Order as Alternation: the status of Order as a valid category in Nêhiyawêwin

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Order is a striking feature of Algonquian languages. Structurally, it is a system of allomorphy of the person/number marking morphemes. Bloomfield's (1946) account of Algonquian Order makes mention of five orders: the Independent, the Imperative, the Conjunct, The interrogative, and the prohibitive. In each of these orders, Algonquian languages have various subforms, referred to as *modes*, but the number of Orders and modes varies between the various Algonquian languages. Although it seems to have had a larger number of Orders historically, contemporary Nêhiyawêwin has only three orders: the Independent, the Imperative, and the Conjunct (Wolfart 1973, Cook 2014). However, these orders are not created equal. This presentation will discuss the ways in which Nêhiyawêwin Orders pattern semantically, syntactically, and morphologically. We will argue that there is no way to justify treating the Independent, Imperative, and the Conjunct as three phenomena of the same type in Nêhiyawêwin. Specifically, we argue that the Independent and Conjunct are two forms of an alternation, while the Imperative should be considered separately. Implications for future research are considered.

Reference
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