

Insubordination in Tlingit: An Areal Effect? ^{1, 2}

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1. Introduction

The main claim of this paper is that so-called ‘in subordinate clauses’ (Evans 2007, Mithun 2008) can be found in Tlingit, a Na-Dene language of Alaska, British Columbia and the Yukon.

As reviewed in Section 2, ‘in subordinate clauses’ are ones that bear the internal morpho-syntactic markings of subordinate clauses, but are not actually syntactically subordinated. It will be shown that, as in other languages, such clauses in Tlingit play a variety of roles in discourse. First, we will see that there are three main structural types of insubordination in Tlingit: (i) plain subordinate clauses, (ii) relative clauses modifying the light noun *yé* ‘way’, and (iii) relative clauses modifying some other light noun. Secondly, we will see that cross-cutting these three syntactic sub-types are four semantic sub-types: (i) backgrounding or ‘meta-comment’, (ii) exclamatives, (iii) ‘quasi-clause chaining’, and (iv) rhetorical questions. Interestingly, these syntactic and semantic sub-classes seem largely independent of one another; none are strictly correlated with the other, though some trends are apparent.

Following the presentation and discussion of the key data, I will offer some informed speculations regarding the origin of insubordination in the Tlingit language. We will see that insubordination was likely a feature of proto-Tlingit, though it is not a general feature of Athabaskan languages. On the other hand, insubordination does seem to be present in the neighboring, unrelated languages of the Northern Pacific Northwest (Haida, Gitksan-Nisga’a). It’s plausible, then, that insubordination may have crept into proto-Tlingit as a result of areal contact and influence from these other languages.

2. Background on ‘Insubordination’

The term ‘insubordination’ was introduced by Evans (2007) to describe cases where a matrix, ‘stand-alone’ utterance exhibits morpho-syntactic properties that are otherwise indicative of subordinate clauses. Although virtually non-existent in English, such clauses are common in other European languages. The following data illustrate the phenomenon in German.

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² In this paper I use the following abbreviations in glossed examples: 1sgS ‘first person singular subject’, 3ABS ‘third person absolutive agreement’, 3ERG ‘third person ergative agreement’, 3O ‘third person object’, CASE ‘case marker’, CL ‘verbal classifier’, CN ‘connective’, DUB ‘dubitative particle’, ERG ‘ergative marker’, FOC ‘focus particle’, PERF ‘perfective’, PRES ‘present tense’, Q ‘question particle’, REL ‘marker of relativization’, SUB ‘maker of subordination’.

(1) **Insubordination in German (Truckenbrodt 2006)**

a. Insubordinate Interrogative Clause

Ob es ihm gut geht?
whether it him good goes
Literal Translation: *Whether he is doing well?*
Free Translation: *I wonder if he's doing well.*

b. Insubordinate Declarative Clause

Dass du nicht wieder dein ganzes Geld aus gibst!
that you not again your entire money give.away
Literal Translation: *That you don't spend all your money again.*
Free Translation: *Don't spend all your money again!*

The clauses in (1) have the morpho-syntactic markers of subordination in German: the complementizers *ob* and *dass*, and V-final word order. Nevertheless, they may be used as single, stand-alone utterances, where they are not overtly embedded in any larger clause. When used in such a manner, these clauses take on special interpretations; interrogatives commonly become 'self-directed' questions, while declaratives can take on a 'modal' or 'imperative' meaning.

Comparing the 'literal' and 'free' translations in (1) highlights a useful diagnostic for insubordination. Given that English lacks insubordination, insubordinate clauses in other languages have the hard-to-miss property that direct, literal translation into English does not produce a grammatical or felicitous English structure. Such literal translation would produce an English clause bearing markers of subordination (*i.e.*, complementizers), and such clauses simply cannot in English be used as single, stand-alone utterances, as the 'literal translations' in (1) indicate.

In this context, let us now consider a putative case of insubordination in the Tlingit language. The following three sentences are taken from a naturalistic (but also edited) text.

(2) **Illustrative Example from Tlingit (Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer 1987, 112: 68-70)**

a. "A tayedéi nagú!" yóo ash yawsikaa.
"Go under this," it said to him

b.	Tlél	tóo	awunoogú	áwé	tle.	} Insubordinate Clause
	tlél	tóo	a-wu-noog-ú	áwé	tle.	
	not	inside	3O-PERF-feel-SUB	FOC	then	

Author's Translation: *He didn't even feel the sea.*
More Literal Translation: **That** *he didn't even feel the sea.*

c. Gwá! Aan, hít!
Oh! It's a village, a house!

The putative in subordinate clause is given in (b). The context for (b) in its original source is given in (a) and (c). As the reader can verify, (b) does not appear to be syntactically subordinated to either the preceding or following clause. Moreover, it should be noted that the editors of the text from which (b) is taken place (b) on a separate line from (a) and (c), indicating a significant prosodic break. Finally, the source text for (b) was edited by a native speaker of Tlingit, with various speech errors and false starts removed. Therefore, we can be confident that (a)-(c) is a well-formed segment of Tlingit discourse. This is despite the fact that, as I will review in Section 3, sentence (b) bears a suffix (-ú) that is otherwise characteristic of clausal complements.

In addition to establishing the existence of in subordination in Tlingit, this paper seeks to examine the use of such clauses in discourse. As noted above, in subordinate clauses take on special interpretations that distinguish them from ‘normal’ main clauses. In a landmark work, Mithun (2008) explores the uses of in subordination in two North American languages: Navajo and Central Alaskan Yup’ik. In these languages, she identifies two main uses for in subordination. Although Mithun herself does not give labels to these uses, I choose to refer to them as ‘in subordinate backgrounding/meta-comment’ and ‘quasi-clause-chaining’.

