

# Nuuchahnulth Modification: syntactic evidence against Category Neutrality<sup>1</sup>

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Based on the observation that any open-class category in Nuuchahnulth can be either a predicate or an argument, this language has traditionally been regarded as syntactically category-neutral. This paper examines the category-sensitivity of complex predicates and relative clauses, and determines that there is in fact ample evidence within the syntax of Nuuchahnulth to enable us to dispense with the notion that it is a language free of inherent syntactic categorial distinctions.

## 1 Introduction

Nuuchahnulth (nuučaahnulth) is a Southern Wakashan language spoken on the west coast of Vancouver Island, British Columbia. Formerly known as Nootka, this dialectally diverse language is comprised of approximately 14-20 distinct variants (Rose 1981). Unless otherwise noted, the dialect under consideration within this paper is that of Ahousaht (ʔaahʔuusʔath).

Since the publication of Swadesh's (1939) "Nootka Internal Syntax," Nuuchahnulth has been repeatedly cited as a language with no categorial distinctions (see Jacobsen 1979 for a comprehensive review of references to the status of Wakashan categories). In his influential article, Swadesh (1939: 79) makes the following claim about Nuuchahnulth:

One general type of word structure applies to all words with the exception of a limited number of particles. Normal words [i.e. non-particles] do not fall into classes like noun, verb, adjective, preposition, but all sorts of ideas find their expression in the same general type of word, which is predicative or non-predicative according to its paradigmatic ending.

As this quote indicates, the characterisation of Nuuchahnulth as a category-neutral language arises from the observation that nouns, verbs and adjectives each appear to have the ability to function as either predicates or arguments. This flexibility is demonstrated in (1):<sup>2</sup>

- (1a)   mamuuk-ʔiš      čakup-ʔi  
         work-3SG      man-DET  
         'The man is working'
- (1b)   čakup-ʔiš      mamuuk-ʔi  
         man-3SG      work-DET  
         'The working one is a man'
- (1c)   hiix<sup>w</sup>athii-ʔiš    mamuuk-ʔi  
         cranky-3SG    work-DET  
         'The worker is cranky'

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<sup>2</sup>Abbreviations are as follows: CL = classifier, CAUS = causative, DIR = directive transitivizer, DEIC = deictic, DET = determiner, DUR = durative aspect, ERG = ergative, EXIS = existential, MOM = momentaneous aspect, PSN = position, QUOT = quotative, RED = reduplication, REL = relativizer, RLT = relative, SG = singular, TOP = topic.

- (1d) mamuuk-ʔiš      hiix<sup>w</sup>athii-ʔi  
work-3SG          cranky-DET  
‘The cranky one is working’
- (1e) hiix<sup>w</sup>athii-ʔiš      čakup-ʔi  
cranky-3SG          man-DET  
‘The man is cranky’
- (1f) čakup-ʔiš          hiix<sup>w</sup>athii-ʔi  
man-3SG              cranky-DET  
‘The cranky one is a man’

In this predicate-initial language, the roots *mamuuk* ‘work’, *hiix<sup>w</sup>athii* ‘cranky’ and *čakup* ‘man’ receive predicative interpretations when they are inflected for person and number, while the same roots are interpreted as arguments when they occur with the determiner *-ʔi*. This apparent overlap in the distribution of lexical categories has prompted Nakayama (1993) to assert that there exists in Nuuchahnulth only a “sharp distinction between predicates and arguments as structural domains” and that, in fact, “parts-of-speech distinctions, such as nouns and verbs, are not very much of an integral part of the formal structure of [the] grammar” of this language.

The examples in (1) appear to constitute straightforward evidence for the hypothesis espoused by Marantz (1997, as cited in Davis and Matthewson 1999), who claims that when inherently category-neutral roots “are placed in a nominal environment, the result is a ‘nominalization’; when the roots are placed in a verbal environment, they become verbs.” The existence of putative category-neutral languages such as Nuuchahnulth seem to lend obvious support for the proposal that it is the functional categories of D and *v* that determine the lexical category of the roots which serve as their complements. This proposal, hereafter referred to as “The Functional Determination Hypothesis,” has as its aim the removal of redundancies between lexical and functional categories. The reader is referred to Davis and Matthewson (1999) for further discussion of this hypothesis.

The proponents of the category neutrality hypothesis have not gone unchallenged. In both Demirdache and Matthewson (1995) and Baker (in prep) it is argued that an inherent distinction between lexical categories constitutes a fundamental trait of Universal Grammar. Davis and Matthewson (1999) show the limitations of the Functional Determination Hypothesis in representing languages as structurally dissimilar as Salish and English. Within Wakashan literature specifically, Jacobsen (1979) provides an argument for a distinction in the morphological behaviours of the lexical classes in Makah, a language closely related to Nuuchahnulth. In summary, Jacobsen notes the following differences in morphological distributions with regards to nouns and verbs: (1) only nouns may directly occur as arguments; verbs functioning as arguments require a determiner; (2) possessive suffixes may only occur with nouns; (3) iterative and future markings are restricted to verbs. While similar differences in morphological distribution have yet to be conclusively determined for Nuuchahnulth, Rose (1981) does provide some suggestive evidence regarding the category-sensitivity of Nuuchahnulth aspectual morphology: continuative aspect is limited to verbal and adjectival roots, while gradulative aspect occurs only with verbal roots.

