

Negation in Montana Salish¹

Nico Baier & Di Wdzenczny
University of Michigan

There are two negators in Montana Salish, *ta* and *tam*. This paper will be concerned with two basic questions: a) In what environments are the two negators found, and, if they can be determined, what factors condition the use of one negator over the other?, and b) Is this type of system found in other Salish languages? How did the distinction between *ta* and *tam* arise? For a), we argue that there are two main factors conditioning the choice of negator: 1) the type of predicate being negated and 2) the aspectual form of the predicate. For b), it seems that there are similar systems in Kalispel and Spokane, dialects of the same language of Montana Salish. Also, the Montana Salish negator *tam* appears to be cognate with the Tillamook negative existential *taw*, as noted by Davis (2005).

1 Introduction

There are two negators in Montana Salish (from here on MSa), *ta* and *tam*. Although it has previously been clear that these negative words are not interchangeable, their distribution has been only vaguely understood. In this paper, we attempt to address this issue. We examine the environments in which each of the negators occurs, and from these data try to determine what factors condition the choice of one negator over the other. We also examine whether parallels to this system can be found in other Salish languages, specifically those of the Interior branch. We will first deal with some preliminaries regarding the general morphosyntactic properties of the negators in section 2, before examining *ta* and *tam* in sections 3 and 4, respectively. We then analyze this distribution in section 5, before looking at the situation in the related Southern Interior dialects of Kalispel and Spokane in section 6.

2 Preliminaries

The negators are found in clause initial position before the predicate they negate. In some cases, they occur after a particle or a fronted constituent.

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- (1) a. ta qe sčmšqanmí.
 ta qeʔ s-č-míš=qín-míst
 NEG 1PL NOM-LOC:TO-none=head-INTR.REFL
 ‘We didn’t give up.’
- b. tam čn esčχsmé
 tam čn es-č-χés-m=é(?)
 NEG 1SG ASP-LOC:TO-good-ANTIP=?
 ‘I’m unlucky’
- c. že tam p esntélsmm
 že tam p es-nt=éls-mí-m
 already NEG 2PL ASP-think=feelings-DER.TR-TR.CONT
 ‘We don’t want you.’

In example 1a, the negative *ta* negates the following predicate *qe sčmšqanmí* ‘we gave up’, and in 1b, we find the negative *tam* negating the adjective-like predicate *čn esčχsmé* ‘I’m unlucky’.

It is difficult to determine whether or not the negators are predicative themselves, forming a complex clause with the following predicate, or behave more like particles. Although they occupy a sentential position that is normally reserved for predicates in MSa, they do not take inflection like other predicates in the language. Unfortunately, we do not have examples of subordinated negated clauses, which would be useful towards reaching an answer. Although it seems likely that they the negatives are non-predicative, there are a few facts that complicate the picture.

First, the negator *tam* may be separated from its negated predicate by the particle *u* ‘and,’ a common strategy for coordinating clauses in MSa. Consider example 2 below:

- (2) čʔ tam u k^w esxwúyi
 čʔ tam u k^w es-xwúy-mí
 to NEG and 2SG.INTR.SBJ ASP-go-INTR.CONT
 ‘You’re going the wrong way’

Here, the negator *tam* is separated from the negated predicate in a coordinate structure. This seems to point to the conclusion that, in this example, *tam* is in fact predicative. Perhaps also supporting this analysis is the use of *tam* in negating non-verbal predicates, such as in ex. 3:

- (3) tam x^w?i smχe
 tam x^w?i smχe
 NEG many grizzly
 ‘[There are] not many grizzlies’

Here, *tam* seems to be used as a negative existential. It is not known whether *xwʔ smʒe* ‘many grizzlies’ is acting as an argument of *tam* or as a separate predicate, perhaps like the constituent *kw esxwúyi* ‘you are going’ in ex. 2 above. Because of that example, however, we will proceed with the assumption that *xwʔ smʒe* is a predicate.

