

Negative generic sentences in Skwxwú7mesh Salish¹

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This paper will investigate two patterns of negation in Skwxwú7mesh Salish, paying close attention to the interpretations found with each. The first pattern involves a generic interpretation, which I claim arises from a generic operator introduced by the particle *kalh*. The second pattern involves a non-generic interpretation. The first pattern will be shown to be restricted with respect to the aspectual categories with which it may co-occur. This restriction is claimed to be a result of the generic operator. The second pattern is free to co-occur with any of the aspectual categories as it lacks any generic operator. It is shown that the first pattern may not involve pluractionality, although it appears to act as such on the surface.

1 Introduction

This paper will investigate two of the patterns of negation in Skwxwú7mesh (henceforth Sq), a Coast Salish language spoken North of the Burrard Inlet. The first pattern is associated with a generic interpretation. This interpretation is not found in other patterns. This pattern is also associated with aspectual restrictions that do not apply to the other patterns. The second pattern involves a non-generic (usually active) interpretation. The two patterns will be compared in order to show that the generic interpretation is not found in all negative contexts.

1.1 The Data

For the purposes of this paper, I will examine two of the negation patterns found in Sq. The primary pattern involves indicative subject morphology (i.e., that morphology which is found in most matrix clauses) and the mysterious particle *kalh*. The secondary pattern involves subjunctive subject morphology (i.e., that morphology which is more or less found in subjunctive clauses) and the ‘irrealis’ marker.

- (1) a. haw chen kalh ts’its’ap’
 *neg indic part work*²
 ‘I don’t work’ ‘I am not working’
 b. haw k=an i ts’its’ap’
 neg ir=Isbj aux work
 ‘I didn’t work’

There are a number of puzzles that are raised by these data: i) why each of the patterns are associated with the different subject morphology, ii) why the patterns involve the ‘irrealis’

¹ I would like to thank each of my consultants EL, LB, TC and YJ for their time and their insights into their language. I would also like to thank Martina Wiltschko, Henry Davis, Rose-Marie Déchaine and the audience at the 2001 CLA at Laval for discussion of this data and analysis.

² I use the following abbreviations for morpheme glosses: 1 = first person, 2 = second person 3 = third person, aux = auxiliary, caus = causativizer, det = determiner, f = feminine, indic = indicative morphology, ir = irrealis, m = masculine, neg = negative, nom = nominalizer, pa = pluractional marker, pl = plural, poss = possessive morphology, red = reduplicant, rl = realis, sbj = subjunctive morphology, trans = transitivizer.

pluractional marker, ii) the particle *kalh* is a marker of genericity (and is perhaps the generic operator itself). I will show that the first analysis is untenable.

1.2 Some properties of *kalh*

The particle *kalh* looks like a Negative Polarity Item (NPI) as it is only found in negative constructions.

- (6) a. haw chen kalh ts'its'ap'
 neg lindic part work
 'I don't work' 'I'm not working'
- b. * chen kalh ts'its'ap'
 lindic part work

However, it does not behave like an English NPI as it may not be used in questions.

- (7) a. chewx u ts'its'ap'
 2indic Q work
 'Are you working?'
- b. * chexw u kalh ts'its'ap'
 2indic Q part work

These facts may be relevant to the analysis, but I will not discuss them further here.

This particle is quite high. It precedes auxiliaries (but follows the subject morphology).

- (8) a. haw chen kalh i na wa ts'its'ap'
 neg lindic part aux rl pa work
 'I don't work'
- b. * haw chen i kalh na wa ts'its'ap'
 neg lindic aux part rl pa work

It also precedes quantifiers (which are usually first in a clause).

- (9) a. lhik' chen wa ts'its'ap'
 always lindic pa work
 'I always work'
- b. haw chen kalh lhik' ts'its'ap'
 neg lindic part always work
 'I'm not always working'
- c. * haw chen lhik' kalh ts'its'ap'
 neg lindic always part work

This suggests that the particle may be an operator-like element, since it is higher than other operators.

1.3 Structure of the paper

The structure of this paper is as follows: §2 will discuss the first possibility of *kalh* as a pluractional marker, §3 will demonstrate that this analysis is untenable, §4 will discuss the second possibility of *kalh* as a marker of genericity, §5 will examine some of the apparent problems with this analysis and §6 will conclude the paper.

