A new category for Kiksht ideophones*

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Introduction

This paper presents a preliminary morphosyntactic account of ideophones—"member[s] of an open lexical class of marked words that depict sensory imagery" (Dingemanse 2019:16)– in Kiksht, an Indigenous language spoken at the Warm Springs Reservation in Oregon. Initially thought to be specific to Bantu languages (Dingemanse 2012:655), ideophones have been observed across typologically diverse language families. Despite their crosslinguistic commonality, they have previously received marginalized treatment. Among the body of contemporary literature discussing ideophones, Dingemanse (2018, 2019) and Akita & Dingemanse (2019) have recently focused on unifying ideophones under their common cross-linguistic features, while allowing for language specific variation. One element of cross-linguistic variation is the syntactic categorization of ideophones.

Ideophones are a robust feature of Kiksht. They appear with relatively high frequency in the most extensive published collection of texts (Sapir (1909)'s *Wishram Texts*) that currently exists for the variety of the language we discuss herein, Wasco-Wishram. Though ideophones have received some attention in previous descriptive literature for Kiksht (Dyk 1933:124-135) and related Chinookan (Boas 1904:118-124), their syntactic categorization has yet to be determined. Dyk, for example, categorizes them as "particles," a broad category encompassing ideophones as well as, for example, adverbs, modals, and conjunctions. Dyk's categorization of ideophones does not capture shared features of ideophones and particles outside of the absence of affixes that are obligatory to nouns and verbs. Based on a sample of ideophones used in *Wishram Texts* and the *Wasco Dictionary* (Culture & Heritage Department 1996), we develop a morphosyntactic description of Wasco-Wishram Kiksht ideophones, discussing implications for syntactic categoryhood. We show that Kiksht ideophones are morphosyntactically unlike any other syntactic category in the language, high-

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lighting properties such as relatively invariant word order, strict tendency towards clause-initiality, and infrequent appearance of affixes that are unique to ideophones. We find that the morphosyntactic evidence supports the claim that Kiksht ideophones are their own syntactic category.

1 Ideophones and syntactic category

Cross-linguistically, ideophones convey a range of sensory imagery, including sound, movement, texture, and emotional state (Akita & Dingemanse 2019:1). Dingemanse (2019:15) compiles cross-linguistic properties of ideophones, which are as follows:

i. ideophones are MARKED, i.e. they have structural properties that make them stand out from other words
ii. they are WORDS, i.e., conventionalized lexical items that can be listed and defined
iii. they DEPICT, i.e., they represent scenes by means of structural resemblances between aspects of form and meaning
iv. their meanings lie in the broad domain of SENSORY IMAGERY, which covers perceptions of the external world as well as inner sensations and feelings
v. ideophones form an OPEN LEXICAL CLASS, i.e., a set of lexical items open to new additions

The markedness of ideophones can be phonological, morphological, semantic, or syntactic in nature (see, e.g., Newman 1968, Beck 2008, Blench 2010, Akita & Dingemanse 2019). For example, ideophones commonly differ phonologically from other words, violating otherwise regular properties and rules (see, e.g., Childs 1988:171-179 for the Niger-Congo language Kisi), and may feature unusual sound combinations and vowel harmony. Lengthening, special intonation, and reduplication are also commonly observed. Syntactic distribution can be restricted, with ideophones most commonly appearing in affirmative-declarative sentences (Akita & Dingemanse 2019). For this paper, we are primarily interested in identifying what it looks like and what it means for Kiksht ideophones to be "marked" morphosyntactically.

The syntactic category of ideophones cannot be generalized across languages and "must be answered for each language on its own terms" (Dingemanse 2019:16). As described by Ameka (2001:26), ideophones classified in a single category in a language are more restricted in use. They typically appear in conjunction with specific words, have special stress, are syntactically isolated, and are only used in affirmative declarative sentences (Ameka 2001). In languages in which ideophones are observed across categories, ideophones have fewer restrictions and may be used with a variety of words and sentence types and typically display no special stress. Some languages may have a combination of these types of ideophones. In Bambara (Mande), for example, most ideophones are classified as adverbs

and are restricted to affirmative sentences in sentence final position and with high pitch, although there are some ideophones that are classified as nouns or verbs (Dumestre 1998:331, Ameka 2001:27). These ideophones do not have special pitch and are not restricted to affirmative sentences.

