Connected Speech in Nłeʔképmxcín:
Functions of *ʔé məł nés* in Discourse and Storytelling*

Ella Hannon
University of British Columbia

Abstract: This squib focuses on the trimorphemic construction *ʔé məł nés* in Nłeʔkepmxcín (Interior Salish), using novel data collected during targeted elicitations and weekly conversation sessions with two speakers, data from personal narratives, or *spipípiləxm*, told by *K̓ʷəłtèzétkʷu* (Bernice Garcia), and traditional stories, or *sptekʷł*, told by *Ċuʔsínek* (Marty Aspinall). The construction *ʔé məł nés* is particularly common in connected speech, and notably absent from examples collected during more 'standard' elicitation sessions. I propose that *ʔé məł nés* is primarily involved in event sequencing, and that it may also imply causality. I also describe a third, distinct use of *ʔé məł nés*, whereby it introduces anecdotes that are conversationally relevant.

Keywords: Nłeʔkepmxcín, pragmatics, semantics, discourse

1   Introduction

This squib will examine the discourse functions of the construction *ʔé məł nés* and its variants in Nłeʔkepmxcín (ISO639-3: thp), a Northern Interior Salish language spoken in a number of communities along the Fraser River by approximately 100 people (Gessner et al. 2022). This squib brings data to bear from conversations between Nłeʔkepmxcín speakers and stories told by Nłeʔkepmxcín speakers.

1.1   Overview

The morphological construction *ʔé məł nés* is ubiquitous in informal conversational speech and in collected narratives but absent from many targeted elicitation sessions. However, neither the meaning contribution nor the discourse functions of the phrase *ʔé məł nés* have been explicitly analyzed in the literature on Nłeʔkepmxcín. Speakers regularly use *ʔé məł nés* in narratives and in conversations — (1), (2), and (3) are examples of utterances containing *ʔé məł nés*, volunteered by consultants during conversation sessions or during the telling of narratives.

(1) **ʔé məł nés** *ném c̓es qʷəmqʷáms ʔe tmíxʷ ʔéyɬ xʷúyceʔ.* [1,2]
    ʔé məł nés   ném   c̓=[ʔ]es-qʷəm~qʷám=s   ʔe=tmíxʷ   ʔéyɬ   xʷúyceʔ
    ʔé məł nés   INTS   EMPH=STAT-AUG~beautiful=3POSS   DET=land   now   more
    'And then the land is very beautiful (again).'   [CMA, Story 07/04/23][3]

(2) **ʔé məł nés** *c̓əltwíʔx ʔéyɬ.*
    ʔé məł nés   c̓əl-t-wíʔx   ʔéyɬ
    ʔé məł nés   cold-IMM-DVL   now
    'That's why it's always cold.'   [KBG, Conversation 09/29/23]

(3) *xʷúy̓ kn teʔ pípləx̌m. **ʔé məł nes** ʔəs cʔés ɬn ímc ʔes kə́kn̓s te zəlkʷúʔ.*
    xʷúy̓=kn   teʔ   pí<p>ləx̌-m   **ʔé məł nés**
    PROSP=1SG.SBJ   DEM   tell.story<DIM>-CTR.MID   **ʔé məł nés**
        ʔə=s=cʔé=s   ɬ=n-ímc
        D/C=NMLZ=come=3POSS   DET=1POSS-grandchild
            ʔe=s=kə́kn̓-s   t=e=zəlkʷúʔ
            DET=NMLZ=partner-3POSS   OBL=DET=chokecherry
    'I'll tell a little story, about my *imc*, my grand-daughter's partner, who gave me some
    chokecherries.'   [CMA, Conversation 08/11/23]

I claim that *ʔé məł nés* has three main functions in discourse contexts:

    I.   *ʔé məł nés* temporally sequences two propositions, such that the second proposition occurs after the first proposition
    II.   *ʔé məł nés* implies a causative relation between two propositions, such that the second proposition is caused by the first proposition
    III.   *ʔé məł nés* may introduce an anecdote that is relevant to the conversation, when it occurs sentence-initially

---

[1] Glosses used in this paper for the most part follow the Leipzig Glossing Conventions (Comrie, Haspelmath and Bickel 2008). Additional glosses used in this paper are: CNSQ = consequential particle; CTR = control pre-transitivizer; CTR.MID = control middle; DIM = diminutive reduplication; DVL = developmental suffix; EMPH = emphatic particle; EPEN = epenthetic vowel; IMM = immediate suffix; INDEF.OBJ = indefinite object; INDEF.SBJ = indefinite subject; INFER = inferential evidential; INS = instrumental suffix; INT = introductory predicate; INTS = intensifier; MOD = modal particle; RLT = relational pre-transitivizer; SENSE = sensory evidential; WN = weak necessity modal. Most additional glosses come from Thompson & Thompson (1996).