Next, we find the use of *ta* with what seem to be subordinated predicates. There is a construction in which *ta* precedes a completive verbal predicate bearing normal inflection but except for the nominalizing prefix *s-*. This parallels another form of subordination in which an otherwise normally inflected predicate is subordinated to a predicate of qualification (Kroeber 1999). Compare ex. 4 to ex. 5 (or to exx. 8a-b):

- | | | | |
|-----|----------------|---------------------------------|--------|
| (4) | qʔsip | skʷlpaχém | Čoní |
| | qʔsi-p | s-kʷl-páχ-ém | Čoní |
| | long.time-INCH | NOM-LOC:UNDER-think.about-ANTIP | Johnny |

u cʰoqʷm
u cʰóqʷ-ém
and point-ANTIP

‘Johnny thinks for a long time and then points.’

- | | | |
|-----|-----|--------------------|
| (5) | ta | swíčis |
| | ta | s-wíč-nt-és |
| | NEG | NOM-see-TR-3TR.SBJ |
- ‘He didn’t see it.’

In example 4 above, the predicate *skwʷlpaχém* ‘he thinks’ takes the prefix *s-*, showing that it is subordinate to the predicate *qʔsíp* ‘for a long time’. This seems to parallel what we see in example 5. In this construction, the negated predicate takes the prefix *s-* as well, suggesting that it is also subordinate. There are also examples of *ta* negated predicates, not completive in meaning, which have the prefix *s-* in meaning as can be seen in exx. 6a and b:

- | | | |
|--------|-----|------------------------------------|
| (6) a. | ta | qskʷupncn |
| | ta | qł-s-kʷúp-nt-sí-én |
| | NEG | IRR-NOM-push-TR-2SG.OBJ-1SG.TR.SBJ |
- ‘I won’t push you.’

- | | | |
|----|-----|--------------------|
| b. | ta | epspelímʹcn. |
| | ta | epl-s-plímʹ=cín |
| | NEG | have-NOM-lip=mouth |
- ‘He didn’t have any lips’

In 6a, *s-* follows the irrealis prefix *qł-*, while in 6b it follows the morpheme *epl-* ‘have’. It is hard to determine whether these demonstrate the same use as the

construction shown in ex. 5. It could be further evidence that predicates negated by *ta* are subordinated, or it could simply be a requirement of this construction.

Not all predicates negated by *ta* have the prefix *s-*, complicating the situation further. These predicates generally show the aspect prefix *es-*, as in example 7 below.

- (7) ta k^w esčlχp'χp'qni!
 ta k^w es-čl-χp'-χp'=qín-íst
 NEG 2SG.INTR.SBJ ASP-LOC:ON-REDUP-button.pants=head-INTR.REFL
 'You're not buttoned!'

It could be the case that the prefix *es-* blocks the use of the *s-* prefix, therefore obscuring any sign of subordination.

3 Environment of *ta*

We first examine the environments in which the negative element *ta* occurs. The first and most common of these environments is before completive verbal predicates prefixed with *s-* (see also exx. 1a and 5):

- (8) a. ta sč'stmís t Čoní
 ta s-č'és-t-mí-nt-és t Čoní
 NEG NOM-bad-STATV-DER.TR-TR-3.TR.SUBJ OBL Johnny
 'Johnny didn't get mad'
- b. ta sk^wlsthun
 ta s-k^wúl-íst-nún-nt-én
 NEG NOM-send-INTR.REFL-SUCCESS-TR-1SG.TR.SBJ
 'He refused to go' (lit. 'I didn't succeed in sending him')

The predicates negated in this type of construction take normal inflection, such as the 3rd person transitive subject suffix *-és* (ex. 7a) or the 1st person transitive subject suffix *-én* (ex. 7b).

Next, we find that *ta* is also used in negative constructions with predicates having the irrealis prefix *qł-*, producing negative future clauses or negative commands. It is the only negator found in such formations. Two examples of such constructions are below (as well as in ex. 3b, above):

- (9) a. ta qsk^wupncn!
 ta qł-s-k^wúp-nt-sí-én
 NEG IRR-NOM-push-TR-2SG.OBJ-1SG.TR.SBJ
 'I won't push you.'

