

snippets

Issue 34 - December 2018

Special Issue on Non-local Contextual Allomorphy

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Non-local allomorphy in Passamaquoddy-Maliseet

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DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7358/snippet-2018-034-brue>

Passamaquoddy-Maliseet (Algonquian) presents a case of long-distance allomorphy. Verbs in the independent order have a prefix and a sequence of suffixes shown in Tables 1-3. The Prefix and the Central suffix both index one of the arguments, while the Periph(eral) suffix indexes the other. The Theme sign indicates which is subject/object. The Final indicates transitivity and animacy of one of the arguments (here, transitive with animate object). The suffixes relevant here are Neg(ative), “N,” and Dub(itative) and Pret(erite). N appears in several different contexts, including ditransitives and the subordinative mode (it usually has an [n], see (1)). Dub and Pret mark modal and tense categories.

In Table 1, the form of Neg is *-wi*. Neg also takes this form in 1/2 forms that are not preterite (*-ya* is Central, /w/ changing to /y/ after the /i/ of the N suffix):

- (1) (ma=te) k-tok-om-i-**w**-oni-ya
(Neg=Emph) 2-hit-TransAn-2/1-Neg-N-Pl
‘You (Pl) did not hit me.’ (subordinative form)

In contrast, in Tables 2 and 3, when the subject and object are both first and second person and the verb is preterite, Neg is null. A special allomorph of either the Dub or Pret suffix appears instead, and Dub and Pret seem to have coalesced.

What this means is that we have non-local conditioning between Neg and Pret (and Dub if present) across intervening suffixes N, Dub, and Central. Neg is only null when the subject and object are both first and second persons and Pret is present (in the dubitative preterite in Table 2, Pret seems to have coalesced with Dub, or even switched places with it, since Dub is usually marked with an *-s*). The features [1,2] are part of the conditioning environment for the special forms of Neg and Pret, so Central might be involved because it reflects these features. However, N does not bear any of the conditioning features (though it also takes a special form in the context of Neg and [1,2]). This means that Neg and Pret take their form based on a head that is separated from them by at least two intervening heads (N and Dub), at least one of which is overt (N).

This non-local conditioning means that the strongest restriction on allomorphy, restricting it to adjacent forms, is too strong. An alternative analysis that would maintain strict locality would be to claim that the suffixes are in a different order in 1/2 preterite forms. The allomorphs of Dub or Pret in Tables 2–3 look like they might include a negative morpheme initially. In some other forms, the Neg suffix before a [p] is *-h*, just like the dubitative preterite 1/2 forms in Table 2. In some other forms, the Neg suffix includes *-hq*, like the beginning of Pret in Table 3. One might analyze these 1/2 preterite forms as having Neg exceptionally follow Central. If one went this route, one could also have Dub and Pret switch positions in Table 2, so that the order in Table 2 is N-Central-Neg-Pret-Dub. In Table 3, the order would be N-Central-Neg-Pret (Dub not present). On this analysis, the two morphemes that are conditioning each other (Neg and Pret) are adjacent,

and Neg would be adjacent to Central, which bears the [1,2] features that also condition the special forms. Even this would not get rid of non-local allomorphy completely: In Table 3, Neg would be *-hq-* and Pret *-(o)pon*; in Table 2, the final /n/ of Pret *-(o)pon* would assimilate to the /s/ of Dub, but Neg would have to take the form *-h-* rather than *-hq-* based on the presence of Dub, which is not adjacent to it. The only way to avoid non-local conditioning in Table 2 is to analyze *-poss* as a single form that encodes both Pret and Dub.

Table 1: Direct forms, plural (3rd person) object

Subject	Prefix	V Stem	Final	Theme	Neg	N	Central	Dub	Pret	Periph
1	n-	tok	-om	-a	-wi			-s	-opon	-ik
2	k-	tok	-om	-a	-wi			-s	-opon	-ik
3	'-	tok	-om	-a	-wi			-s	-opon	-i(hi)
1P	n-	tok	-om	-a	-wi		-nu	-s	-opon	-ik
12	k-	tok	-om	-a	-wi		-nu	-s	-opon	-ik
2P	k-	tok	-om	-a	-wi		-wa	-s	-opon	-ik
3P	'-	tok	-om	-a	-wi		-wa	-s	-opon	-i(hi)

Table 2: 1-2 forms, dubitative preterite

Subj/Obj	Prefix	V Stem	Final	Theme	Neg	N	Central	Dub	Pret	Periph
1/2	k-	tok	-om	-olu				-hposs		
1/2P	k-	tok	-om	-ol		-p	-a	-hposs		
1P/2(P)	k-	tok	-om	-ol		-po	-nu	-hposs		
2/1	k-	tok	-om	-i				-hposs		
2P/1	k-	tok	-om	-i		-p	-a	-hposs		
2(P)/1P	k-	tok	-om	-i		-po	-nu	-hposs		

Table 3: 1-2 forms, preterite (non-dubitative)

Subj/Obj	Prefix	V Stem	Final	Theme	Neg	N	Central	Dub	Pret	Periph
1/2	k-	tok	-om	-olu					-hqopon	
1/2P	k-	tok	-om	-ol		-p	-a		-hqopon	
1P/2(P)	k-	tok	-om	-ol		-po	-nu		-hqopon	
2/1	k-	tok	-om	-i					-hqopon	
2P/1	k-	tok	-om	-i		-p	-a		-hqopon	
2(P)/1P	k-	tok	-om	-i		-po	-nu		-hqopon	

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