[2] In this four-line gloss, the first line represents a phonemic transcription in the orthography used in Thompson & Thompson (1992, 1996) and Egesdal, Thompson, & Jimmie (2011). The second line is a morpheme-by-morpheme segmentation of the Nɬeʔkepmxcín, using the underlying forms listed in Thompson & Thompson (1992, 1996). The third line is a morpheme-by-morpheme segmentation in English. The fourth line is an English translation. Stress is represented according to Thompson & Thompson (1996).

[3] For each example collected or recorded during conversation sessions by me, the speaker's initials, the date, and the type of discourse are specified – Story indicates that the data is from a traditional story, Narrative indicates that the data is from a story about a speaker's own experiences, and Conversation indicates that the data comes from a conversation.

There are further constructions regularly volunteered in discourse that begin with *ʔé* and *məł*, including *ʔé məł xéʔ*, *ʔé məł wíʔ*, *ʔé məł néʔ*, and *ʔé məł xéʔ néʔ*. *ʔé məł xéʔ* shares at least one of the discourse functions of *ʔé məł nés*: linking propositions temporally, from my reading of Egesdal et al. (2011). A temporal use of *ʔé məł xéʔ* is in (4).

(4)   *ʔé məł xéʔ e scúns téʔe ł səpsépns nésuze xʷə́stuze nł cecitxʷép.* **ʔe məł xeʔ** *e sxʷəsxʷə́sts ł smə́łmúłec.*

    ʔé=məł   xéʔ   e=s=cún=s   téʔe   ł=səp~sépn-s
    INT=CNSQ   DEM   D/C=NMLZ=say=3POSS   DEM   DET=AUG~daughter.in.law-3POSS
       nés-uz-e   xʷə́s-t-uz-e   n=ł=ce~citxʷ-ép
       go-PL-IMP   return.home-IMM-PL-IMP   at=DET=AUG~house-bottom
          ʔé=məł   **xeʔ**   ʔe=s=xʷəs~xʷə́s-t=s
          INT=CNSQ   DEM   D/C=NMLZ=PL~return.home-IMM=3POSS
              ł=s-məł~múłec
              DET=NMLZ-AUG~woman
    'He (Old Coyote) told his daughters-in-law: "Go! Return to your houses." The women went back to their houses.'   (Egesdal et al. 2011:110–111)

None of these constructions featuring *ʔe* and *məł* have been explicitly analyzed in the literature on Nłeʔkepmxcín. I have chosen to analyze solely *ʔé məł nés* both for reasons of space, and due to its frequent use in conversations and in stories.

    This paper is structured as follows: Section 1.2 outlines my methodology and data sources. Section 2 describes each of the morphemes involved in *ʔé məł nés*, both syntactically and semantically. Section 3 describes the three discourse functions of *ʔé məł nés* listed above in more detail. Section 4 provides a preliminary analysis of *ʔé məł nés* as a discourse marker. Section 5 concludes.

1.2   Methodology

The conversations that these data come from were recorded on August 11th, 2023 and September 29th, 2023. Two speakers of Nłeʔkepmxcín, *K̓ʷəłtɘ̀zétkʷu* (Bernice Garcia [KBG]) and *Cúʔsinek* (Marty Aspinall [CMA]), both from the *c̓əłétkʷu* dialect area, took part in both conversations.[4] The conversations were not prompted by any visual or verbal stimuli, and cover a wide range of topics, all chosen by the consultants. This is in contrast to the conversations recorded in Hannon et al. (2023), which were prompted by visual stimuli. I chose not to prompt the conversations so as to give speakers free rein over conversation topics. All translations from Nłeʔkepmxcín to English were provided by consultants in May 2024.

    Narratives that data come from were told by CMA and KBG, on separate occasions. CMA told two *sptekʷł*, or traditional stories, on July 4th, 2023, that she translated on July 4th, 2023. KBG told three personal narratives on June 22nd, 2023, that she later retold on November 16th, 2023. Examples from KBG's narratives are taken from the November 16th retelling.

---

[4] There are nine more conversations recorded between September 2023 and June 2024 that have not yet been translated. These conversations also feature a speaker from *sulús*, Gene Moses. The *sulús* and *c̓əłétkʷu* dialects are mutually intelligible, but speakers from *c̓əłétkʷu* appear to use *ʔé məł nés* more often.