- b. ta qesq^womscú!
 ta ql-es-q^wom-st-cút
 NEG IRR-ASP-mistake-TR-3.TR.SBJ
 ‘Don’t make a mistake!’

As can be seen from the examples above, the prefix *ql-* does not surface as such. In most cases, either the prefix *s-* or the prefix *es-* follows the irrealis prefix. This sequence then contracts to *qs-* or *qes-*, respectively. It is not clear what the function of these prefixes is in the formation, or what underpins their distribution. As discussed in section 2 above, the *s-* may be a sign of subordination to *ta*.

Ta also negates verbal predicates containing the morpheme *epł-* ‘have’ (see also ex. 3c):

- (10) a. ta čn epłkapí
 ta čn epł-kapí
 NEG 1SG.INTR.SBJ have-coffee
 ‘I don’t have any coffee.’

- b. ta qe epłqéne
 ta qe? epł-qéne?
 NEG 1PL have-grandmother
 ‘We don’t have a grandmother.’

Forms with *epł-* may or may not take the nominalizing prefix *s-*. If they do, the *s-* occurs after the *epł-* and the morpheme sequence contracts to *eps-*, as in 6b above. It is not known whether the *s-* in these forms is required by the presence of *ta*, or if it is already present in the nominal words which are compounded with *epł-*.

Ta is also found with some verbal predicates having the aspect prefix *es-*:

- (11) a. ta esyostén sq^weymncú.
 ta es-yo?-st-én s-q^wey-mí-n-cút
 NEG ASP-know.how-TR-1SG.TR.SBJ NOM-dance-DER.TR-TR-REFL
 I didn’t know how to dance

- b. ta esk^winc’nmá
 ta es-k^wl-n-c’an-m-ép
 NEG ASP-LOC:UNDER-LOC:IN-TIGHT-ANTIP=bottom/door
 ‘It’s unlocked/not locked.’

- c. ta esséwne Čoní
 tá es-sév=ené? Čoní
 NEG ASP-ask/perceive=ear Johnny
 ‘Johnny doesn’t mind.’ (lit. ‘Johnny doesn’t hear’)

These forms seem to go against the norm, since there aren't many in the data. In some cases, they have continuative or stative semantics, and in some cases not. This topic will be dealt with below in section 5.

Next, there is a small group of *ta* negations in which the negated predicate is found with the first person possessive prefix *in-*, instead of normal person inflection:

- (12) a. ta y'esniw'áls
 ta in-es-n-yíl'w=éls
 NEG 1SG.POSS-ASP-LOC:IN-move=feelings
 'I don't feel right about it.'
- b. ta y'esčmšqnmí(st)
 ta in-es-č-míš=qín-míst
 NEG 1SG.POSS-ASP-LOC:TO-none=head-INTR.REFL
 'I don't give up.'
- c. ta y'epłkapí
 ta in-epł-kapí
 NEG 1SG.POSS-have-coffee
 'I don't have any coffee yet.'

This group of predicates is very limited. Forms with the second person possessive prefix *an-* are not attested, although one might expect them to be. Also, this construction seems to be the only type of *ta* negatives which always have stative or generic meaning. All predicates taking this type of negation have the prefix *es-* or are based on a predicate containing *epł-*. Before both these prefixes *in-* usually becomes *y* or *y'*, though sometimes the entire sequence contracts to *is-*.²

Finally, *ta* is found in the negative expressions *tapisté* 'never', *ta stém* 'nothing', and *ta suwé* 'no one':

- (13) a. tapisté k^w escn?úłx^w
 ta-pén-s-tém' k^w es-c-n-?úłx^w
 NEG-time-NOM-what 2SG.INTR.SBJ ASP-LOC:HITHER-LOC:IN-go.in
- ye l incítx^w
 ye l in-cítx^w
 DEM at 1SG.POSS-tipi
 'You've never come into my tipi.'

² This sound change, like quite a few others observed in examples above, do not have a bearing on the phenomenon we are discussing, and therefore will not be addressed in this paper.

