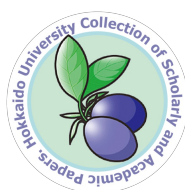




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[Materials and Research Notes]

A Sliammon Text: “Birds and Rain”, as told by Mary George*

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Keywords: Sliammon, Salish, North America

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_YL^AT_EX.

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

* My deepest gratitude goes, first and foremost, to the late Mrs. Mary George for sharing this story with me and teaching me her traditional language. I am grateful also to Mrs. Marion Harry for working through this text with me. I am thankful to the Tla’amin (Sliammon) community and to my other language teachers: the late Mrs. Agnes McGee, the late Mrs. Annie Dominick, and Mrs. Elsie Paul. My research on Sliammon has been supported by various agencies, most recently by JSPS (KAKENHI, Grant Numbers 16K02660 and 16H05672) and also by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture (a funding given to ILCAA, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies for “Linguistic Dynamics Science Project”). Needless to say, I assume full responsibility of my analyses and any errors in the data.

¹ What to call the language, however, is not a simple matter. The term *ʔayʔaʃuθəm* 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 (√) is placed only where the identification 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 $C_1\bar{\alpha}C_2$ reduplication. The Sliammon word for ‘birds’ is *t’ast’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 ʔut tatawθiyam’uʔ šə tʰ kʷukʷpaʔuʔ naʔa ʔə ʔ t’it’ist’is.
- (2) qʷaqʷay ʔa ʔ t’it’ist’is.
- (3) “yayaʔat ʔkʷa kʷ ʔ’əʔ,” niʔitas.
- (4) “ʔ’aʔaʔʔ’əʔ ʔ’aʔaʔʔ’əʔ.”
- (5) “ʔ’aʔaʔʔ’əʔ,” hut ʔkʷa ʔ t’it’ist’is.
- (6) taʔat ʔiʔusθasuʔ kʷ ʔin’ t’it’ist’is.
- (7) “yayaʔatəm θiʔi t’it’ist’is kʷ ʔ’əʔ,” natas ʔa.
- (8) qʷəl’ ʔa ʔənaxʷ kʷ ʔ’əʔ.
- (9) ʔ’iʔiʔ’iʔ’əʔ s ʔuts.
- (10) ʔʷuxʷʔuxʷ ʔa ʔiy qʷəl’ kʷ ʔ’əʔ.

- (11) tawtumufas ga.
- (12) k'wənit čxw ɬə yayaɬatam'ut ɬə t'it'ist'is.
- (13) “č'əɬ kwi,” natumufas ga k'wan'.
- (14) hi k'wa ga k'waʔin nans k'w naʔa t'it'ist'is.
- (15) č'iyitaxw q'waq'ways.
- (16) “č'aʔaɬč'əɬ č'aʔaɬč'əɬ č'aʔaɬč'əɬ,” huθut k'wa.
- (17) q'wəl ga gənaxw č'əɬ.
- (18) hi ga ʔə xw niʔs ʔut k'w naʔa ʔə k'w... k'w ʔəxtiy k'wan'.
- (19) “č'aʔaɬč'əɬ.”
- (20) niʔ ʔut k'wan' q'way ʔə nimuf.
- (21) hi k'wan' tuwa k'w ɬə t'it'ist'is s yayaɬats k'w č'əɬ.
- (22) hi ga xw č'aʔaɬč'əɬs.
- (23) niʔ ʔut k'w č'aʔaɬč'əɬ.
- (24) hi k'wan' naʔs ɬə t'it'ist'is q'waq'wəθəm'

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 analysis³

- (1) [páyεʔot tátu:θeyλʔmoʔ šit⁰k^wúk^wpaʔoʔ na: ʔaʔ t'ét'est'ès]
 payaʔ ʔut ta~taw-θiy-am'-uʔ šə ʔ⁰ k^wuk^wpaʔ-uʔ
 √payaʔ ʔut CV~√tag-θay-ə-m-ʔuL šə ʔ⁰ k^wuk^wpaʔ-ʔuL
 always CLT IMPF~tell-CTR+1SG.OBJ-PASS-PST DET 1SG.POSS grandfather-PST
 naʔa ʔə ʔ⁰ t'it'ist'is.
 naʔa ʔə ʔə t'it'ist'is
 R.FILLER OBL DET bird

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

- (2) [q^wá:q^waygλ ʔt'ét'est'ès]
 q^wa~q^way ga ʔ⁰ t'it'ist'is.
 CV~√q^way ga ʔə t'it'ist'is
 IMPF~talk MTG DET bird
 'The bird was singing.' (lit. 'talking') (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.002)

