

The Minimal Word in Kaytetye

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Kaytetye is an Arandic language of Central Australia. This paper considers the minimal word in Kaytetye. We show that the minimal word is a target in morphological and phonological processes. We also show that the structure of the minimal word in Kaytetye involves a significant departure from general cross-linguistic patterns.

The minimal word is a bimoraic word shape that has a significant role in the morphophonology of the world's languages (Alderete & MacMillan 2015; Crowhurst 1991; Itô 1990; McCarthy & Prince 1993: 45-48; McCarthy & Prince 1995: 51; Park 1997). The minimal word is a target in at least three independent categories of processes: (i) allomorphy, (ii) reduplication, and (iii) augmentation of sub-minimal words, or exceptions to reduction processes that occur in larger words.

We exemplify these processes in three different languages. In Martuthunira, the default locative suffix is *-la*. If the noun root is a minimal word, the locative suffix is instead *-ŋka* (1) (Dench 1995: 37). In Hawaiian, the minimal word is a target for reduplication (2) (Alderete & MacMillan 2015: 8). In Latin, CV words are always realised with a long vowel, creating a bimoraic syllable (3) (Mester 1994: 23).

In Kaytetye, the shape VCV is a target in allomorphy, reduction, and reduplication processes. VCV nominal roots take the Ergative marker *-nge*, whereas longer roots take *-le* (4). VCV words do not permit vowel reduction, whereas longer words may undergo optional wordinitial and word-final vowel deletion (5). The target for verbal reduplication in Kaytetye is the final VCV of the verb root (6). The Kaytetye VCV shape may be analysed as a minimal word as it is both bimoraic and a target in processes which target the minimal word cross-linguistically.

The standard interpretation of a bimoraic minimal word would also include consonant-initial (CVCV) forms, and these should show the same patterns as VCV forms. However, in Kaytetye, CVCV roots do not pattern with VCV roots. Rather, they pattern with longer forms: (i) CVCV nominal roots take the *-le* Ergative allomorph (7); (ii) CVCV words undergo optional final vowel deletion (8); (iii) CVCV verb roots do not show CVCV reduplicants, but rather show VCV reduplicants (9).

There are two approaches to the analysis of the minimal word. The standard analysis proposes that the bimoraic minimum for the minimal word follows from a requirement that a minimal word must constitute a prosodic foot. Word minimality follows from the requirement for prosodic feet to be binary (Crowhurst 1991; McCarthy & Prince 1993). The alternative analysis proposes that word minimality and foot structure are distinct, with word minimality being motivated by independent phonological constraints. Potential constraints include: (i) word structure, such as constraints against the occurrence of monomoraic word forms; (ii) the distribution of stress, such as requirements for stressed syllables to be preceded by unstressed syllables (Garrett 1999).

Stress in Kaytetye selects the first vowel preceded by an onset (5). Kaytetye feet are trochees, and CVCV roots correspond to a binary foot (10). In VCV words, the final syllable is stressed (11). This means that VCV words contain a degenerate foot, in which a stressed syllable is preceded by an extrametrical unstressed vowel (see also Turpin & Demuth 2012).

CVCV words correspond to a bimoraic foot but do not constitute a minimal word. VCV words do not correspond to a bimoraic foot but are a minimal word. The standard analysis of word minimality cannot account this distribution of foot structure and word minimality. Rather, the structure of Kaytetye minimal words supports an analysis in which word minimality is independent of the categories of the prosodic hierarchy.

- (1) a. *ɲuu-ŋka*
face-LOC
'On the face'
b. *kaa.a-la*
hipbone-LOC
'On the hipbone'
(Dench 1995: 38)
- (2) *hiolo* → **hio-hiolo**
'Tumble down (freq.)'
(Alderete & MacMillan 2015: 8)
- (3) /da/ → [da:]
'Give (imp. sg.)'
(Mester 1994: 23)
- (4) a. *apmwe-nge*
snake-ERG
'Snake (erg.)'
b. *aleke-le*
dog-ERG
'Dog (erg.)'
- (5) a. *aleke* 'dog'
[a_{ft}('lə.kə)_{ft}~ft('lə.kə)_{ft}~
a_{ft}('lək)_{ft}]
b. *ake* 'head'
[a_{ft}('ka)_{ft}~*_{ft}('ka)_{ft}~
*_{ft}(ak)_{ft}]
- (6) *alarre-lp+arre-nke*
hit-during+**RED**-PRS.SIM
'Hit on the way'
- (7) *kayte-le*
grub-ERG
**kayte-nge*
- (8) *kayte* 'grub'
[ft('kaj.tə)_{ft}~ft('kajt)_{ft}]
- (9) *kwathe-lp+athe-nke*
drink-during+**RED**-PRS.SIM
'Drink on the way'
**kwathe-lp+kwathe-nke*
- (10) *kayte* 'grub'
[ft('kaj.tə)_{ft}]
- (11) *ake* 'head'
[a_{ft}('ka)_{ft}]

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