- b. ta stém' esiyostés
 ta s-tém' es-yoʔ-st-és
 NEG NOM-what ASP-know.how-TR-3TR.SBJ
 'He couldn't do anything right.'
- c. ta suwé qeswélk^wp
 ta suwé qł-es-wélk^w-p
 NEG who IRR-ASP-go.down-INCH
 'Don't anyone go down!'

These forms seem to be specialized negative expressions, perhaps a type of compound, instead of a predicate negated by *ta*. That is, they seem to be lexicalized.

4 Environment of *tam*

Next, we examine the environments in which the negator *tam* is found. A major function of *tam*, it seems, is to negate non-verbal predicates. First, it is found before nominal-like predicates:

- (14) a. tam ilmíx^wm łu Čulmsčí.
 tam yál=míx^w-m łu Čulmsčí
 NEG round=person-ANTIP 2NDRY Čulmsčí
 'Čulmsčí wasn't even a chief.'
- b. tam ascnq'éʔe
 tam an-s-c-n-q'éʔ
 NEG 2SG.POSS-NOM-LOC:HITHER-LOC:IN-do.business
 'That's none of your business.'
- c. tam sqélix^w
 tam s-qél=ix^w
 NEG NOM-body=person
 'He's not an Indian.'

The meaning of these negations is either existential (as in ex. 3, above), or equational. There is no special marking on the nominal predicate. It is not clear whether the negator is part of the negated predicate or predicative itself, as discussed above.

Tam is also found before adverbial-like predicates and predicates which contain a particle:

- (15) a. tam χ^wl' anwí esyapqéyni!
 tam χ^wl' anwí es-yaʔ-p=qín-mí
 NEG for 2SG.INDEP ASP-gather-INCH=head-INTR.CONT
 'This meeting's not for you!'

- b. tam t šiʔmí, tam tl' ntχwe,
 tam t šiʔmí tam tl' n-tóχ=étkw
 NEG OBL any NEG from LOC:IN-straight=water
- u tl' člq'alí
 u tl' čl-q'lí
 and from LOC:ON-lake
 'Not just any old [rocks], not from the river or lake.'

In this pattern, the predicate being negated is adverbial, as in 15a. In 15b, we see two negations, one in construction with *t šiʔmí* 'any', and one in construction with two coordinated locative constituents: *tl' ntχwé u tl' člq'alí* 'from the river or from the lake'. The meaning of these constructions is stative.

In addition to negating these non-verbal forms, *tam* is found before adjective-like predicates:

- (16) a. tam uné
 tam uné
 NEG true
 'It wasn't true.'
- b. ta, tam k^wk^wtunt
 ta tam k^w-k^wtún-t
 NEG NEG REDUP-big-STATV
 'No, they weren't big ones.'

The meaning of these constructions is also equational. The predicates that appear negated in this pattern may or may not bear the stative suffix *-t*, as in example 15b. There does not seem to have an effect on the meaning of the predicate.

The negator *tam* is also used before continuative verbal predicates. These predicates are overtly marked for continuative aspect, either in the form of the transitive continuative construction (exx. 17a, 17c, below) or in the form of an intransitive continuative (ex. 17b, below):

- (17) a. tam iesntélsmm
 tam in-es-nt=éls-mí-ém
 NEG 1SG.POSS-ASP-think=feelings-DER.TR-TR.CONT
- ci sk^wísk^ws
 ci s-k^wísk^ws
 DEM NOM-chicken
 "I don't want those chickens."

b. tam esx^wúyi
 tam es-x^wuy-mí
 NEG ASP-go-INTR.CONT
 ‘She isn’t going.’

c. t Čoní tam q^wo
 t Čoní tam q^wo
 OBL Johnny NEG 1SG.INTR.SBJ

esx ^w íc’ítms	pusts
es-x ^w íc’-l-t-ém-s	pust-s
ASP-give-REL-TR-TR.CONT-3POSS	cat-3POSS
‘Johnny isn’t giving his cat to me.’	

All predicates overtly marked for continuative aspect are negated by *tam*. Though there are verbal predicates negated by *tam* that are not overtly marked for continuative aspect, the majority of these negations are. We discuss such examples below, in sections 5.

