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Conjunctive /so?/ in Cowichan

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0. INTRODUCTION

The element /soʔ/ may function as a conjunction marker in Cowichan Halkomelem, indicating sequencing in time ("and, and then, so"). I show below that this element decomposes into the so-called /s-/ nominalizer plus the proclitic /ʔoʔ/. I also suggest that the latter has meaning in this construction, although it is difficult to say whether this is the same meaning that /ʔoʔ/ has in other constructions where it is optional.

/s-/ occurs in at least three syntactic constructions in Cowichan. It occurs in relative (i.e., attributive) clauses, where it is associated with the lexical head of the predicate and can be viewed as a lexical nominalization (cf., Hukari (1977, 1981) and Gerds (1981)). Here, the /s-/ marks oblique object nominalization. Compare (1) to (2), where the nominalized verb functions as a predicate whose subject corresponds to the oblique object of (1).

1. ?ex’eʔəmə əcəʔ ʔa toʔi sceekton1
   give-20 IS FUT P this salmon
   I will give you this salmon.
2. na-s-ʔex’eʔəmə toʔi sceekton2,3
   my S give-20 this salmon
   This salmon is what I will give you.

/s-/ also occurs in clauses introduced with the marker /kʷ-ʔ/ (possibly an article). Such clauses may be purposive, possibly temporal and conceivably may function in more clearly NP relations such as subject or object, although this is debateable (cf., Leslie, 1979). In such constructions /s-/ is a proclitic, occurring on the first word of the clause, although it frequently forms a phonetic word with the preceding /kʷ/, as reflected in the orthographical conventions used here.

3. ?əwo kʷ-s ʔapəkwom-ʔs.
   not kʷ-S smoke 3poss
   He never smokes. He doesn't smoke.

4. ?əwo kʷ-səs ʔapəkwom.
   not kʷ-S-niʔ-s smoke
   S AUX 3poss
   He hasn't smoked (yet).

Note that the form /kʷsəs/ is analysed here as consisting of four elements, including the nonproximal auxiliary /niʔ/ which is realized phonetically as an allophone of /ə/ ([I]).

The conjunctive use of /s-/ does not have the case-changing function of /s-/ in relative clauses or in nominalized predicates such as (2), nor do the clauses have any obvious NP grammatical role, in contrast to the /kʷ/ construction (assuming one can make a case for NP status in these). Semantically, the clauses involve temporal sequencing, such as one might find in coordinate conjunction. Purely syntactic considerations do not decide between coordinate conjunction and subordination. Although the fact that such constructions seemingly can stand as
independent sentences strongly suggests this is not sub-
ordination. In any case, such clauses do not function
as NP arguments (e.g., subject, object) nor are any lexi-
cal items subcategorized for them.

2. FUNCTION

The conjunctive /-s/ construction links clauses
when events occur in a temporal series, as in (5) through
(7).

5. $x'oK't \text{ceep } ?o \text{ K' } ?o? \text{ stem } ?o? \text{ loK'ton}
\text{wrap } 3\text{PLSu } P \text{ ART } ?o? \text{ some just blanket}
\text{an'?so? } \text{ yoqe't.}
2\text{POSS-}<K'o? \text{ burn}
Wrap it up with something or a blanket and burn it.

6. so? \text{ ?omot-}s \text{ t''o}ni?-?s \text{ sit } 3\text{POSS ART}
\text{ sit } 3\text{POSS}
so? \text{ ?i'mo?}s\text{om?} ni? \text{ ?o } t''ey? \text{ ni? } 3\text{-ni?}-?s.
S-'o? \text{ go walking at } P \text{ ART AUX LOC-at } 3\text{POSS}
So he got up--he sat up and then he stood up and he
started walking around this place where he was.