Despite this morphological evidence for category distinctions in Wakashan, it may still be assumed that there is no basis for representing distinct and inherent categories *in the syntax* of these languages. Indeed, Nakayama (1993: 286) states that notions of lexical categories may still be represented *semantically* in the grammar of Nuuchahnulth even though there is no evidence for separate morphosyntactic representations of these categories. This sentiment echoes Robins (1952), who makes the following statement with reference to Nuuchahnulth:

There is only one form-class of major word-stems; but these stems can be nominalized or verbalized, and the two grammatical categories are thereby still introduced, though at a slightly different level in the analysis.

It appears that although some authors are comfortable dispensing with the idea of distinct syntactic categories, they nonetheless prefer to retain some semantic notion of a categorial distinction.

With this background in mind, the present study aims to confront the long-standing assumption that the underived categories of noun, verb and adjective are not represented at a syntactic level in Nuuchahnulth. This paper draws upon the methodology developed by Demirdache and Matthewson (1995), who target complex nominal predicates and relative clauses as sources for differentiating nouns from other lexical classes in Salish. The outline of the paper is as follows. Section 2 examines the category-sensitivity of both initial- and final-position in complex nominal predicates. Section 3 introduces two structurally distinct forms of Nuuchahnulth relative clauses, and shows that for both of these constructions, only nouns may occur as heads. The evidence in these sections will conclusively demonstrate the inaccuracy of referring to Nuuchahnulth as a syntactically category-neutral language.

## 2 Complex Nominal Predicates

In Nuuchahnulth, there is a modification construction which allows a single clause to contain two predicative elements:

- (2a) [ʔurʔ-ʔiʃ            ʔuucma]            Susan  
       good-3SG            woman            Susan  
       ‘Susan is a good-hearted woman’
- (2b) [ʔiŋ-aq-aq-ʔiʃ            čims]            Smokey  
       big-very-very-3SG        bear            Smokey  
       ‘Smokey is a very, very big bear’
- (2c) [mamaʔni-ʔiʃ            ʔakum]            Betsy  
       caucasian-3SG            queen            Betsy  
       ‘Betsy is a white queen’

The inflectional marking, as a clitic, attaches word-finally to the first predicative element in the clause. It is ungrammatical for the inflection to appear on the second element:

- (3) \* [ʔurʔ    ʔuucma-ʔiʃ]        Susan  
       good    woman-3SG        Susan  
       ‘Susan is a good-hearted woman’

In these complex predicates, the initial element must be an individual-level predicate. The following examples are disallowed because *hawiiqʔ* ‘hungry’, *nunuuk* ‘singing’ and *hiixʷathii* ‘cranky’ denote stage-level properties:

- (4a) \* [hawiiqʔ-ʔiʃ        ʔuucma]            Susan  
       hungry-3SG        woman            Susan  
       ‘Susan is a hungry woman’
- (4b) \* [nunuuk-ʔiʃ        ʔuucma]            Susan  
       sing-3SG            woman            Susan  
       ‘Susan is a singing woman’
- (4c) ?? [hiixʷathii-ʔiʃ        ʔuucma]            Susan  
       cranky-3SG        woman            Susan  
       ‘Susan is a cranky woman’

### 2.1 A Categorical Constraint on Final Elements

There are additional restrictions on the constituency of these complex predicates. While noun-final orderings are permitted, as in the earlier examples in (2), adjective-final orderings are not:

- (5a) \* [ʔuucma-ʔiʃ     *ʔurʔ*]     Susan  
 woman-3SG     *good*     Susan  
 'Susan is a female good-hearted one'
- (5b) \* [ɛims-ʔiʃ     *ʔih-aq-aq*]     Smokey  
 bear-3SG     *big-very-very*     Smokey  
 'Smokey is a very, very big bear (lit: Smokey is a bearish very, very big one)'
- (5c) \* [ʔakum-ʔiʃ     *mamaʔii*]     Betsy  
 queen-3SG     *caucasian*     Betsy  
 'Betsy is a white queen (lit: Betsy is a queenly white person)'

In (5), each of the initial elements is a noun, while the final elements are adjectives. It is also ungrammatical for an adjective to occur finally with an initial adjective:

- (6a) \* [q<sup>w</sup>ačat-aq-ʔiʃ     *ʔurʔ*]     Susan  
 beautiful-very-3SG     *good*     Susan  
 'Susan is a very beautiful good-hearted one'
- (6b) \* [ʔaphii-ʔiʃ     *nanaʔa*]     ʔaa     ʔuucma-ʔi  
 friendly-3SG     *intelligent*     DEIC     woman-DET  
 'That woman is a friendly intelligent one'
- (6c) \* [ʔurʔ-ʔiʃ     *ʔaphii*]     ʔaa     ʔuucma-ʔi  
 good-3SG     *friendly*     DEIC     woman-DET  
 'That woman is a good-hearted friendly one'

A verbal element in final position is similarly disallowed:

- (7a) \* [q<sup>w</sup>ačat-aq-ʔiʃ     *nunuuk*]     Susan  
 beautiful-very-3SG     *sing*     Susan  
 'Susan is a very beautiful singer'
- (7b) \* [nanaʔa-ʔiʃ     *mamuuk*]     ʔaa     čakup-ʔi  
 intelligent-3SG     *work*     DEIC     man-DET  
 'That man is an intelligent worker'
- (7c) \* [ʔaašaa-ʔiʃ     *maakuk<sup>w</sup>*]     ʔaa     čakup-ʔi  
 selective-3SG     *buy*     DEIC     man-DET  
 'That man is a selective buyer'

Only nouns are permitted in the final position in Nuuchahnulth complex predicates. In the examples in (5) and (6), each of the final predicates denotes a permanent property of the subject, so no distinction between individual- and stage-level modification could justify a difference in relative ordering. Since there is no known semantic factor which could account for the noun-final restriction on Nuuchahnulth complex predicates, a syntactic categorial distinction is necessary.

## 2.2 Restrictions on Initial Elements

As noted in Section 2, stage-level predicates are disallowed in initial position in complex predicates. In addition to this restriction on initial elements, there is also a constraint which prohibits two nouns from co-occurring in one complex predicate:

- (8a) \* [†uucma-ʔiš quuʔas] Susan  
 woman-3SG F.N.person Susan  
 'Susan is a female First Nations person'
- (8b) \* [quuʔas-ʔiš †uucma] Susan  
 F.N.person-3SG woman Susan  
 'Susan is a First Nations woman'
- (8c) \* [ʔiičʰum-ʔiš †uucma] Susan  
 old.person-3SG woman Susan  
 'Susan is an old woman'
- (8d) \* [†uucma-ʔiš čakup] Tim  
 woman-3SG man Tim  
 'Tim is a womanish man'

In order to avoid creating noun-noun complex predicates, a single predicate may be used which carries the semantics of both nouns. For example, in (9) it is shown that †uučuk 'womanish' is an aspectualized predicate which can only be used in reference to men:

- (9a) †uuč-uk-ʔiš Tim  
 woman-DUR-3SG Tim  
 'Tim is womanish (and a man)'
- (9b) \* †uuč-uk-ʔiš Susan  
 woman-DUR-3SG Susan  
 'Susan is womanish (and a man)'

The ungrammaticality of the noun-initial cases shown in (8) arises from a categorial constraint which requires that the first element in a complex predicate be an individual-level adjective, rather than simply an individual-level predicate. While Davis, Lai and Matthewson (1997) argue against an independent category of adjective for the Salish languages St'át'imcets and Secwepemctsin, the Salish complex nominal predicates are unlike those in Nuuchahnulth in allowing both N-N and apparent A-N combinations. Therefore, while the notion of "individual-level predicate" may suffice for describing the initial element in Salish complex predicates, this label is inadequate for Nuuchahnulth. Only individual-level adjectives, and not individual-level nouns, are the first element in Nuuchahnulth complex nominal predicates.

Davis, Lai and Matthewson (1997) adopt a Salish categorial distinction between the class of nouns and the undifferentiated class of verb/adjective. Such a notion of an undifferentiated class will not be utilized within this paper for Nuuchahnulth. The complex predicates presented in this paper constitute evidence for a Nuuchahnulth distinction between verbs and adjectives, since if one were to assume an undifferentiated verb/adjective class, it would merely be an accident that the individual-level predicates of this class pattern one way and the stage-level predicates pattern another. I will therefore assume that "adjective" is an appropriate label for the class of individual-level predicates which have been shown to contrast with nouns in their privileged ability to appear initially in complex predicates.

### 3 Relative Clauses

In their cross-linguistic study of relative clauses, Keenan and Comrie (1977) provide the following definition for what constitutes a relative clause (RC): an RC is any syntactic object which (1) specifies a large set of objects, called the "domain" of relativization, and (2) restricts this set to some subset for which the "restricting" sentence is true. Using this diagnostic, Nuuchahnulth can be seen to have two distinct means of forming relative clauses, each of which may be either "headed" or "headless". The RC types differ in the positioning of their heads as well as in the presence of certain morphology. The first type, termed a "left-headed" relative clause, has a head which precedes a clause containing relativizing morphology:

- (10) quuʔas-ʔiʃ      [h̄aa    *čakup-ʔi*      yaq-ʔitq      nunuuk]  
 F.N.person-3SG DEIC *man*-DET      REL-3SG.RLT      sing  
 ‘That man who is singing is a First Nations person.’