2 What is *ʔé məɬ nés*?

ʔé məɬ nés is composed of three morphemes — an introductory predicate *ʔe*, a consequential post-predicative particle *məɬ*, and a predicate *nes*. Although *ʔe* and *məɬ* can alternatively be followed by a number of demonstrative clitics, including *xeʔ*, *neʔ*, and *teʔ*, I argue that in the case of *ʔé məɬ nés*, *nes* is verbal. Evidence for this claim comes primarily from two facts: the fact that *nes* can be nominalized within the construction *ʔé məɬ nés*, and the fact that *ʔé məɬ nés* may be followed by the second-position clitic *nke*.

(5) **Nominalization**

> … *ʔé məɬ snés pumínms.*[5]
> ʔé=məɬ   s=nés   pu-mín-m=s
> INT=CNSQ NMLZ=go[6] drum-INS-CTR.MID=3POSS
> 'And they started drumming.'   ([CMA] Hannon et al. 2023:131)

(6) **Followed by a second-position clitic**

> *ʔé məɬ nés nke ƛ̓əp néʔ kʷúpətəm ʔə smúm̓ɬec.*[7]
> ʔé=məɬ   nes=nke   ƛəp   néʔ kʷúp[-n]-t-Ø-em
> INT=CNSQ go=INFER   MOD   DEM push-CTR-TR-3OBJ-1PL.ERG
>   ʔə=s-mú<m̓>ɬec
>   DET=NMLZ-woman<DIM>
> 'We probably poked the little girl.'   [KBG, Story, 11/16/23]

ʔé məɬ nés links two propositions — *ʔé məɬ nés* may link two propositions uttered by the same speaker, or a proposition uttered by one speaker that an addressee then responds to. *ʔé məɬ nés* may start a sentence, as in (6), but it does not have to — (5) is a continuation of a longer sentence, where *ʔé məɬ nés* introduces the final event referred to (i.e., the drumming). In *ʔé məɬ nés*, *nes* does not bear overt person marking; I assume that *nes* in *ʔé məɬ nés* bears 3rd person subject marking, which is null.

3 Discourse functions of *ʔé məɬ nés*

I claim that *ʔé məɬ nés* has at least three functions in Nɬeʔkepmxcín:

I.   Temporal sequencing (similar to English *and then*, e.g., *I drove my mother to the store and then we bought some food*)
II. Causal relation (similar to English *so*, e.g., *I was up late last night so I'm tired now*)
III. Introduction of discourse-relevant anecdotes

---

[5] This gloss has been changed from the original paper to more accurately reflect the underlying form.
[6] In previous works, *ʔé məɬ nés* had been glossed following Thompson and Thompson's (1996) glosses, so I reflect that here. In the rest of the paper, I do not gloss *ʔé məɬ nés* to remain analysis-neutral.
[7] This example has been taken from one of the *sptínusm* 'memories' told by *K̓ʷəɬtə̀zétkʷu* [Bernice Garcia] that appears in this volume (Garcia, Hannon, and Stacey).

By no means is the above list exhaustive. I expect further research to turn up other uses of *ʔé məɬ nés*.

3.1 Function #1: Temporal sequencing

The most frequent use of *ʔé məɬ nés* links two propositions, where the event in the second proposition occurs after the event in the first proposition (i.e., $e_1 > e_2$, where e_1 is the first event mentioned and e_2 the second event mentioned, and $>$ indicates that e_1 occurred prior to e_2). Consider (7), where e_1, the speaker and her *qeck*'s (her older male relative of a similar age, such as an older brother or older male cousin) looking at their fingers, happens prior to e_2, i.e., the poking of the little boy (part of a weathervane).

(7) *k̓ʷéṅtm ʔə cúɬmn **ʔé məɬ nés** kʷúpetəm ʔə tuʔúʔt.*
    k̓ʷéṅ[-n]-t-Ø-em   ʔə=cúɬ-mn   **ʔé məɬ nés**
    look.at-CTR-TR-3OBJ-1PL.ERG   DET=point-INS   **ʔé məɬ nés**
        kʷúp[-n]-t-Ø-em   ʔə=tuʔúʔt
        push-CTR-TR-3OBJ-1PL.ERG   DET=little.boy
    'We took our pointy fingers and poked the little boy.'   [KBG, Story, 11/16/23]

In (8), the speaker is telling a story about a time that she was given a box of chokecherries instead of soapberries. The event of saying how happy she was came before the event of looking more closely at the box's contents.

