From the Nisgha speaker's point of view:
the evidential postclitics

Marie-Lucie Tarpent
Bilingual/Bicultural Center, S.D. 92 (Nisgha)

To be a good speaker of Nisgha is more than simply to control
the grammatical skeleton of the language. This skeleton is neces­

sary, but not sufficient: as the sole means of expression it
would result in correct but lifeless, disembodied language. The
fluent and idiomatic use of Nisgha also requires the judicious use
of optional postclitics which enable the speaker to add a personal
touch to what he says: to emphasize his role as conversational
partner, narrator or relator, and to make clear to others in what
manner his words are to be taken.

Because these postclitics are optional, and have a mostly prag­
matic function, having to do, in varying proportions, with the con­
text of the speech event as well as with the speech event itself
and the actual events it refers to, they are much more elusive for
the analyst than the obligatory structures of the grammar. Trans­
lation into Nisgha usually leaves them out altogether, while trans­
lation from Nisgha of sentences containing some of the postclitics
is often very difficult and inadequate. Nevertheless the postclit­
ics can be divided into five pairs on the basis of their meaning
and syntactic use. The chart on p. 14 summarizes the relations
between the pairs.

1. The speaker's relation to the utterance.

1.1. Conversational status of the utterance. Whether a sentence
is declarative or interrogative is not a purely formal grammatical
matter. Under normal circumstances, a question is a request for a
reply from another person. A declarative sentence may have various
pragmatic meanings depending on the context of utterance.

Two postclitics are characteristic of normal conversational ex­
change. The interrogative postclitic -a indicates the attitude:
'tell me whether it's true that...' while the interactive postclitic
-as(t) indicates 'I am talking to you and I mean what I say'.
These postclitics normally occur at the end of the sentence, and
may be followed only by a term of address.

1.1.1. The interrogative postclitic -a (-ya after vowel). A yes/no question ends in the interrogative postclitic -a. Such a ques­
tion may be in the form of an independent declarative sentence:

Siikw âäina? sick
you- a

Wayinhl andidaalâja? you find
my wallet - a

or, more politely, of a negative sentence:

Nihl siippwin? You weren't sick, by
not you-sick- a any chance?

Ni mi élâhl andidaalâja? You wouldn't have
not you find my wallet- a found my wallet?

In either/or questions, -a occurs only at the end of the first
clause:

Hlgu gathl hlgu beebiyâ. Is the baby a boy
little man little baby - a

oo lilii hlgu hanâk? or a girl?

or for in- woman

stance

1.1.2. The interactive postclitic -is(t)(-vis(t) after vowel,
-as(t) after uvular, -s(t) after glottal stop) (use of final t is
older, more formal). A declarative sentence, or a question begin­
ning with a question word, is grammatically complete without -is(t),
but the exclusive use of such sentences in conversation would mark
a speaker as extremely abrupt if not downright rude. It seems to
have a pragmatic function similar to that of English well, whè, so,
sure, the main function of which is to assert the interest of the
speaker in participating in the conversation.

This postclitic is especially typical of short, single word
answers to questions, which would sound like incomplete sentences
if not rounded out by -is(t):

Naa tgusdi? -- Maryis. Who's that?
who that-Q -is(t) -- Why, it's Mary.

Min tguni? -- Nii, hlgiigwigis. Is this you [in the
you this-Q no my sister - is(t) picture]?

Luumaanihl kofiiya? -- Luumaanis! -- No, it's my sister.
in-left coffee- a in-left - is(t)

Lumusanihl kofiiya? -- Luumaanis! Is there any coffee
in-left coffee- a in-left - is(t)

left? -- Sure!
A common exchange is this pair of comments:

Mid? -- Midis! Is that so? -- Yes it is!

This postclitic can also be used when initiating a conversation, often at the end of questions beginning with a question word:

Aghul jijabinis? What are you doing?
Aghul dim dii giigwinist? (195.15-196.1) What do you want

Such questions without the postclitic are correct and do occur, but they sound definitely more neutral, colder. A bureaucratic interview conducted in Nisg̊a’a would probably omit -is(t).

Requests and suggestions also often end in -im:

Ji Ahálsh k’udats’inis! IRREALIS you button your coat - is(t)
Sim smishlagwist! (130.8-9) [All of you] light you (pl) kindle firewood - is(t)

In one of the Boas stories, the hero, Txeemsim, the Trickster, comes to a river where people are fishing on the other side; he shouts to

Sim jaggamagahl k’eeqwilh aniwinist loof? [please] put one you (pl) put ashore one what you’ve got ashore for me!