5 Analysis

What can the environments outlined above tell us about the underlying factors conditioning the use of the two negators? We have identified two major patterns in our data. First, there is a split according to the *type of predicate* being negated. *Tam* negations are based on those that are generally not verbal, though there are examples of *tam* negations based on verbs. *Ta* negations, on the other hand, are based exclusively on verbal predicates. Second, within verbal negations, there is a split between those negations based on non-continuative predicates which employ *ta*, and those based on continuative predicates, which are negated by *tam*. This split is not perfect. Predicates that are not marked for aspect have been found negated by both *ta* and *tam*. We will discuss each of these patterns in turn.

The first major factor conditioning the choice of negator is the type of predicate being negated. As seen from the examples above, nominal- (ex. 3, 14), adverbial- (ex. 15), and adjectival-like (ex. 16) predicates are exclusively negated by *tam*. They contrast with negations using *ta*, which are exclusively verbal. Though at first sight the negative expressions *tapisté*, *ta stém* and *ta suwé* pose a contradiction to this claim, these forms become less problematic when one approaches them as lexicalized phrases. Because nominal forms cannot be substituted for *pisté*, etc., it seems clear that these elements are not predicative within the negation itself. They are separate forms.

Because of the overlap between the two negators in the realm of verbal negations, another factor is needed to determine which verbal predication will take *ta* and which *tam*. To solve this problem, we propose that the aspectual form of a verbal predicate conditions which negator is taken by that predicate. This split occurs between non-continuative and continuative predicates, though

this split is not perfect. For some predicates not marked for any type of aspect, there are examples of negations with *ta* and negations with *tam*. We will return to this point below.

There are two definite splits in aspect. First, *tam* always negates continuative verbal predicates (exx. 1c, 2 and 17). Second, *ta* is always found with completive (exx. 1a, 5 and 8) and irrealis predicates (exx. 6a and 9). Negated completive predicates occur with the prefix *s-*, and negated irrealis predicates occur with the prefix *qt-*, which may be followed by either the prefix *s-* or the prefix *es-*. Second, *tam* always negates continuative verbal predicates (exx. 1c, 2 and 17).

There are examples of predicates without aspect marking, many of which are statives or generics, and there does not seem to be any clear rule dictating which predicate will take which negator. Those stative or generic predicates containing *ept-* are negated by *ta* (exx. 10a-b). Examples like 7 and 11b may be resultatives, showing a state that has been reached, and thus this aspectual meaning may license the use of *ta*. Statives negated by *tam* (such as ex. 1b) may be lexically durative, and therefore be associated more closely with the status of other *tam* marked predicates. If this is the case, examples such as 18a-b, below, could be explained:

- (18) a. Čoní tam esnté
 Čoní tam es-nt=éls
 Johnny NEG ASP-think=feelings
- u ĺe t sk^wisk^ws
 u ĺu-ʔe t s-k^wisk^ws
 and 2NDARY-this/that OBL NOM-chicken
 ‘Johnny didn’t want any more chickens.’

- b. t Malí tam xmenčs ĺu Čoní
 t Malí tam xménč-és ĺu Čoní
 OBL Mary NEG love/like-3TR.SBJ 2NDARY Johnny
 ‘Mary doesn’t love Johnny.’

Notice that the negated predicate, *xmenčs* ‘she loves him’, in 18b does not have either *es-* or *s-*. The inherent durativity of such predicates could cause the use of *tam* in such examples.

Also interesting are predicates such as those in example 12, above. In such constructions, the negator *ta* appears before a stative or generic predicate having the first person possessive prefix *in-*. This formation seems to be limited to the first person. Additionally, there seem to be a limited number of roots or stems that can appear in it. All predicates in this construction have the prefix *es-* or contain the morpheme *ept-* ‘have’. Many of these negations have non-*in-*prefixed equivalents. Compare 19a to 19b:

- (19) a. ta y'epłkapí
 ta in-epł-kapí
 NEG 1SG.POSS-have-coffee
 'I don't have any coffee yet.'
- b. ta čn epłkapí
 ta čn epł-kapí
 NEG 1SG.INTR.SBJ have-coffee
 'I don't have any coffee.'