2 Ideophones in Kiksht

Kiksht is an Indigenous language spoken by the Wasq'u (Wasco) people at the Warm Springs Reservation in Oregon. It is the only language from the Chinookan family in active use (see Duncan et al., to appear, for notes on the term "Chinookan" when discussing Kiksht), and is currently undergoing language revitalization efforts by members of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. The endonym 'Kiksht' encompasses a group of dialects (Clackamas, Cascades, and Wasco-Wishram) originally spoken across villages of the Middle Columbia River region from the lower Willamette River east to The Dalles (Silverstein 1990, Zenk et al. 2016). The variety we discuss in this paper is that of Wasco-Wishram Kiksht. *Wishram Texts* is a collection that includes myths, histories, descriptions of customs, and personal letters. The *Wasco Dictionary* contains content drawn from *Wishram Texts* as well as from pedagogical material.

Kiksht is a polysynthetic, head-marking language. Moore (2000:171) considers "Chinookan grammar [to be] strongly non-configurational," and states that Kiksht word order is "quite free." The Kiksht verb consists of a verbal root or stem and a series of affixes, including tense, person, number, case, and directionals (Dyk 1933, Hymes 1975, Silverstein 1977). The noun has affixes marking person, number, and gender, and can also take various suffixes encoding, e.g., plural or distributive (Dyk 1933, Fowler & French 1982). All other words in the language have been classified as particles, which typically lack affixes entirely (Dyk 1933). This includes temporal and spatial particles, adverbs, conjunctions, negation, and ideophones.

As shown in (1), Kiksht ideophones usually appear with verbal stems, primarily *x̣* 'do' or *i* 'go, come', to form verbal predicates.[1]

(1) **C'a'** igiu**x̣**.
c'a' i-g-i-u-x̣
IDPH.mend IMM.PST-3SG.F.ERG-3SG.M.ABS-DIR-do
'She mended it.'

Although the lack of pronominal prefixes on ideophones in Kiksht distinguishes them from verbs and nouns, ideophones still bear resemblance to these categories. Semantically, ideophones are similar to verbs because they build verbal predicates. Syntactically, ideophones appear in a surface position that nouns can occupy, illustrated in the pair of sentences in (2).

[1] Abbreviations in this paper beyond those in the Leipzig Glossing Rules are as follows: COLL = collective, DIR = directional, EP = epenthetic vowel, IPDH = ideophone, IMM = immediate, MYT = mythic, REM = remote.

(2) a. **Łkupłkup** niłkshtx̣á ishk'alkal.
łkup~łkup ni-łk-sh-t-x̣-á
IDPH.break.up~IDPH.break.up REM.PST-3PL.ERG-3DU.ABS-DIR-do-EP
ish-k'alkal
DU-shiny.ball
'They broke up the shiny ball.'

b. **Waqix** gnux̣t.
wa-qix Ø-g-n-u-x̣-t
F-longing.for.fruit PRS-3SG.F.ERG-1SG-DIR-do-IPFV
'I long for/crave fruit.' (Lit., 'Fruit-longing does me.')

The sentence in (2a) is like that of (1) in that it shows an example of an ideophone co-occurring with a fully-inflected form of the verb *x̣* 'do'. The ideophone *łkup* 'break up', reduplicated as *łkupłkup*, is obligatory in terms of contributing to the core meaning of the predicate (rather than loosely "modifying" ''do'). Additionally, the ideophone is not coindexed on the verb, unlike the noun. While Kiksht verbs can accommodate up to three agreement prefixes (Silverstein 1976, Moore 1988), there are two in (2a): one coindexing the subject, 'they', and another coindexing the object *ishk'alkal* 'shiny ball'. In (2b) the noun *waqix* 'longing for fruit' appears in a similar environment, namely, immediately preceding 'do'. However, unlike the ideophone, the noun takes a gender and noun class prefix *wa-*, and is co-indexed on the verb with the pronominal prefix *g-*. This suggests that while the surface order of ideophones can resemble that of other categories, like nouns, there are crucial differences, such as ideophones not serving as arguments of verbs.