After asking the same thing twice in this friendly tone, Txeemsim resorts to threats—without the postclitic.

It is also added to all sorts of comments and spontaneous utterances, as in

Ts’axw niinis! You’re really something!
Hlaa xdaanist, wigt Logabuulaa! You’ve won, brother

The speaker’s interest in the conversation is not always friendly:

Agu ma gan hakiyist? (118.2) Why do you call me names?

1.2. The speaker’s stake in the information conveyed. Two pairs of postclitics come under his heading. The pair -im/-ima’a conveys the speaker’s personal opinion of the reliability of his information. The pair -sin/-shit conveys the message that the utterance is not necessarily reliable. Within each pair there is again a dichotomy between personal and neutral information. Except for -sin, these postclitics are suffixed to the first contentive word or phrase of the sentence, which may be the predicate, the auxiliary or negative verb if present, or a topicalized element such as a question word.

1.2.1. The speaker claims some truth value for the utterance. Both postclitics in the pair -(i)ma’a/-a’a convey the speaker’s opinion that what he says is true. However, -(i)ma’a indicates a truth value based on inference, and therefore subject to confirmation, while -a’a indicates that the speaker is absolutely sure of the fact, usually because he has verified it himself.

1.2.1.1. The probabilitive postclitic -(i)ma’a (present-day usually -(i)ma’, -(i)ma’ after vowel; Boas usually -(i)ma’). The use of this postclitic in a declarative sentence means that the speaker thinks that what he says is probably true on the basis of what he knows or can infer, but does not want to commit himself as he could be proved wrong:

Ga’ahl wil t’uuts’kwhl laxha anuu peets’. Look how dark the sky see that black sky towards is down the valley, (conj) downriver

yuqwina’ahl haywis Gitxat’in. it’s probably raining Aux - ima’a rain Greenville

Ga’ahl maxmak’ay, see rainbow

look at the rainbow, dim anaalqhayima’a ji t’ashaklv. it will probably be FUT nice weather- IRR tomorrow -ima’a

Dim naksgwidima’a Peter t Susan. Peter is probably Dim he will marry- ima’a going to marry Susan.

Gitwinkshigwina’a dim wil jogkdiit. They will probably Canyon City - FUT where they live -ima’a
In one story, Ts'eezim, who is continually hungry, notices people fishing for halibut and thinks:

Hildima'ahl daxa dip gusdi
many-ima'a bait those
a ni dim gipt! (50.14)
(goal) I FUT eat it

Those people probably have lots of bait
that I can eat!

In another story a Grizzly bear woman is living in a village with her human husband; one day in the spring she says:

Hlaa mukwdima'ahl hli wil wiliY!(206.6-7)
The berries are now it's ripe- the where I am probably ripe now-ima'a where I come from~

As this postclitic does not commit the speaker, it is especially useful in situations requiring diplomatic restraint. In another story, a chief's son has been abandoned years before; one day the father decides to send for him, but the son refuses to have anything to do with the family that abandoned him and instructs the messenger to say he is dead. When the chief asks for news of his son, the messenger can reply without disloyalty to either father or son:

Hlaa ankwel daxa anstma'a.(182.8)
He's been dead a long now long since he died -ima'a time, probably.

It is polite to use this postclitic when asking a question, since in doing so the speaker is only talking about himself and does not imply that he requires an answer; Nisg̱a'a people usually use 'I wonder' as the English equivalent of -ima'a in a question:

Naayima'ahl dip gusdi?
who - ima'a those-Q

The addressee may be wondering the same thing, and reply

Naayima'ahl.
who - ima'a

For the same reason, -ima'a is used in polite requests:

Aanima'ahl dim jagnamawga'iq loosimaa?
FUT I ride across with you

Would it be all right if I got a ride across -ima'a with you?