When receiving the use I call ‘in subordinate backgrounding/meta-comment’, the in subordination serves to signal that the clause in question is (i) *not* advancing the main narrative, but (ii) is instead providing some kind of background, incidental or amplificatory information, emotional evaluation, *etc.* Mithun (2008) illustrates this use with the following discourse from Navajo. In the following discourse, the bold-faced –o is a generally a marker of subordination in the language.

(3) In subordinate Backgrounding/Meta-Comment in Navajo (Mithun 2008)

- a. Hádaáǎléi'ya, hastiin léi' nihaaníyáo akwe'é...
One day a man came(-SUB) to visit us here.
- b. ...Áko. Ha'at'íish éiya, “Ndi'aaah!” shi'doo'niido...
So. "go and get", something or other, I was told(-SUB)...
- c. Akóne' yáh eeshwod ndéé.
I ran off into the hogan.
- d. “Nléi hont'ahdi si'á” dishní ndéé.
"It's sitting way back there in the corner" I was saying.
- e. T'áh éi áadi sidá léi.
Hont'ah was still sitting back there.
- f. t'óó baayániizǎ'í'o
I got so embarrassed(-SUB)
- g. Ch'inááńshwod.
I ran back out.

In this discourse, the in subordinate clauses are (a), (b) and (f). As is typical for such clauses in Navajo, the information they provide is not part of the ‘main action’ of the narration. Instead, they provide background, ‘set-up’ information (a-b), or they provide an explanation/meta-comment on the action in question (f).

For more information regarding this use of in subordination, the reader is referred to Mithun (2008). In general, though, I use the term ‘in subordinate backgrounding/meta-comment’ whenever the in subordinate clause signals that the speaker has stepped out of the main narrative, and is instead providing information that is parenthetical, amplificatory, or background.

In addition to ‘in subordinate backgrounding/metacomment’, Mithun (2008) observes a second, complementary use of in subordination in Central Alaskan Yup’ik, one that I refer to as ‘quasi-clause-chaining’. When receiving this use, in subordination signals that the clauses in question describe very closely related events/states, ones that together constitute a larger event/state that is of primary concern. The following discourse illustrates this use in Yup’ik. In this discourse, the boldfaced *lu* and *na* are typically markers of subordination in the language.

(4) Quasi-Clause-Chaining in Central Alaskan Yup’ik (Mithun 2008)

- a. Nutegangrani ikna cirunelek ilai-wa arnaqatak irniani-llu --
Even as he began to shoot that one over there, the one with the horns, its relatives, a female and her offspring--
- b. Cirunelek tuai nutegar**luku**.
And so, he shot(-SUB) the one with the horns repeatedly.
- c. Tuai’ll taun’ piqerr**luni**
And then that one suddenly got up(-SUB)
- d. Avai tagel**luni**.
It went up(-SUB)
- e. Massinarpukllu ayarciigan**ani**.
And our motor wouldn’t start(-SUB)

In this discourse, the in subordinate clauses are (b)-(e). As is typical for such clauses in Central Alaskan Yup’ik, the information they provide *is* part of the ‘main action’ of the narration. Moreover, the actions are closely related in time/space, and together make up a single episode of key interest and importance. Again, I refer the reader to Mithun (2008) for more information. In general, though, I use the term ‘quasi-clause-chaining’ for cases where in subordination signals that the speaker is sticking within the main narrative, and is describing a series of closely related events/states.

Finally, it should be noted that, although ‘in subordinate backgrounding’ and ‘quasi-clause-chaining’ are distinct and complementary uses, they *can* co-exist within the same language. For example, Mithun (2008) demonstrates that Central Alaskan Yup’ik also exhibits in subordinate backgrounding/meta-comment, although this use is typically associated with the

appearance of the suffix *-l'*, an additional marker of subordination in Yup'ik that can be found in in subordinate clauses. Again, I must refer the reader to Mithun (2008) for more details.

3. Background on Subordination in Tlingit

In order to defend the claim that in subordination is a feature of Tlingit, I should first make clear what morpho-syntactic properties I take to be indicative of subordination in the language. In the present study, two types of subordinate clauses will be of interest: the 'attributive clauses' and the 'subordinate clauses'.

So-called 'attributive clauses' in Tlingit typically function as adnominal relatives or free relatives. The following is a simple, constructed example.

(5) Attributive Clauses (Relative Clauses) in Tlingit

Xwasiteeni
 wu- xa- si- teen -i
 PERF 1sgS CL(I-series) ROOT REL
(thing) which I saw

The defining morpho-syntactic property of attributive causes is that they are headed by verbs in the 'attributive form'. The defining morphological properties of this verb form are the following. First, the verb takes an I-series classifier in those inflections that independently require it (e.g. perfective, stative imperfective, potential, etc.). Secondly, when the verb takes an I-series classifier, it is also appears with the suffix *-i*, which is uniformly low-tone.³

So-called 'subordinate clauses' in Tlingit typically function as clausal complements. When such clauses are complements to postpositions, they may also function as clausal adjuncts. The following is a simple, constructed example.

(6) Subordinate Clauses (Clausal Complements/Adjuncts) in Tlingit

Xwasateení
 wu- xa- sa- teen -í
 PERF 1sgS CL(non-I-series) ROOT SUB
That I saw it.

The defining property of these clauses is that they are headed by verbs in the 'subordinate form'. The defining properties of this verb form are the following. First, the verb *never* takes an I-series

³Another defining property of 'attributive/relative clauses' in Tlingit concerns the appearance of the so-called 'decessive' form of the verb. Since none of the in subordinate clauses I have found thus far are in the decessive form, I put those additional details aside here.

classifier, even in those inflections which otherwise require it. Secondly, the verb always appears with the suffix *-i*, which is of variable tone (it is H-toned with L-toned roots, and *vice versa*).⁴

With these facts at hand, I can state what I take to be the ‘markers of subordination’ in the present study. Generally speaking, if a verbal form in Tlingit ends with either the suffix *-i* or the suffix *-í*, then it (generally) has the form of an embedded clause.⁵ Moreover, if a verbal form appears to function syntactically as the modifier of a noun, then these are also grounds for stating that it has the form of an embedded clause. The reader is invited to confirm for themselves that all the alleged cases of insubordination in Tlingit below fit one of these two structural criteria.