3 Data and analysis

To investigate the syntactic category of ideophones in Kiksht, we compiled a list of 319 instances of 98 different ideophones taken from *Wishram Texts* and the *Wasco Dictionary*. Examples were coded to highlight and determine the frequency of select morphological and syntactic properties of Kikhst ideophones, specifically:

1. Do they take affixes (and, if so, which ones)?
2. Do they reduplicate?
3. What verbs do they co-occur with?
4. Where in the clause do they appear?
5. How rigid is their word order?

Answering these questions helps us build a morphosyntactic profile for Kiksht ideophones that in turn facilitates comparison to other categories. The logic underlying this strategy is that, if Kiksht ideophones are a subtype of an existing category or categories then we

might expect them to bear affinity to those categories with respect to things like affixation, verbal co-occurrence, and word order. Alternatively, if Kiksht ideophones are unlike known categories in their distributional properties then this would support the notion that they are a category of their own.

Firstly, we make note of the degree of affixation and reduplication present among ideophones. These results are summarized in Figure 1.

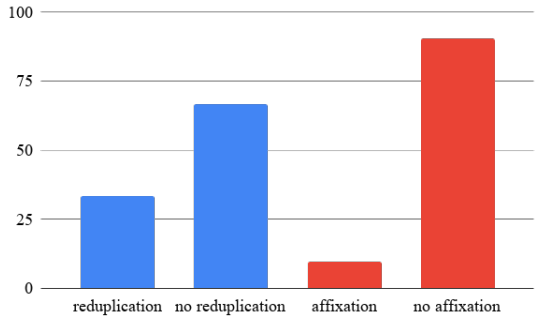

Figure 1: Percentage of reduplication (blue) and affixation (red)

Reduplication was fairly common, occurring about a third of the time, and this exclusively consisted of full reduplication. The sentence in (3) illustrates, showing an alternate of (1) above, with the ideophone *c'a'* 'mend' being fully reduplicated.

(3) **C'a'c'a'** igiuẋ.
c'a'~c'a' i-g-i-u-ẋ
IDPH.mend~IDPH.mend IMM.PST-3SG.F.ERG-3SG.M.ABS-DIR-do
'She mended it (all over/at different places).'

When Kiksht ideophones are reduplicated, they tend to have meanings attested for reduplicated ideophones cross-linguistically, such as distributivity, pluractionality, and intensification (Dingemanse 2015, Henderson 2016). Affixation was much less common, only happening about a tenth of the time. Affixation was almost exclusively in the form of prefixes; among affixed ideophones that co-occured with a verb, this included *da-*, *shai-/sai-*, and *ai-*. Example (4) shows the reduplicated ideophone *tł'aẋtł'áẋ* 'tear' with the prefix *da-*.

(4) nawit **datł'aẋtł'áẋ** gashẋúẋ ishiagich ilalik
nawit da-tł'aẋ~tł'áẋ ga-sh-ẋ-ú-ẋ
straight ADV-IDPH.tear~tear MYT.PST-3DU.ABS-REFL-DIR-do
ish-ia-gich i-lalik
DU-3SG.M.POSS-nose M-rabbit
'immediately Rabbit's nostrils tore open'

Due to their infrequent occurrence and lack of minimal pairs in the data we analyzed, we have so far been unable to detect the precise meaning that these affixes impart, though Dyk

(1933:127) states that they have "an adverbial nature" and that they "emphasize the time or manner of the act." Importantly for our purposes, these affixes appear to be exclusive to ideophones.

