

A Direct Evidential in Siksiká Blackfoot

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Introduction This paper has three goals: (i) an empirical goal to describe the distribution and semantic contribution of *na-*, a left edge verbal prefix in the Siksiká dialect of Blackfoot (Algonquian), (ii) an analytical goal to develop an account of *na-* as a direct evidential, but one that does not encode evidence type or manner of support, and (iii) a theoretical goal to support the modal analysis of direct evidentials.

Distribution and Semantic Contribution of *na-* The prefix *na-* is restricted to past time reference (1).

- (1) *Na* *Leo náókska'siwa.*
 ann-wa L **na**-okska'si-wa
 DEM-PROX L **EVID** -run.AI-PROX
 “Leo ran.” / *“Leo is running.” / *“Leo will run.”

Consistent with its past time orientation, *na-* is banned from irrealis (future-oriented) clause types, such as complements of desiderative predicates (2), subjunctive clauses (3), and imperative clauses (4).

- (2) *Nitsíksstaataw na Jaan (*ná)áhksikkossi amo atsinayí.*
 nit-ik-sstaat-a-wa anna J aahk-sikkohsi-hs-yi amo atsinayi-yi
 I-INTNS-want.TA-DIR-PROX DEM J MOD-melt.TI-CONJ-OBV DEM fat-INAN
 “I want John to (**na-*) melt this fat.”
- (3) (**Na*)ikkámaistoosi na Jaani yáákohtsopowahtsi'satawa annisk ihtáóhpommao'pi.
 ikkam-waist-oo-si anna J yaak-oht-sopowahtsi's-at-a-wa annisk ihtaohpommao'p-yi
 if- by.SPKR-go.AI-SBJN DEM J FUT-CONT-ask-TA-DIR-PROX DEM money-INAN
 “If John (**na-*) comes, we will ask him about the money.”
- (4) (**Na*)kippóóhkááhkanomookit amo sí'kaana.
 kipp-noohk-waahkan-omo-oki-t amo si'kaan-wa
 please-please-sew-TA-2:1-IMP DEM blanket-PROX
 intended: “Please (**na-*) sew this blanket for me.”

Although previously described as a past tense marker (Frantz 2009), restrictions on *na-* in the non-veridical contexts (cf. Giannakidou 1998) are incompatible with a past tense analysis. In particular, *na-* cannot appear in the scope of clausal negation (5), although it can scope over predicate negation (6).

- (5) (**Na*)máátsiksipiiwaatsiks.
 maat-siksip-yii-wa-atsiksi
 NEG-bite.TA-3:4-PROX-NONAFF
 “S/he didn't (**na-*) bite him/her.” (lit. “It is not the case that s/he bit him/her”)
- (6) *Náísayinakowa.*
na-sa-inako-wa
EVID-NEG-visible.II-PROX
 “It was invisible.” (lit. “It is the case that it is not visible.”)

Moreover, *na-* is banned from yes/no questions (7), although it can appear in rhetorical (echo) questions, which are veridical, and have assertive rather than interrogative force (cf., Han 2000), (8).

- (7) *Na Leo (*na)ikataí'sstimaahkatsiiwaatsiksi ni Rosie?*
 ann-wa L kata'-sstimaahkat-yii-wa-atsiksi ann-yi R
 DEM-PROX L INTERR-hire.TA-3:4-PROX-NONAFF DEM-OBV R
 “Did Leo (**na-*) hire Rosie?” (CONTEXT: You want to know if Leo hired someone)
- (8) *Náókska'siwaatsiksi?*
na-okska'si-waatsiksi
EVID-run.AI-3SG.NONAFF
 “He ran?” (CONTEXT: You are surprised to hear that Leo ran, in spite of his injuries.)