1.2.1.2. The assertive postclitic -a'a. The postclitic -a'a on the other hand indicates that the speaker can vouch for the truth of the utterance, even against his own or others' expectations. For instance, you may think that you locked your car, but in fact:

K'aamo'ahl plo'on!
ajar- a'a your door

Your door is unlocked! (I bet you didn't know)

It does not usually snow in May, but I just looked out the window:

Yugna'ahl maadim!
AUX - a'a snowfall

It's actually snowing! (believe it or not)

The voice on the phone sounds familiar, but turns out to belong to someone else:

Hañigoodi'ahl Oscarhl heheet, my thought speaking

I thought it was Oscar speaking, but -a'a

Some people may be afraid of an eclipse (h'ohl hloks, 'the sun dies') but:

Niyi'ahl dim k'ap h'ohl hloks
no - (p) a For die sun

FUT sure I can assure you that the sun is not really going to die

In one story from Boas, a toddler (who is actually Ts'eezim, the Trickster) cannot make himself understood; he obviously wants something, but no one can tell what he is whimpering about; finally someone makes the right guess:

"Aan'ahl" anheeten! (22.3)
"Light", that's what light- a'a what he means- sa
(old word) PROXIMAL

Light, he obviously means!

This postclitic may be combined with the interactive postclitic -is(t) (1.1.2), as in the following examples: Baby Ts'eezim is given the ball of light to play with and finally runs away with it as he intended to do all along; but others ignorant of his true identity are surprised:

Kaidbeyin Ts'eezimhl aaxa'ast! (23.3)
Would you believe that ran out with light- a'a - is(t) Ts'eezim actually ran out with the light!
After many adventures, Teemsim, now grown, arrives at the oolichan chief's house and declares that he has caught oolichans, even though oolichan season is six months away; no one believes him, but some curious youths go investigate and report:

Simuda'ast! (29.13)
he's really telling the truth!

1.2.1.3. Like -a and -(i)ma'a (1.1.), -(i)ma'a and -a' can be contrasted in conversational exchange:

Nidina'a:
that's - ima'a

Nida'a:
It is so too!

1.2.2. The speaker does not claim any truth value for the utterance. The pair -sin/sin is probably less of a true pair than the other pairs of postclitics. Syntactically, -sin does not have the same distribution as the other postclitics in this section. Yet -sin and -sin do have common and opposite features, which qualify them for pair status. By using -sin or -sin the speaker disclaims responsibility for the truth of the utterance: with -sin, because he is only reporting information originating with others; with -sin, because what he is saying is not really meant to be heard.

1.2.2.1. The reportive postclitic -sin (it drops before the connectives -hi and -a). The use of -sin means that the information relayed by the speaker originates with others and that the speaker has no idea of its truth value. Naturally this postclitic is very useful for gossip as well as for legitimate news:

Slipkw-gat t Mary.
I hear Mary is sick.

Dim bingodii-gat ji t'anyůًin.
FUT bingo 
IRR tonight

Ta'axv-gahil sim Peter
considerable drunk

Dim naksgwit-gat Peter t Lilian.
FUT he marries

Using -sin in questions means that the speaker is only asking about a report, not about the truth of an event, and the listener need not feel bad if he does not know the answer; on the other hand, the reply may also include -gat:

Agu diya-gat t Mary?
what says

- What's Mary supposed to have said?

Ji gaspu-gahi dim go'o'ah?
IRR when 
FUT we get paid

- When did they say we'd get paid?

Ganuukw tgun-gat.
we this

- They said this week.

Orders and instructions emanating from legitimate authority, which are not supposed to be questioned, are reported using this postclitic. In the Boas stories, a common situation is that of moving a village to another site; the chief who makes the decision never announces it himself, but send a slave to make the announcement; as the slave merely reports the official pronouncement, he always uses -gat, as in:

Ji lukw-gat ásíh ji t'aahlakw (37.9-10)
You are supposed to
IRR move you (pl) tomorrow
IRR move tomorrow

A slave using -gat is naturally understood to be speaking for his master; he can sometimes turn this fact to his advantage, as in this other Teemsim story: at a feast, Teemsim behaves with perfect propriety in asking his slave to mention to the chief his love of a certain food; the slave says instead:

Nii-gat-gidii'wixixihl sim'ooqit tgunhl
I am told this chief not (intensives) chief this
always eat

anwínin
what you've got

what you've got

Teemsim is humiliated and the slave gets to eat the food instead of him, but does not get away with it for long.

