

DP Structure and Semantic Composition in Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish)

Introduction In this paper, we explore the availability of two positions for determiners in Skwxwú7mesh (a Coast Salish language spoken in southwestern British Columbia). Szabolcsi (1994) distinguishes between two determiner positions in Hungarian: a higher 'subordinator' position (which she claims is analogous to C) and a lower quantifier/demonstrative position (analogous to T). The subordinator position is used to mark the NP as a possible argument; the other provides deictic information for the NP. She suggests that these two positions can be performed by two different morphemes or they may be conflated into one morpheme. We argue that Skwxwú7mesh is an example of a language that uses both options: one set of determiners conflates the positions (marks both deictic and subordinating functions) and one determiner marks only one position: subordination. We also argue that this allows us to understand semantic composition (Chung and Ladusaw 2004) and how a language chooses between Restrict-type and Specify-type indefinites.

Data The determiner system in Salish in general marks proximity, and sometimes gender and/or number (Matthewson 1998). Skwxwú7mesh in particular has at least 8 determiners (Currie 1997, see also Kuipers 1967 who claims there are 12). These mark proximity (1a), gender (1b), and (in some cases) number (1c). (We use Peter Jacobs's (nd) description of the Skwxwú7mesh determiners in the glosses.)

There is one determiner (*kwi*) which marks none of these distinctions - it merely indicates that the NP is an argument (2). This determiner varies from the other determiners in two other ways: (i) *kwi* must always be interpreted with narrow scope (3), whereas the other determiners can also be interpreted with wide scope (4), and (ii) *kwi* is the only determiner that can introduce embedded clauses (5).

Claims We claim that the above properties fall out from (i) different determiner positions (Szabolcsi) and (ii) predicate restriction (Chung and Ladusaw).

Discussion The first claim is that the two types of determiners occupy different positions: *ta*, *lha*, and the rest of the deictic determiners occupy the lower D position (moving up to the higher position); *kwi* occupies the higher position. We further claim that the lower position is not available in *kwi* DPs because there is no deictic information provided by this determiner. This allows us to understand why only one of the determiners has been chosen as a subordinator in embedding contexts (5): it is the only determiner that has *only* the subordinating property.

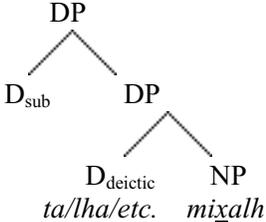
The second claim involves 'modes of composition' (Chung and Ladusaw 2004). Chung and Ladusaw propose that there are two types of semantic composition available to indefinites (which they claim are of type $\langle e, t \rangle$). The first is "Specify", which introduces a variable over choice functions, following Reinhart (1997), Winters (1997), and many others. This type saturates the argument position of the predicate. The second is "Restrict", which does not saturate the argument position of the predicate, but instead modifies the predicate.

We claim that *kwi* DPs must compose with the predicate via Restrict. This allows us to predict the obligatory low scope of *kwi* DPs - those DPs that do not saturate the verb (composed via Restrict) must be existentially closed by the time the event is closed off (at the VP level). As negation (and other quantificational elements) are higher than the VP level, they will always take wider scope than any Restrict indefinite.

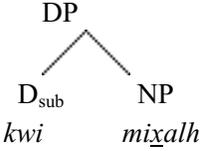
We propose that Restrict indefinites must lack any deictic information. Rullmann and You (2003) have similarly proposed that Restrict indefinites must have General Number. This proposal is in the same vein - they must be bleached of almost all semantic information.

Implications This analysis predicts that indefinites in any language that lack deictic/number/gender information must be composed via Restrict. That is, bare nouns (at least in systems that mark deictic information in some way) will be Restrict-type (and therefore low-scope) indefinites. It also allows us to understand how a child could learn which indefinites were composed via Restrict: the ones with the least semantically specified determiner.

Data

- (1) a. Chen kw'ach-nexw [ta/kwa mixalh].
Isg.s see-trans distal.det/non-visible.det bear
 'I saw a/the bear.'
- b. Chen kw'ach-nexw [lha/kwelha mixalh].
Isg.s see-trans distal.f.det/non-visible.f.det bear
 'I saw a/the bear.'
- c. Chen kw'ach-nexw [iytsi mixalh].
Isg.s see-trans distal.pl.det/ bear
 'I saw some/the bears.'
- (2) Chen kw'ach-nexw [kwi mixalh].
Isg.s see-trans det bear
 'I saw a bear.'
- (3) Haw k-an i kw'ach-nexw [kwi mixalh].
neg irrealis-Isg.s aux see-trans det bear
 'I didn't see a bear.'
 (i) ≠ ∃x [bear (x) & ¬ [see (x) (I)]]
 (ii) ¬ [∃x [bear (x) & see (x) (I)]]
- (4) Haw k-an i kw'ach-nexw [ta/kwa mixalh].
neg irrealis-Isg.s aux see-trans distal.det/non-visible.det bear
 'I didn't see a/the bear.'
 (i) ∃x [bear (x) & ¬ [see (x) (I)]]
 (ii) ¬ [∃x [bear (x) & see (x) (I)]]
- (5) a. Chen lhchius [kwi-n-s wa ts'its'ap'].
Isg.s tired det-1poss-nom pa working
 'I am tired of working.'
- b. * Chen lhchius [ta-n-s wa ts'its'ap'].
I tired det-1poss-nom pa working
- (6) a. 

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graph TD
  DP1[DP] --- Dsub[Dsub]
  DP1 --- DP2[DP]
  DP2 --- Ddeictic[Ddeictic  
ta/lha/etc.]
  DP2 --- NP[NP  
mixalh]
  
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- b. 

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graph TD
  DP[DP] --- Dsub[Dsub  
kwi]
  DP --- NP[NP  
mixalh]
  
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References

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