In (10), the highlighted element, *čakup* ‘man’, is the head and is modified by the following clause. This head is not obligatory. The following is an example of a headless RC of this type:

- (11) quuʔas-ʔiʃ      [h̄aa    yaq-ʔitq      nunuuk]  
 F.N.person-3SG DEIC REL-3SG.RLT      sing  
 ‘That one who is singing is a First Nations person’

In these examples, the main predicate, *quuʔas* ‘First Nations person’, is marked with the third-person inflection *-ʔiʃ*, while relative clauses use special relative morphology. For third-person singular, this relative inflection is either *-ʔitq*, as in (11), or *-ii*, as in (12), and it attaches to a relativizer morpheme, *yaq-*.<sup>3</sup>

- (12) yaac-waas-it-ʔiʃ      [čakup-ʔi    yaq-it-ii      ʔuutʔyaap    suuḥaa]  
 walk-outside-past-3SG    man-DET    REL-past-3SG.RLT    bring      salmon  
 ‘The man who brought the salmon left’

The second type of Nuuchahnulth relative clause, referred to as a “right-headed” relative clause, is both structurally and morphologically dissimilar to left-headed relative clauses. In right-headed relative clauses, both the previously described relative inflection and the morpheme *yaq-* are absent. Instead, what appears is a head preceded by a restricting small clause (see Section 3.2.1 for discussion):

- (13) ʃiiḥ-šiʔ-ʔiʃ      [h̄aa    haʔukʷ-as-ʔi    *ḥaakʷaaʔ*]  
 cry-MOM-3SG    DEIC    eat-surface-DET    *girl*  
 ‘That girl who is eating (at the table) is starting to cry’

I assume that the determiner is a clitic which appears word-finally on the first element of its complement (see Stonham 1999). For a structural representation of this type of DP, see Section 3.2.1.

In the restrictive context of specifying out of a group of girls the one girl who is eating, the right-headed RC in (13) is deemed as natural as the equivalent right-headed RC in (14):

- (14) ʃiiḥ-šiʔ-ʔiʃ      [h̄aa    *ḥaakʷaaʔ-ʔi*    yaq-ʔitq      haʔukʷ-as]  
 cry-MOM-3SG    DEIC    *girl*-DET      REL-3SG.RLT    eat-surface  
 ‘That girl who is eating (at the table) is starting to cry’

The two RC types differ distributionally in that transitive verbs occurring with objects are not permitted in the restricting clause of right-headed RCs.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> According to Rose (1981: 128), these relative inflection forms differ in that *-ʔitq* is used for “definite and particularized” referents, whereas *-ii* is reserved for “particularized but indefinite” referents. Within the Kyuquot dialect of Nuuchahnulth described by Rose, this contrast may be represented by *yaqkupʔitq* ‘that’s the one which/who he likes’ (definite) and *hayimḥiyiis yaqsuupi* ‘I don’t know which he killed’ (indefinite).

<sup>4</sup> It does not appear that this restriction on right-headed RCs holds for all dialects of Nuuchahnulth, however. Stonham (1999) presents evidence from the Tsishaath (čišaaʔaḥ) dialect studied by Sapir and Swadesh which indicates that transitive verbs and their accompanying lexical objects are allowed in right-headed RCs, or at least in headless versions of this type. For example:

[ʔuca-čič-it-ʔi      mačʔaath]  
 go-MOM-past-DET    Machhla.tribe  
 ‘The one who went to Machhlaath’

(adapted from Stonham 1999: 244, #38)

Unfortunately, Stonham presents no headed versions of this type, and indeed, he mistakenly refers to this RC type as “left-headed.” As noted earlier, left-headed RCs in Nuuchahnulth contain the relativizer *yaq-*, as well as relative inflection.

(15a) \* yaac-waas-it-ʔiš            [ʔuutʔyaap-ʔi            suuḥaa            čakup]  
 walk-outside-past-3SG    bring-DET            salmon            man  
 ‘The man who brought the salmon left’

(15b) ?? quuʔas-ʔiš            [ḥaa            maakukʷ-ʔi            maḥʔii    čakup]  
 F.N.person-3SG    DEIC    buy            house    man  
 ‘That man who bought a house is a First Nations person’

This restriction also holds for headless versions of right-headed relative clauses (see Section 3.2.1 for discussion of the status of this construction as a *pro*-headed right-headed relative clause):

(16a) \* yaac-waas-ʔaʔ-ʔiš            [ʔuutʔyaap-ʔi            suuḥaa]  
 walk-outside-now-3SG    bring-DET            salmon  
 ‘The one who brought the salmon left’