4. Overview of Insubordination in Tlingit

The present study is based upon a corpus of insubordinate clauses that I extracted from published, naturalistic texts in the Tlingit language. This corpus, Cable (2010), is available publicly, at the following URL: <http://people.umass.edu/scable/papers/Insubordinate-Corpus.pdf>.

The passages making up the corpus were taken from four, book-length textual collections: Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer 1987; Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer 1990; Williams, Williams & Leer 1978; Nyman & Leer 1993. Each entry in the corpus pairs one putative case of insubordination with the immediately preceding and following lines of text, to substantiate the claim that the clause in question truly is a ‘stand alone’ utterance. In addition the passage itself, the following information is marked in each entry: (i) the source of the passage, (ii) the speaker providing the text, (iii) the dialect of Tlingit employed in the text, (iv) the narrative genre of the text, (v) the structural sub-type of the example, and (vi) the semantic sub-type of the example.

Regarding the dialects of Tlingit, three are attested in the corpus: Interior Tlingit, Greater Northern Tlingit, and Tongass Tlingit. Regarding the textual genres, four are attested: ancient narrative (*Tláagu*), recent clan history, personal history, and formal oratory.

There are three structural types that the insubordinate clauses of Tlingit appear to fall into. The first are **relative clauses modifying *yé* ‘way’**. These clauses, which make up 60% of Cable (2010), are ones in which the main predicate of the insubordinate clause bears the ‘attributive’ morphology in (5), and the clause itself appears to modify the light noun *yé*, which means ‘way, manner, place’. An illustrative example appears below.

(7) Relative Clause Modifying *Yé* ‘Way’ (Corpus Example (4))

Yá	du	toowóo	gíwé	tle	gúshé	aadéi	yoo	amsineiyi	yé.
this	her	mind	DUB	then	DUB	it.to	he.did.REL		way
<i>Authors’ Translation:</i>					<i>Maybe he did something with her mind.</i>				
<i>Literal Translation:</i>					<i>The way that he maybe did something with her mind.</i>				

⁴ Another defining property of ‘subordinate clauses’ in Tlingit concerns the appearance of the so-called ‘decessive’ form of the verb. For the reasons stated in footnote 3, I put those additional details aside here.

⁵ So-called ‘hortative’ forms (Leer 1991) can also surface bearing a suffix *-i* even when they are not embedded. However, such forms can be distinguished from attributive/relative clauses and subordinate clauses via the conjugation prefixes appearing in the verb (Leer 1991). Thus, I can attest that in the present study, none of the putative insubordinate clauses are actually hortative forms.

The second structural type of insubordinate clause in Tlingit are the **plain subordinate clauses**. These clauses, which make up 31% of the corpus, are ones in which the main predicate bears the ‘subordinate’ morphology in (6). An illustrative example appears below.

(8) **Plain Subordinate Clause (Corpus Example (21))**

Ách	áwé	wé	dziyáak	tlél	yan kaysheeyí.
it.because	FOC	that	earlier	not	you.finish.singing.SUB

Authors’ Trans: *This is the reason a while ago you didn’t finish your song.*
Literal Trans: *That you didn’t finish singing because of it.*

The third structural type in the corpus are the **relative clauses modifying some other light noun**. These clauses, which make up only 9% of the corpus, are ones in which the main predicate of the insubordinate clause bears the ‘attributive’ morphology in (5), and the clause itself appears to modify a light noun other than *yé*. Typically, the light nouns appearing in these examples are *át* ‘thing’ and *aa* ‘one’. The following illustrates.

(9) **Relative Clause Modifying Some Other Light Noun (Corpus Example (22))**

Ách	adaa	yóo x’axatangi	át	ax	sani há.s.
it.because	it.about	I.am.talking.REL	thing	my	uncles

Authors’ Trans: *This is the reason why I’m talking about it, my uncles.*
Literal Trans: *A thing that I am talking about because of it, my uncles.*

These three structural sub-types are cross-cut by four semantic sub-types of insubordinate clause. I should note at the outset, however, that the types presented here are somewhat provisional, and represent my own ‘best-guess’ efforts at determining the semantic contribution of the insubordinate clause in the immediate discourse. Be this as it may, the first semantic sub-type of Tlingit insubordinate clause are the cases of **insubordinate backgrounding/meta-comment**. Constituting 51% of the corpus, these are insubordinate clauses that appear to be used in the manner described in Section 2 as ‘insubordinate backgrounding/meta-comment’. Generally speaking, these clauses appear not to be part of the ‘main narrative’, and instead provide some form of ‘background’ or ‘parenthetical’ contribution. The following illustrates.

(10) **Insubordinate Backgrounding/Meta-Comment (Corpus Example (19))**

Ách	áwé	du	tláax	wusiteeyi	aa.
it.because	FOC	her	mother	she.became.REL	one

Authors’ Translation: *This is how she became her mother.*
Literal Translation: *One who became her mother because of this.*

A second, related use of insubordination are the cases of **exclamatives**. In these examples, making up 31% of the corpus, the English translation suggests that the insubordinate clause has an exclamative meaning. The following example illustrates.

(11) **Exclamatives (Corpus Example (17))**

A tuwáatx haa toowú litseeni yé
its spirit.from our spirit it.is.strong.REL way
Authors' Trans: *How much strength of mind we gained because of it.*
Literal Trans: *The way our spirits were strong from it.*

Given that exclamatives are *per force* not part of the main narrative, these cases could instead be categorized simply as further cases of in subordinate backgrounding. In the present study, I have chosen not to do so, and to regard these clauses as a separate semantic type.

