Towards a grammar of Innu-aimun particles
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Introduction

Topic: The grammar of Innu-aimun (Montagnais) particles.

Problem: Lack of a descriptive and analytical framework for particles in Innu-aimun (and Algonquian in general).

Existing research on CMN particles

Goals of my MA thesis (Oxford 2007)
– Classify Innu-aimun particles into well-justified categories.
– Describe the grammatical properties of each category.
– Supplement the description with theoretical analysis.

Scope: The Innu-aimun spoken in Sheshatshiu, Labrador.

Methodology: Corpus of narrative texts; fieldwork conducted with 8 speakers over 8 weeks.

Today: Overview of the classification scheme in order to provide a basic familiarization with the entire set of Innu-aimun particles and their essential grammatical properties.

1 Nominal function words

Definition: Function words that carry nominal inflection; traditionally called pronouns. (Not particles, but some overlap.)


1.1 Personal pronouns have the same distribution as NPs.
(1) Examples: nin 1s, tshin 2s, uın 3s, uınu 3p, etc.

1.2 Indefinite pronouns have the same distribution as Ns.
(2) Examples: auen ‘someone’, tshkuän ‘something’
(3) Like N, an indefinite pronoun can be modified:
   a. kassinu tshkuän every something (=‘everything’)
   b. ne auen that someone (=‘that person’)
   c. NP
   Dem
   N
   ne auen

1.3 Demonstratives, unlike pronouns, may occur adnominally.
(4) Examples: üme ‘this’, an ‘that’, ne ‘that (there)’
(5) üme nıshkuänàpuı this soup

A note on locative demonstratives—particles formed from demonstrative roots plus locative -ite final
(6) Examples: üte ‘here’, anite ‘there’, nete ‘over there’
(7) Analysis: Though often treated as adverbs, they seem to be members of the demonstrative paradigm (Cyr 1993). They are syntactically equivalent to regular demonstratives:
   a. Ne nıshitk̓u kushtikuän that island be.dangerous.3s ‘That island is dangerous.’
   b. Nimănuk̓šu-même nete nıshitk̓u. 1.set.up.camp.1P that.LOC island.LOC ‘We set up camp on that island.’

(8) Proposed representations:

1.4 Kutak ‘other’ may accompany N (.: not a pronoun)
(10) Not mutually exclusive with demonstratives:
   nenu kutakanu atshino that.3’s other.3’s mountain.3’s

(11) Analysis: kutak is a nominal modifier—i.e. an adjective (sounds controversial, but see §3)

(12) Proposed representation:
2 “Clefting words”

Definition: An ad-hoc term (better suggestions welcome!) for words with the following properties:
(13) a. Occur sentence-initially
b. Are predicative
c. Involve contrastive focus
d. Inflect for tense and mood like AI/II verbs
e. Followed by clause with changed conjunct verb

Examples:
(14) Eukuannu nenu utapannu [kâ tshimuittit Án].
   it.is.3′ that.3′ car.3′ IC.pbv steal. CNJ Ann
   ‘It’s that car [that Ann stole].’
(15) Ekuannitshe nenu utapannu […]
   it.is.DUB.3′ that.3′ car.3′ […]
   ‘It might be that car [that Ann stole].’

Note the similarity to an English cleft structure:
copula-like verbal form + focused NP + subordinate clause

Members of the category
(16) “Core” clefting words (serve no other function):
   a. eukuan ‘it is this/that one [that…]’
   b. namaieu ‘it is not this/that one [that…]’

Like demonstratives, the core clefting words are paralleled by indeclinable locative versions in -ite:
   a. ekute ‘it is here/there [that…]’
   b. namaieute ‘it is not here/there [that…]’

Personal and indefinite pronouns may also act as clefting words:
(18) a. Utmdushapan [tâpashâht nutâpânâ].
    it.is.them.PAST.INDIR [IC.use.CONJ 1.car.3’]
    ‘It was apparently them [that used my car].’
   b. Tshekuannitshe [eitit]?
    what.is.it.DUB.3′ IC.do.CONJ
    ‘What might it be [that she is doing]?’

