On word class and predication in Karuk*

Line Mikkelsen, UC Berkeley
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1 Introduction

Karuk, a polysynthetic language of Northwest California, exhibits verbal (1) and non-verbal (2) predication:

(1) a. ni-shxâar-eesh
   1SG-go.fishing-FUT
   ‘I’m going to go fishing.’ Vina Smith (UCB2010-05-01)

   b. naa ni-xú-ti Herbert u-’aahkô-o-ti pa-tâlpus
   1SG 1SG-think-DUR H. 3SG-set.fire-to-PL.ACT-DUR the-young.fir.tree
   ‘I think Herbert is burning fir boughs.’ Julia Starritt “Smoke” (WB90:2)

(2) naa viîra yâamach-heesh
   1SG INT pretty-FUT
   ‘I’m going to be pretty’ Imkyánvaan “Coyote Doctors a Girl” (JPH)

Both allow tense and aspect (TA) marking, but only verbs show agreement.

Bright (1957)

• certain TA markers are clitics → attach to predicates of any word class
• agreement morphemes are affixes → attach only to verbs.
• (1) is verbal predication; (2) is non-verbal predication

Macaulay (1989)

• (2) involves verbalizer -hi: yâamach-heech = /yamach-hi-eesh/
• verbal predication in both (1) and (2)
• no person agreement in (2) for semantic reasons

This talk:

• examine semantics of agreeing and non-agreeing predicates to test Macaulay’s claim
• Macaulay’s claim is largely supported, but it is theoretically and empirically puzzling
• place the Karuk pattern in a typological context (Stassen 1997)

* I am grateful to the Karuk elders Lucille Albers, Sonny Davis, Bud Smith and Vina Smith for working with the UC Berkeley Karuk study group and sharing their language with us. Much of the data for this presentation has been made available online as part of the Karuk Dictionary and Texts Project (http://linguistics.berkeley.edu/~karuk/index.php), a collaboration between the Karuk Tribe and at Survey of California and Other Indian Languages at UC Berkeley. I am grateful to Susan Gehr and Andrew Garrett for spearheading this effort and to the Karuk apprentices and UC Berkeley students who contributed recordings and processed texts for the data base, including Tamara Alexander, Nico Baier, Kayla Carpenter, Anna Curry, Erin Donnelley-Kuhns, Kouros Falati, Matt Faytak, Morgan Jacobs, Melanie Redeye, Clare Sandy, and Tammy Stark. All examples are given in the orthography adopted by the Karuk tribe. I use the following abbreviations in the glosses: ANC = ancient tense, ANT = anterior tense, DIMINUTIVE, DUR = durative, EVIDENTIAL, FUT = future, INAN = inanimate, INT = intensive, IRR = irrealis, IT = iterative, NEG = negation, NMLZ = nominalizer, PERF = perfect, PL = plural, PL.ACT = plural action, POSS = possessive, SG = singular, mgvblz = verbalizer. Where this information is available, examples are listed with the name of the Karuk speaker who supplied it and the narrative or elicitation session that it is part of. More information on data sources is provided in section 2.
2 Background

- The Karuk language
  - spoken along the middle course of the Klamath river in northwestern California
  - isolate within Hokan group
  - neighbours: Yurok (Algic), Shasta (also Hokan), Tolowa (Athabaskan), Hupa (Athabaskan)
  - 1800-2700 speakers at contact; currently around 6-12 native speakers and 20-50 second language speakers (3500 tribal members)

- Linguistic features:
  - vowel length (V vs. VV), accent (V, VV, ´V, ´VV, ˆVV)
  - polysynthetic, no noun incorporation, but highly developed set of directional suffixes (Macaulay 2005)
  - agglutinative; predominantly suffixing; productive compounding of nouns and adjectives
  - elaborate person marking on verbs (Macaulay 1992) and possessive marking on nouns
  - non-configurational syntax, tendency for [New/Contrast V Old]