The third semantic sub-type found in the corpus are the cases of **quasi-clause-chaining**. These cases, making up 11% of the corpus, are ones where the in subordinate clauses are used in the manner described in Section 2 as ‘quasi-clause-chaining’. Generally speaking, these are cases where the in subordinate clause *is* a part of the main narrative, and describes one of a series of very closely related events. The following illustrates.

(12) **Quasi-Clause-Chaining (Corpus Example (5))**

Ch'u tle ch'u yéi teeyí ch'u yéi teeyí
just then just they.stay.there.SUB just they.stay.there.SUB
Authors' Translation: *Then they stayed there, they stayed there.*
Literal Trans: *That they then stayed there; that they stayed there*

The fourth semantic sub-type are the **rhetorical questions**. Making up 6% of the corpus, these are cases where the in subordinate clause appears to be used as a rhetorical question. The following illustrates.

(13) **Rhetorical Questions (Corpus Example (11))**

Ch'u wáa yóo tukdatángi sá kwshíwé wé shaatk' kwa
just how she.was.thinking.SUB Q DUB that girl though
Authors' Trans: *What was she thinking, anyway, that young girl?*
Literal Trans: *Just what the girl was thinking, though...*

As with the exclamatives, these cases could simply be grouped as ‘in subordinate backgrounding/meta-comment’, but I have chosen not to do so in the present study.

Finally, the reader should note that for reasons of space, I do not here include certain information regarding the illustrative examples taken from the corpus. For information regarding the textual source, speaker, dialect, *etc.* of the illustrative examples here, I refer the reader to Cable (2010).

5. Properties of the Structural Sub-Types of Tlingit Insubordination

In this section, I discuss in more detail each of the syntactic types of in subordination in Tlingit.

5.1 *Relative Clauses Modifying Yé ‘Way’*

By far and away, the most common structural type of insubordination in Cable (2010) are the relative clauses modifying the light noun *yé*, ‘way, manner, place’. The discourse in (14) gives a relatively detailed example; there, the insubordinate clause in (14b) is given with its immediate context. The chart in (15) lists the relevant properties of each instance of this type in the corpus.

(14) **Detailed Illustrative Example (Corpus Example (4))**

- a. Ts’as shóogu áwé tlél yéi tootí.
At first she didn’t want to go.
- b. **Yá du toowóo gíwé tle gúshé aadéi yoo amsineiyi yé.**
this her mind DUB then DUB it.to he.did.REL way
Authors’ Translation: Maybe he did something with her mind.
More Literal Translation: The way he maybe did something with her mind.
- c. Yáax’ áwé tle aan woo.aat.
Then she went with him.

(15) **Properties of Insubordinate Relative Clauses Modifying Yé**

Corpus Example	Dialect Spoken	Genre of Text	Semantic Type
(1)	Greater Northern	Ancient Narrative	Quasi-Clause-Chain
(3)	Greater Northern	Ancient Narrative	Exclamative
(4)	Interior	Ancient Narrative	Insub. Backgrounding
(9)	Greater Northern	Ancient Narrative	Exclamative
(10)	Greater Northern	Ancient Narrative	Exclamative
(12)	Greater Northern	Recent Clan History	Exclamative
(13)	Greater Northern	Recent Clan History	Exclamative
(14)	Greater Northern	Recent Clan History	Insub. Backgrounding
(15)	Greater Northern	Recent Clan History	Insub. Backgrounding
(16)	Greater Northern	Formal Oratory	Exclamative
(17)	Greater Northern	Formal Oratory	Exclamative
(18)	Greater Northern	Formal Oratory	Exclamative
(24)	Greater Northern	Formal Oratory	Exclamative
(28)	Interior	Personal History	Exclamative
(29)	Greater Northern	Recent Clan History	Insub. Backgrounding
(30)	Greater Northern	Recent Clan History	Insub. Backgrounding
(31)	Greater Northern	Recent Clan History	Insub. Backgrounding
(32)	Greater Northern	Recent Clan History	Insub. Backgrounding
(33)	Greater Northern	Recent Clan History	Insub. Backgrounding
(34)	Greater Northern	Recent Clan History	Insub. Backgrounding
(35)	Greater Northern	Recent Clan History	Insub. Backgrounding

As shown above, 60% of the corpus (21/35 entries) are instances of this structural type. We also find that this structural type is not restricted to any particular dialect or narrative genre. Moreover, this structure type is not restricted to any particular meaning; all four semantic sub-types are witnessed amongst the instances of this structural type.

On the other hand, while there is no absolute restriction to dialect, genre or semantic type/function, it is also apparent that certain trends exist. Regarding dialect distribution, only 9% of this type were found in texts from the Interior Tlingit dialect, despite the fact that ~25% of source texts were taken from this dialect. Moreover, no examples of this type were found in texts from the Tongass dialect.

There are also some interesting trends in the uses this structural type is paired with. A full 48% of this type are cases of insubordinate backgrounding. If we also include exclamatives under this heading, the percentage raises to nearly 95%, which suggests that this may be the primary (but not exclusive) function of this structural type.

5.1.1 A Potentially Related Construction

Before we leave discussion of this structural type, we should briefly make note of a potentially related construction in Tlingit. As observed by Leer (1991), there is another construction where a matrix clause takes on the form of a relative clause modifying the light noun *yé* ‘way’. In this other construction, however, the verb also bears so-called ‘potential’ morphology and is preceded by negation. The resulting structure is interpreted as the negation of a possibility statement, as illustrated below.

(16) The ‘*No Way X is Possible*’ Construction (Nyman & Leer 1993: 64)

Tlél aadéi haa gwaaxsiteeni yé.
not it.to he.can.see.us.REL way
Authors’ Translation: He couldn’t see us there.
More Literal Translation: No way that he could see us there.

Although sentences of this form could be classified as instances of insubordination, in the present study I have chosen not to. Thus, none of the clauses in (15) are instances of this (possibly related) construction.

