

Deixis Meets Evidentiality: Clausal Demonstratives in ʔayʔajuθəm

Marianne Huijsmans and D. K. E. Reisinger

1. Introduction

ʔayʔajuθəm (a.k.a. Comox-Sliammon; ISO 639-3: coo) is a Central Salish language traditionally spoken by the Tla'amin, Klahoose, Homalco, and K'ómoks First Nations along the Northern Strait of Georgia in British Columbia. The language boasts a rich demonstrative system that consists of several paradigms. In each of these paradigms, the initial consonant marks an evidential distinction which roughly correlates to visibility/non-visibility. The vowels, on the other hand, encode deictic distance (Huijsmans & Reisinger 2018). Table 1 presents one of these demonstrative paradigms and compares it to a paradigm of second-position clitics with parallel forms. While the regular demonstratives generally encode information about entities and locations, the clitics encode information about events. For this reason, we label them clausal demonstratives (CLDs).

	Demonstratives		Clausal demonstratives	
	Proximal	Distal	Proximal	Distal
Visible	<i>tiʔi</i>	<i>taʔa</i>	<i>ti</i>	<i>ta</i>
Non-visible	<i>kʷəʂi</i>	<i>kʷaʔa</i>	<i>kʷi</i>	<i>kʷa</i>

Table 1: Demonstrative and clausal demonstrative paradigms.

We argue that CLDs encode evidentiality and temporal deixis through relations between situations (following Speas 2010; Kalsang et al. 2013). Approaching these deictic elements in such a way allows us to unify the analysis of their evidential and deictic components: both depend on relationships between situations and their spatio-temporal coordinates (cf. Chung 2007; Koev 2017). This approach predicts an affinity between deixis and evidentiality more broadly.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. While Section 2 will briefly review previous descriptions of these clitics, Section 3 will present original fieldwork data that illustrate the evidential and deictic contributions of the CLDs. To account for the empirical picture that emerges, we propose an analysis in Section 4 that is grounded in situation semantics. Section 5 concludes.

2. Previous Descriptions

Despite substantial fieldwork over the last few decades, no one has explored the clitics *ti*, *ta*, *kʷi*, and *kʷa* in detail or grouped these forms into a cohesive paradigm. Instead, the existing literature only offers brief descriptions of individual forms. Harris (1981:149), for instance, notes a present/absent contrast between *ti* and *kʷi*, while Blake (2000:438–439) argues that *kʷi* encodes recency and *kʷa* marks direct evidence. The most recent descriptions by Watanabe (2003:520, 528) also relate *kʷa* to direct evidence

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direct evidence (2, 5, 7) and indirect evidence (3). Their infelicity in cases where the speaker has CDE can be captured through competition with the *t*-initial forms, as will be outlined in Section 4.3.

4.2. Deictic distance

Since situations have a temporal location (e.g., Kratzer 2007), we propose that the temporal distance encoded by the CLDs can also be analyzed as a relation between situations. More specifically, we argue that the CLDs encode the temporal proximity between the ES (e.g., the time of the transition between the pre-state and post-state of the proposition)⁴ and the DS (i.e., the time of utterance).⁵ Since proximity is contextually determined, we define proximity in terms of a THRESHOLD function, which takes a context variable, determined by the utterance context, as its input and outputs a temporal coordinate. We propose that the *i*-final CLDs encode that the ES is temporally closer to the DS than the temporal coordinate returned by the threshold function (10a). The *a*-final CLDs encode that the ES is temporally further from the DS than the temporal coordinate returned by the threshold function (10b).

- (10) a. $\text{PROX}(s_E, s_D) = 1$ iff $\text{THRESHOLD}(c) < s_E < s_D$
 b. $\text{DIST}(s_E, s_D) = 1$ iff $s_E < \text{THRESHOLD}(c) < s_D$
 where $\text{THRESHOLD}(c)$ is a function from a context c to a temporal coordinate, the threshold between proximal and distal

To take a concrete example, in (4), the proximal CLD is felicitous because the temporal coordinate of the ES is located temporally closer to the DS than the contextually determined threshold. The speaker utters (4) immediately following the light's change of colour since there is only a short window of time between when the light changes colour and when action is required by the driver. The exact location of the threshold is difficult to determine but, in this case, might be located closer to when the light is expected to change again.

It is worth noting that for both PROX and DIST the temporal coordinate of the ES is located prior to the DS. This correctly derives that the CLDs cannot be used for future events. In fact, when the CLDs co-occur with the future clitic *səm*, they force a nonfuture modal reading (11).⁶

- (11) a. *Context: You're not looking at the ocean, but you know about the tides.*
 səm=kʷi qaqa.
 FUT=PROX.CLD tide.way.out
 'The tide will be way out now.'
- b. *Context: You know the tide will be way out tonight. Right now, it's still quite high.*
 # səm=kʷi qaqa snat.
 FUT=PROX.CLD tide.way.out tonight
 'The tide will be way out tonight.'