- Documentation and data sources
  - CT Jeremiah Curtin unpublished field notes 1889
  - CM C. Hart Merriam unpublished field notes 1910-1921
  - JPH John Peabody Harrington Karok Texts (IJAL) 1930
  - AF Jaime de Angulo and Lucy Freeland Karok Texts (IJAL) 1931
  - TK John Peabody Harrington Tobacco among the Karok Indians 1932
  - WB William Bright The Karok Language (UC Press) 1957
  - UCB UC Berkeley faculty and students unpublished field notes 2010-2012

2.1 Bright on word classes and TA marking

(3)

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interjection
verb noun
  adverbial noun non-adverbial noun
    adjective adverb personal noun general noun
      pronoun non-pronoun
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(a) interjections (WB 250): outside any system of derivation or inflection, ayukii ‘hello’, haa ‘yes’
(b) verbs (WB 230): occurs with one or more verbal affixes, e.g. ni-’ahoo ‘I go’, u-snur-at ‘It thundered’
(c) nouns (WB 600): can’t occur with verbal affix, may occur with nominal affix, may compound:
   (i) adjective: may occur with -sa plural, e.g. yamach-as ‘pretty-PL’,
   (ii) adverb: ook ‘here’
   (iii) personal noun: may occur with -sa plural, e.g. ikxaréeyav-as ‘spirit person-PL’
   (iv) pronoun: no plural, no compounding, e.g. náa ‘I’
   (v) general noun: no plural, e.g. taphuus ‘fir bough’

(4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>category</th>
<th>(basic) postverbal form</th>
<th>postnominal form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>clitic</td>
<td>FUTURE -avish (-eesh)</td>
<td>=heesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ANCIENT -anik</td>
<td>=hanik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NEGATION -ara</td>
<td>=hara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ANTERIOR -aheen</td>
<td>=heen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IRREALIS(^1) -ahaak</td>
<td>=haak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>affix</td>
<td>PAST -at</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DURATIVE -tih</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.2 Macaulay’s argument

Bright’s postnominal forms are morphological complex; all contain verbalizing -hi (Macaulay 198:170-173)⁵

(5) a. Vowel Deletion (VD; cf. WB 353): deletes stem-final vowel before a vowel
   b. Special Contraction (SC; cf. WB 322): contracts two vowels across v, y, or h (avi > ee, ahee > ee)
   c. category (basic) postverbal form derivation of post-hi form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TAM</th>
<th>postverbal form</th>
<th>derivation of post-hi form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FUTURE</td>
<td>-avish &gt;-eesh (SC)</td>
<td>-hi-avish &gt; -havish (VD) &gt; heesh (SC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANCIENT</td>
<td>-anik</td>
<td>-hi-anik &gt; -hanik (VD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEGATION</td>
<td>-ara</td>
<td>-hi-ara &gt; -hara (VD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANTERIOR</td>
<td>-aheen</td>
<td>-hi-aheen &gt; -haaen (VD) &gt; heen (SC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRREALIS</td>
<td>-ahaak</td>
<td>-hi-ahaak &gt; -hahaak (VD) &gt; haak (SC)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All 7 TAM markers are affixes; no series of mysterious h-initial allomorphs of -avish, -anik, -ara, -aheen and -ahaak.

3 The agreement puzzle

If (6) involves verbalization of yáamach, why is there no agreement on the resulting verb?

(6) Náa váurá yáamach-heesh
1SG INT pretty-FUT
‘I’m going to be pretty’ Imkyánvaan “Coyote Doctors a Girl” (JPH.157)

(7) ni-slxáar-eesh
1SG-go.fishing-FUT
‘I’m going to go fishing.’ Vina Smith (UCB2010-05-01)

Macaulay’s conjecture (pp. 174-178):

(8) Copular clauses don’t display agreement for semantic reasons.
   a. When verbalized nominals occur in copular clauses, they will not exhibit agreement.
   b. When verbalized nominals occur in non-copular clauses, they will exhibit agreement.