2 Pluractionality and *kalh*

The first possibility I raised for the interpretation of *kalh* was as a pluractional marker. This at first seems like a possibility as it is subject to the same restrictions as another particle (*wa*) which has been argued to be a pluractional marker (Bar-el 1998).

2.1 Pluractional markers cross-linguistically

Pluractional markers are morphemes which “attach to the verb to indicate a multiplicity of actions, whether involving multiple participants, times or locations” (Lasersohn 1995: 240). “Pluractional markers do not reflect the plurality of a verb’s arguments so much as plurality of the verb itself: the verb is understood to represent the occurrence of multiple events” (Lasersohn 1995: 241). They may be associated with many different kinds of ‘plurality’ of the verb (durativity, augmentativity, iterativity, diminutivity, etc. - Lasersohn 1995).

2.2 The pluractional marker *wa*

The clitic *wa* is often used as a continuative marker (Kuipers 1967, Bar-el 1998).

- (10) a. *chen* *xwitem*
 lindic *jump*
 ‘I jumped (once)’
 b. *chen wa* *xwitem*
 lindic pa *jump*
 ‘I am jumping’ ‘I jumped more than once’

“[*wa*] refers to a process as occupying a stretch of time, as having a duration. This duration may concern either a single act or the regular (iterated) performance of it” (Kuipers 1967: 159). Following Bar-el (1998) I assume that *wa* is a pluractional marker. Pluractionality in Sq then is either interpreted as habituality or iteration (depending on context and verb type).

2.3 *kalh* as a pluractional marker?

The restrictions that apply to the first pattern of negation (i.e., the pattern involving *kalh*) also apply to *wa*. Nominal predicates and individual-level predicates may not co-occur with *wa*.⁶

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|------|------|--------------------------------|-----------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| (11) | a. | <i>na</i> | <i>wa</i> | <i>xwitem</i> | Verb |
| | | <i>rl</i> | <i>pa</i> | <i>jump</i> | |
| | | ‘S/he jumped (more than once)’ | | | ‘S/he is jumping’ |
| | b. | <i>na</i> | <i>wa</i> | <i>kw’ay’</i> | Stage-level Adjective |
| | | <i>rl</i> | <i>pa</i> | <i>get.hungry</i> | |
| | | ‘S/he is hungry’ | | | |
| | c. * | <i>na</i> | <i>wa</i> | <i>laplait</i> | Nominal Predicate |
| | | <i>rl</i> | <i>pa</i> | <i>priest</i> | |
| | d. * | <i>na</i> | <i>wa</i> | <i>tl’aktay’kwem</i> | Individual-level Predicate |
| | | <i>rl</i> | <i>pa</i> | <i>tall</i> | |

⁶ There are some exceptions to the restriction on individual-level predicates - for example, if the time of being short is finite, for some reason. They are then interpreted as stage-level predicates (Bar-el 1998).

i) *chen=t* *wa* *etl’imay’kwem.* *chen* *mi* *tl’aktay’kwem*
 lindic=pst *pa* *short* *lindic* *come* *tall*
 ‘I was short. I became tall.’

wa has the same co-occurrence restrictions as the particle *kalh* does and is also associated with the same kinds of interpretations (habituality and progressivity). It appears on the surface that they have the same function - only in different contexts. *kalh* would then be a pluractional marker found only in negative contexts and *wa* would be found elsewhere.

3 The problems with a pluractional analysis

There are a few problems with calling *kalh* a pluractional marker. The first one involves co-occurrence. Both *kalh* and *wa* may occur in the same clause. This is not expected if they have the same function in the sentence.

- (12) a. haw kalh wa xwitem
 neg part pa jump
 ‘S/he doesn’t jump’ ‘S/he is not jumping’
 b. haw k=as wa xwitem
 neg ir=3sbj pa jump
 ‘S/he didn’t jump (more than once)’ ‘S/he’s not jumping’

Stage-level predicates *must* occur with *wa*; if they do not, they are associated with a change-of-state interpretation (Bar-el 1998).

- (13) a. chen wa kw’ay’
 lindic pa hungry
 ‘I’m hungry’
 b. chen kw’ay’
 lindic hungry
 ‘I’m getting hungry’

This is true, even when the first pattern of negation is used.

- (14) a. haw kalh wa kw’ay’
 neg part pa hungry
 ‘S/he’s not hungry’
 b. haw kalh kw’ay’
 neg part hungry
 ‘S/he doesn’t get hungry’

This is unexpected if they have the same interpretation.

