

DEFINING THE WORD IN NUUCHAHNULTH*

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This paper will investigate what determines wordhood in Nuuchahnulth and will provide a set of criteria for deciding on this, as well as tools to isolate the syntactic and phonological word, so as to facilitate discussion of word-related topics, including incorporation, clisis, and various other movement phenomena.

The three main aims of this paper are: 1) to clarify word divisions when analysing syntactic structure in the language; 2) to establish the physical boundaries within which the morphology operates; and 3) to facilitate the investigation of incorporation and other related operations by providing a clear set of criteria for isolating the target, that is, the word, and comparing this to the movement domain involved in other similar processes such as fronting.

1. Introduction

The data for this paper are drawn mainly from the field notes on Tsishaath collected by Edward Sapir from 1911-1922,¹ supplemented by material on the Kyuquot dialect from Rose (1981). Nuuchahnulth is highly polysynthetic with some 500 derivational suffixes, numerous inflectional and aspectual suffixes and a number of clitics. An example is provided in (1).²

- (1) ?a.ʔa.ʔaλ.qimʔ.ht.imy.iʔ.minh.ʔaaqλ.eʔicuu
 REP- SUF- two -UNITS-on the foot[R]-move-inside-PL-INTENT-2PL.IND
 ‘You will carry two dollars on your feet’

* This research is the result of ongoing work arising from a five-year research project supported by the British Arts and Humanities Research Board (AHRB No. B/RG/AN7953/APN12323) to investigate the nature of Nuuchahnulth grammar.

1 The Sapir data (Sapir n.d., Sapir & Swadesh 1939, 1955) is especially important since the language was quite robust at that time, with mainly monolingual speakers.

2 Examples are organized in the following format: the first line represents the utterance with periods showing the morpheme breakdown, the second line provides glosses for each morpheme, and the third line gives a loose translation. Non-transparent abbreviations include: [R] reduplication-trigger, DISTR distributive reduplication, INDIR indirect, INF inferential, LOC locative base, MOM momentaneous aspect, PLdup plural reduplication, QT quotative, REF referential base, REL relative, REP repetitive reduplication, SUF suffix-triggered reduplication.

- (4) a. $\text{híi}^{\text{y}}\text{i}^{\text{h}}$ ‘be after blood’
 b. $\text{qah}^{\text{n}}\text{áa}^{\text{k}}\text{a}^{\text{ł}}$ ‘someone now died’
 c. $\text{fá}^{\text{n}}\text{anak}$ ‘have a child’
 d. $\text{wáama}^{\text{h}}\text{suu}$ ‘I was saying so’
 e. $\text{tánakmi}^{\text{i}}\text{č}^{\text{i}}\text{?a}^{\text{ł}}$ ‘turned into mosquitoes’

In (4), the stress always appears on the first or second syllable.⁴ In the cases with two heavy syllables present initially in the word as in (4a) and (4d), stress is assigned to the leftmost of the two, regardless of the presence of heavy syllables further on in the word, as in (4d). When the first syllable is light and the second is heavy, as in (4b), stress is assigned to the second. And when both of the first two syllables are light, again it is the leftmost within the word which is assigned the stress, even though there is a heavy syllable available further on beyond the first two syllables of the word, as in (4e). The rule can be described as in (5):

(5) **Stress Rule**

Stress the leftmost heavy syllable of the first two syllables; if both syllables are light, stress the leftmost one.

We can employ this analysis of primary stress assignment to assist with the determination of (phonological) word boundaries in the language. Note the sentences below:

- (6) $\text{?úu}^{\text{.}}\text{sim}^{\text{č}}\text{.a}^{\text{ł}}$ $\text{máa}^{\text{?}}\text{ak}$ $\text{?íi}^{\text{h}}\text{tuup}$ $\text{k}^{\text{°}}\text{álsic}^{\text{.}}$
 REF -train for...[L] -NOW California whale whale Kwalisits
 ‘Kwalisits was training for California whales.’
- (7) $\text{yáa}^{\text{ł}}$ $\text{hí}^{\text{ł}}\text{.?at}$ $\text{sí}^{\text{f}}\text{a}$ $\text{tú}^{\text{h}}\text{čit}^{\text{.at}}\text{.?i}$ $\text{q}^{\text{°}}\text{áa}$ $\text{?ah}^{\text{?}}\text{áa}^{\text{.}}$
 there LOC -INAL tail head -INAL -DEF thus that way
 ‘There where his tail was was his head; it was like this.’