(8) *cút kn: oohhhh ném nsy̓és nsxʷáxʷk. **ʔé məɬ nés** k̓ʷéṅe k̓ʷéṅe xʷúy̓ceʔ xéʔe ʔeɬ cúne "təté ʔ xéʔe k sxʷúsms. zəlkúʔ xéʔe".*
    cút=kn   ohh   ném   ʔə=n-s-y̓é=s   n-sxʷáxʷk   **ʔé məɬ nés**
    say=1SG.SBJ ohh INTS D/C=LOC-NMLZ-good=3POSS 1SG.POSS-heart **ʔé məɬ nés**
        k̓ʷéṅ[-n-t]-Ø-[n]e   k̓ʷéṅ[-n-t]-Ø-[n]e   xʷúy̓ceʔ   ʔeɬ
        look.at-CTR-TR-3OBJ-1SG.ERG   look.at-CTR-TR-3OBJ-1SG.ERG more   and
           cú-n-[t]-Ø-[n]e   təté ʔ xéʔe   k=s-xʷúsm-s
           say-CTR-TR-3OBJ-1SG.ERG   NEG DEM   DET=NMLZ-soapberry-3POSS
               zəlkúʔ=Ø   xéʔe
               chokecherry=3SBJ   DEM
    'I said: "*Ooh I'm so happy*." And then I looked at it and looked at it again and I said "These aren't soapberries. These are chokecherries."'

                                       [CMA, Conversation 1, 08/11/23]

Examples (9) and (9b) were uttered in sequence, during a story told by the speaker about a childhood memory. The event in (9), i.e., the speaker's *yéyeʔ's* (her grandmother's) saying of the imperative, also occurs before the event in (9), i.e., the speaker's going outside.

(9) a.   *'nésweʔ wə ɬe ʔéyc̓qeʔ k̓ʷéṅete ʔə tmixʷ'.*
        nés-weʔ   wə=ɬe=ʔéyc̓qeʔ   k̓ʷéṅ-n-t-Ø-e   ʔə=tmíxʷ
        go-IMP   to=DET=outside   look.at-CTR-TR-3OBJ-IMP DET=land
         'Go outside and look at the land!'
                                         [KBG, Story, 11/16/23]

b. **ʔé məł nés** *néskt wə łe ʔéyc̓qeʔ k̓ʷén̓etm ʔə tmíx̣ʷ.*
    ʔé məł nés   nés=kt   wə=łe=ʔéyc̓qeʔ   k̓ʷén̓-e-t-Ø-em
    ʔé məł nés   go=1PL.SBJ   to=DET=outside   look.at-CTR-TR-3OBJ-1PL.ERG
       ʔə=tmíx̣ʷ
       DET=land
   'We went outside and we looked all around the land.'

                                                     [KBG, Story, 11/16/23]

In (10), e_2, the speaker and her relative's waking up happens after the e_1 of their sleeping.

(10) *ʔéx kt nke te ʕʷóy̓t peł nqéck peł ncéweʔ* […] **ʔé məł nés** *qíłkt.*
    ʔéx=kt=nke   t=e=ʕʷóy̓t   peł   n-qéck   peł   ncéweʔ
    IPFV=1PL.SBJ=INFER   OBL=DET=sleep with 1POSS-older.brother with 1SG.INDEP
       ʔé məł nés   qíł=kt
       ʔé məł nés   wake.up=1PL.SBJ
   'We were probably sleeping, my *qeck*[8] and I… and then we woke up.'

                                                     [KBG, Story, 11/16/23]

I wish to note here that *ʔé məł nés* is not *required* for event sequencing. In order to support this claim, I provide examples of temporally sequenced events that do not involve *ʔé məł nés*. Examples (11) and (12) were uttered in sequence by the same speaker, describing how she eats the meals her child canned for her. In (11), the opening and warming events are temporally sequenced with *ʔeł* 'and'; in (12), *nes* 'go' sequences the drinking event after the warming-up event from (11) .

(11) *nwəlcínne péye ʔeł qamténe.*
    n-wəl-cín[-n-t]-Ø-ne   péye=Ø   ʔeł qam[-n]-t-Ø-éne
    LOC-open-mouth-CTR-TR-3OBJ-1SG.ERG   one=3SBJ   and warm.up-CTR-TR-3OBJ-1SG.ERG
   'I open one (jar) up and warm it up.'

                                                  [CMA, Conversation, 09/29/23]

(12) *nés ʔúqʷeʔne xéʔe ooh tk y̓é.*
    nes   ʔúqʷeʔ[-n-t]-Ø-ne   xéʔe ooh t=k=y̓é=Ø
    go   drink-CTR-TR-3OBJ-1SG.ERG   DEM ooh OBL=D/C=good=3SBJ
   'And then I drink it, and it is really good.'

                                                  [CMA, Conversation, 09/29/23]

ʔé məł nés is infelicitous when the event in the second proposition occurs before the event in the first proposition, as shown by (13) and (14). In both cases, the consultant's comments are particularly insightful.