Thus, there appears to be some morphological effects with ideophones, but these occurred in less than 15% of instances we examined on average. Still, it is important to note that the morphological features above seem specific to ideophones. That is, reduplication is not a feature of other lexical items, and the prefixes that we find on ideophones are both very limited and only occur with ideophones. We did record a total of 11 potential counterexamples, where an ideophone bore either standard nominal (9 instances with 4 distinct ideophones) or verbal affixes (2 instances with 1 ideophone). Here we note that such cases remain part of our broader investigation as we continue to collect and analyze more examples. From the current dataset, though, all instances with nominal prefixes appear to be nominalized or relativized (e.g., *igiqw'utłmat* 'broom'; lit., 'something that one sweeps with'), which could mean that they are not actually counterexamples. Since there are only two examples with verb morphology, it is unclear as to whether these challenge our ultimate conclusions or, for example, present evidence of a "grammaticalized ideophone" (Dwyer & Moshi 2003), "deideophonisation" (Akita & Dingemanse 2019), or zero derivation.

Next, we consider which verbs appear in tandem with ideophones to give them a verbal or verb-like interpretation. As seen in Figure 2, about 92% of the examples we analyzed involved ideophones co-occurring with a verb.

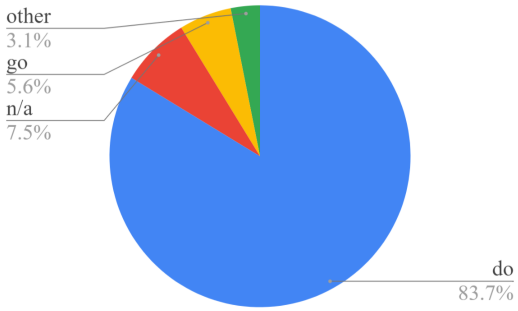

Figure 2: Distribution of Kiksht ideophones based on co-occurring verb

Nearly 84% of the sentences we examined involved the verb *x̣* 'do'. The verb *i* 'go, come' appeared in nearly 6% of instances, but almost all of these were from the single ideophone *chxa* 'drown'. Other verbs were extremely rare and made up just over 3% of our data. The patterns we find are consistent with the fact that many languages use "light or dummy verbs [to] incorporate ideophones into sentence structure" (Akita & Dingemanse 2019:6; see also Langdon 1995, Schaefer & Egbokhare 2002, Franco 2017, a.o.). What is interesting for Kiksht is not simply the presence of this typologically common feature, but its prevalence. The asymmetry between the presence and absence of a supporting verb suggests that verbal co-occurrence is a primary strategy for integrating ideophones into syntactic structure. We

take it that this and the overwhelming restrictive tendency for Kiksht ideophones to co-occur with just one verb, *ẋ* 'do', constitute evidence that Kiksht ideophones are marked and supports classifying ideophones as a distinct category.

To better understand how word order functions in clauses with ideophones, we considered how often additional material appears, and, when it does, whether material precedes, follows, or occurs inside the ideophone+verb complex. By "additional material," we mean any overt content that is not the ideophone or the supporting verb (i.e., nouns, adverbs, modals, negative particles, etc.). Nearly 83% of ideophones we examined contained no accompanying material at all. We attribute this to the fact that fully-inflected verbs and nouns in Kiksht are themselves well-formed sentences, which means that overt arguments beyond those expressed prefixally on verbs and nouns are not required. Hence, the ideophone and the inflected supporting verb alone constitute a well-formed sentence. To determine clause boundaries, we relied heavily on existing punctuation (periods and semi colons). Each example was then reviewed to see if further clause division was merited in the event that the existing punctuation was not sufficient to determine clausal boundaries.

Narrowing in on the examples we analyzed that do contain accompanying material, Figure 3 shows the data for the three aforementioned distributional possibilities.