Implications for wh-questions
- (18b) is a run-of-the-mill wh-question.
- In general, Innu-aimun wh-questions have the same grammatical properties as other “clefting word” sentences
- Conclusion: a wh-question is just a cleft sentence in which an indefinite pronoun serves in the “clefting word” role
- There is a long tradition of regarding Algonquian wh-words as predicative (e.g. Bloomfield 1946: 116); more recently, several researchers have argued that Algonquian wh-questions are biclausal and/or clefted (Wolfart 1973; Johns 1982; Blain 1997; Reinholtz & Russell 1995).
- The ability of Innu-aimun wh-words to carry tense and mood provides strong support for the biclausal analysis.

3 Adnominal particles

Definition: Particles that occur within the NP.

Major classes: Quantifiers and adjectives.

3.1 Quantifiers specify the quantity of a noun.
(19) Classes of quantifiers
   a. Non-numeral quantifiers (kassinu ‘all, every, each’, mtsheet ‘some’)
   b. Numeral quantifiers (peik ‘1’, nish ‘2’, nish ‘3’)
   c. Complex quantifiers (nishtunakan ‘three cupfuls’, nishtuashk ‘three sticklike objects’)

3.2 Adjectives may accompany and modify a noun.
(20) Only a small set of these “nominal modifier particles”:
   a. peiktâu ‘same (one)’
   b. tâpioshk ‘same (kind)’
   c. natamik ‘any (kind)’
   d. uskhat ‘first’
   e. mâsh ten ‘last’

Examples
(21) Utâkushit peiktâu nishk nuâpamâtân.
    yesterday same goose 1.see.pst.1>3
    ‘We saw the same goose yesterday.’
(22) Ekuana nenu mâsh ten nish tshîmana.
    it.is that.3P last three match.3P
    ‘Those are the last three matches.’

On the use of “adjective”
Objection: No adjectives in Algonquian! In fact, the term “adjective” is overly general in English. We must distinguish between lexical and functional adjectives (cf. Kayne 2005, Cinque 2005)

(23) Lexical adjectives (e.g. happy, trustworthy):
   a. The extremely { happy trustworthy } man
   b. The { happier more trustworthy } man
   c. The man seems { happy trustworthy }.

(24) Functional adjectives (e.g. same, last):
   a. *The extremely { same last } man
   b. *The { samer last } / { more same more last } man
   c. *The man seems { same last }.
4 Prepositions

Definition: Particles that may take an NP complement.

Major classes: Functional prepositions, simple locative prepositions, and complex locative prepositions

4.1 Functional prepositions: non-locative NP complement.

(26) Examples: miʕam ‘like’, mák át ‘in comparison with’

(27) [PP Miʕam ukáuta ] ishi-pimáteu.
[PP like 3mother.3] thus-walk.3s
‘She walks like her mother.’

4.2 Simple locative prepositions: locative NP complement.

(28) Examples: ākú ‘hidden behind’, āpitú ‘halfway along’,
akámít ‘on the other side (of)’, āsh’tte ‘beyond, past’

(29) [PP ākú mishtikut ] kášhú.
[PP behind tree.LOC] hide.3s
‘S/he is hiding behind a tree.’

4.3 Complex locative prepositions: preposition + nominal morpheme. At least two subclasses: classificatory and compound.

(30) Classificatory prepositions
a. Nominal morpheme is a medial.
b. Complex P may take external NP complement.
c. āpítiʕashua mishtikut
   halfway.along+sticklike.object branch.LOC
   ‘halfway along a tree branch’

(31) Compound prepositions
a. Nominal morpheme is a full-fledged noun.
b. Complex P may not take external NP complement.
c. āpíti-ʕáshuá
   halfway.along+bay
   ‘halfway along the bay’

The nature of locative categories in Innu-aìmun
Locative Ps and locative Ns have properties in common. Morphologically, both may carry the locative suffix:

(32) Nouns
a. mítshuáp ‘house’ (non-locative)
b. mítshuápít ‘to/in the house’ (locative)

(33) Certain prepositions
a. akámít ‘to/on the other side of’
b. atámit ‘in, at the bottom (of), under’
c. enáti ‘below’
d. āpítiʕátiít ‘halfway along a wooden thing’
   (complex: āpíti ‘halfway’ + tát ‘wood’ + locative ít)

Syntactically, both are nearly always preceded by a locative demonstrative:

(34) Dem + NPLOC
[PP Aníte atáutshuápít ] nimuat.
[PP that.LOC store.LOC] dance.3p
‘They’re dancing in the store.’