5.2 Plain Subordinate Clauses

The next most common structural type in Cable (2010) are the plain subordinate clauses. The discourse in (17) provides a relatively detailed example of this type. Again, the insubordinate clause in (17b) is given with its original immediate context (17a, 17c). Furthermore, the chart in (18) lists the relevant properties of each instance of this type in the corpus.

(17) **Detailed Illustrative Example (Corpus Example (7))**

- a. Du aayí ku.aa áwé tle yakoolkées'ch wé héenx sateeyí.
Hers though would keep going out, being water logged.
- b. **Wáanáx sá yéi kdayéini?**
why Q thus.it.is.like.SUB
Authors' Translation: Who knows why it was like this!
More Literal Translation: Why it is like this?
- c. Ách áwé áa shakawduwajáa yáa du yáx sháach wudlitl'ak'i aa.
So the other women showed her what to do with the wet ones.

(18) **Properties of Insubordinate 'Plain Subordinate' Clauses**

Corpus Example	Dialect Spoken	Genre of Text	Semantic Type
(2)	Greater Northern	Ancient Narrative	Quasi-Clause-Chain
(5)	Interior	Ancient Narrative	Quasi-Clause-Chain
(6)	Greater Northern	Ancient Narrative	Insub. Backgrounding
(7)	Greater Northern	Ancient Narrative	Rhetorical Question
(8)	Greater Northern	Ancient Narrative	Exclamative
(11)	Greater Northern	Recent Clan History	Rhetorical Question
(21)	Greater Northern	Formal Oratory	Insub. Backgrounding
(23)	Greater Northern	Formal Oratory	Insub. Backgrounding
(25)	Greater Northern	Formal Oratory	Insub. Backgrounding
(26)	Greater Northern	Formal Oratory	Insub. Backgrounding
(27)	Tongass	Recent Clan History	Quasi-Clause-Chain

As shown above, 31% of the corpus (11/35 entries) are instances of this structural type. Once again, we find that this structural type is not strictly correlated with any particular dialect, genre or semantic type. However, we also find that certain trends nevertheless exist. Regarding dialect, a full 81% of this type were taken from texts in the Greater Northern dialect (though some examples were found in the other two dialects as well). Regarding genre, a full 82% of this type were taken from either 'ancient narrative' or 'formal oratory'. This is in interesting distinction to the relative clauses modifying *yé* 'way'; as shown in (15), only 43% of those clauses were taken from 'ancient narrative' or 'formal oratory'. This might suggest that – at a very rough level of description – insubordination using plain subordinate clauses is more 'high register' (or 'formal') than insubordination using relative clauses modifying *yé*. At present, however, this is but a vague and speculative suggestion.

Finally, we should note some interesting trends in the uses that this type of insubordination can have. Intriguingly, despite the overall low frequency of 'quasi-clause-chaining' (11% of corpus) and 'rhetorical questions' (6% of corpus), a rather high percentage of plain subordinate clauses were cases of quasi-clause-chaining (27%) and rhetorical questions

(18%). As we will see in Section 6, this conforms with trends that suggest that plain subordinate clauses are the primary structural type for expressing these particular meanings.

5.3 *Relative Clauses Modifying a Light Noun (Other than Yé ‘Way’)*

Finally, the least common structural type of insubordination in Cable (2010) are the relative clauses modifying a light noun other than *yé* ‘way’. The discourse in (19) provides a relatively detailed example, and the chart in (20) lists the relevant properties of each instance of this type in the corpus.

(19) **Detailed Illustrative Example (Corpus Example (20))**

Wednesday ka Sunday yaa xat jigatánch cháchdei.
Wednesday and Sunday, she would take me by the hand to church.

Aax **yá** **gaaw** **yá** **aan** **xat** **kawdudlixetli** **át.**
it.from **that** **time** **this** **it.with** **I.have.been.blessed.REL** **thing**
Authors’ Trans: *From that time to this, I have been blessed with this weaving.*
Literal Trans: *A thing that I have been blessed with from then to this time.*

Gunalchéesh yee tuwáa sagoowú.
Thank you for wanting it.

(20) **Properties of Insubordinate Relative Clauses Modifying Light Noun**

Corpus Example	Dialect Spoken	Genre of Text	Semantic Type
(19)	Greater Northern	Formal Oratory	Insub. Backgrounding
(20)	Greater Northern	Formal Oratory	Insub. Backgrounding
(22)	Greater Northern	Formal Oratory	Insub. Backgrounding

As shown above, this structural type is rather rare, and is found in only 9% of the total corpus of insubordinate clauses. It also seems to be restricted to the Greater Northern dialect, to the genre of ‘Formal Oratory’, and to the semantic function of ‘Insubordinate Backgrounding.’ Finally, in this context, it should be noted that each of the three examples in (17) comes from *different texts* by *different speakers*, which (weakly) supports the reality of these observed restrictions.

6. **Properties of the Semantic Sub-Types of Tlingit Insubordination**

In this section, I discuss in more detail each of the semantic types of insubordination in Tlingit.

6.1 *Insubordinate Backgrounding*

By far and away, the most common function of insubordination in Tlingit seems to be that of insubordinate backgrounding/meta-comment. The discourse in (21) provides a relatively detailed

example of this type, and pairs the insubordinate clause in (21b) with its original immediate context. Moreover, the chart in (22) lists the relevant properties of each instance of this type in the corpus.

(21) **Detailed Illustrative Example (Corpus Example (24))**

- a. And the opposite tribe on that side they have to stand up and hold your hands up,
 chuch kaax̄ áyá kakgidachóox yú yéik.
And the opposite moiety would stand with their hands raised to ward off the spirit.
- b. **Aadéi kut kei ntugix' yé haa kusteeyí.**
it.to away we.are.throwing way our culture
Authors' Translation: How much we are losing our culture.
More Literal Translation: The way that we are throwing away our culture.
- c. Ách áyá yeedát a daa yoo x'axaatánk.
This is why I'm speaking about it now.

