Future in Colville-Okanagan Salish

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I. Introduction. Many languages of the world express future time with more than one grammatical device. Moreover, future markers (henceforth 'grams') tend to have functions that extend beyond the expression of future time (Bybee et al. 1994). In Colville-Okanagan Salish, where tense is not an inflectional category, future meaning is expressed with 1) temporal particles and 2) a modal prefix. The particles are temporal conjunctions similar to English conjunctions 'when', 'once', and 'then'. The modal prefix marks several modalities which I describe below. What unites these diverse forms is their occurrence in simple predictions made by the speaker, i.e. the canonical use of future cross-linguistically. The diversity of form is not unexpected; futures frequently develop historically through pragmatic inferences rather than through formal oppositions. Similarly, the diversity of function shown by Colville-Okanagan future grams is in keeping with the finding that old, middle-aged, and new uses of a gram may coexist in a language as long as each function is sufficiently specialized (Bybee et al. 1994:243).

The goal of this paper is to sketch the semantics and form of Colville-Okanagan futures to reveal the complexity of the situation. First I describe the temporal particles used as future grams and then the modalities of the inflectional future prefix. Finally, I consider the value of the term 'irrealis' in describing Colville-Okanagan future grams.

2. Particle future. Ok uses three preverbal particles to mark canonical future clauses: n' in'w'íʔ, mít, and mi. These particles function primarily to sequence non-past or non-perfective events. They appear to be temporal conjunctions with a future nuance that is made stronger by the addition of the epistemic particles cəm's' probably, maybe, might' or uc 'possibly'. n' in'w'íʔ and mít typically introduce main clauses but mi is limited to subordinate clauses. n' in'w'íʔ is the most common future particle in the speech of Colville elder Pete Seymour from whom examples (1-8) come.1

(1) axª? iʔ t i-ixk' k'ul am n'in'w'íʔ c k'ul'am-s
die art_prep lsPoss-workman fut asp-fix(tr)-3sSub
My working man will care for them. GW201

(2) n'in'w'íʔ put ank' apspink k'u fka?íp
fut exact one year 1pSub_come_back
It will be exactly one year that we come back. GW7

(3) way' n'in'w'íʔ ix? kn kalsqili"x"
mod fut dei lsSub_invite_people
I will invite people
ix? mi k'ú c-mrim
dei fut 1pSub_marry
then we will get married. GW122

(4) way' n'in'w'íʔ kn mypwfšan,
pt fut lsSub_learn
I will learn,
t_swit k'ú m'ya?í-s
prep someone lsObj_reach(tr)-3sSub
anybody shows me,

1Most of the data in this paper come from texts collected, translated and published by Anthony Mattina and two generations of Colville-Okanagan speakers. The data is identified by an abbreviated source name and page or line number. The abbreviations are: GW = The Golden Woman; COD = Colville-Okanagan Dictionary; EC = Enow'kin Centre's axªʔ iʔ k'ú suknaqinx iʔ acq'acq'by'at ta_nqilx"can (see References for full bibliographic entries). Data not from these sources is from Sarah Peterson, Okanagan elder and teacher.

2Abbreviations for the glosses are as follows: fut = future; tr = transitive; Sub = subject; Obj = object; Gen = genitive subject; prep = preposition; art = assertive mode; diec = deictic; asp = aspect; art = article; Poss = possessive person; neg = negative particle; Imp = imperative; ques = question marker; s = singular; p = plural.
While in the preceding examples n’in’w’i7 translates as an intentional future, its temporal (rather than modal) function is evident in other examples.

(5) ut n’in’w’i7? ix7 k"u wi2sk‘”ul’ant-x” and fut deic 1sObj_finish_fix(tr)-2sSub
And when you finish taking care of me,
  lut k"u a-ks-nk‘”ix”kn‘am
  neg 1sObj_2sSub-fut-remove_saddle(tr)
don’t take the saddle off me. GW:64

(6) n’in’w’i7? wi?sm’ay?ncit-ax
when finish_telling_about_self-3p
When they’re done telling about themselves,

ix7 məł k* u_e-mrim.
dei fut 1pSub asp-marry.
then we will get married. GW:403

The particle n’in’w’i7 also occurs in conditional clauses, usually in combination with epistemic particles cam‘, ‘and even (if)’, or cak‘ “contrary-to-fact”. The data in (7) suggest that n’in’w’i7 may have an epistemic interpretation along with its temporal one but it is a rare example of its kind in the corpus.

(7) n’in’w’i7? k* _nx7
if 2sSub _be_scared
If you get scared

*A description of the epistemic particles in Okanagan is, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this paper. However, some of them lend themselves to future interpretations through inference. For example cam‘ is often translated with English will, but most contexts suggest that epistemic might is more accurate.