7. so? \text{ t'o } \text{ lejom-}s \text{ so? } \text{ nem-}s\text{-}s \text{ ?o } t''o
\text{ S-'o? } \text{ arrive } P \text{ ART house } 3\text{POSS } S-'o? \text{ go } 3\text{POSS P ART}
S-\text{-ni?}-?s \text{ t''o } \text{ eloK'-}s\text{-}s \text{ t''o'ni?'s.}
LOC AUX 3\text{POSS ART elders } 3\text{POSS ART}
When he arrived home, he went to his parent's place.

The translation of (7), with the initial clause treated as
temporal ("When") is typical of conjunction in Cowichan
(even in a more transparent case of conjunction with the
connective /?i?/). An equivalent translation would be
"he arrived home and went to his parents' place". Also,
(7) is fully grammatical without the initial /so?/, which
has a discourse function in the larger speech context, as
does the initial /so?/ in (6). This is discussed below.

Note that the third person possessive suffix /-s/
is missing in several cases above. This may be a gram-
matical lapse, although it is a very frequent one on the
part of Cowichan speakers. The element /so?/, although
it is a proclitic, functions morphologically on the next
word, which then takes subordinate subject markers (pos-
sessives or special /-t/ object markers in the passive).
This variability extends to transitives, where the sub-
ject marker /-os/ may be used in place of the seemingly
more correct possessive /-s/ and to passives, where /-m/
forms may replace the preferred /-t/ passives.

Nominal /s/-conjunction may operate at the discourse
level, where only one clause is involved in the syntactic
construction, meaning something like "and then" or "so".

8. so? \text{ oqe}K'-om-}s\text{-}s \text{ ni? } \text{ t''o } 3\text{-ni?}-?s \text{ t''o } \text{ stom?}.
S-'o? \text{ kneel } 3\text{POSS at } P \text{ ART LOC at } 3\text{POSS ART bone}
And then he knelt down in front of where the bone was.

9. so? \text{ cK}'om-}s \text{ t''ey? } \text{ swiw?'los.}
S-'o? \text{ jump } 3\text{POSS ART young-man}
Then this young man jumped.

Sentence (9), for example, introduces a new paragraph.
Given the fact that such nominalized clauses can function
as main clauses, it seems unlikely that this construction
introduces subordinate clauses, although tests such as accessibility for relative clause formation have not been pursued yet.

3. DECOMPOSITION

The proclitic /?o?/ does not precede an auxiliary verb of motion when the auxiliary verb is the first element of the clause. Since the nominal prefix is attached to the first word (nonwithstanding my orthographic convention), this is a case where /so?/ splits up into its constituents.

    morning S--?o? depart 3POSS ART-PL arrive P ART
    s--nem?--s ?o? k--i?, x--ciciuk ?o t--ey? smeent.
    S-- go 3POSS ?o? climb go high P ART mountain
    The next morning they departed for their destination and upon arriving there, they climbed and reached the highest peak of the mountain.

    gather-3 ART AUX lunch 3POSS S go 3POSS ?o?
    again ?imo?.
    walk
    He would gather up his trail food and walk again.

Note that in (11) the proclitic goes on the adverb /qo?et/ showing that, while it skips the auxiliary verb, it is not restricted to main verbs. We return to this in section (4) below. Note further that this skipping of auxiliary verbs is not a property of the lexical items per se, since when they function as main verbs they take the proclitic, as in example (7) above.

4. A SECOND CASE OF DECOMPOSITION

Additional evidence that /so?/ decomposes comes from clauses beginning with /sos/. It appears at first blush that the nominal proclitic can combine with the third person possessive suffix in conjunctives to form /so?/. In point of fact, it is consistent with the facts to consider this a reduction of //s--ni?--s//, where /ni?/ is the nonproximal auxiliary, as in the analysis of (4) above for /k--sos/. This fills a distributional gap when we compare sets of sentences such as the following.

    AUX 1SU stand 1POSS-S AUX-?o? leave
    I stood up and walked away.

    AUX stand S-AUX-3POSS ?o? leave-3SU
    He stood up and walked away.

This also applies to /suct/ with the first person plural possessive suffix: //s--ni?--ct//.