- (3) [yéyεʔatk^wa k^wč'it né:tʔs]
 "ya~yaʔ-a-t k^wa k^w č'əʔ," niʔ-i-t-as.
 CV~√yaʔ-V-t k^wa k^w √č'əʔ √niʔ-V-t-as
 IMPF~call-LV-CTR QUOT DET rain say-LV-CTR-3ERG
 "She is calling for rain," he said.'⁵ (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.003)

- (4) [č'əʔč'it č'əʔč'it]
 "č'aʔaʔ~č'əʔ č'aʔaʔ~č'əʔ"
 CVʔVC~√č'əʔ CVʔVC~√č'əʔ
 RDPL~rain RDPL~rain
 "Rain, rain. Rain, rain."⁶ (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.004)

- (5) [č'əʔč'it hótk^wa t'ét'est'ès]
 "č'aʔaʔ~č'əʔ," hut k^wa ʔ⁰ t'it'ist'is.
 CVʔVC~√č'əʔ √hut k^wa ʔə t'it'ist'is
 RDPL~rain say QUOT DET bird
 "Rain, rain," the bird would say.' (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.005)

³ Symbols and abbreviations used are: ʔ = 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 [tátu:...], presumably as a result of fast speech phenomenon. The expected Oblique marker is omitted before šə ʔ⁰ k^wuk^wpaʔuʔ. Although there is a word, *niniji*, which means 'about, as regards to', ʔ⁰ 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'aʔaʔ~č'əʔ.

- (6) [tʰʌʔt xɛ́çusθàsoʔ kʷʂín' t'et'est'ès]

taʔat xɛ́ç-us-θ-as-uʔ kʷ ʂín' t'it'ist'is.
 √taʔat √xɛ́ç-us-θ-as-ʔuL kʷ √ʂín' 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) [yéyɛʔatəm θɛʔ t'et'est'es kʷč'ɪ ná:tʌsgʌ]

“ya~yaʔ-a-t-əm θiʔi t'it'ist'is kʷ č'əʔ,” na-t-as ɟa.
 CV~√yaʔ-V-t-əm √θiʔi t'it'ist'is kʷ √č'əʔ √na-t-as ɟa
 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) [qʷól'gʌ gʌnəxʷ kʷč'ɪ]

qʷəl' ɟa gənaʰxʷ kʷ č'əʔ.
 √qʷəl' ɟa √gənaʰxʷ kʷ √č'əʔ
 come MTG true DET rain
 ‘And the rain did come.’ (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.008)

- (9) [č'íʔi~č'í~č'əʔ sʌʔts]

č'íʔi~č'í~č'əʔ sʌ ʔut-s.
 Ciʔi~CV~√č'əʔ sʌ √ʔut-s
 RDPL~RDPL~rain NMLZ long.ago/first-3POSS
 ‘It would be sprinkling at first.’ (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.009)

- (10) [xʷóxʷʔoxʷgʌ ʔi qʷól' kʷč'ɪ]

xʷuxʷʔuxʷ ɟa ʔiy qʷəl' kʷ č'əʔ.
 xʷuxʷʔuxʷ ɟa ʔiy √qʷəl' kʷ √č'əʔ
 short.time MTG and come DET rain
 ‘In a little while the rain would come.’ (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.010)

- (11) [táwtòmoʔʌsgʌ]

taw-t-umuʔ-as ɟa.
 √tag-t-umuʔ-as ɟa
 tell-CTR-1PL.OBJ-3ERG MTG
 ‘He would tell us.’ (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.011)

- (12) [kʷʌnčxʷ ʔə yéyɛʔatàʔmoʔ ʔə (ʔ) t'et'est'es]

kʷən-i-t čxʷ ʔə ya~yaʔ-a-t-əm-uʔ ʔə t'it'ist'is.
 √kʷən-i-t čxʷ ʔə CV~√yaʔ-V-t-əm-ʔuL ʔə 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)