(i) cam‘ way’ k* xaq7
might 2sSub_get_out
You will get out. GC:129

(ii) cam‘ kn c-naq“aq”
might 1sSub_2sbe_robbed
(They) might steal from me. [lit. ‘I might get stolen from’] GW:951

Okanagan elder Martin Louie uses the particle məł to sequence non-past events.

(8) ix7 ut k* _cu-s,
and then 1sObj_say(tr)-3sSub
And he told me,

“cam’ x”u y 4 a-(k)c-x”alas”6lt
maybe go that 2sSub-fut-be_alive
“In the future if you are still alive.

məł wi2ant-x”
fut see(tr)-2sSub
you will see
i7 _ta? _nwist i7 sqilx” kə?
art_prep.sky art people who
people travelling in the sky.

ta _nwist məł x”uy i7 sqilx”
prep.sky fut go art people
The people (will) travel in the air.

atl7 k* _x”uy _məł k‘al_p’ul’om i7
dei 2sSub_go_fut prep_end art earth
you (will) go from here to the end of the earth, (and)

məł k* _ntiʔk’lnəm.
 fut 2sSub_lunch.
2sSub_finiish_eating 2sSub_ride_back
you (will) have lunch. You get done eating, you can ride back

This may be a dialectal difference. I found little use of n’in’w’i7 in the texts prepared by the En’owkin Centre from Martin Louie, Sandy Lezard, Edna Jack, and Tommy Gregoire. More common was məł.

This is a rare example of the modal məł following the verb in Colville-Okanagan. The cognate forms in Thompson, Shuswap, and Lillooet are enclitic.
and then the people already knew about them. & 6

(11) atla? i?_la'aka*i'kap maj k"úst-salx i?_ttw'it...
dec art elders fut send(tr)-3pSub art boy
From there the elders would send a boy...
t'i camkxán i?_ttw'it maj ntrunspcut
pt by_foot art boy fut run
The boy'd go on foot
k'a_niš'ítik λ?'am t_sman's" prep_north get
prep_tobacco
and he runs north to get some tobacco. & 123

The particle mi occurs in environments similar to maj, also with a non-past sequencing function.

(12) n'im'w'i? ckicas-tak
fut bring back(tr)-2sSub art birds
When you bring back the birds,
mi i'ak"t-w" y?mx'am
fut take(tr)-2sSub art king
take them to the king. & 95

(13) way' k"_way'
already 2sSub_finish
When you quit
mi t_k"ok's?i' kn_t-k"ul'am t_kyátxw" 
fut prep_different 1sSub_make_again
prep_sun
I'll make a different sun. & 143

mi also occurs in the apodosis or consequent clause.

(14) ax? n'im'w'i? i?_t_ska?mašq'at
dec fut art prep_along_sky
If right next to the sky
Matina 1980). I describe below the several types of agent-oriented and subordinate modality that are expressed with the verbal prefix k- in 3.1-3.4.

3.1 Agent-oriented modalities. Agent-oriented modality denotes conditions of 1) desire or intent, 2) obligation, or 3) ability that obtain over the agent of a proposition. This modality differs from simple future in not functioning primarily to mark a speaker's prediction. It is common, however, for grams that mark agent-oriented functions to develop into future markers. This appears to be the case in Colville-Okanagan where the agent-oriented uses of k- co-exist with the future use. Examples (16)-(18) show main clauses with intentional future interpretations marked by the prefix k-.

(16) cəst-əlx: way' ut "ałʔ/pw kʷ_yml̓məhšam say-3pSub father 2sSub chief
They said: "Father, you are the chief,
ul ʔəx̌ m'7əx̌ʔ��-tat and fut-tell(tr)-2sObj-1pSub art thinking-1pPoss and we are going to tell you what we are thinking. GW4

(17) way' náʔəml kʷ_i-ʔəx̌-q̓əl̓t̓l̓ t̓am.
"say-tr-4pSub tack(tr)
but 2sObj _1stGen-fut-speak(tr)
but (first) I want to talk to you. GW636

(18) t̓ɪx̌ náʔəml t̓_ʔn̓wíʔ ɬ̓ kʷ_ł̓nt-x̌
"art but prep you fetch(tr)-2sSub
But you go after it,
lut kʷ_ t̓._i-ʔəx̌-ł̓t̓ ɬ̓ t̓am neg 2sObj _art_1stGen-fut-give(tr)
I'm not going to hand it to you. GW289

A second subtype of agent-oriented modality encodes the obligation or necessity of an agent's action. This modality falls short of imperative mode and is best translated with English 'ought to have to' constructions.