What’s a copular clause?

(9) Macaulay’s examples of copular clauses (p. 176):
   a. pu-yáak-hara pa-’óo-ku-kam
      NEG-good.place-NEG the-here-to-side
      ‘This side is a bad place.’ Julia Starritt “Coyote Marries His Own Daughter” (WB16:33)
   b. pa-’aráar pa-hluunta-haak
      the-person NMLZ-peculiar-IRR
      ‘when a person was peculiar’ (WB p. 143)
   c. pa-mú–saanva furax-múrax
      the-3SG.poss-clothes woodpecker.head-entirely
      ‘Her clothes were nothing but woodpecker heads.’ Lottie Beck “The Perils of Weasel” (WB18:73)

In Stassen’s (1997:13, 168) semantic typology of intransitive predication these are PROPERTY-CONCEPT PREDICATES:

(10) HUMAN PROPENSITY hungry, happy, sad, angry, cruel, proud, . . .
    PHYSICAL hard, soft, smooth, heavy, light, hot, cold, sweet, . . .
    DIMENSION big, small, long, short, wide, narrow, thick, thin, . . .
    COLOUR black, white, red, . . .
    AGE new, old, young, fresh, . . .
    FORM round, straight, . . .
    VALUE good, bad, important, nice, . . .
    MATERIAL wooden, silver, golden, . . .

¹Bright describes -ahaak as a temporal marker, but Peltola (2008) demonstrates that it only occurs in irrealis contexts and I have therefore labelled it an irrealis marker here. The table itself is inspired by Macaulay (1989:169).
²Bright and Macaulay both label -hi denominative. I call it a verbalizer to focus attention on the part of speech issue at hand.
Macaulay’s examples of non-copular clauses (p. 177)

a. u-saamváoro-hi-tih
   3SG-creek-vblz-dur
   ‘There was a creek.’  
   Nettie Ruben “Coyote’s Journey” (WB1:47)

b. u-’íinva-hi-ti
   3SG-forest.fire-vblz-dur
   ‘There was a forest fire.’  
   Julia Starritt “Coyote’s Journey” (WB4:30)

Recasting Macaulay’s conjecture within Stassen’s typology of intransitive predication:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEMANTIC CATEGORY</th>
<th>PROTOTYPICALENCODING</th>
<th>EXPECTED TO AGREE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EVENT (including actions, states, processes)</td>
<td>verb</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXISTENTIALS</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOCATION</td>
<td>adverb</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROPERTY (see (10))</td>
<td>adjective</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLASS + IDENTITY</td>
<td>noun</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.1 Eventive -hi forms

Predicted to agree and typically do:

(13) váurá ník pa-nú-vyih-m-añaaák váurá i-yuup-h-éesh
   INT a.little NMLZ-1PL-go.PL-to-when then.fut INT 2SG-eye-vblz-fut
   ‘When we get there, then you can open your eyes.’  
   Nettie Ruben, “Coyote’s Homecoming” (WB2a:42)

(14) chími u-píičaat-h-éesh.
   soon 3SG-nothing-vblz-fut
   ‘he feels like he’s going to faint.’  
   [TK 193.22]

(15) pá-píish kun-íkú-a-ti báam tás tás kun-píish-ha
   NMLZ-soaked.acorns 3PL-make-DUR 3SG then PERF 3PL-soaked.acorns-vblz
   ‘When they made pish, they soaked acorns.’  
   Julia Starritt, “Soaking Acorns” (WB75:1)

(16) xás kárí u-kú-o-ha pa-‘asiktá’an
    then 3SG-all-vblz the-woman
    ‘Then the woman (from Katimín) quit.’  
    Emily Donohue, “Professor Gifford’s Visit” (WB88:9)

(17) chími u-thríha-h-éesh.
    soon 3SG-flower(N)-vblz-fut
    ‘it’s going to blossom.’  
    [TK 55.40]