(16b) ?? kuuwɪt-it-ʔiš            čʔapac    [ʔuca-čɪʔ-it-ʔi            mačʔaath]  
 steal-past-3SG    canoe    go-MOM-past-DET            Machhla.tribe  
 ‘The one who went to Machhlaath stole the canoe’

Unlike right-headed RCs, left-headed RCs may have restrictive clauses that contain transitive verbs with lexical objects:

(17) quuʔas-ʔiš            [ḥaa            čakup-ʔi            yaq-ʔitq            maakukʷ            maḥʔii  
 F.N.person-3SG    DEIC    man-DET            REL-3SG.RLT    buy            house  
 ‘That man who bought a house is a First Nations person’

The impermissibility of objects occurring in the restrictive clause of Ahousaht right-headed RCs may result from one of the two following constraints: (1) a restriction on the transitivity of the predicate in the restricting clause of right-headed RCs, or (2) a “same-side” constraint which prohibits complements in restrictive clauses of right-headed RCs from appearing before the head of the construction. While these hypotheses remain to be tested, the latter option in particular would not be unexpected, since the same restriction applies to other languages such as English and St’át’imcets (Henry Davis, p.c.). This is shown in the following examples (in the St’át’imcets examples, ‘=’ denotes a clitic boundary, while ‘-’ denotes an affix boundary):

English:

(18a) ‘the man good at Linguistics’

(18b) \* ‘the good at Linguistics man’

St’át’imcets:

(19a) ti=sqáycw=a            ti=ats’x-en-táli=ha            ti=sqáx7=a  
 DET=man=EXIS            DET=see-DIR-TOP=EXIS            DET=dog=EXIS  
 ‘the man who saw the dog’

(19b) \* ti=ats’x-en-táli=ha            ti=sqáx7=a            sqaycw  
 DET=see-DIR-1SG.ERG=EXIS            DET=dog=EXIS            man  
 ‘the man who saw the dog’

The following sections will examine the category-sensitivity of both the left-headed and right-headed RCs of Nuuchahnulth. In Section 3.1, I consider the category requirements of the predicate and head positions in left-headed RCs, and then in Section 3.2, I turn to the restrictions on the head position in right-headed RCs.

### 3.1.1 Main Predicates within L-headed Relative Clauses

Lexical items of any category can appear as the predicate of a restricting clause. In the following example, the verb *nunuuk* 'sing' appears in this position:

- (20) kʷi-kʷix-as-iʔ-it-ʔiʂ Sue ʔuukʷit [ʔaa ʂakup-ʔi yaq-ʔitq *nunuuk*]  
 RED-kiss-cheek-MOM-past-3SG Sue to DEIC man-DET REL-3SG.RLT *sing*  
 'Sue kissed that man who is singing'

It is also possible for a predicative noun, as in *quuʔas* 'First Nations person', to occur in this position:

- (21) kʷi-kʷix-as-iʔ-it-ʔiʂ Sue ʔuukʷit [ʔaa ʂakup-ʔi yaq-ʔitq *quuʔas*]  
 RED-kiss-cheek-MOM-past-3SG Sue to DEIC man-DET REL-3SG.RLT *F.N.person*  
 'Sue kissed that man who is a First Nations person'

Adjectives that are accompanied by classifiers also occur in relative clauses as the predicate of a restricting clause. In the example in (22), the adjective *ʔiih* 'big' appears with the classifier *-umt*, which roughly provides the semantics of 'round':

- (22) haaʔapʂ-ʔiʂ [ʔaa ʂims yaq-ʔitq *ʔiih-umt*]  
 eat-3SG DEIC bear REL-3SG.RLT *big-CL*  
 'The bear that is big is eating'

Based on the evidence that any category of predicate can occur as the predicate of a relative clause, it appears that for this position there are no categorial requirements. This is not surprising considering the uncontroversial fact that lexical items of any open-class category can be predicates in Nuuchahnulth.

### 3.1.2 The Category of the Head of L-headed Relative Clauses

While there are no category restrictions on the restricting clause of this construction, the head position of this relative clause *is* category-sensitive. Nouns can head a relative clause:

- (23a) haaʔapʂ-ʔiʂ [ʔuh ʂims yaq-ʔitq tupk-umt]  
 eat-3SG DEIC *bear* REL-3SG.RLT black-CL  
 'That bear that is black is eating'
- (23b) quuʔas-ʔiʂ [ʔaa ʔiiʂum-ʔi yaq-ʔitq haʔuk]  
 F.N.person-3SG DEIC *old.person-DET* REL-3SG.RLT eat  
 'That old person who is eating is a First Nations person'
- (23c) kʷi-kʷix-as-iʔ-it-ʔiʂ Sue ʔuukʷit [ʔaa ʂakup-ʔi yaq-ʔitq nunuuk]  
 RED-kiss-cheek-MOM-past-3SG Sue to DEIC *man-DET* REL-3SG.RLT sing  
 'Sue kissed that man who is singing'

Verbs, in contrast, are not permitted as heads<sup>5</sup>:

