**Nominal, verbal, and idiomatic uses of *–nuk$^{w}$* in Kwak'wala**[*]

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The suffix *–nuk$^{w}$* has a curious synchronic distribution in Kwak'wala. In addition to its productive use in nominal possession constructions, it can be used on verbal stems along with passive suffixes to form indefinite object constructions with agentive subjects. These agentive subjects are puzzling given the presence of passive morphology on the verb. In this paper I document the syntactic and semantic properties of *–nuk$^{w}$* constructions in the synchronic domain and discuss some changes that have occurred in the distribution of this suffix since the generation of speakers consulted by Boas.

## 1 Introduction

This paper explores the curious distribution of the suffix *–nuk$^{w}$* in Kwak'wala. In addition to being a 'fossilized' component of certain frequent lexical items (e.g. *gigəʔoɬnuk$^{w}$* 'parents'), *–nuk$^{w}$* is productively applied to nominal stems to produce 'possessor of' nominals (e.g. *wa* 'river'; *wanuk$^{w}$* 'owner of a river'). When suffixed to nominal stems and used as a predicate, the suffix *–nuk$^{w}$* means '*to have x*' where '*x*' is a member of the set denoted by the nominal stem, as shown in (1). These constructions involve asserting both possession over and existence of something:

(1) *Nominal predicates with –nuk$^{w}$ mean 'to have x':*

a. ʔabəls-nuk$^{w}$=ənoχ$^{w}$
apple(s)-nuk$^{w}$=1.PL.EXCL
'We [EXCL] have apples.' (VF)

b. k'atəmeʔ-nuk$^{w}$=i=da c'ədaq
picture-nuk$^{w}$=D3=DET woman
'The woman has a picture.' (VF)[1]

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When used with transitive verbal predictes, *-nuk*$^{w}$ co-occurs with a passive suffix to form a construction that asserts the existence of an indefinite object. The puzzling thing about these 'indefinite object constructions' is that their grammatical subjects are semantically AGENTS: yet given the presence of the passive suffix and the behaviour of passive suffixes elsewhere in the language, we would expect the AGENT in these sentences to be demoted and potentially omitted altogether. The examples in (2)-(5) provide an illustration: (2) shows a regular transitive verb *təpa* 'to break' together with an accusative-marked object; (3) shows that when the passive suffix *–suʔ* is present on the predicate, the object is promoted to subject position, in which case the subject is demoted though optionally expressed in an agentive by-phrase; (4) shows an indefinite object construction, where a passive suffix and *–nuk*$^{w}$ are present and the AGENT subject remains, showing no sign of being demoted; finally (5) confirms that the subject is being interpreted as an AGENT by showing that this interpretation is not easily overcome by real-world knowledge when an inanimate object is placed in subject position:

(2) *A basic transitive sentence:*

təp-ʔid=oχ babağ$^{w}$əm=eχ=χ=is q$^{w}$əʔsta
break-BEC=D2 little.boy=VIS=ACC=3.CO.POSS cup
'The little boy broke his cup.' (VF)

(3) *A transitive sentence with passive suffix, 'promoted' object, and 'demoted' agent:*

təp-ʔid-suʔ=i=da q$^{w}$əʔsta (=sa babağ$^{w}$əm)
break-BEC=O.PASS=D3=DET cup (=OBL little.boy)
'The cup was broken (*optional:* by the boy).' (VF)

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[1] The glossing conventions used in this paper include the following: 1 - first-person subject; 1.OBJ - first-person object; 2 - second-person subject; 2.OBJ - second-person object; 1.POSS - first-person possessor; 2.POSS- second-person possessor; 3.POSS - third-person possessor (not coreferent with subject); 3.CO.POSS – (coreferent with subject); AUX - auxiliary verb; ACC - =χ case marker (accusative); OBL - =s case marker (genitive, instrumental, agentive by-phrases); be.D1 - copula, here near speaker; be.D2 - copula, around speaker; be.D3 - copula, not around speaker; BEC – become/ inchoative aspect; CAUS - causative; COMPL - completive suffix; D1 - (he/she/they/it) here; D2 - (he/she/they/it) around; D3 - (he/she/they/it) not around; DET - ostensive marker; EMPH - emphatic suffix; empty.root - referential root (semantically-null); FUT - future tense; INVIS - invisibility clitic; JF - judged form in elicitation; OI – Old information; O.PASS - object passive suffix; I.PASS - instrumental passive suffix; INTR – interrogative; INST - instrumental preposition; L.PASS - locative passive suffix; NM – nominalizing suffix; pro - little pro; PST - past tense; PREP - preposition; R.PST - recent past tense; T.ADJ – temporal adjunct introducer; TF - translated form in elicitation; VIS - visibility clitic; VF - volunteered form in elicitation; ~ - reduplication.

(4) *An indefinite object construction:*

təp-ʔid-suʔ-nuk$^{w}$=i=da babağ$^{w}$əm
break-BEC=O.PASS-nuk$^{w}$=D3=DET little.boy
'The boy broke something.' (VF)

(5) *Strong reading of the subject as an* AGENT*:*

# təp-ʔid-suʔ-nuk$^{w}$=i=da q$^{w}$əʔsta
break-BEC=O.PASS-nuk$^{w}$=D3=DET cup
*Translation:* # 'The cup broke something' (TR)

In this paper is I document the synchronic properties of *–nuk$^{w}$* constructions and discuss historical changes in the distribution of *–nuk$^{w}$* that have occurred since the generation of speakers represented in Boas' (1911, 1947) grammars and the Boas and Hunt's (1902) *Kwakiutl Texts*.

Section 2 introduces the Kwak'wala language and major features of its grammar that will be important to know in order to understand later sections. Then in Section 3 I document the synchronic uses of *–nuk$^{w}$* in three domains: on nominal stems, in idiomatic constructions, and on verbal stems. I will also discuss historical changes that have occurred involving *–nuk$^{w}$*. Section 4 concludes.

## 2 Kwak'wala Language Overview

Kwak'wala is a Wakashan language spoken on the central coast of British Columbia, Canada, by members of the Kwakwaka'wakw nation. Though the language is spoken today as a first language by less than 200 speakers, there is growing community interest and involvement in its revitalization. There are at least five dialect areas of Kwa'wala (Anonby 1997): the field data cited in this paper is from a speaker from Gwaʒ̓i (Kingcome Inlet).

Kwak'wala is a member of the Wakashan language family which consists of seven languages split into two branches, Northern and Southern. While the two branches are clearly reconstructable in the domain of derivational morphology, they have undergone significant changes relative to each other. In the Northern Branch, such changes include the development of inflectional clitics (Fortescue 2006) as well as prepositions and morphological case-markers (Sardinha 2011). The Northern Branch includes *Haisla, Heiltsuk, Oowekyala* and *Kwak'wala*, and the Southern Branch includes *Nuu-Chah-Nulth, Ditidaht*, and *Makah*. The language family is summarized below:

| The Wakashan Language family | |
|---|---|
| *Northern* | *Southern* |
| Haisla | Nuu-Cha-Nulth |
| Heiltsuk | Ditidaht |
| Oowekyala | Makah |
| Kwak'wala | |

Kwak'wala has been the focus of a number of descriptive and theoretical studies (e.g. Boas 1911, Boas et al. 1947, Grubb 1997, Levine 1980, 1984, Anderson 1984, Chung 2007, Nicholson and Werle 2009). However, many aspects of its syntax and semantics await comprehensive study.

Basic word order in Kwak'wala is VSO, though main predicates may be preceded by auxiliaries, in which case the subject may also move to the left of the main predicate. Kwak'wala has a complex system of inflection involving many enclitic determiners. Subject agreement is marked by a set of second-position enclitics, with first and second person subjects *=ən* '1', *=ənsˀ* '1.PL.INCL', *=ənoχʷ* '1.PL.EXCL' and *=as* '2'; third-person subjects, whether expressed as overt NPs or omitted, are marked by a locative deictic clitic which encodes a three-way distinction of PROXIMAL, MEDIAL and DISTAL. The 'distance' meaning of these deictic clitics encodes both concrete and abstract distance relative to the speaker (Nicholson & Werle 2009). In what follows I adopt the convention of Nicholson & Werle (ibid.) in glossing these determiners as D1, D2 and D3 respectively. Third-person nominal arguments are placed within by complex strings of enclitic determiners marking case, deictic status, definiteness, and visibility (Chung 2007, Nicholsen & Werle 2009). In particular the catgories of case, location, and definiteness are encoded by enclitics which prosodically attach to an element preceding the NP, while clitics indicating an NP's visibility attach to its left edge. Case-markers precede the arguments they introduce and include zero-marked nominative case, *=χ* accusative case ('ACC') and *=s* oblique case ('OBL').