***na-* is an Evidential** We propose that Siksiká *na-* is an evidential, signalling that the ORIGO (or knowledge holder) has irrefutable evidence regarding a past time event. We adopt Waldie's (2013) model of evidential relations in order to diagnose *na-*. Waldie proposes that evidentiality is concerned with the relations between 3 factors: an origo, a proposition (PREJACENT), and a perceived situation. An evidential necessarily encodes one or more relation(s) between these factors; it may encode the PERSPECTIVAL STATUS relation; i.e., whether the origo believes the prejacent to be true or not, the PERCEPTUAL

GROUNDING relation, i.e., how the origo perceives the situation (e.g., by visual or auditory evidence, etc.), and/or the MANNER OF SUPPORT relation, i.e., how the situation supports the prejacent (e.g., via inference, report, etc.). We propose that *na-* encodes the perspectival status relation: it asserts that the origo is certain that the prejacent is true. This is consistent with comments regarding the felicity conditions of *na-*; it is only permitted when the speaker has evidence to be certain that an event took place (9).

(9) *Náísootaawa.*

na-i-sootaa-wa

EVID-rain.II-PROX

‘‘It rained.’’ (CONTEXT: ‘Like right now, I’m looking outside, and I know that it rained ... I see that the ground is wet, it rained.’)

Moreover, *na-* is unspecified for perceptual grounding and manner of support relations; it is compatible with visual (10) and auditory (11) evidence, as well as reported (12) and inferred (13) manners of support.

(10) *Anná náóoyiwa akóópis.*

ann-wa **na**-ooyi-wa akoopis

DEM-PROX **EVID** -eat.AI-PROX soup

‘‘S/he ate soup.’’ (CONTEXT: ‘Right now I am telling you ‘she ate soup,’ I saw her, she ate it.’)

(11) *Nitóóhtsimaa nahk Rachel náikiikiyihk ni bingo.*

nit-yoohtsim-a-wa ann-wa-hk R **na**-ikiiki-yihk ann-yi bingo

I-hear.TI-DIR-PROX DEM-P-PROX-INVIS R **EVID** -win.AI-REP DEM-OBV bingo

‘‘I hear that Rachel won at bingo.’’

(12) *Nitohkáániikkoo náhk Rosie náthpiyihka.*

nit-ohk-waaniist-ok-oo annahk R **na**-ihpiyi-hk-wa

I-CONT-say.TA-INV-UNSPEC DEM R **EVID** -dance.AI-REP-PROX

‘‘Someone told me Rosie danced.’’

(13) *Na Leo náisapipoommaatooma omístsi písátssaiskistsi.*

anna L **na**-sapipoommaatoo-m-wa om-istsi písátssaisk-istsi

DEM L **EVID** -plant.TI-3:INAN-PROX DEM-PL flower-PL

‘‘Leo planted those flowers.’’ (CONTEXT: ‘After the fact you see the flowers ... they’ve grown.’)

(Direct) Evidentials as Modals There is an ongoing debate as to whether evidentials have modal semantics (e.g., Matthewson 2011, in prep). Matthewson notes that particularly problematic for the modal analysis are direct evidentials which strengthen the proposition, whereas modals are standardly thought to weaken it. Siksiká *na-* falls within the class of direct evidentials; it signals that the origo has irrefutable evidence to be certain about a past time event. As such, it can contribute to the modal debate. The fact that *na-* is sensitive to the ir/realis contrast and veridicality supports a modal analysis, as modals characteristically show such sensitivities. Moreover, the morphosyntactic distribution of *na-* supports a modal analysis; it is in complementary distribution with the modal *aahk(am)-* (14).

(14) **Na Rosie (*ná)áhkamihpiyiwa.*

ann-wa R **aahkam**-ihpiyi-wa

DEM-PROX R **MOD**-dance.AI-PROX

‘‘Rosie (**na-*) might/must have danced.’’

Conclusion Siksiká *na-* is a direct evidential that encodes the perspectival status relation. Restrictions on the distribution of *na-* suggest that it is compatible with a modal analysis.

References

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