(18) xás váurá puxích tá kun-ímchax tás tás kun-ástunk-ha
    then INT very.much PERF 3PL-get.hot then PERF 3PL-sweat(N)-vblz
    ‘And it got very hot, and they sweated.’  
    Julia Starritt, “The Sweathouse” (WB76:15)

Note also:

(19) xás tás kóó pa-‘ir
    then PERF all the-world.renewal.ceremony
    ‘Then the world renewal was over.’  
    Emily Donohue “The pikiawish at Katamin” (WB:22)

(20) yáas u-kóó-hi-tí pa-‘ir
    then 3SG-all-vblz-dur the-world-renewal.ceremony
    ‘Then the world renewal ended.’  
    Emily Donohue “The pikiawish at Katamin” (WB:24)

3.4 Existentials are not part of Stassen’s typology and arguably do not involve predication at all. I include them here because Macaulay explicitly mentions them.

In Karuk, location is typically expressed by a series of dedicated posture verbs (WB p. 113-114), which all exhibit agreement. However, certain locative adverbs, e.g. dok ‘here’, kaan ‘there’, and hooy ‘where’, may function as predicates without an accompanying posture verb (cf. Stassen’s (1997:238) ‘small world parameter’) and those are the ones referenced in the table.
3.2 Existential -hi forms

Predicted to agree, and the few additional examples I have found do:

(21) yánava u-spíka-hi-ti káan

EVI 3SG-gold-VBLZ-DUR there
‘Behold, there was gold there.’

Benonie Harrie “How I Found Gold” (AF)

But other types of quantificational predicates don’t agree:

(22) kumateech yáv-h-eesh, táyu-h-eesh

later good-VBLZ-FUT much-VBLZ-FUT
‘It is going to be a big time tonight, there will be lots of people.’

Imkyánvaan “Coyote Gives a War Dance” (JPH)

3.3 Locative -hi forms

Predicated to not agree, and most don’t:

(23) úum káan-h-eesh

3SG there-VBLZ-FUT
‘He will be there.’

(JC p. 218)

(24) xáat naa pu-‘óok-h-ara

may 1SG NEG-here-VBLZ-NEG
‘no matter if I am not here’

JPH1b Yas, ”How Buzzard Became Bald” (1930)

But some do:

(25) yuras-chíshiih ávah-kam úum u-káan-h-eesh

ocean-dog on-top 3SG 3SG-there-VBLZ-FUT
‘He will be on the horse.’

(JC p. 218)

3.4 Property -hi forms

Predicted to not agree, and most don’t:

• Human propensity

(26) Yakún úum xaas thakáari-h-anik.

EVI 3SG almost starved(?)-VBLZ-ANC
‘Behold he was almost starving.’

Imkyánvaan “Panther and his wives” (JPH)

• Physical

(27) avans-áxiich váarama-h-eesh

man-schild tall-VBLZ-FUT
‘The boy will be tall.’

(JC p. 215)

• Dimension

(28) kári xas u-püp naa vírã na-pman-anámáhach-hi-ti

and then 3SG-say 1SG INT 1SG.Poss-mouth-small-VBLZ-DUR
‘then he said I myself have a small mouth’

Frank and Nettie Ruben “Bluejay, Medicine-Man (AF)

• Colour

(29) chánchaaf-kunish-‘ik-h-eesh, ikráram-kunish-‘ik-h-eesh

foam-like-must-VBLZ-FUT night-like-must-VBLZ-FUT
‘May it be white” “May it be black’

Imkyánvaan “Coyote Doctors a Girl” (JPH)
• Age

(30) Pimnanihtanákaanitc uum **afshan-ich-h-anik**
Mourning Dove 3SG young.man-DIM-VBLZ-ANC
‘Mourning Dove was a **young** man.’ Afriitc “Mourning Dove Gambles away his Grandmother’s Dress” (JPH)