1.2.2. The rhetorical postclitic -sin. The syntactic distribution of -sin is not quite clear at this point. As far as meaning goes, -sin is added to an utterance, usually a question, which from the point of view of information need not be said at all, either because it is unanswerable, as in asking of a dead person:
or because the speaker or hearer knows the answer only too well. Thus what is conveyed by the use of -sin is not really information but a sense that the speaker is merely reliving his feelings and that what he says should not be taken seriously: 'Don't pay attention to me, I am just talking to myself'. For instance, your son is constantly getting into scrapes. You no longer need to ask: "Agu ñaan daawihlt-sin? What reason he leaves"

For instance, your son is constantly getting into scrapes. You no longer need to ask: "Agu ñaan daawihlt-sin? What reason he leaves?"

You think you have made a foolish remark, and you reflect aloud: "Agu niya ʔiiʔ-sin? What did I say!" (I should have known better)

Since -sin allows the speaker to pretend that he did not mean to be heard, it is well suited to teasing or insulting someone, as in: "Agu ñaanheen-sin? What do you mean?" (Don’t tell me, I know)

In the Boas stories, Txeemsim is frequently (and deservedly) the butt of jokes and insults using -sin; others pretend they have not heard or understood him, talking about him in the third person: "Agu hilt-sin? Hlaa bunw ñiih ĵii ñ Txeemsim! What did he say? That’s big Txeemsim all over again!”

In the Boas stories, Txeemsim is frequently (and deservedly) the butt of jokes and insults using -sin; others pretend they have not heard or understood him, talking about him in the third person: "Agu hilt-sin? Hlaa bunw ñiih ĵii ñ Txeemsim! What did he say? That’s big Txeemsim all over again!”

In one point, Txeemsim finds himself in a house where he is first entertained, then tricked and beaten by invisible beings; he hears women’s voices laughing at him; they guess his thoughts and distort their meaning, adding: "... diya-sinhli goots WiGat.(61.13-14) ... that’s what Giant says hear big man thinks to himself!

The postclitic -sin can be followed by the interrogative postclitic -sa, as in the following examples. In the story of Sgaą, mentioned in Boas (Sqawo, 1902: 222, Sgaą’s grandmother is trying to find her a suitable husband; one suitor after another answers her call and says: "Nihl ʔiiʔ ĵimt an nakskwhl hguuhlkwhl hit-sins? Will I be the one to marry the daughter of the one who speaks?

Here the use of -sin conveys the humble attitude of the speaker, who is ready to take back the suggestion if it is not appropriate.

2. The speaker’s relation to the event.
2.1. Spatio-temporal correlates. The two postclitics -sa and -zi refer to the speaker’s physical distance (in time or space) to what he is talking about. These postclitics are usually attached to the last NP in the clause, and refer to the whole of it. If there is no overt NP (e.g. if the object of a transitive verb is left unmentioned), they are attached to the predicate. In at least one case the distal postclitic -zi has become part of a noun-phrase: "Sim’oogit lasa-gi chief (in) sky

2.1.1. The proximal postclitic -sa. This postclitic indicates that the utterance refers to a situation in which the topic of conversation is physically close to the speaker (and usually the addressee as well): "Aguhli kst-sin? What name this? (Q) hold in my hand)

Jaa ndahil ĵimt wil diwikiwhl IRR: where PUT where get from (Q) liar going to get

4it gwiixgalangohli heet-sinhli anheet? the stuff he’s talking about? (16.6-7)

At one point, Txeemsim finds himself in a house where he is first entertained, then tricked and beaten by invisible beings; he hears women’s voices laughing at him: they guess his thoughts and distort their meaning, adding: "... diya-sinhli goots WiGat.(61.13-14) ... that’s what Giant says hear big man thinks to himself!”

The postclitic -sin can be followed by the interrogative postclitic -sa, as in the following examples. In the story of Sgaą, mentioned in Boas (Sqawo, 1902: 222, Sgaą’s grandmother is trying to find her a suitable husband; one suitor after another answers her call and says:

Nihl ʔiiʔ ĵimt an nakskwhl hguuhlkwhl hit-sins? Will I be the one to marry the daughter of the one who speaks?

Here the use of -sin conveys the humble attitude of the speaker, who is ready to take back the suggestion if it is not appropriate.