Sequences of words in the above sentences are each marked by a primary stress, clearly isolating the phonological words within each sentence. The stress assignment rule is therefore a useful test of (phonological) wordhood.

⁴ Note that a heavy syllable consists of either a branching nucleus or a coda containing a sonorant consonant. See Stonham (1999) for a more detailed account of Tsishaath Nuuchahnulth stress and syllable structure.

2.2. Variable-length vowels

The phenomenon of variable-length vowels, first described in Sapir & Swadesh (1939), may also be used as a criterion to identify the word, as the first foot of the word constitutes an important domain for this phenomenon.⁵

Nuuchahnulth has both long and short vowels phonemically, and in addition, phonologically variable-length vowels, as shown in (8). (8a) provides examples of minimal pairs of short/long root vowels, while (8b) provides examples of three-way contrastive length within suffixes.⁶

(8) a.	yač	‘dogfish’	yaač	‘warped, bent out’
	mut	‘cut off chunk’	muut	‘boat’
	mit	‘twist yarn’	miit	‘ship’s mate’
b.	<i>Short</i>	<i>Variable-Length</i>	<i>Long</i>	
	-’as	‘on ground’	-a’š	‘daughter of ...’
	-i	‘quality of ...’	-i̇	DURATIVE
	-ʔaʔ	‘aware of ...’	-ʔa’ʔ	‘on a surface’
	-uʔ	‘place of ...’	-u’ʔ	‘on the face’
			-’aas	‘at the wrist’
			-ii	INCEP. ITER.
			-ʔaaʔ	‘to come off’
			-uuʔ	ITERATIVE

A variable-length vowel such as that in *-na’k^w* in (9), is long in the first two syllables of the word, as in (9a), but short when it is in the third or later syllable of the word as shown in (9b) & (c).⁷

(9) a.	ʔunaak	b. čapacnak	c. ʔáñanak
	REF -have...	canoe -have...	child -have
	‘possess it’	‘have a canoe’	‘have a child’

While this distinction has been primarily discussed in terms of suffixes, Swadesh (1937) has suggested that it is also a property of certain roots, although they are not as obvious on the surface. The cases in (10) demonstrate this property with reduplication, in which the position of roots is shifted rightward with respect to the beginning of the word as shown in (10b).

⁵ See Stonham (1994) for a more detailed exposition of the phenomenon.

⁶ The symbol of a raised dot with a breve above it, /̇/, represents variable length.

⁷ It should be noted that this distinction of variable-length is a purely abstract one, surface realisations of vowels being either short or long phonetically.

- (10) a. *kic.aas.ił.ma* *ýáaq yacačus hii.hin.ačas.ʔi*
 log-on surface-MOM-3S.IND long ladder SUF- LOC -at margin[RL]-DEF
 ‘A long stepladder was placed on the edge of the bank.’
- b. *ýá.ýa.ýaq.ħi.ʔi* ‘The long-limbed ones’
 PLDUP- SUF- long -at the limbs[R] -DEF

(10b) shows that the first two syllables are part of the word after reduplication, since the variable-length vowel in *ýačq* meaning ‘long’ becomes short, due to being pushed into the third syllable. A similar situation obtains in (11) where the root *yačk^w* ‘sore’ shows both long and short alternants, depending on its position.

- (11) a. *yáak.ši.ʔał.at* ‘became sore’
 sore- mom -temp -pass
- b. *yá.ya.yak.suuħ* ‘sore-eyed (DISTRIBUTIVE)’
 DISTR- SUF- sore -at eye[R]

These examples with double reduplication confirm that variable-length may be a property of the root vowel, as well as the suffix. Furthermore, it is clear that such cases are sensitive to the left word boundary. These facts combine to provide us with another test of wordhood in Nuuchahnulth, since any morpheme with a variable-length vowel will emerge as long, when in the first foot of the word and as short in later syllables. This is illustrated by the examples in (12), where a sequence of words containing morphemes with variable-length vowels (*sayač* ‘far off’, *ʔič* DEF, and *-čiič* DAYS) indicates the word domains within the sentence.

- (12) ... *sayée.ʔi* *múu.čiič* *híinisuuʔuk*
 far off -DEF four -DAYS go along sea-mammal fashion
 ‘... heading for far away, for four days he went along sea-mammal fashion.’

In (12), the variable-length vowels in the first and second words is long, indicating that the left word boundaries for each are no more than one syllable away, and that there must be two separate words rather than a single word **sayéeʔimuučiič*.