⁷ [kʷʌnčxʷ] is shortened from [kʷʌnɛtčxʷ]. The expected Oblique marker before ʔə 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'íłkʷiː nátòːmołʌsgʌ kʷán']
 “č'əł ɟkʷi,” na-t-umuł-as ɟga kʷan'.
 √č'əł ɟkʷi √na-t-umuł-as ɟga √kʷan'
 rain CLT say-CTR-1PL.OBJ-3CNJ.SBJ MTG DEM
 ‘“It’s starting to rain,” he would tell us.’ (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.013)
- (14) [héłkʷagʌ kʷáʔèn nánʌs kʷnaː t'éːt'əst'ès]
 hi ɟkʷa ɟga kʷaʔin nan-s kʷ naʔa t'it'ist'is.
 hiL ɟkʷa ɟga kʷaʔin √nan-s kʷ naʔa t'it'ist'is
 it's QUOT MTG DEM name-3POSS DET R.FILLER bird
 ‘They say that is why this bird has its name.’ (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.014)
- (15) [č'íyitʌxʷ 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'éłč'íł č'éłč'íł č'éłč'íł hóθotk'wà]
 “č'aʔał~č'əł č'aʔał~č'əł č'aʔał~č'əł,” huθut ɟkʷa.
 CVʔVC~√č'əł CVʔVC~√č'əł CVʔVC~√č'əł huθut ɟkʷa
 RDPL~rain RDPL~rain RDPL~rain say QUOT
 ‘“Rain, rain, rain,” it says.’ (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.016)
- (17) [qʷólga gʌnəxʷ č'íł]
 qʷəl ɟga gənaxʷ č'əł.
 √qʷəl ɟga √gənaxʷ √č'əł
 come MTG true rain
 ‘And the rain really does come.’ (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.017)
- (18) [héłga ʔʌxʷ néʔsʔot kʷnaː ʔʌkʷʔʌx ... kʷʔʌxtiː kʷán']
 hi ɟga ʔə xʷ níʔ-s ʔut kʷ naʔa ʔə kʷ ...
 hiL ɟga ʔə xʷ √níʔ-s ʔut kʷ naʔa ʔə kʷ ...
 it's MTG CLFT NMLZ be.there-3POSS CLT DET R.FILLER OBL DET (pause)
 kʷ ʔəxtiy kʷan'.
 kʷ √ʔəxtiy √kʷan'
 DET similar DEM
 ‘That is why there is one like that.’ (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.018)
- (19) [č'éłč'íł]
 “č'aʔał~č'əł”
 CVʔVC~√č'əł
 RDPL~rain
 ‘“Rain, rain.”’ (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.019)

- (20) [néʔot kʷán' qʷáy ʔʌ némoʔ]
 niʔ ʔut kʷan' qʷay ʔə nimuʔ.
 √niʔ ʔut √kʷan' √qʷay ʔə √nimuʔ
 be.there CLT DEM talk OBL 1PL.INDP
 ‘There is that word with us (in our language).’⁸ (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.020)
- (21) [héʔ kʷán' túwà kʷʔ t'é't'əst'ès syéyeʔʌts kʷ č'itʔ]
 hiʔ kʷan' tuwa kʷ ʔə t'it'ist'is s ʔə ya~yaʔ-a-t-s kʷ
 hiL √kʷan' √tuwa kʷ ʔə t'it'ist'is s CV~√yaʔ-V-t-s kʷ
 it's DEM from DET DET bird NMLZ IMPF~call-LV-CTR-3POSS DET
 č'əʔ.
 √č'əʔ
 rain
 ‘That’s the one about the bird calling for rain.’⁹ (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.021)
- (22) [héʔʌ xʷč'əʔč'itʔs]
 hi ʔa xʷ č'aʔaʔ~č'əʔ-s.
 hiL ʔa xʷ CVʔVC~√č'əʔ-s
 it's MTG NMLZ RDPL~rain-3POSS
 ‘That’s why it rains.’¹⁰ (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.022)
- (23) [néʔot kʷč'əʔč'itʔ]
 niʔ ʔut kʷ č'aʔaʔ~č'əʔ.
 √niʔ ʔut kʷ CVʔVC~√č'əʔ
 be.there CLT DET RDPL~rain
 ‘And there is that “rain bird”.’¹¹ (MG-BIRDS&RAIN.023)
- (24) [héʔ kʷán' náʔs ʔə't'é't'est'ès qʷáqʷəθəm']
 hiʔ kʷan' naʔ-s ʔə t'it'ist'is qʷaqʷəθəm'.
 hiL √kʷan' √naʔ-s ʔə t'it'ist'is qʷaqʷəθəm'
 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.

⁸ qʷay means ‘word’ when used as noun.

⁹ What appears to be the determiner preceding t'it'ist'is ‘bird’ sounds like [kʷʔ] 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 ʔə) 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'aʔaʔč'əʔ.

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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