2. The speaker’s relation to the event.
2.1. Spatio-temporal correlates. The two postclitics -sa and -zi refer to the speaker’s physical distance (in time or space) to what he is talking about. These postclitics are usually attached to the last NP in the clause, and refer to the whole of it. If there is no overt NP (e.g. if the object of a transitive verb is left unmentioned), they are attached to the predicate. In at least one case the distal postclitic -zi has become part of a noun-phrase: Sim’oogit lasa-gi chief (in) sky

2.1.1. The proximal postclitic -sa. This postclitic indicates that the utterance refers to a situation in which the topic of conversation is physically close to the speaker (and usually the addressee as well): "Aguhli kst-sin? What name this? (Q) hold in my hand)

Jaa ndahil ĵimt wil diwikiwhl IRR: where PUT where get from (Q) liar going to get

4it gwiixgalangohli heet-sinhli anheet? the stuff he’s talking about? (16.6-7)
Lip jabiy-sa. I make it
Hlaa sim gankhi lagha-sa. This weather is quite warm
now quite warm weather
Ga'ahl anheehl gaak ahl geew-sa! (151.13-14) Go see what this
talks about on our beach!
see what the raven at water's edge is cawing about

2.1.2. The distal postclitic -gi. The postclitic -gi indicates that
the topic of conversation is remote from the speaker in place or time
or both:
Lip jabiy-gi. I had made it myself
self I make it (I don't have it anymore).

Bi'ii sim'oogit t nigwoodiy-gi
big chief my father
[either] My father, who
lives far away, is a
great chief [or] My
father, who is dead,
was a great chief.

In the story of the abandoned son (1.2.1.1.), the father sends
people to look for him, saying:
Ado'o, sim ga'ahl hluwegiwiy-gi
Go see my child
(PI)
Go see my son (who is far away and may be dead)

This postclitic is used liberally in tales, which refer to the past.
This is a typical story beginning from the Boas tales:
K'yoolhl hlu tk'ihlgwiy-gi,
There was a little boy
one little child
Ts'akhl wat-gi, ganhl hlu nits'itis't, named Ts'ak, and his
his name and little his grandmother
grandmother,
Ahhl k'ii htkhwlg hlu wilpdiiit-gi,
and they had a little
that and stand little their house
house ... (117.1-2)

2.1.3. Although -gi indicates the past, -sa is often used for
a more vivid effect in stories, once the past background is established.
This use is rare in Boas, who recorded by the slow dictation method,
but very frequent in more spontaneous texts.

2.2. The speaker's control over an undesirable event. The pair of
predicate-final postclitics -git and -gux indicates the control, or
lack thereof, of the speaker over an event he wishes to prevent.
With -git, the event is prevented, with -gux, the speaker bemoans an
unavoidable fate. It may seem strange to classify -git under the
heading 'speaker associates self with event', since the event does
not happen, and -gux under the opposite heading, since the event
does happen. The justification is that with -git the speaker states
that he has the power to let the event happen or not; with -gux the
speaker is the passive plaything of uncontrollable forces against
his wishes and efforts.

2.2.1. The potentiue postclitic -git. An independent declarative
sentence without the future particle dim normally means that an
evend occurred. Use of the postclitic -git after the predicate means
that the speaker is or was confident of being able to prevent this
event from happening.

The speaker may have exercised self-control to prevent nature
from taking her usual course:
Sipkya-giy 4iiy.
sick I
I didn't let myself
be sick. I made sure
I did not get sick.

This postclitic is appropriate to the expression of threats: the
declarative form of the sentence suggests that the event would have
happened already were it not for the speaker's self-control, which
of course might be relaxed any time. For instance, the story of
the Grizzly bear wife (1.2.1.1) ends with the bear getting angry with
humans and deciding to go back to her home; her husband entreats her
to stay, but she says in anger:
Ado'o, yaltgwiy-giy 4iiy.
(210.1) Away, go back, I
I could very well
kill you

Another grizzly bear gets angry at Ts'ak (2.1.2) and gets him to
provoke him to carry out his threat:
Nimts'awgwy-giy 4iiy, "way, gah!
I could snuff you in
nu ya
Just say 'go ahead!'
(118.5)
Ts'ak gets snuffed into the bear, but manages to kill him. When he
tells his grandmother, she refuses to believe him:
Bikw'in, xha'a, huxw sidoogan-gi yâhjik'! You're lying, slave, your lie, slave again you fool-gi (119.6-7) you think you can fool me again! (but I won't let you)

This postclitic is used most often when the speaker is involved in the sentence as subject, agent or object, but other uses are possible too. In one story a man goes up to heaven to rescue his little son who has been kidnapped by the stars. The child cries and the father says:

Gilo! Gilo! Naγhâyit-giř shi'sim wilp: Stop! Stop! We don't hear in the house don't want them to hear in the house! (and we can make sure they don't)

2.2.2. The impotentive postclitic -gwa. Finally, the postclitic -gwa, which seems to be used mostly in songs and some traditional formulae, means that the speaker is lamenting an event which he was unable to prevent. A person beset by misfortune can bemoan his fate and disclaim responsibility by saying:

Aywaasliy-gwa: Alas! there was nothing I could do!

and similarly others may commiserate and absolve him from blame:

Aywaasliy-gwa: Alas! there was nothing he could do!