(22) **Properties of Insubordinate Backgrounding Clauses**

Corpus Example	Dialect Spoken	Genre of Text	Structural Type
(4)	Interior	Ancient Narrative	Relative with <i>Yé</i>
(6)	Greater Northern	Ancient Narrative	Subordinate Clause
(14)	Greater Northern	Recent Clan History	Relative with <i>Yé</i>
(15)	Greater Northern	Recent Clan History	Relative with <i>Yé</i>
(19)	Greater Northern	Formal Oratory	Relative with Light N
(20)	Greater Northern	Formal Oratory	Relative with Light N
(21)	Greater Northern	Formal Oratory	Subordinate Clause
(22)	Greater Northern	Formal Oratory	Relative with Light N
(23)	Greater Northern	Formal Oratory	Subordinate Clause
(25)	Greater Northern	Formal Oratory	Subordinate Clause
(26)	Greater Northern	Formal Oratory	Subordinate Clause
(29)	Greater Northern	Recent Clan History	Relative with <i>Yé</i>
(30)	Greater Northern	Recent Clan History	Relative with <i>Yé</i>
(31)	Greater Northern	Recent Clan History	Relative with <i>Yé</i>
(32)	Greater Northern	Recent Clan History	Relative with <i>Yé</i>
(33)	Greater Northern	Recent Clan History	Relative with <i>Yé</i>
(34)	Greater Northern	Recent Clan History	Relative with <i>Yé</i>
(35)	Greater Northern	Recent Clan History	Relative with <i>Yé</i>

As shown above, 51% of the corpus (18/35 entries) are instances of this semantic type. We also find that this semantic type is not restricted to any particular dialect or narrative genre. Moreover, this semantic type is not restricted to any particular structural type; all three syntactic sub-types are witnessed amongst the instances of this semantic type.

On the other hand, while there is no absolute restriction to dialect, genre or semantic type/function, it is also apparent that certain trends exist. Regarding dialect distribution, ~94% of the clauses in (22) were taken from texts in the Greater Northern dialect. Although ~25% of the source texts were in the Interior dialect, only one example of this type was found in those texts, and none were found in texts from the Tongass dialect.

There are also some interesting trends in the structural types that express this meaning. A full 72% of this semantic type were clauses modifying some light noun; 55% were clauses modifying *yé*, and 17% were modifying some other light noun. This suggests that insubordinate backgrounding in Tlingit is primarily done through insubordinate relative clauses modifying a light noun (predominantly *yé*), though it should be noted that plain subordinate clauses have been observed with this meaning as well.

6.2 Exclamatives

After insubordinate backgrounding, the next most common semantic type in Cable (2010) are the exclamatives. It should again be born in mind, though, that these exclamatives could be reclassified as simply more cases of insubordinate backgrounding. The following chart lists the properties of the various instances of this type.

(23) Properties of Exclamative (Insubordinate) Clauses

Corpus Example	Dialect Spoken	Genre of Text	Structural Type
(3)	Greater Northern	Ancient Narrative	Relative with <i>Yé</i>
(8)	Greater Northern	Ancient Narrative	Subordinate Clause
(9)	Greater Northern	Ancient Narrative	Relative with <i>Yé</i>
(10)	Greater Northern	Ancient Narrative	Relative with <i>Yé</i>
(12)	Greater Northern	Recent Clan History	Relative with <i>Yé</i>
(13)	Greater Northern	Recent Clan History	Relative with <i>Yé</i>
(16)	Greater Northern	Formal Oratory	Relative with <i>Yé</i>
(17)	Greater Northern	Formal Oratory	Relative with <i>Yé</i>
(18)	Greater Northern	Formal Oratory	Relative with <i>Yé</i>
(24)	Greater Northern	Formal Oratory	Relative with <i>Yé</i>
(28)	Interior	Personal History	Relative with <i>Yé</i>

As shown above, 31% of the corpus (11/35 entries) are instances of this semantic type. We again find that this semantic type is not restricted to any dialect, narrative genre, or structural type.

However, while perfect correlations do not exist, there are again some interesting trends. Regarding dialect distribution, ~91% of the clauses in (23) were taken from texts in the Greater Northern dialect, and only one example was found in texts from the Interior dialect (while the Tongass texts produced none). Regarding genre distribution, nearly 72% of the clauses in (23) were taken from either ancient narrative or formal oratory, and only 18% were taken from recent clan history. This is in interesting contrast to insubordinate backgrounding; as shown in (22), nearly 50% of that type were taken from recent clan history. The reasons for this contrast are

unclear, but one might speculate that the exclamative use of insubordination is of relatively ‘high register’. Clearly, more research is warranted.

Finally, there are again interesting trends in the structural types that express this meaning. A full 91% of the clauses in (23) were relative clauses modifying *yé*; only one clause was a plain subordinate clause. This again suggests that exclamatives in Tlingit are primarily expressed through relative clauses modifying *yé*, though it should be noted that plain subordinate clauses have been observed with this meaning as well.

6.3 *Quasi-Clause Chaining*

A rather small number of clauses in Cable (2010) appear to be cases of quasi-clause-chaining. The following chart lists the properties of the instances of this type.

(24) **Properties of Quasi-Clause Chaining**

Corpus Example	Dialect Spoken	Genre of Text	Structural Type
(1)	Greater Northern	Ancient Narrative	Relative with <i>Yé</i>
(2)	Greater Northern	Ancient Narrative	Subordinate Clause
(5)	Interior	Ancient Narrative	Subordinate Clause
(27)	Tongass	Recent Clan History	Subordinate Clause

Only 11% of the corpus were instances of this semantic type (4/25 entries). Again, there are no strict correlations with dialect, genre or structural type, but certain trends are apparent. Nearly 75% of the instances of this type were taken from ancient narrative. Given the meaning of this semantic type, its frequency within ancient narratives is perhaps understandable, since these narratives often contain sequences of tightly connected, ‘action-packed’ clauses.