(35) Dem + PP
[PP Aníte shekí mishtikut ] táutat.
[PP that.LOC under tree.LOC ] be.3p
‘They’re under the trees.’

Both also have the same distribution (as adverbal modifiers or as complements of goal-selecting verbs).

A possible analysis: locative suffix as “little p”:

(36) Locative noun atáutshuápít ‘to/in the store’

\[
\begin{array}{c}
pP \\
| \\
| N \\
| -ít \ atáutshuáp
\end{array}
\]

(37) Preposition akámít ‘to/on the other side of’

\[
\begin{array}{c}
pP \\
| \\
| Root \\
| -ít \ akám-
\end{array}
\]

Compare Brittain 2003, Branigan et al. 2005, and Mathieu 2006 (in prep.), in which verb finals are analyzed as v.

5 Adverbs

Definition: Particles that modify non-nominal categories.

Semantic classification: See list on attached sheet for one possible classification (based on Cinque 1999, Quirk et al. 1985).

Grammatical classification: Adverbs “proper” (VP and sentence modifiers) vs. degree modifiers (which modify prepositions, locative nouns, and other adverbs).
8 Conjunctions

3.1 Symmetrical coordinators: Particles that link two grammatically identical constituents—two XPs of the same category or two clauses with verbs inflected in the same order.

(43) a. [NP innuat] māk [NP aisstmeuat]
   Innu.PL and Inuit.PL
b. [s Nimânukâshun nîn] ek* [s Mânî kuteue]
   1.pitch.tent.1s 1s and Mary make.fire
   ‘I set up the tent and Mary built a fire.’
Coordinated clauses are independent obviation domains.

3.2 Asymmetrical coordinators: Particles that link two clauses and require the second clause to contain a conjunct verb. However, the second clause remains a separate obviation domain (un-like a subordinate clause).

(44) [s Ninakuâtânân uâpush] ekue
   1.snare.1DEP.1>3 rabbit and.then
   [s pâkunât Pân].
   skin.CONJ.1>3 Paul
   ‘We caught a rabbit and then Paul skinned it.’
Branigan & MacKenzie (2002) discuss one grammatical pattern that words in this category participate in.

3.3 Adverbializers: Particles that mark adverbial clauses.

(45) Examples: mekuât ‘while’, pâtush ‘until, unless’, mîâm ‘just as, just as though’, iâ(pi)t ‘even if, even though’

3.4 Sentence-initial subordinators: Particles that occur sentence-initially and must be followed by a subordinate clause.

   is.first.time go.on.trip.1s airplane
   ‘It’s the first time that I’ve gone on a plane.’
b. Tshîmâ paâsit akî.
   L.wish catch.fire.1s earth
   ‘I wish that the earth would catch fire.’

“Particle verbs”?

3.5 Conjunctive adverbs: Adverbial particles that indicate how the sentence relates to the preceding discourse.

(47) Examples: eshpa ‘however’, nâte ‘for example’, utin ‘in that case’, mekuât ‘meanwhile’, tânite ‘however, besides’

9 Interjections

Definition: Particles that may stand alone as non-elliptical utterances. (For informal classification and examples, see list on attached sheet, based mainly on Yngve 1970, Ameka 1992, Wierzbicka 1992, Wilkins 1992, Hartmann 1999.)
References


—. 1999. The distribution of the conjunct verb form in Western Naskapi and related morpho-syntactic issues. Doctoral dissertation, Memorial University of Newfoundland.