---

[8] KBG does not translate *qéck* into English when giving translations; given this, and the fact that the translation of 'older brother' is not fully accurate (as it can also refer to any male relative that is close in age, e.g. a cousin), I have also chosen to leave it untranslated.

(13) *Context: My friend asks me what I did yesterday. I showered, and then I went to the shop. I say:*

*#nés kn wəł ntéwmn **ʔé məł nés** séxʷm kn.*

nés=kn	wə=ł=n-téw-mn	**ʔé məł nés**	séxʷm=kn
go=1SG.SBJ	PREP=DET=LOC-buy-INS	**ʔé məł nés**	bathe=1SG.SBJ

'I went to the store and then I showered.'
Consultant comment: "You've got it backwards."

<div align="right">[CMA, SF[9], 05/29/24]</div>

(14) *Context: I'm telling my friend a story where I opened the door and hit myself in the face with it. I tell her:*

*# c̓q̓sténe nk̓ʷƛ̓ús **ʔé məł nés** wəłcínn̩e ʔə nteqcíntn.*

c̓q̓-s-t-Ø-éne	n-k̓ʷƛ̓uús	**ʔé məł nés**
hit-CAUS-TR-3OBJ-1SG.ERG	1POSS-face	**ʔé məł nés**
wəł-cín[-n-t]-Ø-ne		ʔə=n-teq-cín-tn
open-mouth-CTR-TR-3OBJ-1SG.ERG		DET=LOC-close-mouth-INS

'I hit myself in the face and then I opened the door.'
Consultant comment: "I don't know how you can get your face hit if you haven't opened the door yet."

<div align="right">[CMA, SF, 05/29/24]</div>

This subsection has demonstrated that *ʔé məł nés* may temporally connect the two propositions that it conjoins, and that *ʔé məł nés* is rejected when the event contained in the first proposition occurred after the event contained in the second proposition. The next subsection will describe another, related, function that *ʔé məł nés* can perform — relating two events causally.

3.2 Function #2: Causal relation

ʔé məł nés can signal that the speaker (or hearer, in a conversation) is causally relating two events (i.e., $e_1 \Rightarrow e_2$, where $\Rightarrow$ is the logical symbol of causation). I claim that this use is inferential, in that the speaker using *ʔé məł nés* is signaling that they have made a causation inference based on a prior utterance, as in (15), based on past experience, as in (16), or based on past behaviour, as in (17). For example, (15) is a response to (15), where the speaker of (15) is making an inference that the e_1 described in (15), i.e., the closing of the door, causes the e_2, i.e., the room's cooling.

(15) a. *ʔeł naʕʔíp ʔes ntəqcín ʔə xéʔ tk room.*

ʔeł	naʕʔíp	ʔes-n-təq-cín	ʔə=xéʔ	t=k=room
and	always	STAT-LOC-close-mouth	DET=DEM	OBL=DET=room

'The door to that room is always closed.'

<div align="right">[CMA, Conversation, 09/29/23]</div>

---

b. ***ʔé məł nés*** *ċəltwíʔx ʔéył.*

ʔé məł nés	ċəł-t-wíʔx	ʔéył
ʔé məł nés	cold-IMM-DVL	now

'That's why it's always cold.'

[KBG, Conversation, 09/29/23]

In (16), the speaker is reasoning that, based on her sleeping in *e₁*, she startles herself (*e₂*). Example (16) is uttered just after the conversation participants have been joking about being tired.

(16) *ʔe ʕʷóyt kn ƛ̓uʔ nupíken ʔé məł nés qə́zp.*

ʔe=ʕʷóyt=kn	ƛ̓uʔ	nupíken	**ʔé məł nés**	qə́z-p
HYP=sleep=1SG.SBJ	until	noon	**ʔé məł nés**	startle-INC

'And then sometimes I sleep until noon and then I get startled.'

[CMA, Conversation, 09/29/23]

Lastly, in (17), the speaker is implying that her aging (*e₁*) has caused her to get slower at getting dressed (*e₂*).

(17) *twíw̓tkn x̣ʷə́nt ƛ̓uʔ ċíy ske te ns cuwumnwéłn k̓ém̓əł cʔéył qəłminwíʔx kn ʔé məł nés xín̓s nukʷ nzáx̣.*

twíw̓t=kn		x̣ʷə́n-t=Ø	ƛ̓uʔ	ċíy=Ø	ske
young.adult=1SG.SBJ		fast-IMM=3SBJ	but	like=3SBJ	WN
	t=e=n=s=cuwúm-nwełn			k̓ém̓əł	cʔéył	qəłmin-wíʔx=kn
	OBL=D/C=1POSS=NMLZ=work-LC.MID			but	now	old-DVL=1SG.SBJ
	ʔé məł nés	xín̓=s=nukʷ		n=záx̣	
	ʔé məł nés	long=3POSS=SENSE		1POSS=clothe	

'When I was younger, I did things very quickly, but now that I've gotten older, it takes me a long time to get dressed.'