The following examples illustrate basic sentences with nominal (6), adjectival (7) and verbal (8) predicates. These sentences contain a third-person, second-person possessor, and first-person subject, respectively:

(6) c'əqʷan=oχ=da ɬəl̓=eχ
bird=D2=DET dead.thing=VIS
'That dead thing is a bird' (VF)

(7) t'exstuw=us ğəy̓ağəs
brown=2.POSS eye
'Your eyes are brown.' (VF)

(8) mənxʷ=ən
smile=1
'I am smiling.' (VF)

Example (9) illustrates how a complex sentence with two expressed arguments is formed. The predicate *c'əw* 'to give' marks its first object with oblique *=s* and places its second argument in a prepositional phrase where it is accusative-marked with *=χ*. Temporal adjuncts, if present, typically occur at the right edge of the sentence.

(9) c'əw=i=da cədaq=sa ƛatəmɬ la=χa bəgʷanəm (χa nala)
give=D3=DEF woman=OBL hat PREP=ACC man (T.ADJ day )
'The woman is giving a hat to the man (today).' (VF)

Though there is considerable flexibility in the use of stems as either predicates or arguments, the claim that the language lacks categories of noun and verb is too strong. In what follows we will see that the suffix *–nukʷ* behaves differently when attached to what we might want to refer to 'nominal' versus 'verbal' stems; therefore, I will be using these category labels in my discussion.

## 3 The synchronic distribution of *–nukʷ* in the modern language

In this section I provide an overview of the synchronic uses of the suffix *–nukʷ*. Broadly, this suffix occurs in three grammatical domains:

- In the nominal domain both as a fossilized component of some 'possessor-of-x' nouns and kin terms and productively suffixed to nominal stems to form 'possessor-of-x' constructions; when used as predicates, these constructions are translated as 'to have x';
- As a component of idiomatic constructions expressing emotions and psychological states;
- Productively suffixed to transitive verbal stems, along with passive suffixes, to form indefinite object constructions.

The following sections 3.1 – 3.3 will document the major features of *–nukʷ* in each of these grammatical domains.

### 3.1 Uses of *-nukʷ* with nominal stems

The suffix *–nukʷ* attaches freely to most nominal stems in the language. There is also a small set of lexical items where *–nukʷ* has apparently become reanalyzed as a permanent part of the stem; a few examples are given in (10). The words in (11) are similar-sounding but probably contain the numeral classifier *–ukʷ* 'person' (Boas 1947: 280).

(10) *Examples of lexical items containing –nukʷ*:
a. xʷənukʷ 'child'
b. gigəʔoɬnukʷ 'parents'
c. wanukʷ 'owner of a river'
d. kanukʷ 'owner of a car'
e. mameχələmasnukʷ 'sleeping pill'

(11) *Similar-sounding lexical items with –ukʷ* 'person' (classifier)
f. nəmukʷ 'friend; other'
g. wəʔokʷ 'follower, friend, companion'
h. ʔiksukʷ 'beautiful, attractive'

The degree to which words like those in (10) are 'fossilized' as independent words, as well as how many words belong to this class, probably varies across different speakers and is not predictable.

In its productive use, *-nuk$^{w}$* can be suffixed to any nominal stem. When it attaches to a nominal stem, it takes the meaning 'possessor-of-x' where 'x' stands for a member of the set denoted by the nominal stem. In general, nominal stems in Kwak'wala may be used as either predicates or arguments depending on their syntactic position; this generalization applies also to nominal stems hosting *–nuk$^{w}$*. Thus when a nominal stem with *–nuk$^{w}$* occurs in argument position, it serves syntactically as a noun or a relative clause. The example words in (10), for instance, can occur in argument position as illustrated in (12-b) with the nominal+*nuk$^{w}$* stem shown in (12-a):

(12) *Nominal stems with –nuk$^{w}$ can be used in argument position:*

a. ma~meχəla-mas-nuk$^{w}$
RED~sleep-CAUS-nuk$^{w}$
'sleeping pill' (VF)
[*lit.* "the one that makes you sleep"]

b. meχ-ʔid-amas=oχ=da ʔəbəmp=eχ=χ=is x$^{w}$ənuk$^{w}$=sa
sleep-BEC-CAUS=D2=DET mother=VIS=ACC=1.POSS child=OBL

mameχəlamasnuk$^{w}$
sleeping.pill
'The mother made her kid sleep with a sleeping pill.' (VF)

When a nominal stem with *–nuk$^{w}$* occurs in predicate position, the resulting construction is usually translated into English as 'to have a(n) x' where 'x' is a member of the set denoted by the nominal stem. Examples (13)-(15) illustrate these basic have–*nuk$^{w}$* constructions:

(13) guk$^{w}$-nuk$^{w}$=oχ Connor
house-nuk$^{w}$=D2 Connor
'Connor has/owns a house.' (VF)

(14) hənλəm-nuk$^{w}$=as
gun-nuk$^{w}$=2
'You have a gun.' (VF)

(15) (nug$^{w}$aʔəm) ka-nuk$^{w}$=ən
(it.is.I) car-nuk$^{w}$=1
'I have a car.' (VF)

The semantics of have-*nuk$^{w}$* constructions is fairly specific: used declaratively, these constructions are used to simultaneously assert both possession of and existence of an individual or set of individuals denoted by the nominal

predicate. A basic sentence with a nominal predicate plus *–nuk*$^{w}$ therefore means the following: *Y exists and X has Y*, where *X* denotes a possessor subject and *Y* denotes a non-specific member (or members) of the set denoted by the nominal predicate. Because these have-*nuk*$^{w}$ constructions always assert existence of some possessed object or objects, they always involve the introduction of a referent into the discourse.[2] The contextualized examples in (16)-(18) illustrate how the semantics of these constructions involve both an assertion of possession and an assertion of existence:

(16) *Context: Answering the question - Do you have any siblings?*

c'aẏa-nuk$^{w}$=ən
younger.sibling-nuk$^{w}$=1
'I have a younger brother.'[3] (VF)

(17) *Context: A little girl is trying to trick her mom into buying her candy. She tells her mom that they should stop in at a grocery to get some food, but her mom replies…*

həm̓eʔ-e-nux$^{w}$-m̓=əns
food-but-nuk$^{w}$-OI=1.PL.INCL
'No, we *have* food.' (VF)

(18) *Context: You don't own a car, but you're borrowing your brother's car to drive to the grocery store.*

ka-nuk$^{w}$=ən χ$^{w}$a nala=χ
car-nuk$^{w}$=1 T.ADJ day=VIS
'I have a car today.' (VF)

The suffix *–nuk*$^{w}$ is also volunteered in positive questions about whether something both exists and is possessed, as illustrated in (19)-(20):

(19) *Context: A border guard is questioning you about what you have.*

həm̓eʔ-nuk$^{w}$-mas-e
food-nuk$^{w}$-Q-INTR
'Do you have any food?' (VF)

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[2] A plural possessum may be indicated by reduplication on the nominal predicate, as in the example *ẇiẇac'inuk$^{w}$oχda bibibəg$^{w}$anəm* 'They have dogs' (VF) where both the initial predicate and the nominal subject shows reduplication. Plurality is often left unmarked in Kwak'wala, and thus plural reduplication is often optional in the language; this seems to be the case for *–nuk*$^{w}$ constructions as well (e.g. see (1-a)) but I have not investigated this systematically.

[3] This sentence can also mean 'I have a younger sister.'