We have now shown two principal instances of phonological indicators of wordhood, (1) primary stress assignment, and (2) variable-length vowels, both of which may be employed in the determination of words in Nuuchahnulth.

reduplication-triggering suffix is in. A case like that in (14c) where reduplication is triggered by a morpheme in the preceding word is therefore ruled out.

- (14) a. nuu.k^wiiʔ.ʃiʔ.aʎ.ni nuuk ya.yaq^w.iyaq^h.ʔaaq^ʎ.qin.
 sing -make...-MOM -NOW-1p.ABS song SUF- REL-sing[R]-INTENT-1p.REL
 ‘We started practicing the song we would sing.’
- b. hupt.aa.ʔaʎ.weʔin yaq.ʔiitq ʎač.uʔaʔ.
 in hiding - NOW -3s. QT REL -3s. REL see -perceive
 ‘The one who had seen him was in hiding.’
- c. * nuu.k^wiiʔ.ʃiʔ.aʎ.ni [nu.nuuk yaq^w.iyaq^h.ʔaaq^ʎ.qin]
-

In these examples, the reduplication process, as triggered by a particular suffix, will identify the left edge of the word. Again this process is one of the many devices employed to identify word boundaries.

3.3. Word-word reduplication

Rose (1981:273) observes that in Kyuquot there is a special form of reduplication involving the entire word:

- (15) There is, however, a multi-word construction which is productive and commonly indicates iterative aspect. This is ‘word-word’ reduplication, in which a full stem is repeated.... Inflection typically occurs in the leftmost stem. Stems involved in word-word reduplication can have implicit aspect or can be marked for any aspect except -‘i’či(ʎ) INC(EPTIVE).

- (16) a. ʔu·ʃtaq ʔu·ʃtaq He kept working and working on it
 ʔuʃ-taq [L] some -work on ..
- b. ʎiʎa ʎiʎa It rained repeatedly
 ʎiʎ-(y)a' rain -CONT (Rose1981:274)

Clearly this kind of reduplication to indicate iteration (16) must be able to identify a word in the language, in order to determine what exactly to reduplicate in forming this aspectual distinction. Rose’s further observation that “Inflection typically occurs in the leftmost stem” (Rose 1981:273) suggests that word boundaries occur between the forms, attesting to the syntactic nature of the process.

This concludes the discussion of morphological criteria, including (a) vowel lengthening processes, (b) suffix-triggered reduplication, and (c) word-word reduplication, which may be employed to isolate the word.

4. Syntactic Criteria for Wordhood

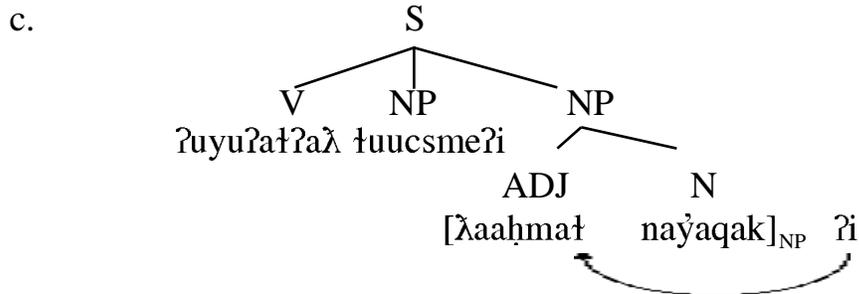
In addition to phonological and morphological criteria, Nuuchahnulth also provides syntactic properties which prove useful in establishing wordhood. Among these are (i) cliticisation, (ii) fronting, and (iii) incorporation.

4.1. Cliticisation

Cliticisation is a crucial phenomenon in the identification of the word. There are several clitics in the language, *ʔaʔ* PL, *ʔaa* ‘again, also’, *ʔaʔa* ‘always’, and the definite article, *ʔiʔ*, which only attach to the end of a word. In the case of *ʔiʔ*, it attaches to the end of the first word within the NP, except for elements within SPEC. This element, associated with the entire NP, is able to pick out the word, thereby demonstrating sensitivity to word boundaries, as shown in (17a), where *ʔiʔ* attaches to the numeral ‘four’, within the phrase ‘the four persons’.

(17)a. *haaʔiʔi.ʔiʔ.aʔ* [múu.ʔii qúuʔas]_{NP} ‘The four people started to bathe’
 start to bathe four -DEF person

b. *ʔú.yuʔaʔ.ʔaʔ* [túucsme.ʔi]_{NP} [ʔaaʔmaʔ.ʔi náʔaqaq]_{NP}
 REF -perceive -NOW woman -DEF newborn -DEF baby
 ‘The woman saw the newborn baby’



In (17b), *ʔiʔ* moves to the first member of the object noun phrase ‘newborn baby’, attaching to the preceding adjective ‘newborn’. This behaviour of *ʔiʔ* is demonstrated in the phrase structure tree in (17c), where the clitic is attached to the first member of the phrase.