These two examples seem to be very similar in meaning, though there may be a slight aspectual difference in 19a. This distinction is not yet understood, and merits further investigation.

6 Negation in Southern Interior Salish & the origin of the *ta/tam* distinction

We now examine whether there are any parallels between the negation system described above for Montana Salish, and those of other Salish languages, specifically, those of the Interior branch of the Salish family. For two dialects of the same nameless language as Montana Salish, Kalispel and Spokane, there seem to be similarities. In this section, we also consider the origin on the *ta/tam* distinction.

There seem to be quite a few parallels between the negation system of Kalispel and that of Montana Salish. Kalispel employs both *ta* and *tam*. In his grammar of the language, Vogt (1940) states that *tam* is used with:

- 1) “nominal expressions”
- 2) “continuative forms of the verb”
- 3) “adjectives used as adverbs”

He also states that the *ta* is used with:

- 1) “completive tasks which take the nominalizing prefix *s-*”
- 2) “to form negative pronouns *tapistém* ‘never,’ *talčén* ‘nowhere,’ *tasuwét* ‘no one’”
- 3) “continuative forms of the verb”

Most of these uses match the uses of the Montana Salish negators, though there is a key difference in that *ta* may be used with continuative verb forms. Vogt does not discuss this point, therefore which continuative forms are used with which negator is unknown. He also notes that “the resultative has *ta*”, which may resemble uses of *ta* as noted above, and speaks of negative forms bearing a possessive prefix, which he analyzes as arising out of nominalization present in those forms (Vogt 1940).

We can only superficially speak of Spokane’s negation system, but it appears to be similar to that of MSa. Both *ta* and *tam* are present in Spokane. The use of *tam* seems to be more limited. In his 1972 grammar, Carlson states the following about *tam*:

“s- derived words also occur commonly after restricted negative word *tam* ‘be nothing’. However, after *tam*, s- words serving as adjuncts refer to entities rather than events and occur only with possessive and intransitive pronouns.”

He also states that after *ta*, most predicates have the nominalizing s-. These two facts, though not elaborated upon in Carlson’s grammar, do point to at least some similar processes in the language involving the distribution of negatives.

Two other Southern Interior Languages, Colville-Okanagan and Couer D’Alene, do not have negative systems like MSa. Both these languages use a different negative, *lut*, and neither appears to make a distinction in negative constructions according to predicate type of aspect (Doak 1997, Mattina 1973). In the Couer D’Alene, the negated predicate is subordinated, and immediately follows *lut*.

It is not clear whether *tam* is an innovation of the Southern Interior languages, or whether it could have originally been wider spread alongside the negator *ta*. A similar form, *tem*, exists alongside a form *te?* in Thompson Salish, a Northern Interior language, as noted in Thompson & Thompson 1992. Davis 2005 shows evidence that *tam* could earlier have been wider spread, perhaps contrasting with **ta*. He cites the existence of the negative existential *taw* in Tillamook, which is historically related to *tam* through the regular sound change **m* → *w*. This can be seen in the example below:

(20) *taw* *k^w=hiyəlhu*
 NEG DET=man
 ‘No man (was there)’ (Davis 2005:40)

This use of *taw* closely resembles *tam* negations such as those found in example 3, above. This use could suggest that an older form, *tam*, had a closer affinity with nominal or non-verbal predicates.

7 **Conclusion**

We have examined the distribution of the two Montana Salish negatives *ta* and *tam*, and attempted to elucidate the underlying factors which condition this distribution, of which there seem to be two. First, MSa makes a distinction between verbal and non-verbal predicates, with all non-verbal predicates being negated by *tam*. Second, there is a split within negated verbal predicates along the lines of aspectual form. *Tam* negates continuative verbal predicates, while many non-continuative forms are negated by *ta*. Although this does fill in many gaps about what was previously known about Montana

Salish's negation system, there are still areas which merit further investigation, especially the syntax of the negators; the construction found with *ta* in which a negated predicate takes the first person possessive prefix *in-*; and the use factors which underpin the distribution of the negators with predicates unmarked for aspect.

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