[KBG, Conversation, 09/29/23]

All of the uses of *ʔé məł nés* in this section also involve temporal sequencing of *e₁* with respect to *e₂*, as with the purely temporal uses discussed in Section 3.1. I have separated the causal uses out from the purely temporal uses in Section 3.1 because there is a distinct implication of causation apparent in the examples discussed above that is missing from the uses described in Section 3.1.

Causation is usually assumed to be unidirectional (Menzies 2017), in that the causing event must temporally precede the caused event, although certain evidentials are felicitous in contexts of 'backwards' causation i.e., reasoning 'backwards' from witnessing an event to its likely cause (Hirayama & Matthewson 2022:178). *ʔé məł nés* must link the caused and the causing event in a certain order — the first event must cause the second. *ʔé məł nés* is judged infelicitous when *e₂*, the event in the second proposition, causes the event in the first proposition (*e₁*). Consider (18).

(18) *Context: I walk into a room in my parents' house and it's really hot! I want to tell my mother that it's hot in here because the window is closed. I say:*

#*ném ʔes ċłóxʷ nʔéye **ʔé məł nés** ntəqcíns ʔə kʷenústn.*

ném	ʔes-ċłóxʷ	nʔéye	**ʔé məł nés**	n-teq-cín-s	ʔə=kʷeṅ-ús-tn
INTS	STAT-hot	here	**ʔé məł nés**	LOC-close-mouth=3POSS	DET=look.at-face-INS

Intended: 'It's really hot in here because the window is closed.'

[GM, SF, 05/31/24]

Corrected to: *nem nʔéyes ċłoxʷs təs nteqcíns ʔə nkʷenústn* ['It's really hot in here because the window is closed'].

[GM, VF, 05/31/24][10]

When *ʔé məł nés* is used to sequence events, as described in Section 5.1, it can be rephrased using *ʔeł* 'and' or *nes* 'go'. The construction *t=ə=s* (OBL=D/C=NMLZ) can be used to link two events causally, as in (19).

(19) [...] *xʷúẏkt wíʔkt snəkʷnúkʷeʔ **təs** ṅcín te swéẇł.*

xʷùẏ=kt	wíʔ=kt	s-nəkʷ~núkʷeʔ	**t=ə=s**=ṅ-t-sí-en
PROSP=1PL.SBJ	EMPH=1PL.SBJ	NMLZ-AUG~friend	**OBL=D/C=NMLZ**=give-TR-2SG.OBJ-1SG.ERG

		t=ə=s-wéẇł
		OBL=DET=NMLZ-fish

'We're going to be friends because I gave you a fish.'

(Hannon et al. 2023:151)

When *t=ə=s* is present, the ordering of the caused vs. causing events is reversed. That is, the event in the first clause, (e_1), is the caused event, and the event in the second clause (e_2) is the causing event. Therefore, the events are in the opposite order as when connected with *ʔé məł nés*.

For *ʔé məł nés* to be interpreted causatively, there must be a temporal relationship between events such that e_2 causes e_1, and not vice versa. If e_1 causes e_2, *t=ə=s* must be used.

3.3   Function #3: Introducing relevant, new information

When *ʔé məł nés* is used utterance-initially, it can relate back to topics in the common ground. This function is more common in longer stretches of discourse, i.e., when there are more than two segments to connect. In (20), the speaker is responding to a claim just made by the addressee, agreeing with that claim and then telling a new story that relates to the claim. The story is introduced by the first *ʔé məł nés*; the second *ʔé məł nés* introduces the event caused by the snow, that occurred temporally after the snow fell, namely the speaker's breaking of her ankle.

(20) a. *ʔéy néxʷm. tətéʔ k sxʷúxʷc ʔíy.*

ʔéy	néxʷ-m	tətéʔ	k=s=xʷúxʷ=s	ʔíy
yes	right-CTR.MID	NEG	D/C=NMLZ=snow=3POSS	yet

'It hasn't snowed yet.'