• Form

(31) mi-vásih **kúm-h-eesh**
2SG-back(N) crooked-VBLZ-FUT
‘Your back will get **crooked**’ Imkyánvaan “Panther and his wives” (JPH)

• Value

(32) **pu-yav-h-ara** pa-’ávansa
NEG-good-VBLZ-NEG the-man
‘He is a **bad** man.’ (CM, p. 70)

(33) Náa vára **yáamach-h-eesh**
1SG INT pretty-VBLZ-FUT
‘I’m going to be **pretty**’ Imkyánvaan, “Coyote Doctors a Girl” (JPH)

• Material

(34) Naa ithá’-iish fk vára **furax-múrax-h-eesh**
1SG all-flesh must INT woodpecker.head-VBLZ-FUT
“I am going to be scarlet-downed all over” Imkyánvaan, “Coyote Doctors a Girl” (JPH)

But some do:

(35) Ansáriik va’ára mi-yaffus t-u-’áas-ha
A. 3SG.POSS-person 2SG.POSS PERF-3SG-wet-VBLZ
“Weitchpec person your dress it is getting **wet**”

(36) u-’ahváara-hi-ti
3SG-hollow.tree-VBLZ-DUR
‘It is **hollow**.’ Benonie Harrie “Three Adventures” (AF)

(37) a. t-u-p-ipihara-pa5
PERF-3SG-IT-bony-VBLZ
‘He had **bones** in him already’ Imkyánvaan “Panther and his wives” (JPH)

b. kúna chámuxich uum vára ñpíhar
in.addition sucker 3.SG INT bony
‘But Sucker is **bony**.’ Mamie Offield “Eel and Sucker” (WB37:6)

3.5 Class and identity -**hi** forms

Predicted to not agree, and they don’t:

(38) vaa kári kari **áraar-as-h-anik**
3 still person-PL-VBLZ-ANC
‘They were still **people**’ Afriitc “Mourning Dove Gambles away his Grandmother’s Dress” (JPH)

(39) Kóovura p-áchvíiv **Pe-ekxáréeayav-sa-h-anik**
all the-bird the-spirit.person-PL-VBLZ-ANC
‘The birds were all ikxareyavs [i.e. spirit people]’ Imkyánvaan, “Coyote Doctors a Girl” (JPH)

(40) naa pu-pihnéefich-h-ara
1SG NEG-coyote-VBLZ-NEG
‘I’m not **Coyote**.’ Julia Starritt “Coyote Steals Fire” (WB10:31)

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5 The verbalizer -**hi** has the allomorph -pa in forms that contain the iterative prefix (WB p. 85).
Conclusion

Macaulay’s conjecture is largely, but not completely, supported by available data:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEMANTIC CATEGORY</th>
<th>PREDICTED TO AGREE</th>
<th>OBSERVED TO AGREE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EVENT</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXISTENTIALS</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOCATION</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROPERTY</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLASS + IDENTITY</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Outstanding questions for Macaulay’s analysis

1. Is the variation in agreement with property and locational -hi forms semantically conditioned?

2. If Karuk agreement is in general semantically determined, why would that be?

   Aspectual categories, and the possibilities of marking them formally on predicates, appear to be firmly tied up with the prototypical semantic content of the lexical items in each predicate category. As such, these aspectual marking are opposed to other types of formal marking such as PNG [person, number, gender; LM]-agreement and negation. *There is nothing in the semantics of predicates like ‘walk’, ‘tall’, or ‘priest’ which demands them to have person-marking or, conversely, blocks them from having that marking.* Stassen (1997:53)

3. If non-agreeing -hi forms are verbs, why do they allow possessive marking?

   (42) Pa-fúrax úum pú-vaa mu-síshaf-h-ara, vaa uum mú-’aax
   the-woodpecker.head 3SG 3SG.POSS semen-VBLZ-NEG 3G 3SG.POSS-blood
   the woodpecker is not his semen, it is his blood (JPH, fn. p. 157)

   Are they nouns at one end and verbs at the other?

References