The second problem involves adjacency (or lack thereof) to the verb. Lasersohn (1995) states that a pluractional marker is attached to the verb. This is obviously the case for *wa* as it is the closest auxiliary to the verbal complex (Gillon 2000), and is obviously *not* the case for *kalh*. It may be separated from the verb by other auxiliaries (such as *na*, the realis marker).

- (15) haw chen kalh na wa ts’its’ap’
 neg lindic part rl pa work
 ‘I don’t work’

The third problem involves the progressive interpretation. This interpretation should be found in the past tense as well if *kalh* is truly a pluractional marker. However, this is not the case. Instead, the particle is associated with a ‘used to’ interpretation. This is not the case for the second pattern, which is only associated with a regular past tense interpretation.

- (21) a. * John is weighing 175 pounds
 b. Luigi is drinking wine with his dinner (non-generic)
 c. Luigi drinks wine with his dinner (generic)
 (Krifka et al 1995: 12)

Here, the linguistic form (progressive) can neither be used for a stative form, nor may be used for generic interpretations. These tests will be applied to Sq in the next section.

Krifka et al (1995) suggest that generic sentences involve generic operators. An example is given in (22).

- (22) John smokes. Gen(smoke)(John) (Krifka et al 1995: 20)

In English this operator is not phonologically realized. It is possible that the generic operator may be phonological in some other language. This possibility will be explored below.

4.2 *kalh* as generic operator

We have seen that *kalh* is associated with a habitual interpretation. This interpretation possibly arises because the particle *kalh* is itself a generic operator. The generic interpretation is shown below.

- (22) haw chen kalh tehim' ta lam'
 neg *lindic* part make det.m house
 'I don't build houses'

It is also associated with a universally quantified interpretation "never". This is consistent with this pattern involving a generic operator as generic sentences often feel like universally quantified sentences.

- (23) haw kalh xaym
 neg part laugh
 'S/he never laughs'

When a past tense marker is added to the *kalh* pattern, the interpretation given is one that is a marker of genericity in English (i.e., 'used to'), as we saw above.

- (24) haw chen=t kalh wa t'ayak'
 neg *lindic=pst* part pa angry
 'I never used to get mad'

The two tests given by Krifka et al (1995) may also be applied to *kalh*. I will only look at the first test here. The second one will be discussed in the next section. The first test of genericity is the co-occurrence with adverbs like *usually* or *typically*. Here, the adverb is *lhik* 'always'. When *kalh* and *lhik* co-occur, the interpretation is similar to the interpretation of *kalh* on its own.

- (25) a. haw chen kalh lulem
 neg *lindic* part sing
 'I don't sing' ('I am not singing')
 b. haw chen kalh lhik lulem
 neg *lindic* part always sing
 'I don't always sing' 'I rarely sing'

- (30) a. * haw chen kalh i7im
 neg lindic part strong
 b. * -Gen [rest(I)]

i7im, on the other hand, does not introduce a variable, once again creating an ungrammatical structure.

The second problem for this analysis is the problem of the progressive interpretation. *kalh* is associated with both a generic and a progressive interpretation.

- (31) haw kalh ilhen
 neg part eat
 ‘S/he doesn’t eat’ ‘S/he isn’t eating’

This progressive interpretation is one which Krifka et al (1995) would not predict for a generic sentence. The progressive in English is strongly associated with a non-generic interpretation. However, I believe this is a problem of translation. Bar-el (1998) found a similar problem when examining *wa*. In English, there is no real present tense. There is only a progressive and a generic present.

- (32) a. I am singing
 b. I sing

If a speaker of Sq wants to express that something is occurring now, the only way to force that is to use the progressive.

6 Conclusions and remaining issues

The *kalh* pattern, I claim, is associated with a generic operator. *kalh* cannot be a pluractional marker, as I have shown, despite its many similarities to *wa*, the pluractional marker. It remains a question, however, whether the particle *kalh* is itself a generic operator, or only a marker of that operator, as in the ‘used to’ construction.

There are other issues which are brought up by this data: i) why the two types involve different subject morphology, ii) why only the second pattern occurs with the irrealis marker *k*, and iii) if the particle *kalh* is itself a part of the negation; i.e., does this pattern involve a two-part negation, or is *kalh* a polarity item? I leave these questions for further research.

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