4.2. Fronting

Fronting is found in certain restricted contexts in Nuuchahnulth. This process demonstrates one of the few places where a word is moved ahead of the main verb. One of the most common contexts for fronting arises with the verb *ʔukʔaa* ‘to

name’, as shown in (18) where ‘Nuuhtlim band’, the object of the sentence, is fronted to the very beginning of the sentence.

- (18) [nuuʔim.ʂtaqimʔ]_i ʔu.kʔaa.ni [t_i].
 supernatural being -...group REF -naming -1PL.ABS
 ‘Nuuhtlim band, we were called’

Rose (1981:109) provides further examples of fronting from Kyuquot. In both (19) and (20), the subjects, ‘Frog’ and ‘Raccoon’, are fronted ahead of the main verb for emphatic effect.

- (19) waʔit ciʔciʔʂʂiʂ ‘the frog started to talk’
 waʔit CVC-ciʔ -[L] -ʂiʂ -ʔiiʂ frog ITER- talk -GRAD -MOM -IND
- (20) ʂapisim maʔaqsʔint ʂuʂuʂu ‘the raccoon had a chicken in his mouth’
 ʂapisim ma ʔaqsʔ -int ʂuʂuʂu raccoon bite -at mouth -PAST chicken

(21) & (22) demonstrate that the fronted element is a full NP. In (21) the indirect object ‘the one I met’, a reduced relative clause, is fronted. In (22), the coordinated noun phrase ‘Grizzly and Bear’ is extracted from the subject position.

- (21) [yaaq^o.ʔ.q.s ʔamiip]_i ʔu.yi.nt.iis puk [t_i]
 which-do to..-REL-I meet it-give..-PAST-INDF-I book
 ‘I gave a book to the one I met’
- (22) [naanii.qs ʔuʔiiʂ cims.aqs]_i caʔix.ii.č [t_i]
 grizzly- female.. and bear- female.. berry-pick -INDF -INF
 ‘Grizzly and Bear were berry-picking’

These examples demonstrate that an entire phrase may be fronted under the appropriate conditions.

4.3. Syntactic Incorporation

Incorporation is described by Baker (1988:1) as a process ‘by which one semantically independent word comes to be “inside” another’. With a clearer definition of the notion of ‘word’ in hand, the status of the incorporated element in the process of incorporation can now be examined.

Yiu & Stonham (2000) and Yiu (2003) have demonstrated that incorporation in Nuuchahnulth involves the movement of the first element of the object phrase into the verb. Only single words may be incorporated as in (23a), although the

incorporated word may be morphologically complex, as in (23) ‘Uchucklesit-tribe’ and (24) ‘two-SONGS’.

In (23), the incorporated word ‘Uchucklesit-tribe’ is morphologically complex in that it consists of two morphemes, *h̥uuč̥uq̥λis* and *-’ath̥*, while (23b) shows a non-incorporating case involving the same word.

(23)a. *h̥uuč̥uq̥λis.ʔath̥.simč̥.ap̥.aλ̥at* ‘They had him do ritual for getting Uchucklesits’
Uchucklesit -...tribe -train for...[L] -CAUS -NOW -PASS

b. *ʔuuq̥^oaa.ʔaλ̥.quu.weʔin h̥uuč̥uq̥λis.ʔath̥* ‘The Uchucklesits would do the same’
also -NOW -CND-3S.QT Uchucklesit -...tribe

In fact, the element extracted out of the object phrase must be a word in regards to its original site. Example (24a) demonstrates the incorporation of a numeral with its classifier which can only have originated within the object of the sentence, as supported by the agreement between the classifier and its noun.⁹

(24)a. *ʔu.náak.sap̥.aλ̥.aḥ* [*ʔaλ̥.p̥íiʔ̥.ʔi* *núuk*]
REF -have..-MC-NOW-1S.IND two-SONGS-DEF song
‘I now give him the two songs.’

b. *ʔaλ̥.p̥íiʔ̥_i.nak.sap̥.at* [*t_i* *ʔastímx.ʔak*] ‘He now gives him two lullabies.’
↑
two-SONGS -have -MC-PASS lullaby -song

c. *ʔaλ̥.qím̥_i.iip* *ʔíʔiicaqyu* [*t_i* *ʔáatuš*] ‘Titichakyo got two deer.’
↑
two -UNITS-get Titichakyo deer

In (24a), placement of stress and the variable length vowel show that both ‘have’ and ‘two-SONGS’ are independent words. ‘have’ forms an independent verb with *ʔu*,¹⁰ a semantically and syntactically empty obligatory neutral base and the bound verb *-naʔk^o* ‘have’ which is the sole element contributing to the semantics.