(20) *Context: Asking someone questions about themself.*

a. wac'i-nuk$^{w}$-mas-e
dog-nuk$^{w}$-Q-INTR
Do you have a dog? (VF)

b. *Possible responses:*

i. k'iyos=ən wac'i
NEG=1.POSS dog
'I don't have a dog.' (VF)

ii. wac'i-nuk$^{w}$=ən
dog-nuk$^{w}$=1
'I have a dog.' (VF)

The suffix *–nuk$^{w}$* is not used when asserting that something either exists or does not exist when that thing is not possessed. The following pair of sentences illustrates a different possible construction for asserting existence (21-a) or non-existence (21-b) of a non-possessed entity:

(21) *-nuk$^{w}$ is not used to assert simple existence or non-existence:*

a. gudan=oχ=da ʔəχ=eʔ=χ la=χ=əns haṁiksilaʔas
horse=D2=DET empty.stem=NM=VIS PREP=ACC=1.PL.INCL.POSS kitchen
'There is a horse in our kitchen!' (VF)

b. ğağas, nuɬəmaɬ=əʔ=as. k'iyos gudan la=χ$^{w}$a haṁiksilaʔas
grandma crazy=NM=2 NEG horse PREP=ACC kitchen
'Grandma, you're crazy. There isn't a horse in the kitchen.' (VF)

The suffix *–nuk$^{w}$* is also not used to assert that something is possessed when that thing is presupposed to exist or has a definite referent in context. In these situations other possessive constructions are used. Since possession is a very large topic on its own right, I will only show examples of two possible constructions which may be used in these instances – constructions with possessive enclitics (22), and constructions involving independent possessive predicates (23):

(22) *Possessive enclitics*

a. ƛ'aχ$^{w}$stu=oχ t'ibayu=sa c'ədaq
red=D2 shoe=3.POSS lady
'The lady's shoes are red.' (VF)

b. ʔəχ-ʔalas=i=χ=ən dzəmba
empty.stem-use=D3=ACC=1.POSS pants
'He's wearing my pants.' (VF)

(23) *Independent possessive predicates*

a. nus=oχ=(da)
mine=D2=(DET)
'It's mine.' (pointed to) (VF)

b. qus-ɤ=oχ=da kacənaq
yours-FUT=D2=DET spoon
'This spoon will be yours.' (VF)

The suffix *-nuk$^{w}$* is not used to simultaneously assert absence and lack of possession, as we see in (24). This is also evident in example (21-b) above.

(24) *Context: You're being asked at a border crossing if you're carrying any weapons.*

k'i…k'iyos=ən k'awayu
no NEG=1 knife
'No, I don't have knives.' (VF)

Because have-*nuk$^{w}$* constructions assert both existence and possession, they are rarely used with inalienable items such as body parts which almost always exist and are inherently possessed; nonetheless, exceptions may be coerced, such as in (25) with *səya* 'hair':

(25) səya-nuk$^{w}$=ən. k'iyos=da səya=sa bəg$^{w}$anəm
hair-nuk$^{w}$=1 NEG=DET hair=OBL man
'I have hair. That man doesn't have hair.' (VF)

The suffix *–nuk$^{w}$* may also occur on adjectival stems. This is possible if one is asserting that something exists and is owned when that something is only identifiable by a property:

(26) w'alas-dzi-nuk$^{w}$=ən
big-large-nuk$^{w}$=1
'I have a big thing.' / 'I have something big.' (VF)

Since adjectives are usually used to ascribe a property to something that is already known to exist, *–nuk$^{w}$* does not occur in most instances of adjectival predication.

The semantic features of *–nuk$^{w}$* in have-*nuk$^{w}$* constructions are summarized in (27):

(27) *Semantic features of –nuk$^{w}$ in nominal constructions*

nominal stem + -nuk$^{w}$:
*Y exists and X has Y*, where *X* denotes a possessor subject and *Y* denotes a non-specific member of the set denoted by the nominal predicate.

| *Context* | *-nuk$^{w}$* |
|---|---|
| assert existence & assert possession; question existence & possession | Yes |
| assert existence; not possession | No |
| assert possession; not existence | No |
| assert absence and/or non-possession | No |

In its productive use, the suffix *–nuk$^{w}$* is subject to a number of morphological and phonological constraints, though these constraints appear to have undergone recent changes in the modern language. In order to understand the morpho-phonological distribution of *–nuk$^{w}$* we will need to consider it along with another suffix it interacts with: the suffix *–ad*, which is glossed in Boas (1911, 1947) with the same meaning, 'having'. Boas could not find a difference in meaning between the two suffixes, though he cited different phonological and morphological constraints on their distribution. We will also see below that the distribution reported in Boas' grammars has changed somewhat in the modern language.

Regarding morphological distribution, Boas classified the suffix *–nuk$^{w}$* as a 'word suffix' which attaches to the right of 'formal, completive' endings, including derivational suffixes' (1911). For example, *-nuk$^{w}$* attaches to nouns containing the nominalizing suffix *–i?/-e?*. The suffix *–ad* on the other hand he classified as a 'stem suffix': it attaches directly to the right edge of word stems without 'formal, completive endings' (1911: 446).

Boas also characterized these suffixes as having different phonological effects on the base to which they attach. The suffix *-ad* belongs to the class of 'weakening' suffixes which result in lenition of certain preceding consonants. For example, the stem for 'child' is *x$^{w}$ənk$^{w}$-* which becomes *x$^{w}$ənɡ$^{w}$ad* 'to have a child' (c.f (10-a), *x$^{w}$ənuk$^{w}$*). The suffix *–nuk$^{w}$* on the other hand is classified as 'indifferent' – that is, as having no effect on the base to which it attaches.

In terms of phonological distribution, Boas noted that *–ad* is not added to stems ending in *m, n, l*. In these cases, *-nuk$^{w}$* is added instead (e.g. *gilnuk$^{w}$* 'ancestors'). The suffix *–nuk$^{w}$* occurs freely in all phonological environments.

The phonological and morphological distributional differences between the two suffixes as reported in Boas (1911, 1947) are summarized in Table 1:

*Table 1: Distributional differences between –ad and –nuk$^{w}$ reported in Boas (1911, 1947):*

| | *-ad* | *-nuk$^{w}$* |
|---|---|---|
| Morphological distribution | 'Stem suffix': attaches to the right edge of word stems without their 'formal, completive endings' | 'Word' suffix': attaches to the right of 'formal, completive' endings, including derivational suffixes.' |
| Phonological restrictions | Not added to stems ending in *m, n, l.* In these cases, -*nuk$^{w}$* is added instead. | None |
| Phonological effects on the base | 'Weakening' suffix: results in lenition of certain preceding consonants. | None |

Some notable changes to the generalizations in Table 1 have occurred in the modern language. First, the suffix *–nuk$^{w}$* has been extended to new potential bases – thus it freely attaches to stems regardless of whether or not the stems have 'completive or formal' endings, and as such takes over much of the productive function that was once the domain of *–ad*.

Second, the use of *–nuk$^{w}$* is phonologically conditioned in what may or may not be a new way. Namely, it appears to be subject to a tendency in the language to avoid sequences of identical syllable such as *(n)uk$^{w}$nuk$^{w}$*. This haplology effect becomes evident with words where *–nuk$^{w}$* appears to have fossilized, such as *gigəʔoɬnuk$^{w}$* 'parents', and indeed with any word ending in *–uk$^{w}$*, such as *nəmuk$^{w}$* 'friend'. Thus example (28-a) shows us that when *nəmuk$^{w}$* is used predicatively as a possessed nominal, it occurs with *–ad* instead of *–nuk$^{w}$*. The form with *–nuk$^{w}$* is judged as meaning the same thing, but is not the preferred or readily-volunteered form.

(28) *With the word nəmuk$^{w}$ 'friend'*:

a. nəmug$^{w}$-ad=ən. hed=i le Bankuba
friend-ad=1 be.D3=D3 AUX Vancouver
'I have a friend. She is in Vancouver.' (VF)

b. nəmuk$^{w}$-nuk$^{w}$=ən. hed=i le Bankuba
friend-nuk$^{w}$=1 be.D3=D3 AUX Vancouver
'I have a friend. She's in Vancouver.' (JF)
*Speaker: "Yeah you can say that too..."*

It is not always case, however, that *–ad* is used in place of *–nuk$^{w}$* as the preferred haplology-driven repair strategy. Another strategy for avoiding sequences of *–(n)uk$^{w}$nuk$^{w}$* is simply to let the existing *–nuk$^{w}$* assume the meaning of have. This is realized in example (29) with *gigəʔoɬnuk$^{w}$* 'parents'.