    AUX 1SU sing 1POSS-S AUX-?o? dance
    I sang and danced.

    AUX 1PLSU sing S-AUX-1PLPOSS ?o? dance
    We sang and danced.

As with auxiliary verbs, this morphological construction does not contain the proclitic /?o?/, but again it appears on the next word, supporting the conclusion that the proclitic is an independent element in the form /so?/.
Further, both the hidden auxiliary //ni'/ and an auxiliary verb of motion are skipped by /'o?/ when the two cooccur.

16. sos nem? 'o? 'apil'm. S-AUX-3POSS go 'o? lower-him-3SU
   He then lowered him.

17. sos m? l 'o? 'aatom t?3 na?nooa? s?elox... S-AUX-3POSS come 'o? call-PASS ART one elder
   Then one of the elders was called upon to come forward.

   They picked him up and walked carrying him.

The simplest explanation for the distribution of /'o?/ in this construction would be to say that it must appear on the lexical head of the predicate. However (11) above indicates that it may appear on an adverb. This suggests that auxiliaries and auxiliary verbs may be outside some structural unit which includes adverbs and main verbs—a hypothesis which bears investigation in the future.

5. SEMANTICS

In a few rare cases, the /s-/ conjunctive construction does not contain the proclitic /'o?/. In particular, it never occurs when the clause contains the word /yet/ 'then,next'. Since the temporal notion of 'then' or 'and then' seems to be associated with /s-/ plus /'o?/, the omission of the proclitic suggests that it may be signalling temporal change and can be dispensed with when /yet/ is present.

19. ots t'?o s?elox", "?oy? to? hi0 ce? pe?
   say-3POSS ART elder good rather long fut indeed
   k'?s ?istama-ct Boyama-ct yow'en?, ?i?
   k"-S keep you 1PLPOSS prepare you 1PLPOSS first CONJ
   ye? s--nem?--ct k"e?0amo." next S go 1PLPOSS let-you-go
   The elder says, "alright, but we will keep you here
   for a longer period, we will train you first before
   we let you go."

The force of this argument is, however, considerably diminished by the assumption that the /s-/ clause in the /yet/ construction is grammatically equivalent to conjunctive /s-/.

If we accept the argument above, concluding that /'o?/ involves temporal sequencing, this may be compatible with the use of /'o?/ as an optional element in (21).4

20. ?i con w0? ?ciw?w. AUX ISU now tired
   I am tired now.

21. ?i con '0? w0? ?ciw?w. AUX ISU 'o? now tired
   I am tired now. (Context: I am in training, running
   and you have asked me before if I was tired and I
   wasn't. This time I am tired.)

Here /'o?/ may index conversational events. That is, at the time of a previous speech context I was not hungry and at the time of this conversation I am.

6. CONCLUSION

Certain clauses in Cowichan Halkomelem are marked by the so-called nominal proclitic /s-/ plus /'o?/ and
signal temporal sequencing. Since these seemingly may occur as free sentences, it does not appear that this is a case of subordination, despite the possessive morphology of the subject marking system. Further these clauses do not fill the typical NP roles such as subject and object, nor are lexical items subcategorized for them. This may be a case of coordinate conjunction, although this hypothesis should be tested (e.g., by relative clause accessibility).

The element /ʔoʔ/ can be identified as a separate formative in this construction, which appears to signal temporal sequencing and, if so, it may be related to the use of /ʔoʔ/ as an optional element elsewhere.

FOOTNOTES

1The following examples come from a story told by Wilfred Sampson of Shell Beach: 5,6,7,8,9,10,11,16,17,18 and 19. The remainder have been given by Ruby Peter of Duncan, B.C.

2This clause, without its subject, then can function as a relative clause.

3See Davis and Saunders (1981) for a functional explanation of /ʔs-/ in this use in Bella Coola.

4I omit discussion of the various contexts in which /ʔoʔ/ appears, assuming that contexts not cited here are not relevant. See Leslie (1979).

REFERENCES CITED