- (24a) \* kʷi-kʷix-as-iʔ-it-ʔiʂ Sue ʔuukʷit [ʔaa *nunuuk-ʔi* yaq-ʔitq ʂakup]  
 RED-kiss-cheek-MOM-past-3SG Sue to DEIC *sing-DET* REL-3SG.RLT man  
 'Sue kissed that singer who is a man'

<sup>5</sup> One means of avoiding verb-headed relative clauses is to use within the main predicate of the sentence a suffix which connotes the meaning of the ungrammatical verb head. For example, the grammatical version of (24c) is:

haʔuk-ya-ʔas-ʔiʂ ʔaa yaq-ʔitq mamuuk  
 eat-PSN-ground-3SG DEIC REL-3SG.RLT work  
 'The one sitting on the ground who is working is eating'



(24b) \* quuʔas-ʔiʃ      [ħaa    *ħaʔuk-ʔi*      yaq-ʔitq      ʔiičum]  
 F.N.person-3SG DEIC    *eat*-DET      REL-3SG.RLT    old.person  
 ‘That one who is eating who is an old person is a First Nations person’

(24c) ? haʔuk-ʔiʃ      [ħaa    *tʔ-ʃas-ʔi*      yaq-ʔitq      mamuuk]  
 eat-3SG      DEIC    *sit*-ground-DET    REL-3SG.RLT    work  
 ‘That one sitting on the ground who is working is eating’

It is important to note that there is nothing in the semantics of verbs which would restrict them from functioning as heads. In the sentences in (24), the verb heads should receive the interpretation of nominalized verbs, since they occur with determiners. In other instances in the language, when the verb is not functioning as the head of a relative clause, verbs receive just such an interpretation:

(25)    yaaca-ʔiʃ      ʔuh    nunuuk-ʔi  
 walk-3SG      DEIC    sing-DET  
 ‘That singer is leaving’

According to the Functional Determination Hypothesis, any lexical item that is in a nominal syntactic environment (that is, any complement of a determiner) should be a noun. However, it appears that beneath this “nominal” guise lies an underlying syntactic distinction in the root. Within the class of lexical items that occur with determiners, it is the case that nouns, and not verbs, can head a relative clause.

A categorial distinction for heads of relative clauses is even more striking when individual-level adjectives are taken into account. Individual-level adjectives are also disallowed as heads:

(26a) \* yaac-waas-wiʔas-ʔiʃ      [ʔuh    *qʷačat-aq-ʔi*      yaq-ʔitq      nunuuk]  
 walk-outside-plan.to-3SG DEIC    *beautiful*-very-DET    REL-3SG.RLT    sing  
 ‘That very beautiful one who is singing is planning to walk outside’

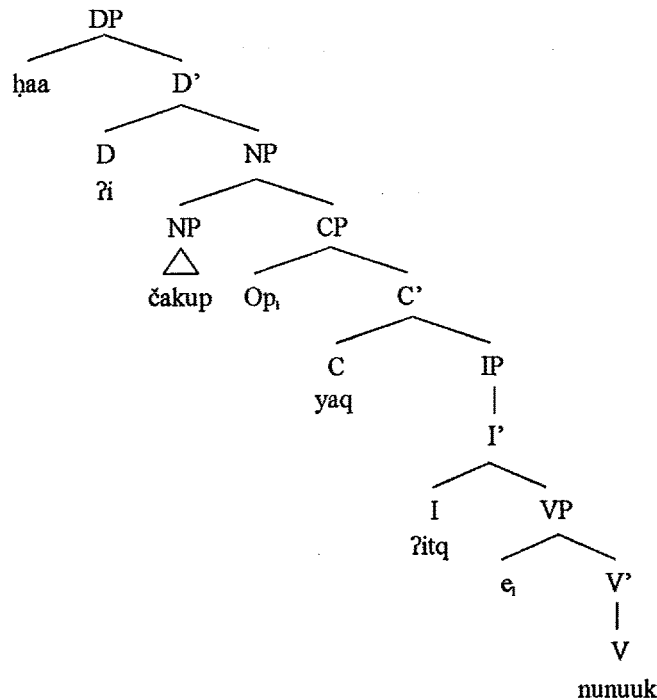
(26b) \* čims-ʔiʃ      [ʔuh    *tupk-umrʔ -ʔi*      yaq-ʔitq      haawapš]  
 bear-3SG      DEIC    *black*-CL-DET    REL-3SG.RLT    eat  
 ‘That black one that is eating is a bear’

(26c) \* haawapš-ʔiʃ      [ħaa    *ʔiih-umrʔ -ʔi*      yaq-ʔitq      čims]  
 eat-3SG      DEIC    *big*-CL-DET    REL-3SG.RLT    bear  
 ‘That big one that is a bear is eating’

Like nouns, the adjectives in the above examples describe permanent properties. I know of no semantic explanation for how some lexical items denoting permanent properties can head a relative clause, while others cannot. While individual-level adjectives and nouns have similar semantics, they do have different syntactic categories. It is this syntactic distinction that determines that only nouns can head a relative clause.