In (29-a), *–nukʷ* seems to do 'double work' as the ending of the word for *gigəʔoɬnukʷ* 'parents' and in meaning have; (29-b) shows us that a construction with *–ad* is possible, whereas (29-c) shows us that a construction with a sequence of similar syllables 'sounds funny':

(29) *With the word gigəʔoɬnukʷ 'parents'*

a. gigəʔoɬ-nuxʷ-m̓=ən
parents-nukʷ-OI=1
'I have parents.' (VF)

b gigəʔoɬnugʷ-ad=ən
'I have parents.' (JF)
*Speaker: "Yeah, you could say that."*

c. *Katie: Could you ever say...*

? gigəʔoɬnukʷnuxʷm̓ən (JF)
*Speaker: "Yeah. Sounds funny though, nuxʷnuxʷ [laughter]."*

Another frequently encountered example is the word *xʷəɬnukʷ* 'child'. The examples in (30) show this form taking *–ad*:

(30) *With the word xʷəɬnukʷ:*

a. χʷənugʷ-ad=oχ Sid
child-ad=D2 Sid
'Sid has a kid.' (VF)

b. xʷənugʷ-ad=ən nəmukʷ
child-ad=1.POSS friend
'My friend has a kid.' (VF)

It is not clear whether particular lexical items involve consistent repair strategies (i.e. using *–ad* versus letting *–nukʷ* do 'double-work'), though I find it more likely that variation occurs. In any case, these constructions appear to be a locus of variation and change in the modern language. Sentences like (29-a), for example, are a potential site for re-analysis of *–nukʷ* as part of the stem in words like *gigəʔoɬnukʷ*.

The morpho-phonological constraints on *–nukʷ* in the modern language are summarized in Table 2. We can see that in general, the distribution of *–nukʷ* has been extended.

*Table 2: Distributional of –nuk$^{w}$ on nominal stems in the modern language*

| | *-nuk$^{w}$* |
|---|---|
| Morphological distribution | Not constrained: attaches directly to stems or to stems with 'completive' endings. |
| Phonological restrictions | Tends to not attach to stems ending in *–(n)uk$^{w}$* (haplology constraint) |
| Phonological effects on the base | None |

Word lists containing examples with *–nuk$^{w}$* and *–ad* are included in an Appendix to this paper.

There is an interesting gap in the use of *–nuk$^{w}$* on nominal predicates. In all of the have-*nuk$^{w}$* constructions we have seen thus far the possessum has been indefinite. Nonetheless, the nominal stem has served to restrict the reference of the possessum by ascribing a property to it. In fact it is impossible to use a simple have-*nuk$^{w}$* construction to assert existence and possession of a totally indefinite object – that is, to say a sentence like 'X owns something'. In order to form this construction using *–nuk$^{w}$* it is necessary to use the form *ʔəχ(ə)nug$^{w}$ad* 'to be an owner' which involves both *–nuk$^{w}$* and *–ad.* As noted in Boas (1947), this is the only instance of both suffixes occuring in the same word. Examples of constructions involving *ʔəχ(ə)nug$^{w}$ad* are given in (31)-(33):

(31) ʔəχ-nug$^{w}$ad=ən
empty.stem-own=1
'I have something.' / 'I am an owner.' (VF)

(32) ʔəχ-ə-nug$^{w}$ad=ən χa ka
empty.stem-ʔ-own=1 ACC car
'I own a car.' (JF/TR)

(33) ʔəng$^{w}$=i=da ʔəχ-ə-nug$^{w}$ad=e=s=ge ka
be.who=D3=DET empty.stem=ʔ-own=INVIS=OBL=D1 car
'Who is the owner of this [here] car?' (VF)

Compare the following sentences, in which *–nuk$^{w}$* occurs without *–ad* and ungrammaticality results:

(34) *ʔəχ-nuk$^{w}$=ən
empty.stem-nuk$^{w}$=1 (JF)
[intended: *I own something.*]

(35) *ʔəχ-nuk$^{w}$=ən=sa kac'ənaq
empty.stem=nuk$^{w}$=1=OBL spoon (JF)
[intended: *I own a spoon.*]

In the examples above we have seen use of the 'empty' stem *ʔəχ-* . This stem can be used with a nominal ending *ʔəχeʔ* to mean 'thing, someone' (36).[4] Oftentimes *ʔəχ-* can alternate with an incorporated object, as we can see in (37) with the lexical affix *–[g]ila* 'to do, make':

(36) meχ=oχ ʔəχ=eʔ=χ la=χ qʷaʔlas=əs Nancy
sleep=D2 empty.stem=NM=VIS PREP=ACC bed=3.POSS Nancy
'Someone is sleeping in Nancy's bed.' (VF)
*Speaker: "We don't know who it is."*

(37) *The empty stem ʔəχ- alternates with an incorporated object:*

a. qʷəʔsta-gil=oχ=da c'ədaq
cup-make=D2=DET woman
'The woman was making a cup' (VF)

b. ʔəx-ʔil=oχ=da c'ədaq=eχ=χʷa qʷəʔsta
empty.stem-make=D2=DET woman=VIS=ACC cup
'The woman made a cup' (VF)

However, *ʔəχnugʷad* cannot incorporate an object:

(38) *ka-nugʷad=ən
car-own=1 (JF)
[*Intended*: 'I own a car.']

To summarize, we have seen that *-nukʷ* in the nominal domain is used productively to form 'possessor of x' constructions which may be used as nominal arguments or predicatively. We have also seen that the semantics of have-*nukʷ* constructions involves asserting existence of and possession over a possessum, where the possessum in these constructions is restricted to being a member of the set denoted by the predicate. The suffix *–nukʷ* cannot be added to the semantically-empty stem *ʔəχ-* to assert possession and existence of a completely 'indefinite' possessum – for that we must use the complex form *ʔəχənugʷad* 'to be an owner'. We will see below that there are many similarities between the semantics of *–nukʷ* in the nominal and the verbal domain; but first, we will consider a few idiomatic uses of *–nukʷ*.

### 3.2 Idiomatic uses of *–nukʷ*

The suffix *–nukʷ* is used idiomatically with a few predicates, many of which relate to emotions and psychological states. The examples in this

[4] Though the word *ʔəχʔeʔ* can be the subject of a sentence, it is never used to mean 'something' or 'someone' in constructions containing an indefinite object.

section are not meant to be exhaustive, but are meant to illustrate the propensity of this suffix to be used idiomatically.

The following sentence with *–nukʷ* is used to express a meaning of being afraid of something; this constructions involves a nominal stem, *kələm* 'fear; to be a scary thing'. Together with *–nukʷ*, this constructions mean 'to have a fear' or 'to be afraid' (to express that one is afraid of something in particular, the predicate *kəɬəla* is typically used):

(39) kələm-nukʷ=i=da c'ədaq
be.scary-nukʷ=D3=DET lady
"The lady's scared of something." (JF/TR)
[lit. *'The lady has a fear.'*]

One way of expressing pain or sadness is with the complex predicate *c'əxələnukʷ*:

(40) c'əxəlaχ-nukʷ=i=da c'ədaq lə-m̓is qʷ'asa
in.pain-nukʷ=D3=DET woman AUX-and.so cry
'The woman's feeling sad so she's crying.' (VF)

The predicate *c'əxəla* on its own means 'to be aching, to be in pain' and is often used to express a state of enduring aches and pains (e.g. *c'əxc'ola* 'to have a headache').

While the canonical verb meaning 'to love' is *ɬakʷəla*, this concept may also be expressed with the complex prediate *lakʷələnukʷ*. This is the only case I have seen of *–nukʷ* occuring on an apparently verbal stem without a passive suffix:

(41) ɬakʷəla-nukʷ=ən=χ=us
love-nukʷ=1=ACC=2.POSS
'I love you.' (VF)

(42) ɬakʷəla-nukʷ=ən χa=χ=ən wac'i
love-nukʷ=1 OBJ.PHR=ACC=1.POSS dog
'I love my dog.' (VF)
[The sentence is also okay with the oblique case: *ɬakʷələnukʷən χasən wac'i.* ]

Nonetheless, this complex predicates behaves in a verbal fashion with regards to indefinite object constructions: in order to refer to an indefinite loved one in the sentence, the passive appears on the predicate:

(43) ɬakʷəla-suʔ-nukʷ=oχ=da bəgʷanəm
love-O.PASS-nukʷ=D2=DET man
'The man loves someone.' / 'The man has someone to love.' (VF)

Usage of *–nuk$^{w}$* is not fully productive with psych/emotion predicates, however. For example, the predicate *ɬawis* 'to be angry (at x)' does not involve it.