Another 75% of the clauses in (24) were cases of plain subordinate clauses. Given the relative infrequency of plain subordinate clauses in (22) and (23), this suggests that the primary use of such clauses is that of quasi-clause-chaining.

6.4 *Rhetorical Questions*

Finally, two insubordinate clauses in Cable (2010) appeared to function as rhetorical questions. The chart below lists their properties.

(25) **Properties of (Insubordinate) Rhetorical Questions**

Corpus Example	Dialect Spoken	Genre of Text	Structural Type
(7)	Greater Northern	Ancient Narrative	Subordinate Clause
(11)	Greater Northern	Recent Clan History	Subordinate Clause

As we see above, both instances of this semantic type were taken from texts in the Greater Northern dialect, and both were of the structural type ‘plain subordinate clause’.

7. Some Speculations on the Origins of Insubordination in Tlingit

Thus far, we have seen that insubordinate clauses are indeed a feature of Tlingit grammar, as evidenced by their appearance in naturalistic Tlingit texts. I have also argued that these clauses fall within three structural types and four semantic types. We have seen that these structural and semantic types are not strictly correlated with one another, but certain trends do seem to be apparent. For example, the most common structural type – relative clauses modifying a light noun – primarily express the most common semantic type – insubordinate backgrounding. There also seems to be an interesting connection between the structural type ‘plain subordinate clause’ and the semantic types ‘quasi-clause-chaining’ and ‘rhetorical questions’. While this preliminary study has not explored these relationships with much statistical rigor, they do suggest avenues for future research, particularly with elders who may be familiar with these specialized constructions.

The recognition that insubordination exists in Tlingit leads one very naturally to ask about its source. Are these constructions relatively recent innovations, or are they a long-held inheritance from Proto-Na-Dene? In this section, I will offer some reason for thinking that neither is the case.

First, it seems unlikely that insubordination is a relatively recent innovation in Tlingit. Thus far, it has been found in three of the five major dialects of the language. Its existence in the other two dialects (Transitional and Southern) is unknown simply due to the lack of textual material from those dialects. Nevertheless, there are grounds for believing that insubordination is a feature of those dialects as well. Note that insubordinate clauses have been found in texts from the Tongass dialect, the southernmost and historically most conservative of the Tlingit dialects. Insubordination in Tongass Tlingit is illustrated below.

(26) Insubordination in Tongass Tlingit (Corpus Example (27))

- a. At kaw`dwa.at wei shaa', ch'a wei kaa'
The women rushed there in a body, and even the men.
- b. **Wei' ee`x taax has al.aa`di.**
that oil bottom.into they.were.putting.them.SUB
Author's Translation: They were dipping (their dishes) in the oil.
More Literal Translation: That they were putting (their dishes) into the oil.
- c. Awe ch'u yaa` nagudi a wei shaa`wat ch'u kaa` jee`gaa' yakaa`wagei`.
But while the woman was still walking along - there was still plenty for everyone.

Given the presence of insubordination in Tongass Tlingit, it's not unreasonable to conclude that it was also likely a feature of Proto-Tlingit, and so therefore *not* a recent innovation of certain modern dialects.

If insubordination is indeed an inheritance from Proto-Tlingit, could it also have been an inheritance from Proto-Na-Dene? This is an incredibly difficult question, one that I am personally not equipped to properly answer. Nevertheless, what facts I have been able to gather

suggest that the answer is no. The main issue is that insubordination is not generally a feature of Athabaskan languages. The following lists the information I have obtained to date regarding insubordination in the Athabaskan family.

(27) **Insubordination Across Athabaskan**

- | | | | |
|----|--------------------------|----|-----------------------------|
| a. | <u>Language With It</u> | b. | <u>Languages Without It</u> |
| | Navajo (Mithun 2009) | | Slave (Rice, p.c.) |
| | Tanacross (Tuttle, p.c.) | | Witsuwit'en (Hargus, p.c.) |
| | Tanana (Tuttle, p.c.) | | Sek'ani (Hargus, p.c.) |
| | Deg Xinag (Hargus, p.c.) | | Dogrib (Saxon, p.c.) |
| | Ahtna (Tuttle, p.c.) | | |
| | Koyukon (Lovick, p.c.) | | |

I should note that the claims stated above are highly tentative. The individuals credited here were offering their best recollections at the time, and should not be held responsible for any errors in this tentative list. Note that existing language resources are not generally of use in addressing whether insubordination exists in a given language, since such resources very rarely (if at all) mention the phenomenon. Thus, at present, I have relied upon informal conversations with scholars knowledgeable about the languages in question.

As (27) shows, insubordination is not a general feature of Athabaskan. Indeed, as noted by James Crippen (p.c.), it seems to be confined to three main areas: the Southwest and Western & Central Alaska. Given the proximity of Deg Xinag to Central Alaskan Yup'ik, it not unreasonable to think that the latter might have been the source of insubordination in the former (see Section 2). Similarly, it is not unreasonable to suppose that insubordination in Navajo might have been due to areal influence from other languages of the Southwest (Mithun 2008). Finally, Koyukon, Tanana, Tanacross, and Ahtna seem to form a North-South pole, the extremes of which are in contact with Inupiaq and Alutiiq, languages that are related to Yup'ik and so may also have insubordination.

These comments are, of course, highly speculative and tentative, due to the scarcity of the necessary data. However, I am inclined to believe that the presence of insubordination in Na-Dene languages is chiefly due to areal contact, and not historical inheritance. Thus, the insubordination found in Tlingit is likewise not an inheritance from proto-Na-Dene.

The only remaining possibility, then, is that insubordination became a feature of proto-Tlingit as a result of areal influence from neighboring, possibly unrelated languages. This possibility receives support from the fact that insubordination does seem to be an areal feature of the Northern Pacific Northwest. It can, for example, be found both in Haida and in the Tsimshianic languages Gitksan and Nisga'a.