In one of the Txeemsim stories, Txeemsim kills a deer and pretends to be possessed by the spirit of sleep and are awakened by a chief. The line repeated in the song is

Aywoohl wil-gwa: Alas, that uncontrolled sleep
Aywoohl wil-gwa: Alas! my act
Aywoohl wil-gwa: Alas! my act
Aywoohl wil-gwa: There was nothing he could do!

Boas (1895:56) quotes a ceremonial song sung by people who have been possessed by the spirit of sleep and are awakened by a chief. The line repeated in the song is

Aywoohl wok-gwa: Alas, that uncontroll-
alas sleep
Aywoohl wok-gwa: my brother-in-law
Aywoohl wok-gwa: Alas! my poor brother-
alas my act
Aywoohl wok-gwa: Alas! my act
Boas is probably a rendering of the Coast Tsimshian equivalent for aywaas. The sleepers are lamenting not their interrupted sleep, but the fact that they were put to sleep by a force beyond their control.
Notes

1. The Nisg̱a̱ga language, a member of the Tsimshianic family, is spoken in the Nass Valley of British Columbia. Most of the data presented here were gathered during the course of my employment with B.C. School District 92 (Nisg̱a̱ga). Among the many Nisg̱a̱ga speakers who helped me learn their language, I especially wish to thank Mrs. Rosie Robinson and Mrs. Verna Williams, who were among my first teachers of Nisg̱a̱ga, and who, as members of my Nisg̱a̱ga Linguistics class in 1983-84, helped me clarify and confirm the use and meaning of the more elusive postclitics. The term itself was suggested to me by Thorn Hess, who read an earlier version of this paper. The interpretations presented here are my own, and I alone am responsible for any errors.

2. For instance, several examples of each postclitic occur in the Boas stories, but Boas' grammar mentions only -sa and -is(e), the latter incorrectly described and glossed (see note 5).

3. I have tried to give each postclitic a suitable label and have had to make up some words. There may be better labels already in use but unknown to me.

4. Examples are given in the modern (Rigsby-designed) Nisg̱a̱ga alphabet, with approximate word-for-word translation underneath. Space considerations prevented a fuller analysis in this paper.

5. In Boas (1911:349) this is considered a 'demonstrative suffix' indicating 'presence and nearness'. It is definitely not demonstrative. 'Presence and nearness' is not too far from the truth if it is taken to refer to the interlocutor rather than anything talked about.

6. Quotes are from Boas 1902, referred to by page and line number. They have been (with the help of native speakers) transcribed into the modern alphabet, corrected and retranslated, as the texts contain numerous errors.

7. a. Here -is(e) is suffixed to the last stressed contentive of the sentence. Present-day speakers would put it right at the end.

b. Boas' transcription indicates a pronunciation jaggamogahl... which is probably an attempt to reproduce a Coast Tsimshian pronunciation. Mythical characters in Boas' stories often speak—or rather, attempt to speak—the Coast Tsimshian language.

8. These two are probably morphologically related. The n of -ima'a could be the same n which appears in some compound suffixes and seems to add the meaning 'for a more or less predictable duration'. The postclitic would then mean 'true (-a'a) for the time being', until confirmed or disproved.

9. Rigsby 1975 uses the term sentence deictics for this pair. I find the word sentence here too restrictive as the domain of these postclitics does not extend beyond the clause and sometimes even the noun-phrase.

10. In one of the Nisg̱a̱ga songs collected and published by Marius Barbeau, one instance of misinterpretation occurs when vali'-gil' ā'ì is translated 'I strike thee' (yatsidî ā'ì), ignoring -gil', instead of 'I could strike thee—but I choose not to'. (p. 133)

11. In the 1895 report this is misleadingly rendered as 'Oh, how sleepy we are', which implies a desire to sleep in peace. In fact the sleepers have no wish to sleep but have been put to sleep in spite of themselves.

References


______________________________


______________________________