(44) *ɬawis-nuk$^{w}$=i=da c'ədaq
angry-nuk$^{w}$=D3=DET lady
*Context: out-of-the-blue.* (JF)

Rather, this verb behaves just like an transitive verb with an optional goal argument:

(45) *A transitive verb ɬawis 'to be angry at':*

a. ɬawis=i=da c'ədaq lə-m̓is təp̓=i=χa q$^{w}$əʔsta
angry=D3=DET woman AUX-and.so break=D3=ACC cup
'The woman was mad and broke the cup.' (VF)

b. ɬawis=i=da bəg$^{w}$anəm=eχ=χa c'ədaq
angry=D3=DET man=VIS=ACC woman
'The man is angry at the woman.' (JF/TF)

c. ɬawis-ʔid-suʔ-nuk$^{w}$=oχ=da c'ədaq
angry-BEC-O.PASS-nuk$^{w}$=D2=DET lady
'The lady's mad at something.' (VF)

These and other idiomatic uses of *–nuk$^{w}$* are probably marginally productive in the language.

### 3.3 Indefinite object constructions

In the verbal domain the suffix *–nuk$^{w}$* can be attached to transitive verbal stems to productively form 'indefinite object constructions'. In such instances, a passive suffix must also be present. Kwak'wala has a set of passive suffixes which enable the promotion of non-subject arguments to subject position; when a passive suffix is present, the original AGENT of the sentence can be expressed optionally in an agentive by-phrase. Different passive suffixes are used to promote constituents depending on their semantic role. The three most commonly-occuring passive suffixes are illustrated in (46) below.[5] These include the 'object passive' *–suʔ* which promotes THEMES/PATIENTS, GOALS, and some SOURCES; the 'instrumental passive' *–ayu*

[5] Other passive suffixes include the 'experiencer passive' *-ɬ* occuring on psych predicates, another instrumental passive *-əm*, and *–k$^{w}$*, used in the formation of certain participles. See Levine (1980, 1984) for discussion of a lexical analysis of the passive in Kwak'wala.

which promotes INSTRUMENTS, and the 'locative passive' *-ʔas* which promotes LOCATIONS and some SOURCES.

(46) *Promotion of arguments with passive suffixes:*

*-suʔ passivizes themes/patients and goals:*

a. kəlxʷa-suʔ=oχ=da ƛətəmɬ=e=sa dagʷada=s=is ẇayas
buy-O.PASS=D2=DET hat=INVIS=OBL doctor=OBL=1.CO.POSS sweetheart
'The doctor's hat was bought by his sweetheart.' (VF)

b. dəɬ-ʔid-suʔ=oχ=da dagʷada
laugh-BEC-O.PASS=D2=DET doctor
'The doctor was laughed at.' (JF)

*-ayu passivizes instruments:*

c. hed=i=da ƛ'iṅa ğəls-ayu=sa c'ədaq
be.D3=D3=DEF grease paint-I.PASS=OBL woman
'It was (eulachon) grease that she was using for paint.' (JF/TF)

*-ʔas passivizes sources and ambient locations:*

d. hed=i=da dalaʔelas gəluɬ-ʔid-ʔas-s=oχ (Bill)
be.D3=D3=DET bank steal-BEC=L.PASS=OBL=D2 (Bill)
'It was the bank that he (Bill) stole from.' (VF)
[lit. *'It's the bank that's the stolen-from place of Bill.*']

e. ƛ'isala-ʔas=oχ=da Bankuba
sun.shine-O.PASS=D2=DET Vancouver
'It's sunny in Vancouver.' (JF)
[lit. '*Vancouver is the sun-shined-on place.*']

When *–nukʷ* is added to these same passivized verbs and the object is made indefinite, the result is an indefinite object construction where the object is 'absorbed' and the agent subject remains:

(47) *Indefinite object constructions:*

*-suʔnukʷ absorbs themes/patients and goals:*

a. kəlxʷa-suʔ-nukʷ=i=da babağʷəm qe=ʔes ʔəbəmp
buy-O.PASS-nukʷ=D3=DET little.boy BEN=3.CO.POSS mother
'The boy bought something for his mother' (VF)

b. dəɬəla-suʔ-nuk$^{w}$=oχ=da babağ$^{w}$əm=χ
laugh-O.PASS-nuk$^{w}$=D2=DET little.boy=VIS
'The little boy is laughing at something/someone.' (VF)

*-ayunuk$^{w}$ absorbs instruments:*

c. ğəls-ʔid-ayu-nuk$^{w}$=ən
paint-BEC-I.PASS-nuk$^{w}$=1
'I painted with something.' (VF)

*-ʔasnuk$^{w}$ absorbs sources and ambient locations:*

d. gəluɬ-ʔid-ə-ʔas-nuk$^{w}$=i Bill=eχ=χa dala
steal-BEC-ʔ-O.PASS-nuk$^{w}$=D3 Bill=VIS=ACC money
'Bill stole money from somewhere.' (VF)

e. ƛ'isala-ʔas-nuk$^{w}$=oχ
sun.shine-O.PASS-nuk$^{w}$=D2
'It's sunny somewhere.' (VF)

This is a puzzling pattern. Passive suffixes on predicates usually demote the agent, but in the constructions in (47) the agent remains as subject. Indeed, the suffix *–nuk$^{w}$* cannot occur on verbal stems if a passive suffix is not also present:

(48) *həm̓-xʔid-nuk$^{w}$=oχ=da bəg$^{w}$anəm
eat-BEC-nuk$^{w}$=D2=DET man
*Speaker's note: Need to have the 'suʔ' in there.* (JF)

Since *–nuk$^{w}$* must co-occur with a passive suffix, its distribution on verbal predicates is constrained. More generally, the distribution of *–nuk$^{w}$* appears to mirror the distribution of passive suffixes exactly in that it can be used to absorb any and only those constituents that can be passivized. It follows that verbs that do not take arguments and thus do not co-occur with passive suffxies, such as unaccusatives, cannot be used to form indefinite object constructions. An illustration is given in (49)-(51) with the verb *meχa* 'to sleep'; (49) shows a basic sentence with this predicate and (50) shows that the predicate is ungrammatical with a passive suffix. In (51) a sentence with a passive suffix and *–nuk$^{w}$* is also ungrammatical.

(49) meχ-ʔid=oχ busi
sleep-BEC=D2 cat
'The cat fell asleep.' (VF)

(50) *meχ-ʔid-suʔ=oχ busi
[lit. *The cat was slept.*] (JF)

(51) *Context: Nancy is a new nurse, and it's her first day working in the hospital. What did she do?*

a. *meχ-ʔid-suʔ-nuk$^{w}$=oχ Nancy
sleep-BEC-O.PASS-nuk$^{w}$=D2 Nancy (JF)
[lit. *'Nancy slept someone.'*]

It should also be noted that passivization and absorption by indefinite object constructions in Kwak'wala is a symmetrical process: either constituent in a ditransitive may be passivized (52) or absorbed (53), with any resulting ambiguities in interpretation being resolved by context and real world knowledge:

(52) *Symmetrical passivization of objects:*

a. k'ak'adoxsila-suʔ=oχ=da buk$^{w}$
read-O.PASS=D2=DET book
'A book is being read.' (VF)

b. k'ak'adoxsila-suʔ=oχ=da gənanəm=χ
read-O.PASS=D2=DET kid=VIS
'The little kid is being read to.' (VF)

(53) *Symmetrical absorption of objects*:

a. k'ak'adoxsila-suʔ-nuk$^{w}$=oχ=da bəg$^{w}$anəm qoʔ=oχ=da gənanəm=χ
read-O.PASS-nuk$^{w}$=D2=DET man BEN=D2=DET kid=VIS
'The man is reading something to his kid.' (VF)

b. k'ak'adoxsila-suʔ-nuk$^{w}$=i Bill=ə=sa buk$^{w}$
read-O.PASS-nuk$^{w}$=D3 Bill=INVIS=OBL book
'Bill is reading a book to someone.' (JF)

Note that the constituents promoted by passive suffixes and absorbed in indefinite object constructions are not necessarily subcategorized 'arguments' of a verb in the lexical semantics sense: the promoted location arguments in (46-e) and (47-e) are clear examples of non-core constituents. Therefore indefinite object constructions cannot be used to distinguish subcategorized arguments from adjuncts.

Significantly, the fact that indefinite object constructions and passive constructions mirror each other in this way suggests that synchronically these constructions are related. Yet whereas passive suffixes usually result in the demotion of agent subjects, indefinite object constructions maintain the agent subject, even though passive suffixes are present.

