

Varying Degrees of Dependency in Clause Linking in Sliammon Salish

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Non-matrix clauses are overtly marked as such in Sliammon Salish: first, by different pronominal subject markers and second, by various proclitics, such as the nominalizers or *ga=* ‘if’. The subjects of main clauses are, for the most part, marked by the Indicative Subject clitics, whereas conjunctive (subjunctive) clauses take the Conjunctive Subject suffixes, and nominalized clauses take the Possessive markers.

In this paper, I briefly summarize how complex sentences with main and subordinate clauses are formed in Sliammon and discuss their clause linkage. Then, I explore cases in which the clauses are formally “subordinate” in their morphology but whose matrix clauses are omitted. Some of these cases are instances of “insubordination,” i.e., the conventionalized main clause use of formally subordinate clauses (Evans 2007).

The following construction is an example, drawn from a narrative text, of a nominalized clause being used independently without a matrix clause:

(1) (immediately preceding sentence: ‘We always had lots of food.’)

$x^w a \text{?} -s$ $s a y s a \text{?} -a s$ $t^{\theta} = k^w u k^w p a \text{?} u \text{?}$
NEG-3POSS be.afraid-3CONJ.SBJ 1sg.POSS=deceased.grandfather
‘My deceased grandfather was not afraid.’

Note the use of the third person possessor suffix *-s* on the initial predicative negator. A consultant, different from the narrator of the above example, was able to provide a possible matrix clause for this construction:

(2) $h i = g a$ $\text{?} \theta = x^w = x^w a \text{?} -s$ $s a y s a \text{?} -a s$ $t^{\theta} = k^w u k^w p a \text{?} u \text{?}$
it’s=CLT CLEFT=NOM=NEG-3POSS be.afraid-3CONJ.SBJ
1sg.POSS=d.grandfather
‘That is why my deceased grandfather was not afraid.’

The distinction between the dependent and independent use of formally subordinate clauses is by no means clear. I provide examples of formally subordinate clauses with varying degree of dependency in Sliammon texts.