The head of a relative clause must therefore be represented as an N, as in the following structural representation of the relative clause from the example below (I assume that the determiner *-ʔi* encliticizes at PF to the first element within the the complement of D):

(27)    kʷi-kʷix-as-iʔ-it-ʔiʃ      Sue ʔuukʷitʔ    [ħaa    *čakup-ʔi*      yaq-ʔitq      nunuuk]  
 RED-kiss-cheek-MOM-past-3SG    Sue to      DEIC    *man*-DET    REL-3SG.RLT    sing  
 ‘Sue kissed that man who is singing’



### 3.1.3 “Headless” L-headed Relative Clauses

Based on the evidence that only nouns are permitted as heads of relative clauses, it is possible to re-examine the claim that the relative clauses in (28) are truly “headless”:

(28a) quʔas-ʔiʂ [ʔaa yaq-ʔitq nunuuk]  
 F.N.person-3SG DEIC REL-3SG.RLT sing  
 ‘The one who is singing is a First Nations person’

(28b) kamatʃ-aqʔ-iʔ-it-wa-ʔiʂ [yaq-it-ii kuuwɪt ʔapac]  
 run.into.woods-inside-towards(?)-past-QUOT-3SG REL-past-3SG.RLT steal canoe  
 ‘The one who stole the canoe ran into the woods (hearsay)’

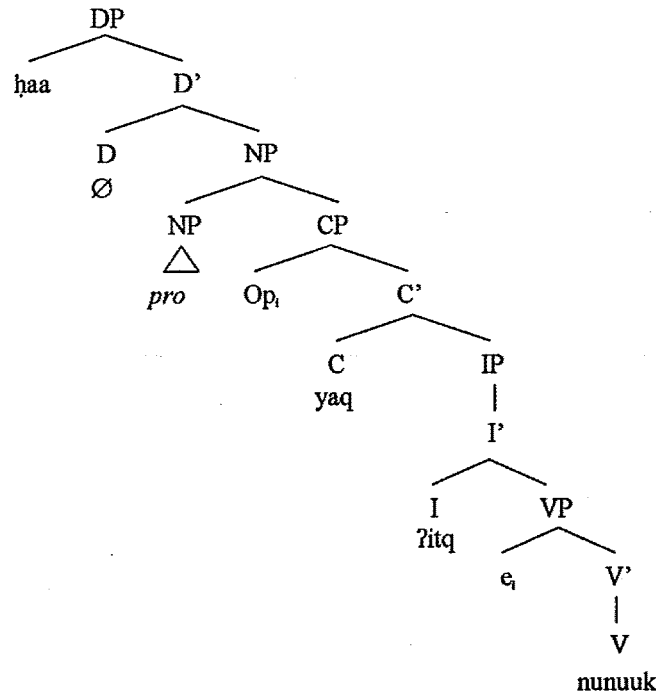
(28c) ciqʔiʔa-ʔiʂ [ʔaa yaq-ʔitq waʔiʔ-itʃ]  
 talk-3SG DEIC REL-3SG.RLT sleep-inside  
 ‘That one who is sleeping is talking away’

There is an understood head in these relative clauses. Headless relative clauses may occur when there is a discourse antecedent to the understood head, so that the head need not be explicitly stated. They also occur when it is impossible to discern the properties necessary to assign a lexical label to an item.

Since heads are necessarily nominal, this understood head may be represented by the NP *pro*. This allows for the following representation of “headless” relative clauses, as in (29)<sup>6</sup>:

<sup>6</sup> I leave open the issue of why no overt determiner appears in *pro*-headed left-headed relative clauses. It may be that there is a null determiner in this construction, or it may be that there is actually a determiner -ʔiʂ which fails to appear phonologically because it lacks a suitable phonological host. As previously noted, -ʔiʂ is a clitic which finds its phonological host within its complement. Within left-headed relative clauses, the first phonologically contentful item within the *pro*-determiner’s complement (that is, the head of the CP) may be outside of the determiner’s phonological phrase.

- (29) quuʔas-ʔiʂ [ħaa *pro* yaq-ʔitq nunuuk]  
 F.N.person-3SG DEIC REL-3SG.RLT sing  
 'That one who is singing is a First Nations person'



### 3.2 Head Restrictions on Right-Headed Relative Clauses

The same categorial restriction that applies to the head of left-headed RCs also applies to the head of right-headed RCs. Nouns may be the head of this construction:

- (30a) tiič-ači-ʔaʎ-ʔiʂ [ħaa waʔič-iʔ-ʔi *čakup*]  
 alive-MOM-now-3SG DEIC sleep-inside-DET *man*  
 'That man who is sleeping is in better health (now)'
- (30b) haawapš-ʔiʂ [ʔuħ tupk-umʔ-ʔi *čims*]  
 eat-3SG DEIC black-CL-DET *bear*  
 'That bear that is black is eating'
- (30c) yaaca-ʔiʂ [ʔuħ ʔiičum-ʔi *ʔuucma*]  
 walk-3SG DEIC old.person-DET *woman*  
 'The old woman is leaving'

While nouns are freely permitted, verbs are not:

- (31a) \* *čims*-ʔiʂ [ħaa tupk-umʔ-ʔi *haawapš*]  
 bear-3SG DEIC black-CL-DET *eat*  
 'That eating thing that is black is a bear'

(31b) \* tiič-ači-ʔaʔ-ʔiš            [ḥaa        čakup-ʔi        waʔič-(it)]  
 alive-MOM-now-3SG        DEIC        man-DET        *sleep*-(inside)  
 ‘That sleeping one who is a man is in better health (now)’

(31c) \* yaaca-ʔiš            [ḥaa        qʷačat-aq-ʔi        nunuuk]  
 walk-3SG                DEIC        beautiful-very-DET        *sing*  
 ‘That singer who is very beautiful is leaving’

Given the appropriate context, there is no semantic reason for why these examples should be ruled out. Likewise, there is no semantic explanation for why adjectives are prohibited as heads, as in the following sentences:

(32a) \* kʷaaʔuc-uk-s            [ḥaa        qʷačat-aq-ʔi        ʔaphii]  
 granddaughter-POSS-1SG DEIC        beautiful-very-DET        *friendly*  
 ‘That friendly one who is beautiful is my granddaughter’

(32b) \* haawapš-ʔiš            [ḥaa        čims-ʔi            tupk-umt]  
 eat-3SG                DEIC        bear-DET            *black-CL*  
 ‘That black thing that is a bear is eating’

(32c) \* yaaca-ʔiš            [ḥaa        nunuuk-ʔi        qʷačat-aq]  
 walk-3SG                DEIC        sing-DET            *beautiful-very*  
 ‘That very beautiful one who is singing is leaving’

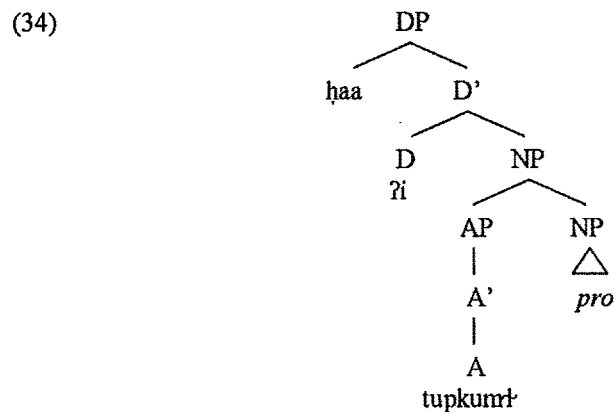
Only nouns can occur as heads in these relative clauses. Again, this follows from a categorial syntactic distinction rather than from the semantics of the construction.

### 3.2.1 *pro* Heads

Since the head of this relative clause is necessarily a noun, it follows that when there is an implicit head, this head may be represented as *pro*. In the following example, *tupkumt* ‘black’ is not simply a nominalised adjective, but is instead an adjective modifying an implicit head NP, *pro*:

(33) čims-tiʔita-ʔiš            [ḥaa        tupk-umt-ʔi        *pro*]  
 bear-pretend-3SG            DEIC        black-CL-DET  
 ‘That black thing is an abstract bear’

This modification construction may thus be represented as an NP complement of a DP, as in the following small clause analysis (again, I assume that the D -ʔi encliticizes to its host, *tupkumt* ‘black’, at PF):



Unlike the left-headed relative clauses, there is no CP or IP in these relative clauses. If CP and IP were to occur, then we would expect the morpheme *yaq-*, as well as relative inflection (cf. Section 3.1.2). Neither of these features appears in right-headed RCs. The representation shown in (34) can plausibly be extended to account for all so-called "verbal" or "adjectival" arguments in Nuuchahnulth. In instances when verbs or adjectives appear to be complements of determiners, it is actually the case that the complement of the determiner is an NP *pro* which is modified by a verb or adjective (see Matthewson and Davis 1995 for similar arguments for Salish).

#### 4 Conclusion

The characterisation of Nuuchahnulth as a category-neutral language is an erroneous one. While a lexical item of any open-class category may occur as a simple predicate, this generalisation does not hold for complex predicates. Only adjectives appear in initial position of complex predicates, and only nouns appear in final position. Similar categorial restrictions are found within relative clauses, where only nouns may occur as the head of these constructions. Given these distinctions, there is strong syntactic evidence for a three-way distinction between the lexical categories of noun, verb and adjective in Nuuchahnulth. This serves to reinforce the conclusion drawn by Jacobsen (1979) regarding morphological distinctions between categories in Wakashan.

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