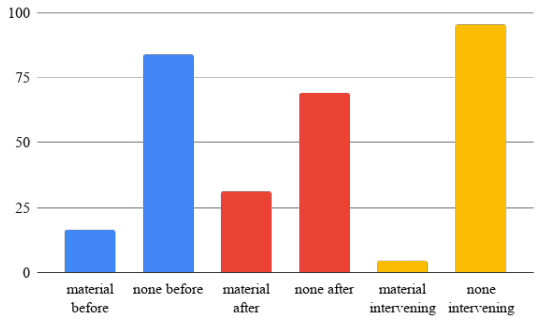

Figure 3: Presence or absence of material appearing before (blue), after (red), or in between (yellow) the ideophone+verb complex

Ideophones occur in various positions within a larger phrase/clause in terms of surface order, but given that having material before only occurred in 16% of all cases, their strongest tendency is to be in clause-initial position, as in (1), (2a), and (4) above. This finding is consistent with the syntactic distribution of ideophones cross-linguistically, where "ideophones tend to be found at the edge of an utterance" (Akita & Dingemanse 2019:5). When material preceded an ideophone in our data, it tended to be adverbial (and commonly one or more "high" adverbs), whereas overt nominal arguments and locative phrases generally surfaced postverbally. An example to illustrate is shown in (4) above, with an adverb before the ideophone+verb complex and the sole argument in postverbal position. In (5) below, the adverbial expression *aga kwapt* 'now then' precedes the ideophone+verb complex *chax galixuẋ* 'he did (REFL)' and both the subject and locative phrase follow.

(5) Aga kwapt **chax galixuẋ** ich'inun k'wab iłchqwá ínadix.

aga	kwapt	chax	gal-i-x-u-ẋ	i-ch'inun	k'wab
now	then	IDPH.step	MYT.PST-3SG.M.ABS-REFL-DIR-do	M-eagle	near

ił-chqwá	ínadix
COLL-water	other.side

'Now then Eagle stepped across to the other side of the water.'

The presence of material following the ideophone+verb complex was nearly twice as prevalent as having material before. Unlike preceding material, which was generally restricted to certain adverbs, but also included negative particles, material that followed the ideophone+verb complex included arguments (transitive subjects, transitive objects, and intransitive subjects) and locative phrases. This can be seen in (5) where both the intransitive subject *ich'inun* 'Eagle' and the phrase *k'wab iłchqwá ínadix* 'near the other side of the water' appear postverbally. In contrast with both of these options, intervening material between the ideophone and the generic verb was quite rare, amounting to 4.4% of the entire dataset. Among this small subset, the most common element that intervened was the object of a transitive clause. Additional intervening elements include the polar interrogative particle *chi*, which Duncan et al. (to appear) note is reminiscent of a second-position clitic, and the modal particle *pu*, which generally appears restricted to preverbal position in Kiksht.

Though Kiksht word order is fluid (Moore 2000), there is a strong syntactic preference for ideophones to be in sentence-/clause-initial position. Perhaps even more convincing is the fact that material that occurred before the ideophone tended to be an adverb or a common transition phrase in Kiksht and not, say, a verbal argument. This is because Kiksht verbal arguments can surface preverbally both when ideophones are absent and when adverbs are present. Again, these properties are in line with Kiksht ideophones being a distinct category that, together with the supporting verb, uniquely forms a tight unit at the clausal edge.

Conclusion

The categoryhood of ideophones varies across languages as they are either classified as a subcategory of another word class or a separate word class of their own. Our argument for the categorization of Kiksht ideophones revolves around their morphosyntactic features. They often reduplicate, and they occasionally display ideophone-specific prefixes. Despite Kiksht's generally free word order, ideophones have a strong tendency towards clause-initial position, and the ideophone+verb complex serves as a tight, generally inseparable unit. Their unique affixation and syntactic distribution differentiate them from nouns, verbs, adverbs, and other particles. The way Kiksht ideophones are marked distinguishes them from other categories to which they seem superficially similar. This points to distinct categorization being a better fit rather than treating them as a subcategory of something else.

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