Turning now to some more fine-grained properties of indefinite object constructions, examples (54)-(55) show that the 'absorbed' argument cannot also be overtly expressed:

(54) *həm̓-xʔid-suʔ-nuk$^{w}$=ən=χa ʔabəls
eat-BEC-O.PASS-nuk$^{w}$=1=ACC apple (JF)
[lit. *'I ate something (an) apple.'*]
*Speaker: "You'd just say ham'xʔidən χa ʔabəls – I ate an apple"*

(55) *laχala-suʔ-nuk$^{w}$=i=da bəg$^{w}$anəm=e=sa t'əmyayu
sell-O.PASS-nuk$^{w}$=D3=DET man=INVIS=OBL phone
[lit. *'The man is selling something phones.'*] (JF)
*Speaker: "No…because we know that it's phones that he's selling."*

Noticing that these predicates appear to lack an internal theta-role, Levine (1984) argued that indefinite object constructions, which he labelled as instances of 'pseudoincorporation', are derived by a process in the lexicon which renders the base predicates intransitive. Whether or not we adopt Levine's lexical analysis, what the data in (49)-(50) do clearly show is that indefinite object constructions are not a type of anti-passive construction.

While indefinite object constructions cannot co-occur with an overt expressed argument, they do in fact introduce a referent into the discouse which can be referred back to by a pronoun later in the discourse. This is shown by the examples (56) and (57) below, where the pronoun in the second sentence (*=s* in (56), *=oχ* in (57)), refers to the indefinite object introduced by the first clause.

(56) dala-suʔ-nuk$^{w}$=oχ=da c'ədaq
carry-O.PASS-nuk$^{w}$=D2=DET woman

lə-m̓is c'əw=s la=χ=is x$^{w}$ənuk$^{w}$
AUX-and.then give=OBL PREP=ACC=3.CO.POSS child
'The woman carried something. Then she gave it to her kid.' (VF)

(57) quta-suʔ-nuk$^{w}$=oχ=da ləχeʔ. Walas=oχ.
full-O.PASS-nuk$^{w}$=D2=DET basket big=D2
'The basket is full. It's big.' (JF/TR)
*Speaker:* "Whatever it is. Is it a big rock?"
*Katie:* "It's big, does that mean that the basket is big…or that the thing inside of it is big?"
*Speaker*: "The thing inside of it is big. When you say walasoχ, whatever is inside it is big."

The semantic properties of indefinite object constructions are similar (though not identical) to those outlined above for nominal have-*nuk$^{w}$* constructions, suggesting that a unified analysis of *–nuk$^{w}$* constructions may be warranted. Indefinite object constructions are volunteered just in those

contexts where an object is known to exist, but its nature is unknown to the speaker. Just like have constructions formed from *–nuk*$^{w}$ on nominal stems, then, indefinite object constructions involve the assertion of existence of an indefinite object. The following examples in (58)-(60) illustrate these constructions in context:

(58) *Context: You can hear one of your neighbours a few apartments over singing a love song to someone, but you don't know who is being sung to.*

dənχala-suʔ-nuk$^{w}$=oχ=da bəg$^{w}$anəm=sa saləm
sing-O.PASS-nuk$^{w}$=D2=DET man=OBL love.song
'The man is singing a love song to someone.' (JF)

(59) *Context: You come in looking a little green in the face and have to explain yourself.*

həm̓-xʔid-suʔ-nuk$^{w}$=ən. lə=m̓is=ən c'əq'a-xʔid=aʔ
eat-BEC-O.PASS-nuk$^{w}$=1 AUX-and.so=1 sick-BEC=VIS
'I ate something and now I feel sick.' (VF)

(60) kəlx$^{w}$a-suʔ-nuk$^{w}$-xənt=i la=χ Ted
buy-O.PASS-nuk$^{w}$-must=D3 PREP=ACC Ted
'He must have bought something from Ted.' (VF)

Indefinite object constructions can't be used when the nature of the object is known to the speaker. If the nature of the object is known, it may either be overtly expressed or indicated pronominally by the presence of an appropriate case-marker. The example in (61) demonstrates that this construction cannot be used to comment on an object when the object is apparent:

(61) *Context: We look out the window and see Alexis. We can see she's eating an apple.*

*həm̓ap̓-suʔ-nuk$^{w}$=oχ Alexis
eat-O.PASS-nuk$^{w}$=D2 Alexis
*Speaker: "We gotta say the apple. hamap̓=oχ$^{w}$=χa ʔabəls."* (JF)

Rather than merely encoding the presence of an indefinite object per se, indefinite object constructions are most readily volunteered when the existence of the indefinite object in particular is what is being discussed. In the following example, the speaker is expressing the fact that she is not hungry because she already ate (something) at home. What is salient is not the fact that the speaker ate *something*, but rather that eating already occurred. In this context, it is odd to use an indefinite object construction with *–nuk*$^{w}$, as shown in (62):

(62) *Context: You come to my house and I ask if you're hungry, but you already ate at home before you came.*

a. k'is=ən pusqa. la-ʔəmd=ən həm̓=xʔid la=χa gukʷ
NEG=1 hungry AUX-DISC=1 eat-BEC PREP=ACC house
'I'm not hungry. I had something to eat at home.' [ate at home](VF)

b. # həm̓-xʔid-suʔ-nukʷ=ən
eat-bec-o.pass-nukʷ=1
[lit. *'I ate something.'*]

It is possible, however, that this effect of marking the salience of the indefinite object is present only with predicates like *həm̓xʔid* 'to eat' which are optionally transitive. With strongly transitive predicates that require the overt expression of an object, objects that can't be named somehow must be expressed using an indefinite object construction. It is not clear whether these cases also express salience of the indefinite object, given that syntactic expression of the object is obligatory. An example of a strongly transitive predicate is *təpa* 'to break', as shown in (63):

(63) *Strongly transitive predicate təpa 'to break'*

a. *Ungrammatical without any expression of the object:*

* təp-ʔid=i=da babağʷəm=eχ
break-BEC=D3=DET little.boy=VIS (JF)
*Speaker: 'Need to know what he broke.'*

b. *Grammatical with omitted object, if object is known or pointed to:*

təp-ʔid=i=da babağʷəm=eχ=χ=oχ
break-BEC=D3=DET little.boy=VIS=ACC=D2 (JF)
'The boy broke it.' [*object is known or pointed to*]

c. *Unknown objects require indefinite object constructions:*

təp-ʔid-suʔ-nukʷ=i=da babağʷəm
break-BEC=O.PASS-nukʷ=D3=DET little.boy
'The boy broke something.' (VF)

Recall that in addition to asserting existence, nominal have-*nukʷ* constructions involve an assertion of possession over an indefinite object. Indefinite object constructions do not involve an assertion that the indefinite object is owned by the subject. Subjects are, rather, simply AGENTS and EXPERIENCERS. This is shown in the examples below. In (64), the subject 'Katie' is afraid of something, but she need not be afraid of something she owns – she could be

afraid of ghosts. In (65) the subject 'Katie' smells something, but similarly, this need not be something in her possession. Similarly in (66), it clearly cannot be the case that an expletive subject 'owns' a place. In these examples, there is no entailment that the subject possesses the indefinite object.

(64) kəɬəla-suʔ-nuk$^{w}$=oχ Katie=yəχ
scared-O.PASS-nuk$^{w}$=D2 Katie=VIS
'Katie's afraid of something.' (VF)

(65) misala-suʔ-nuk$^{w}$=i Katie
smell-O.PASS-nuk$^{w}$=D3 Katie
'Katie smells something.' (VF)

(66) yug$^{w}$a-ʔas-nuk$^{w}$=oχ
rain-L.PASS-nuk$^{w}$=D2
'It's raining somewhere.' (JF/TR)

It is possible that historically a relationship of possession did hold between the agent subject of these sentences and the indefinite object – that is, that these constructions were originally 'indefinite *possessed* object constructions'. Consider a sentence like *c'əwinux$^{w}$ƛənƛoƛ* 'I'll give you something.' (stem: *c'əwiʔ*) which was cited in Boas (1947: 368) and is represented below in (67). The predicate in (67) involves the word *c'əwiʔ* which contains a nominalizer *–iʔ* signaling that it is a noun. This construction therefore is not built on a verbal stem at all; this sentence is, rather, structured just like any nominal have-*nuk$^{w}$* construction, with *–nuk$^{w}$* suffixed to a nominal predicate meaning something like 'giving'. Literally, the sentence in (67) must mean something like: 'There is in my possession a future giving to you.' Note that in this sentence both an assertion of existence and an assertion of possession are part of the meaning of the utterance, just as we have seen in relation to have-*nuk$^{w}$* constructions generally. The assertion of possession in this instance is overdetermined, however, by also being inherent to the change-of-possession meaning of the predicate 'give' itself.

