ' "Rain, rain." ' (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.019)

(20) [nέʔot kʷán' qʷáy ʔʌ némoɬ]

     niʔ   ⌣ʔut   kʷan'   qʷay   ʔə⌣   nimuɬ.

    √niʔ   ⌣ʔut   √kʷan' √qʷay ʔə⌣   √nimuɬ

    be.there ⌣CLT DEM   talk   OBL⌣ 1PL.INDP

    'There is that word with us (in our language).'[8] (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.020)

(21) [hέɬ kʷán' túwà kʷɬ t'é·t'əst'ès syέyɛɬʌ͡ts kʷ č'íɬ]

    hiɬ   kʷan'   tuwa   kʷ⌣   ɬə⌣   t'it'ist'is s⌣   ya~yaɬ-a-t-s   kʷ⌣

    hiL   √kʷan' √tuwa kʷ⌣   ɬə⌣   t'it'ist'is s⌣   CV~√yaɬ-V-t-s   kʷ⌣

    it's   DEM   from   DET⌣ DET⌣ bird   NMLZ⌣ IMPF~call-LV-CTR-3POSS DET⌣

     č'əɬ.

    √č'əɬ

     rain

    'That's the one about the bird calling for rain.'[9] (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.021)

(22) [hέgʌ xʷč'έɬč'ìɬs]

    hi   ⌣ga   xʷ⌣   č'aʔaɬ~č'əɬ-s.

    hiL ⌣ga   xʷ⌣   CVʔVC~√č'əɬ-s

    it's ⌣MTG NMLZ⌣ RDPL~rain-3POSS

    'That's why it rains.'[10] (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.022)

(23) [nέʔot kʷč'έɬčìɬ]

    niʔ   ⌣ʔut   kʷ⌣   č'aʔaɬ~č'əɬ.

    √niʔ   ⌣ʔut   kʷ⌣   CVʔVC~√č'əɬ

    be.there ⌣CLT DET⌣ RDPL~rain

    'And there is that "rain bird".'[11] (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.023)

(24) [hέɬ kʷán' náʔs ɬət'é·t'est'ès q'ʷáq'ʷθə̀m']

    hiɬ   kʷan'   naʔ-s   ɬə⌣   t'it'ist'is q'ʷaq'ʷθəm'.

    hiL   √kʷan' √naʔ-s   ɬə⌣   t'it'ist'is q'ʷaq'ʷθəm'

    it's   DEM   possess-3POSS DET⌣ bird   story

    'That is the tale of the bird.' [The End] (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.024)

References

Watanabe, Honoré. 2003. *A morphological description of Sliammon, Mainland Comox Salish, with a sketch of syntax*, Endangered Languages of the Pacific Rim Publication Series, A2-040, Suita (Osaka): Osaka Gakuin University.

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[8] *qʷay* means 'word' when used as noun.

[9] What appears to be the determiner preceding *t'it'ist'is* 'bird' sounds like [kʷɬ] in this line. (This was pointed out by MH.) This is unattested elsewhere, and it remains to be seen if this is a combination of a determiner (either *kʷə* or *ɬə*) with another element, or a combination of these two determiners, or something entirely different.

[10] A cleft sentence but the Cleft marker *ʔə* is omitted here before the Nominalizer *xʷ*.

[11] The translation is problematic since the term referring to the bird in question was never really revealed in this text. Here, it appears that MG is referring to the bird as *č'aʔaɬč'əɬ*.

Watanabe, Honoré. 2014. "A note on the Sliammon language," in *Written as I remember it* by Elsie Paul in collaboration with Paige Raibmon and Harmony Johnson, Vancouver: UBC Press, pp. xiii–xxii.

スライアモン語テキスト：メアリ・ジョージによる「鳥と雨」

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　本稿は、スライアモン語（北米先住民諸語、セイリッシュ語族）のテキストに、原語、形態素分析とグロス、そして英訳を付けたものである。このテキストは、メアリー・ジョージ氏（故人）によって語られたもので、長さは 1 分 21 秒である。内容は、ある種類の鳥が鳴くと、その後、雨が降るという話を、彼女の祖父が話していたことを語ったものである。

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