4.3. Denotations

Taken together, the evidentiality and deictic components give rise to the denotations in (12). It is apparent from these denotations that the CLDs vary in terms of their informativeness (Grice 1975). While all four forms involve a deictic component, only *ti* and *ta* also encode CDE.

⁴ Throughout this paper, we use the terms *pre-state* and *post-state* to refer to the two states of a transitional verb (cf. Vet 1980; Borillo et al. 2004). They should not be confused with states as an aspectual class.

⁵ Since the ES is minimal, it will extend temporally only long enough to exemplify the proposition. CLDs often co-occur with perfective events encoding a transition (e.g., starting, finishing, a change-of-state), in which case the ES includes just enough of the pre-state, transition, and post-state to be a situation in which the proposition is true. Co-occurrence with imperfective predicates is less common and has additional pragmatic effects (see Section 4.4).

⁶ As expected, only the *kʷ*-initial CLDs can be used in this context. The *t*-initial CLDs are infelicitous as the concept of direct evidence conflicts with modal readings.

always be salient to the speaker. The use of the *k^wa* in example (7), for instance, suggests that the salient IS is a situation that does not extend to the DS in the speaker's mind, presumably because they finished their basket on a preceding day and because they are unable to access the post-state (i.e., the finished basket) at the time of utterance (Figure 3). In contrast, in (14), the speaker has indirect evidence that the tree fell but did not witness the falling event. In this case, only part of the ES for the proposition — namely a fragment of the post-state — is contained in the salient IS (Figure 4). In both of these cases, the use of the *t*-initial CLDs is infelicitous.

- (14) *Context: There's a big tree in your backyard. There was a big windstorm last night and today, you see that it has cracked and fallen over.*

{ča / #ti / #ta} jaq̣ tə=jạja snatʉ.
 {INFER / CDE.PROX.CLD / CDE.DIST.CLD} fall DET=tree last.night
 'The tree must have fallen last night.'

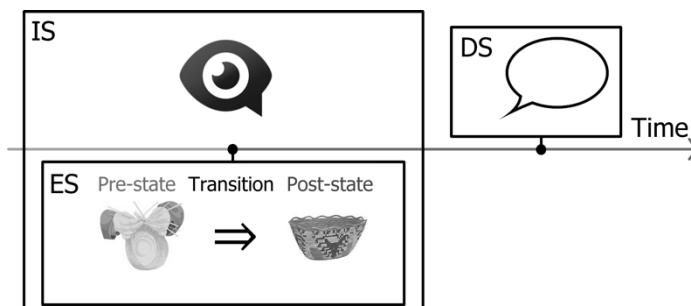


Figure 3: Relations between situations in (7).

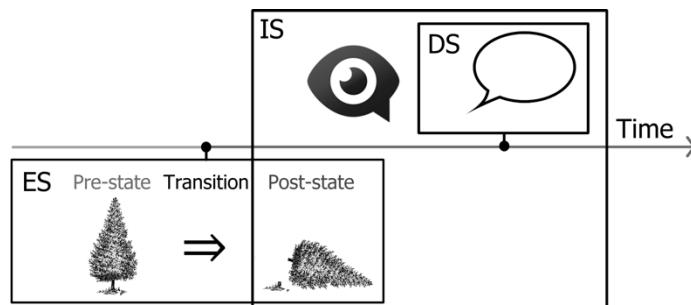


Figure 4: Relations between situations in (14).

4.4. Relation to regular demonstratives

The close resemblance between the CLDs and regular demonstratives in $\text{ʔayʔaju\theta\text{ə}m}$ raises the question of how they are related. Could the CLDs simply be reduced versions of the regular demonstratives? While this is an intriguing possibility, we do not think it is tenable. The demonstrative paradigm shown in Table 1 does not encode temporal but only spatial deixis.

Furthermore, the CLDs interact with the aspectual class of the predicate in a way that the regular demonstratives never do. The CLDs rarely occur with imperfective predicates (15), but frequently occur with telic predicates — presumably because temporally locating the ES relative to the DS is more straightforwardly accomplished with the latter (see footnote 5). Regular demonstratives, on the other hand, do not exhibit this preference and occur with all kinds of predicates, including imperfectives (16).

- (15) *Context: I look out the window and see that it is snowing.*

#ti ʔa~ʔax^w.
 CDE.PROX.CLD IPFV~SNOW
 'It's snowing.'

5. Conclusion

In this paper, we have argued that CLDs in ʔayʔajuθəm encode evidentiality and deixis through relations between situations. This approach allows us to capture both the evidential and deictic contributions using the same components. If a situational analysis is on the right track, we consequently might expect to find affinity between deixis and evidentiality cross-linguistically. While we are aware of deictic elements that encode evidential meaning in other languages (e.g. Matthewson 2011, Gutiérrez 2015), we have not yet explored how widespread this occurs cross-linguistically.

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