(19) ut i̊fíʔ i̊-kʷ_ł̓aʔəx̌tim
and deic 1stGen-fut-fetch(tr)
And then I'm supposed to go after them. GW711

Predicates inflected with k- may be transitive or intransitive; person-marking is from the intransitive, transitive, or genitive (i.e. nominalized) verbal paradigms k- is k- before s.

In elicitation, a perfective predicate with no accompanying temporal particles has a past time interpretation.

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In Colville-Okanagan, epistemic modality is marked by preverbal particles and speaker oriented modality is expressed chiefly through imperative suffixes (see A.

The temporal particles n'w'əʔ, məf, and ml link tenseless clauses to order events with respect to one another. Because Colville-Okanagan has an inflectional system of aspect that marks sentential aspect on the verb, the temporal linkage provided by particles may be best understood as narrative or discourse aspect. The functional niche of n'w'əʔ, məf, and ml, therefore, is above the level of the VP, and may be above the level of the sentence.

1. Inflectional future. The inflectional future in Colville-Okanagan expresses a range of modalities in addition to canonical future meaning. The form of this future gram is k-, which is prefixed to a verb stem. The modalities it expresses are included in Joan Bybee's typology of modality, summarized as follows:

1. epistemic expresses the degree of commitment of the speaker to the truth of the proposition;
2. agent-oriented specifies conditions on agents with respect to the completion of the predicate;
3. speaker-oriented signals that the utterance is a direct or indirect statement that the speaker is not asserting.
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(20) ut išf nis' a-ka-tix'am, išf nis' a-ka-tam,
and dec also 2sGen-fut-gather dec also 2sGen-fut-care for(tr)
You can gather this [food] also, take care of that too.

a-ka-kaTLb3'ām išf', lut a-ka-k'ā'La-nam
2sGen-fut-respect(tr) dec neg 2sGen fut-squander(tr)
treat it with respect, don't squander it. EC'18

(21) way'' a-ka-k'ā'iyām a-šq-arq'sšāl
2Sub-fut-work(tr) 2sPoss-child
You should work with your child
fa xša?šā'ās r? xiśāk*
that sacredness art water
about the sacredness of the water. EC 15

(22) ut lut k"u t'a a-ka-ša-liškatin*π
and neg 1sObj aort 2sSub-fut-guide(tr)
You don't have to guide (sister) me. GW 493

Another subtype of agent-oriented modality expresses the inherent and/or situational conditions that constrain the actions of the agent. That is, this modality comments on the ability of an agent to perform the event named in the proposition. In each of the following examples, the context makes clear that a physical or mental limitation impedes the agents.

(23) cak" iwašh t' k'ā'gLxšām
if even that stretch-3sSub
If even she stretched,

ut lut t'a ka-k'ā'škica-s
then neg aort fut-reach(tr)-3sSub
she can't reach it. GW 357

A negated agent-oriented clause can be distinguished from a negative command by the optional presence of the epistemic particle r'? (sometimes r'[a] or r'x') which signals an assertion by a speaker. Contrast the negative command in (i):

(i) lut k"u a-ka-ša-liškatin
Don't guide me! S Peterson

(24) lut k"u t'a ku-kan-k'ā'La-tam
neg 1sObj aort fut-overshadow(tr)
Never will she overshadow us. GW 223

(25) lut t'a ku-k'ā'La-witām k'ā'La twist
neg aort fut-track(tr)-1sObj prep sky
We can't track him in the sky. GW 679

3.2 Future. Future is distinct from agent-modality in that its core function is to indicate a prediction rather than the conditions obtaining over the agent. Example (2b) is a prophecy, just the pragmatic environment in which a future gram will yield a prediction but not agent-oriented modality.

(26) cut r? scuts k"u ku-čk'ā'La-tam r? kpq-eša?
and art one who said 1sObj fut-arrive(tr) art white ones
The one who said it said, "The white skinned ones will arrive among us.

ks-čk'ā'La-s r? cṇq'"a-šk'ā'La-qan
fur-bring(tr)-3sSub art black-horned cows
They will bring black-horned cows.

k"u ku-ša-štām r? ščag'ša?
1sObj fut-eat(tr) art stuff-1sPoss art white ones
The white skinned ones will eat (up) our food.

k"u ku-ša-štām k"u ks-ta'qam-ščag'ša?
1sObj fut-eat(tr) 1sObj fut-trample(tr) art wild food-1sPoss
They are going to eat and trample the food that we would gather. EC 278

Although interrogative, the first clause of (27) does not have intentional, obligatory, or ablative mode but does express a likely future event, i. e., a prediction.