(67) *A have-nuk$^{w}$ construction with 'to give'* (Boas 1947: 368)

a. c'əwinux$^{w}$ƛənƛoƛ
c'əw-iʔ-nuk$^{w}$-ƛ=ən=ƛoƛ
give-NM-nuk$^{w}$=FUT=1=2
'I'll give you something.'

b. c'əw-iʔ
give.NM
'giving (N)'

In a sentence like (67-a), then, a possessor-relation between the subject and the indefinite object is simultaneously indicated by the suffix *–nuk$^{w}$* and by an entailment of the verb 'give' as a change-of-possession verb. The presence of ambiguity about where to attribute the 'possessive' meaning in these sentences makes them a possible locus of reanalysis. Imagine the following scenario:

speakers, hearing a sentence like (67-a), could have attributed the possession entailment between the subject and the indefinite object entirely to the verb, thereby allowing the suffix *–nukʷ* to be bleached of it possessive meaning in these sentences and left with only its other entailment, namely its assertion of existence of an indefinite object. Following this reanalysis, the use of *–nukʷ* to assert the existence of an indefinite object was extended to verbal predicates other than change-of-possession verbs to form indefinite object constructions. In other words, 'indefinite *possessed* object constructions' became simply 'indefinite object constructions' in two steps: first, the possessive meaning of *–nukʷ* on change-of-possession verbs was reanalyzed as solely attributable to the verbal semantics of the host verbs, thereby bleaching the suffix of its possessive meaning in these contexts; next, the use of *–nukʷ* to signal the existence of an indefinite object was extended to verbs other than those entailing a change of possession, becoming a fully generalized and productive verbal construction.

To make this hypothesis about semantic change seem a little more familiar, we can compare it to the grammaticalization of *have* in English past participle constructions. The verb *have* is still used as a contentful verb to assert possession in English, as in sentences like 'I have a dog and three cats'. Nonetheless, *have* has lost its possessive entailments in constructions where this verb has grammaticalized as an auxiliary, such as in sentences like "Gill has broken her mother's vase." In this example Gill broke a vase, but it was not hers – it was her mothers. Readings of metaphorical 'closeness' between Gill and the vase aside, a possessive meaning is not entailed by the verb *have* when it is used as an element of a participle, just as the subject of indefinite object constructions in Kwak'wala is not entailed to be a 'possessor' of the indefinite object. Nonetheless, in the early stages of this construction, these entailments may have been present.

Data from an earlier stage in the language show that indefinite object constructions have become generalized, productive constructions relatively recently. Thus in his 1911 and 1947 grammars, Boas provides us with a few examples of words and sentences containing *–nukʷ* which resemble indefinite object constructions. Unlike the indefinite object constructions we see today however, these constructions did not consistently contain passive suffixes, suggesting that the construction had not fully generalized. Boas describes these examples as being 'idiomatic'. He comments:

> "*-nukʷ* is used idiomatically to mean 'something' or 'someone'. In such cases it is frequently, but not always, added to a verbal form: *ʔəχidnukʷ* 'someone takes'; *ʔiʔaχəlanukʷ* 'one of them is working'; *doχẇaλəɬnukʷ* 'something that has been discovered'; *gaχəwəlsnukʷ* 'some came out'; *c'əwinuxʷƛənƛoλ* 'I'll give you something.' (*c'əwiʔ*)." (1947: 348).

Some, but not all of the examples Boas provides do contain passive suffixes. Of the examples given in the cited passage, the form *doχẇaλəɬnukʷ* 'something that has been discovered' includes the experiencer passive suffix *-ɬ*. Elsewhere he gives examples which apparently involve the locative passive

*-ʔas* and the instrumental passive *–ayu*, as shown in examples (68) and (69) below. The presence of examples likes these suggests that passive suffixes were a possible, though not obligatory, occurrence in indefinite object constructions at this stage in the language:

(68) laasnuk$^{w}$
la-ʔas-nuk$^{w}$
go-L.PASS-nuk$^{w}$
'being gone somewhere (having a going place)'
(Boas 1947: 348)

(69) m̓ay̓unux$^{w}$ƛasicoχ
m̓as-ayu-nuk$^{w}$-ƛ=as ʔis=s=oχ
what-I.PASS-nuk$^{w}$-FUT=2 with=OBL=D2
'What are you going to do with it?' (Boas 1947: 348)

In the modern language, the predicates cited by Boas in the passage above cannot occur alone with *–nuk$^{w}$* like we see in those examples – they require a passive suffix. Examples of indefinite object constructions as they constructed today are given in (70)-(71) for *c'əw* 'to give', and *ʔiʔaχəla* 'to work'; both examples contain passive suffixes on the verb.

(70) c'əw-suʔ-nuk$^{w}$=oχ=da c'ədaq la=χ=is nəmuk$^{w}$
give-O.PASS-nuk$^{w}$=D2=DET woman PREP=ACC=3.POSS friend
'The woman gave something to her friend.' (JF/VF)

(71) ʔiʔaχəlaʔsunuk$^{w}$ən
work-O.PASS-nuk$^{w}$=1
'I'm working on something' (VF)

In (72) the sentence we saw earlier from Boas' generation (72-a) is compared to the form of this sentence that would be used today (72-b). The sentence in (72-b) has lost the nominal ending on the stem and contains a passive suffix in its place:

(72) *Comparison of a sentence from Boas (1947) (a) and its modern expression (b)*

a. c'əwinux$^{w}$ƛənƛoƛ
c'əw-iʔ-nuk$^{w}$-ƛ=ən=ƛoƛ
give-NM-nuk$^{w}$=FUT=1=2
'I'll give you something.'

b. c'əwsuʔnuk$^{w}$ƛənloɬ
c'əw-suʔ-nuk$^{w}$-ƛ=ən=loɬ
give-O.PASS-nuk$^{w}$-FUT=1=2
'I'll give you something'

The differences between the examples given in Boas' grammars and data obtained from recent fieldwork therefore suggests that the generalized form of indefinite object constructions, including the obligatory use of passive suffixes on verbal stems, is a relatively recent development.

We have already seen in section 3.1 that sometime after the generation of speakers consulted by Boas,[6] the distribution of *–nuk$^w$* widened so that this morpheme was no longer constrained to attach solely to 'words' with completive endings but could also attach directly to stems, thereby taking over much of the former function of the synonymous suffix *–ad*. We have also already encountered a potential clue about what drove this change. In particular, Boas' observation that *-nuk$^w$* attaches to stems ending in *m, n, l* (where *–ad* fails to apply) means that the stem/word generalization was not consistent in the language. When used in have-*nuk$^w$* constructions, words such as *sasəm* 'children' appear as *sasəm-nuk$^w$* rather than **sasəm-ad*. This phonological constraint on *–ad* may itself have resulted from a sound change, or it could have been stable in the language for a long time. In any case, such conditioning could have had very significant repercussions for the status of *–nuk$^w$* in the language. Hearing words like *sasəmnuk$^w$*, speakers learning the language would have learned a pattern whereby *–nuk$^w$* attached to both 'words' and 'stems', thus removing the former constrains on this suffix and paving its path for possible generalization to other stems. To the extent that the frequency of constructions in Boas and Hunt's (1902) Kwakiutl Tales are any indication of the frequency of constructions in everyday use, assertions of possession over kin are indeed one of the most common uses of have constructions; forms such as *sasəmnuk$^w$* 'having children' may therefore have had a significant effect on learners' reanalysis of *–nuk$^w$* as a potential 'stem' suffix. However it began, the result of the historical reanalysis of *–nuk$^w$* is a grammar in which *–nuk$^w$* can be applied to stems – including, potentially, verbal ones, which today always co-occur with passive suffixes where nominalizing suffixes were present historically.

To summarize, we have seen that *–nuk$^w$* is used in the verbal domain along with passive suffixes to form indefinite object constructions which assert the existence of an indefinite object. The properties of modern indefinite object constructions have become regular and generalized relatively recently in history and have been conditioned by the argument structure and the semantics of *–nuk$^w$*. Relevant to the genesis and of these constructions is the historical reanalysis of *–nuk$^w$* as a suffix which may attach directly to stems, as well as generalization of constructions with indefinite possessed objects to predicates other than change-of-possession verbs, involving a loss of 'possessor' entailments. Passive suffixes occur where nominalizing suffixes were present historically, and the particular passive suffix used to 'absorb' a given indefinite argument is the same passive suffix that would be used to promote that argument to subject were it not indefinite. In terms of the timing of these changes, the reanalysis of the suffix *–nuk$^w$* as a stem suffix and subsequent extension to apply directly to new stems must have occurred sometime between the generation of speakers consulted by Boas and today's speakers.

