

The blocking effect of Negation on Initial Change: Rescue by affix deletion

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Initial Change (IC) is a pan-Algonquian morphophonological alternation on verbs commonly analyzed as an affixal complementizer (Dahlstrom 1991; Blain 1997; Brittain 2001, i.a.). What is puzzling about its distribution is that it not only depends on the type of clause, but also on the: (i) stem/preverb status of the host, and (ii) presence/absence of certain negative markers, resulting in intricate patterns that also differ from language to language. We propose a uniform analysis which derives the surface complexity of these patterns from general locality constraints on affixes and hosts interacting with language-specific strategies for avoiding stranded affixes.

In Western Naskapi, IC is regularly found in affirmative clauses on the leftmost morpheme in the verb: either stem (Table 1-a) or preverb ('WANT', Table 1-b or 'FUT', Table 1-c). In cases with multiple preverbs, IC affects the leftmost one ('FUT', Table 1-d). Crucially, IC in W.Naskapi is blocked if the *ekâ* negative morpheme intervenes between IC and the stem (Table 1-a vs. 1-e). However, IC surfaces in negative clauses if a preverb precedes negation (Table 1-f-h).

Table 1. IC distribution in W.Naskapi

<i>Affirmative</i>	<i>Negative with ekâ</i>
a. <IC>.VERB	e. (*<IC>) NEG-VERB
b. <IC>.WANT-VERB	f. <IC>.WANT-NEG-VERB
c. <IC>.FUT-VERB	g. <IC>.FUT-NEG-VERB
d. <IC>.FUT-WANT-VERB	h. <IC>.FUT-NEG-WANT-VERB

We argue that *ekâ* negation is an intervener for *Affix Hopping* analogously to negation in English (Chomsky 1957; Halle and Marantz 1993; Bobaljik 1995, i.a.). The main difference is that in English stranded affixes are rescued via insertion of a dummy auxiliary (*He sleep-s* vs. *He do-es not sleep*), whereas in W.Naskapi the stranded affix (IC) is deleted (see also Bogomolets & Syed *to appear* for the same deletion strategy used in Dravidian). We offer further support for this analysis from a very different pattern of IC and Negation distribution found in Arapaho.

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