(27) ut lut ha? a-ka-šan-tām a'inn'm'sšāl k"u čn'ām,
and neg ques 2sSub-fut-think if 1sObj _ marry
mat tašīfl t' k'čapa-pārššink
then much 2sSub_fel, bad
And won't you think if we marry, very much you will be sorry? GW 608

3.3 Immediate future. Ok also has an aspectual future which is marked with the prefix ku- and a suffix (mis)-a'sš. The longer form of the suffix occurs following
'weak' stems, i.e. those stems that lose stress to certain suffixes, including -(mix)-a7x. These aspe\ntual futures inflect with the intransitive person markers. They are often translated by Colville-Okanagan speakers as 'about to V' or 'going to V'. The following examples occur in contexts where neither a prediction nor agent-oriented modality are appropriate interpretations.

(28) kw-m'ayncut-a7x-3pl axk'7 i'7 kw-sk'a7 1-3Sub fut-story tell-asp-3pSub deic art golden 1sPoss-bird(s) (h) They are going to tell a story these birds of mine. GW:411

(29) quit-x way' kw-u kw-ax-(mix)a7x' waken-Imp 1pSub_fut-die-asp "Wake up! We are going to die!" GW:418

(30) kw kw-ax-ayq-a7x 1sSub_fut-go-asp I am going to go! I'm leaving (now) S. Peterson

As Bybee et al. (1994) point out, immediate futures are not true futures, since they function as predictions than as indicators of temporal phase. The next example, (31), highlights the phasal (aspectual) nature of Colville-Okanagan immediate futures; no prediction or agent-oriented modality can be attributed to the clause.

(31) cuw i7 q'3xpi kw-an't'ak-7w'k7ulan-a7x said art long ago ones fut-travel towards noon-asp As they said long ago, it was going towards noon. EC:52

The functions of ks- range over modality, future, and aspect and there are examples in which more than one function of ks- is exploited. Intentionality and desire appear to be combined with immediate future in (12) and (13).

(32) lut x 7 cmyt-in, neg assert know(tr)-1sSub I don't know anything

uf kw kw-m'ayqya7ncut-a7x and 1sSub_fut-teach_self-asp but I would like to [start to] teach myself. GW:12

3.4 Subordinate modality. While all of the functions of ks- described above occur in main and subordinate clauses, there are two functions of ks- that are limited to subordinate contexts. First, ks- marks purposive subordinate clauses.

(34) kw-ax-a7x, yu-y'd7 it'7 l_tams"aula7x" pray 1pAHS all art on earth They pray to (the salmon) on the whole earth.

(35) way' i7 t'ax ut miy-s sant'apt'paqs-art art_prep_rock place(tr)-3pSub corners-3pPoss Rocks he put on the corners

(36) uf p_cut xi-mink-amk p ks-k'ul-a7x and 2pSub_say desire-2pPoss 2pSub-fut-make-asp And you say you want to make

"The semantics of this sentence make the label 'immediate future' infelicitous. Perhaps the label 'prospective' which I have used elsewhere for this construction would be better suited to it.
(37) n'lm'w'if kn 'symmcut lut k'u-ks-k'sfanwintam
fut 1sSub_do_best neg 1pSub_fut-sense(t)
I will do my best (so) that they won't hear us. GW 315

(38) 1x? uf k" s-an''acusam-s ks-piistam-s
dec and 2sObj_asp-bat-asp fut-kill(tr)-3sSub
But she is baiting you [in order] to kill you. GW 503

(39) uf lwa7 k'afl'as''fa''kb''akstam
and in vain beg(tr) fut-enter water-asp
She kept begging him to go into the water. GW 354

(40) uf lxa7 t'i? k" sc-q"fim-s x''us k" ks''ltx-a?x
then arst 2sSub_asp-trick-asp hurry 2sSub_fut-sleep-asp
But (she's) just taking you in a hurry to put you to sleep. (lit. 'But you are being tricked so that you fall asleep in a hurry.') GW 899

Subordinate reason clauses in Cowichan-Okanagan lack k's, as shown by (41).