Regarding Haida, various comments in Enrico's (2003) grammar indicate that insubordination is present in the language. The key facts concern the expression of present tense in certain cases of connected discourse. As background here, present tense in Haida is expressed differently in main clauses and embedded clauses. In a main clause, present tense is realized via the suffix *-(g)ang*, while in a subordinate clause, it is realized via the suffix *-s* (*~ -as*), which Enrico labels the 'relative present tense'. The following sentences illustrate.

(28) **Present Tense Allomorphy in Haida**

a. Present Tense in Main Clauses

[Bill st'i-7ahlan-s]-ran dii 7unsiid-ang
Bill sick-must-PRES-P I know-PRES

I know that Bill must be sick.

(Enrico 2003: 810)

b. Present Tense in Subordinate Clauses

[nang st'i-7ahlan-s]-.uu 7istl'a.aa-ang qasa.a-ang
INDEF sick-must-PRES-FOC arrive-going.to-PRES

The person who must be sick is going to come here.

(Enrico 2003: 564)

Intriguingly, at one point in his grammar, Enrico (2003) notes that it *is* sometimes possible to use the subordinate ‘relative present tense’ suffix in main clauses, and that such use is usually associated with a ‘backgrounding’ function.

“...the use of relative –s at the end of a root clause ... is fairly strongly correlated with backgrounding.” (Enrico 2003: 1312)

Furthermore, in his discussion of exclamatives, Enrico (2003) notes that they have the appearance of subordinate clauses, despite their being ‘stand alone’ utterances.

“A very common type [of exclamative – SC] in both dialects consists of a clause containing one of the adverbs *tlii*, *tlll* ‘quite a bit’...and marking present tense with the relative present tense suffix –as ~ -s... The form of present tense and the final pitch are characteristics of embedded clauses.” (Enrico 2003: 158)

Enrico illustrates both these points with excerpts from naturalistic texts, which I will not repeat here for reasons of space. However, it’s rather clear from the statements above (and the textual excerpts themselves), that Haida appears to exhibit insubordination, in that it is sometimes possible for main clauses to bear morphological marking that is otherwise indicative of subordinate clauses (*i.e.*, ‘relative present tense’). Furthermore, it appears that insubordination in Haida can be used both for insubordinate backgrounding and exclamatives, two functions that are also found in the neighboring Tlingit language.

Another, rather different case of insubordination in the Pacific Northwest comes from the closely related Tsimshianic languages Gitksan and Nisga’a. As with other languages of their family, verbs in Gitksan and Nisga’a can appear either in ‘dependent’ or ‘independent’ forms. These forms are distinguished by a variety of properties, but a rather salient one is the number of agreement markers present on the verb. As illustrated below, independent verb forms possess only one agreement marker, whereas dependent forms can possess up to two.

(29) **Independent and Dependent Verb Forms in Gitksan-Nisga'a**

a. Independent Verb Forms

stil-ə-t = s	t = John	t = Peter
accompany-ERG-3ERG=CASE	CN=John	CN=Peter
<i>John accompanied Peter.</i>		(Hunt 1993: 136)

b. Dependent Verb Forms

ne:-ti: = t	stil-t = s	t = John	t = Peter
not-CN-3ERG	accompany-3ABS=CASE	CN=John	CN=Peter
<i>John did not accompany Peter.</i>			(Hunt 1993: 136)

Interestingly, although dependent verb forms are largely confined to subordinate clauses, scholars report that they are occasionally permitted in free, stand-alone utterances, ones where there is no clear syntactic ‘trigger’ for the dependent marking. The following quote from Tarpent (1987) is typical.

“An apparent problem [for earlier grammatical descriptions] are clauses which are dependent in form, but *which lack a dependent marker...*” Tarpent (1987)

Hunt (1993) illustrates such use of dependent marking with the following sentence, which was offered by a consultant as a free, stand-alone utterance.

(26) **Insubordination in Gitksan-Nisga'a**

nə	qaks	ħisaʔan-t	
1ERG	finally	finish-3ABS	
<i>I finally finished it!</i>			(Hunt 1993: 149)

Moreover, Rigsby (1986) makes a similar observation:

“...[A speaker can use dependent form when the clause is] ‘loosely’ coordinated in a series with a previous sentence *without a conjunctive particle...*” (Rigsby 1986: 273)

Although he does not illustrate such usage, his description suggests that Gitksan-Nisga'a possesses what I dub ‘quasi-clause-chaining’.

In summary, we find that Tlingit’s closest geographical neighbors in the Northern Pacific Northwest appear to possess insubordination, and appear to imbue such clauses with functions similar to what is found in Tlingit. This lends credence to the view that insubordination entered into (proto-)Tlingit as a result of areal contact, and not as a result of inheritance from an earlier stage of Proto-Na-Dene.

8. Conclusion

In this paper, I have argued that insubordination is a feature of Tlingit grammar, and that such in subordinate clauses can be grouped into three structural types and four semantic types. We've seen that these structural and semantic types are not strictly correlated with one another, but we've also seen that there are some interesting relationships nonetheless. I've also argued that the existence of insubordination in Tlingit is likely due to areal influence from neighboring Northern Pacific Northwest languages, such as Haida and Gitksan-Nisga'a.

In closing, I would like to offer a few thoughts on the way this work highlights the importance of textual documentation and analysis to linguistic research. The general phenomenon of insubordination is a rather under-studied and under-documented, largely due to (i) its discourse-oriented semantics, and (ii) the general absence of the phenomenon from English. Consequently, sentential elicitation is rather unlikely to produce examples of insubordination in those languages that have it, especially if English is being used as a meta-language. In the present study, the existence of insubordination in Tlingit only became apparent upon the close examination of texts that were originally recorded by native (or near-native) speakers. Relatedly, future studies of insubordination, both in Tlingit and other languages, will greatly benefit from recordings of natural, inter-speaker conversation, such as the kind being conducted for Tlingit by Alice Taff (University of Alaska, Southeast).

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