[KBG, Conversation, 09/29/23]

---

[10] VF stands for 'volunteered form' i.e., a form that a speaker produced in response to a prompt.

b. *tətéʔ téy téʔ k sxʷúxʷc ʔíy. **ʔé məɬ nés** xʷúxʷt us péye us n 1993 **ʔé məɬ nés** q̓úʔp nʔankle.*

tətéʔ	téy	téʔ	k=s=xʷúxʷt=s	ʔíy	**ʔé məɬ nés**	xʷúxʷt=us
NEG	EXCLM	DEM	D/C=NLMZ=snow=3POSS	yet	ʔé məɬ nés	snow=3SBJV

péye=us	n-1993	**ʔé məɬ nés**	q̓úʔ-p
3SBJV	LOC-1993	**ʔé məɬ nés**	break.accidentally-INCH

n-ʔ-ankle[11]
1SG.POSS-EPEN-ankle

'It hasn't snowed yet. It snowed in 1993, and I broke my ankle.'

[CMA, Conversation, 09/29/23]

The discourse in (21) is an exchange where one speaker directly asks another to begin a new anecdote. The anecdote then begins with *ʔé məɬ nés*. In this case, the story-telling is expected because the speaker was asked by another speaker to tell a story. The starting of an anecdote is therefore relevant to what is in the common ground (i.e., the speaker's imminent telling of a story), like the snow anecdote in (20).

(21) a. *stéʔ xʷúy̓ kéʔs pípləxm?*

s-téʔ	xʷúy̓	k=éʔ=s=pí<p>ləx̣-m
NMLZ-what	PROSP	D/C=2SG.POSS=NMLZ=story<DIM>-CTR.MID

'Are you going to tell a little story?'

[KBG, Conversation, 08/11/23]

b. *xʷuy̓ kn te pípləxm. **ʔé məɬ nés** ʔəs cʔéms ɬn ímc ʔes kə́kn̓s te zəlkʷuʔ.*

xʷuy̓=kn	teʔ	pí<p>ləx̣-m	**ʔé məɬ nés**
PROSP=1SG.SBJ	DEM	tell.story<DIM>-CTR.MID	ʔé məɬ nés

ʔə=s=cʔé=s	ɬ=n-ímc
D/C=NMLZ=come=3POSS	DET=1SG.POSS-grandchild

ʔe=s=kə́kn̓-s	t=e=zəlkʷúʔ
D/C=NMLZ=partner-3POSS	OBL=DET=chokecherry

'I'll tell a little story, about my grand-daughter's partner, who gave me some chokecherries.'

[CMA, Conversation, 08/11/23]

This function is distinct from the two functions described above. Temporally speaking, both the snowing in (20) and the speaker's telling of a story in (21) happen at a time that is in the future of the event introduced by *ʔé məɬ nés*. This is in contrast to the functions discussed in sections 3.1 and 3.2, where the first event e_1 temporally precedes the second event e_2. This use of *ʔé məɬ nés* appears to reverse the temporal relationship seen in the sequencing of events and causal uses of *ʔé məɬ nés*.

There are some important differences between this anecdotal use of *ʔé məɬ nés* and the temporal and causal uses of *ʔé məɬ nés*. Firstly, the proposition that precedes the anecdotal use of *ʔé məɬ nés* does not have to be directly related to the anecdote that *ʔé məɬ nés* introduces — in (21), for instance, the proposition preceding *ʔé məɬ nés* only indicates the speaker's agreeing to tell a story, without

---

[11] The glottal stop here has no grammatical function; it is an epenthetic (inserted) glottal stop to separate the possessive marker from the English word 'ankle'.

specifying what that story might entail. Similarly, in (20), the proposition before *ʔé məɬ nés* is the speaker's echo of a proposition just uttered by another speaker.

It does not appear to be the case that the e_1 of it not having snowed yet in (20) is temporally related to the e_2, the speaker's anecdote about it snowing in 1993. Rather, in (20) and (21), *ʔé məɬ nés* appears to be signaling relevancy to the first proposition. It is possible that *ʔé məɬ nés*, in this use, must introduce a relevant anecdote. Further research is required as to whether this relevancy condition actually holds for the anecdotal use of *ʔé məɬ nés*.

4   Towards an analysis

In Section 3, I demonstrated that *ʔé məɬ nés* can link two events temporally or causally, or introduce a relevant anecdote. I also showed that *ʔé məɬ nés* is not required for either the temporal or the causal sequencing of events — *ʔeɬ* 'and' and *nes* 'go' can sequence events temporally, and nominalized relative clauses introduced by the oblique determiner *tə* can sequence events causatively.