(41) kan ks-x'as-lal-mi'as?x stil k'u t mateka/nt x"
1sSub_fut-be_killed-asp because 1sObj that lie(tr)-2sSub
I am going to be killed because you lied to me. GW 105

A second specialized function of k's is to indicate the verbal complement of certain complement-taking predicates. These complement-taking predicates are of two major types. The first is a psychological predicate type, typically expressing the experimenter subject's desire or fear with respect to the complement proposition. The common theme of such predicates is that they express an emotional attitude toward a possible outcome. A main predicate of desire (42)-(43) has the same complement type as a predicate of fear (44).**

(42) lut t' in-ilm'ink t i-ks-stwamstam
neg arst 1sPoss that 1sGen-fut-water(tr)
I don't want to water him. GW 66

(43) uf spu7us-asp p ks-tak''tak''fut-a?x
and wish-2Poss 2pSub_fut-travel-asp
And your wish is to travel around. GW 11

(44) uf ati? s-ks-k''al'-mix in-kawuwp
because asp-fut-sweat-asp 1sPoss-horse
(because) my horse was sweating
uf ati? kn sk'Int t i ks-ank''a'cnum-x
because 1sSub_fear that 1sGen-fut-be late
and I was afraid that I'd be late
kam' t i-ks-assu'ip
or that 1sGen-fut-be lost
or that I'd get lost. GW 316

The second type of complement-taking predicate that requires k's on its verbal complement can be characterized as 'achievement' predicates. These complement-taking predicates characterize the ability of the agent named in the main clause. (25)

(25) uf nakamt tilx s
and however not be able-3sPoss
but he couldn't
1a ks-anma/psil s ril sk''ba'k'am-s
that fut-tell-on-3sPoss art brothers-3sPoss
tell on his brothers.
[lit. But it's hard for him to tell on his older brothers.] GW 252

(26) uf kan tak"mist t i-ks-x'its
and 1sSub_struggle that 1sGen-fut-get up
and I can't lift myself up. [lit. I find it difficult to get up.] GW 484

(27) way' lut qitnu-s
neg be able(tr)-3sSub
1a ks-qaq-ax-x axa? s nkS-k'a'qaka/
that fut-trot-3sGen desc art horse
His horse is not even able to trot. GW 440

(28) k' in'' n i-ks-q''al'quitl
try(tr)-1sSub 1sGen-fut-talk
I tried to talk. S. Peterson
The function of *ks* clauses after desire/fear- and ability/ inability-predicates shares with the purposive clauses their non-asserted character. While the subordinating particle *f* optionally occurs between the main predicate and its complement, the *ks* on the lower predicate is sufficient to mark subordination and semantic dependency in the lower clause. In subordinate contexts, *ks* does not mark future time or a prediction. Its functions in subordinate clauses are modal and may be historically related to main clause modal functions of *ks*.

1. Future vs. Irrealis. The diversity of form and function of future grams in Colville-Okanagan frustrates attempts to isolate an invariant shape associated with a single morphological category ‘future’. In Colville-Okanagan, future time can be indicated grammatically with temporal and modal devices; some of the grams that are used to indicate future time have other non-future uses. This situation begs the question of whether ‘future’ is a grammatical category of Colville-Okanagan. Some analysts have applied the label ‘irrealis’ to organize this diffuse area of Salish grammar but as M. Dale Kinkade (1998) points out, there has not been much attention paid to irrealis in Salishan linguistics.

The data I have presented here for Colville-Okanagan suggest that the label ‘irrealis’ applied either to the morph *ks*- or to the category of future notions is not an improvement over other proposals. First, it is far from clear what comprises the category ‘irrealis’ generally, although it is usually associated with events or situations that have not taken place. Chafe (1995:361) argues that the realis-irrealis distinction may be thought of as a covert semantic pressure that emerges in different languages in different ways. This observation brings to mind the way in which grammaticized as tense or aspect or both—is expressed in all languages. In the absence of a cross-linguistically tested theory of ‘irrealis’, it is not yet possible to test for it as a grammatical macrocategory.

Second, as Bybee (1998:265) notes, the application of the broad concept ‘real vs. unreal’ may miss the sometimes contradictory, polysemous details of lexical and grammatical items. In Colville-Okanagan, for example, *ks*- occurs in asserted, future main clauses while some subordinate *ks*- clauses are non-asserted non-futures. Further, there is nothing unreal about agent-modality: if an agent intends, is responsible for, or is able to perform an act, those conditions are present in the situation. Only true futures and clauses with subordinate modality involve events that have not taken place. Although Colville-Okanagan *ks*- would appear to be a candidate for the ‘irrealis’ label, the details of its functions counsel against it.

For many languages ‘irrealis’ may be a handy morphological label with little theoretical import. Even in Colville-Okanagan, the subordinating modality marked by *ks* could be described alternatively as ‘irrealis’ or ‘subjunctive’. However, the data show that in Colville-Okanagan ‘irrealis’ is a narrow subtype of modality and not the reverse. ‘Future’ is a slightly broader subcategory in Colville-Okanagan and elsewhere and therefore is the better descriptive label.

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