In the incorporating case (24b), the independent word ‘two-SONGS’, demonstrated by the attachment of the definite marking clitic *ʔi* in (24a), moves inside the verb to form a larger word and yet remains syntactically active as it is chain co-indexed with its trace, by which it is therefore still part of the object phrase together with the stranded elements, showing the phrasal membership. This is further

⁹ See Yiu & Stonham (2002) for discussion of the use of classifiers in such constructions. The glosses UNITS, SONGS, DAYS, and LONG-OBJS all represent classifiers here.

¹⁰ For discussion of the status of *ʔu*, see Yiu (2003).

- (28) *suča.qimł_i.ayii.ʔat.ma λapisim [caqic.qimł ʔiš t_i taanaa]_{QP}
 ▲──┘
 five -...UNITS -give...-PASS-3S.IND raccoon twenty-UNITS and dollar
 ‘Five was given to Raccoon twenty and dollars.’

In the case of co-ordinate structures, like that in (29), extraction of either element, ‘bow’ or ‘arrow’, is impossible due to the co-ordinate structure constraint, as further supported by Rose (1981:302). Therefore (29b) is ungrammatical.¹²

- (29)a. ʔu.k^wiił.šič.čip.ał.is [muustati ʔiš čiihati.]
 REF -make...-MOM -INDIR -NOW -2s>1.IMP bow and arrow
 ‘Make me a bow and some arrows.’

- b. *muustati.ił.šič.čip.ał.is [t_i ʔiš čiihati]
 ▲──┘
 bow -make...-MOM -INDIR -NOW -2s>1.IMP and arrow

- (30) muu.čiq.ačič [t_i ʔeʔiih.s.ʔi čayāapac]
 ▲──┘
 four -LONG OBJS -go out to sea PLdup- big -in vessel-DEF canoe-PL-
 ‘Then the four big canoes put out to sea.’

In (30), the definite clitic, being a separate syntactic word, ʔiʔ does not incorporate along with the incorporated element ‘four-LONG OBJS’. It is thus left behind to attach to the first remaining available member of the object phrase for definite marking of the whole object phrase, i.e. ‘the big vessels’.

Again, incorporation contrasts directly with the process of fronting in the language, in that, unlike the case of fronting, incorporation of a free standing word into the verb, results in a single verbal complex (31b).

- (31)a. hamuut.i_i haʔuk.š.aʔt.int [t_i] ‘That bone got eaten’
 bone -DEF eat -MOM-PASS-PAST (Rose 1981:110)

- b. ha.hamut.naq.ʔi qu.quuł.ihte.ʔi
 PLdup- bone -eat...-DEF PLdup- hard -at nose -DEF
 ‘The ones who eat bones, the ones with hard-noses!’

(31a) provides a case of fronting, where the whole NP ‘the bone’ with the definite marking ʔiʔ, is moved to the front while in (35b), the word ‘bone’ is moved into the verb to form a larger verbal complex, to which ʔiʔ is later attached, to form a nominalization. The different properties of these two cases are:

¹² But see Wojdak (2003) for an alternative view of the facts.

(32)	Fronted element	Incorporated element
Cliticisation (ʔĩ):	Yes	No
Primary stress domain:	Each element stressed	Entire verbal complex
Variable vowel length:	Word-based	In combination with V
Extracted element:	Phrase	Single syntactic word
Stranding:	No	Yes
Extraction site:	Subject/Object	Object/Subject (intr)

5. Conclusion

In summary, there are a number of areas where the notion of the word is important in Nuuchahnulth grammar, itemised in the table in (33).

(33)	Phonology	Morphology	Syntax
	Variable-length vowels	Vowel lengthening [GRD]	Cliticisation
	Primary stress	Suffix-triggered reduplication	Fronting
		Word-Word reduplication	Incorporation

With the heuristics provided above it should now be possible to isolate the word on phonological, morphological, or syntactic criteria, or to employ a combination of these to arrive at a clear determination of the word in Nuuchahnulth.

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