The first two uses of *ʔé məɬ nés* suggest that it is a temporal connective that may in some instances give rise to a causativity inference. *ʔé məɬ nés* can only be used to connect two events that occur in a particular temporal relationship to each other: the first event, e_1, must occur or have occurred before the second event, e_2. Similarly, the causativity inference is unidirectional — e_1 must be the causing event, and e_2 the caused event. However, the temporal relationship between e_1 and e_2 appears reversed in the third use of *ʔé məɬ nés*, i.e., when *ʔé məɬ nés* introduces an anecdote that is relevant to the discourse context. When *ʔé məɬ nés* introduces a relevant anecdote, the beginning point of that anecdote is often in the past of the utterance time (i.e., the time that the sentence is said). I summarize the various discourse functions of *ʔé məɬ nés* discussed in Section 3 in Table 1.

Also included in Table 1 is a column describing how the hearer interprets *ʔé məɬ nés*. I hypothesize that, when *ʔé məɬ nés* is used solely to sequence events (Function #1), no inferences are made by conversational participants. However, when *ʔé məɬ nés* is used causatively, a causative inference is made by the hearer. Similarly, when *ʔé məɬ nés* is used to introduce an anecdote, I hypothesize that *ʔé məɬ nés* signals to the hearer that whatever follows will be relevant to the conversation topic under discussion.

Table 1: Discourse functions of *ʔé məɬ nés* and temporal relationships between events indicated by *ʔé məɬ nés*

Context of use	Function	Temporal relationship between events	Inference made by the hearer
e_1 *ʔé məɬ nés* e_2	Temporal sequencing (i.e., 'and then')	$e_1 > e_2$ (i.e., e_1 happens before e_2)	—
e_1 *ʔé məɬ nés* e_2	Causativity (i.e., 'that's why')	$e_1 > e_2$	Causativity
e_1 *ʔé məɬ nés* e_2	Introduction of a relevant anecdote	$e_2 > e_1$	Relevance

To summarize, I contend that when *ʔé məɬ nés* links two propositions, it entails that the second proposition occurs after the first proposition. When *ʔé məɬ nés* begins a proposition after a response

to a question has been given or a statement has been confirmed by a conversation participant, it signals the introduction of a relevant anecdote. Further research is needed into all uses of *ʔé məɬ nés*.

5   Conclusion

I have provided an overview of some of the discourse functions of *ʔé məɬ nés*, although I expect further research may turn up more possible uses. *ʔé məɬ nés*, as it is used in informal conversation and storytelling, has one of three functions: (i) it signals to the hearer or listener that the two events that it links occur in sequence, (ii) it signals to the hearer or listener that the two events that it links are causally related, or (iii) it signals to the hearer or listener that a new but contextually relevant anecdote or story is about to begin. I proposed that *ʔé məɬ nés* is a temporal connective, i.e., it establishes a temporal relationship between two propositions at the discourse level.

This squib provides preliminary documentation of a pragmatic phenomenon in an Indigenous language, thereby contributing to the study of cross-linguistic pragmatics. This squib also highlights the importance of documenting conversation and narrative, where possible, in order to find constructions like *ʔé məɬ nés* that do not often appear in targeted elicitation sessions.

6   References

Comrie, Bernard, Martin Haspelmath & Balthasar Bickel. 2008. *The Leipzig Glossing Rules: Conventions for interlinear morpheme-by-morpheme glosses.* Max Planck Institute for Evolutional Anthropology.

Egesdal, Steven, M. Terry Thompson, and Mandy Jimmie. 2011. *nɬekepmxcín: Thompson River Salish Speech*. University of Montana Occasional Papers in Linguistics 22. Missoula, MT: University of Montana Press.

Gessner, Suzanne, Tracey Herbert, and Aliana Parker. 2022. *Report on the Status of B.C. First Nations Languages (4th Edition).* URL: https://fpcc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/FPCC-LanguageReport-23.02.14-FINAL.pdf

Hannon, Ella, Anna Stacey, and Reed Steiner. 2023. Glossed Conversation in Nɬeʔkepmxcín. In D.K.E Reisinger, Laura Griffin, Gloria Mellesmoen, Sander Nederveen, Julia Schillo, and Bailey Trotter (eds.), *Papers for ICSNL 58*:117–158.

Hirayama, Yuto, and Lisa Matthewson. 2022. Evidential-temporal interactions do not (always) come for free. *Journal of Pragmatics* 193:173–188.

Menzies, Peter, 2017. Counterfactual theories of causation. In: Zalta, Edward N. (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2017 Edition).
URL: https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2017/entries/causation-counterfactual/.

Thompson, Laurence C. & M. Terry Thompson. 1992. *The Thompson language*. University of Montana Occasional Papers in Linguistics 8. Missoula, MT: University of Montana Press.

Thompson, Laurence C. & M. Terry Thompson. 1996. *Thompson River Salish dictionary: nɬeʔkepmxcín*. University of Montana Occasional Papers in Linguistics 11. Missoula, MT: University of Montana Press.