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[6] The speakers consulted by Levine (1980, 1984) also appear to construct indefinite object constructions in the 'modern' sense discussed in this paper, indicating that the changes under discussion also occurred before this time.

## 5 Conclusion

This paper has explored the curious synchronic distribution of the suffix *–nukʷ* in Kwak'wala and has discussed this how this distribution relates to historical changes that have taken place after the generation of speakers consulted by Boas. The syntactic and semantic features of *–nukʷ* was discussed in three domains: in the nominal domain occuring in both fossilized words and in productive 'have' constructions; in idiomatic constructions relating to psychological states; and in the verbal domain where it attaches to verbal stems with passive suffixes to form indefinite object constructions. These indefinite object constructions are particularly interesting from a synchronic point of view given the co-occurrence of passive suffixes and agentive subjects. A unified synchronic analysis of *–nukʷ* must account for the syntactic and semantic features documented in this paper.

A synchronic analysis of *–nukʷ* constructions will require one more ingredient that is generally lacking in most analyses of Kwak'wala – namely, an assumption of lexical categories. Throughout this paper we have seen that the suffix *–nukʷ* consistently differentiates between stems which denote a set and stems which denote an event/function – i.e. between nominal (and adjectival) versus verbal stems. While the language has ample derivational resources for deriving nouns from verbs, and while it is capable of using nouns and adjectives predicatively, it does not seem to be the case that all stems are considered equal from the perspective of the syntax. The data in this paper should therefore be taken as evidence that Kwak'wala does not in fact lack a category distinction between nouns and verbs.

## Appendix: Word Lists

Below are lists of words containing the suffixes *–nukʷ* and *–ad* from two external. sources. The first two word lists are from the First Voices online database (http://www.firstvoices.ca/), accessed May 2013; the list presented here has been transliterated into APA orthography and only includes lexical items we can be fairly sure contain the suffixes in question. The remaining word lists include examples combined from Boas' two grammars (1911, 1947).

Words containing *–nukʷ* (First Voices)

| | |
|---|---|
| dalanukʷ | 'money, has or to have' |
| gənukʷ | 'how many persons' |
| gigəʔoɬʔnukʷ | 'parents' |
| həm̓eʔnukʷ | 'has food to eat' |
| kanukʷ | 'owns a car' |
| k'adayunukʷ | 'pencil or pen, owns/has a' |
| k'awayunukʷ | 'knife, owns or has a' |
| k'əbayunukʷ | 'scissors, has' |

| | |
|---|---|
| kʷ'ədayunukʷ | 'glue/tape/bandaids, has' |
| ləʔasʔnukʷ | 'went somewhere or had somewhere to go' |
| nanukʷ | 'worried about someone who hasn't arrived' |
| ṗiṗəλəmnukʷ | 'angel' |
| sasəmnukʷ | 'having children' |
| siχʷsoʔlasʔnukʷ | 'to have a place to paddle through' |
| c'aẏanukʷ | 'female has a younger sister, male has a younger brother' |
| c'ədzisʔnukʷəmeʔ | 'New Vancouver' |
| waqʷ'anukʷ | 'older/younger sibling of the opposite sex, to have an' |
| χʷənukʷ | 'child, (your)' |
| ṅulanukʷ | 'female has older sister, male has older brother' |
| qʷənq̇agaʔɬnukʷ | 'awaken by crying' |

Words containing *–ad* (First Voices)

| | |
|---|---|
| ʔəbayad | 'mother, has a' |
| λiğad | 'name, having a' |
| dzawadəʔenuχʷ | 'Kingcome Inlet, person or people from' [c.f. dzaxʷən 'oolichan'] |
| dzawadi | 'Knight Inlet' [c.f. dzaxʷən 'oolichan'] |
| eğayad | 'female friend, female has a' |
| gəẇəlĺad | 'has a lunch or provisions (e.g. for a journey)' |
| giğad | 'chief, those who have a' |
| gugʷad | 'house, owns a house' |
| ğəgad | 'wife, has a' |
| ğəgadəxʔid | 'get a wife, man gets married' |
| ɬawadəxʔid | 'to get a husband' |
| noğad | 'wise, having wisdom' |
| χʷəngʷad | 'child, (someone) has a' |
| ṅəmugʷad | 'friend, someone has a' |

Words containing *–nukʷ* (Boas 1911: 506, 1947: 348)

| | |
|---|---|
| sasəmnukʷ | 'having children' |
| wəɬdəmnukʷ | 'to have a word, i.e. to talk to' |
| doχẇaλəɬnukʷ | 'one who has seen things' |
| gilnukʷ | 'belonging to ancient times, ancestors' |
| ɬə'lnukʷ | 'to have a dead one (i.e. one of a number dies)' |
| wanukʷ | 'having a river' |
| ʔəχiʔnukʷ | 'creator' |
| bəkʷilinukʷ | 'creator' (someone who made human beings) |

| | |
|---|---|
| λax$^{w}$iʔnuk$^{w}$ | ‘seat owner’ |
| q’uliʔnuk$^{w}$ | ‘one who has an uncle’ |
| k’isʔonuk$^{w}$ | ‘crest owner’ |
| laasnuk$^{w}$ | ‘being gone somewhere (having a going place)’ |
| yew̓inəmnuk$^{w}$ | ‘having a reason for giving a winter ceremonial’ |
| ƛ’asabalanuk$^{w}$ | ‘owner of southwest wind’ |
| y̓ug$^{w}$alanuk$^{w}$ | ‘owner of rain wind’. |
| ʔəχidnuk$^{w}$ | ‘someone takes’ |
| ʔiʔaχəlanuk$^{w}$ | ‘one of them is working’ |
| doχw̓aλəɬnuk$^{w}$ | ‘something that has been discovered’ |
| ƛaqanuk$^{w}$ | ‘overhanging (ƛaχʔid ‘to turn over a flat thing’)’ |

Words containing –*ad* (Boas 1911: 506, 1947: 316)

| | |
|---|---|
| k’əlad | ‘place for shaking off huckleberries’ |
| q’iq’ed ~ q’iq’iad | ‘having |
| yag$^{w}$ad | ‘to have a gift’ |
| q’əmdad | ‘having a song’ |
| noğad | ‘song leader’ |
| səmyad | ‘having a mouth’ |
| ʔawaw̓ad | ‘having large ones’ |
| nawalag$^{w}$ad | ‘having supernatural |
| λəğad | ‘having a name’ |
| qayadzad | ‘having a walking place’ (i.e. song words) |
| dzawad | ‘having olachen (Knights Inlet) |
| cəlwad | ‘having crabapples |
| ʔoyad | ‘having a father’ |
| ʔabayad | ‘having a mother’ |
| nəğ$^{w}$əmbad or nəğ$^{w}$ayad | ‘having parents-in-law’ |
| x$^{w}$əng$^{w}$ad | ‘having a child’ |
| ɬawad | ‘having a husband’ |
| k’idad | ‘to have a chief’s daughter’ |
| xung$^{w}$adəxʔid | ‘to become possessed of a child’ |
| abayad | ‘havinga mother’ |
| ğigad | ‘having a wife’ |
| caxmodad | ‘having sea-egg shells’ |
| məmxcaladzad | ‘to have shame’ |
| mədzidzad | ‘having whistles’ |
| qayadzad | ‘having a walking place, words of a song’ |
| q$^{w}$’əled | ‘life owner (saver)’ |
| c’ayawad | ‘ready to make up mind’ |

Words containing *–id* instead of *–ad*: "This suffix [-*ad*] has a secondary form in *–id* which seems to be more nominal in character than the form *–ad.* It is used in forms of address." (Boas 1911: 507)

| | |
|---|---|
| q'ag$^{w}$id | 'slave-owner' (i.e. O master!) |
| ẇadzid | 'dog-owner' (i.e. O master! [who has me for a dog]). |
| Hamdzid | 'food-owner' (Name) |

Synonyms containing either suffix:

| | |
|---|---|
| ɬiwad, ɬiwiʔnuk$^{w}$ | 'to have a mat' (ɬix$^{w}$-) |
| q'ag$^{w}$ad, q'akonuk$^{w}$ | 'to have a slave' (q'ak$^{w}$-) |
| dəxəmlad, dəxəmɬnuk$^{w}$ | 'to have owl mask' |

Both suffixes together in a single word:

| | |
|---|---|
| ʔəχnug$^{w}$ad | 'owner' |

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