

4 Independents and Conjuncts in Everyday Discourse

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the distribution of independent and conjunct verbs within the context of everyday discourse. As a general statement, the independent order is found in main clauses, and the conjunct in subordinate clauses. While this statement is sufficient to account for the independent order, there are a number of aspects to the use of the conjunct which will require some refinement of this statement, including its co-occurrence with a factive-like preverb *é-*, and its use in certain main clause contexts. Establishing the basic uses of the independent and conjunct, as well as the preverb *é-* will be important for contrasting their use in narrative discourse (examined in Chapter 6).

4.2 Main clause independents and subordinate clause conjuncts

In conversational discourse, the independent is the form for main clause verbs as shown in (1) – (3) below. Independent verbs are underlined:

- (1) Mani wi-gishnenan niw dabyanen.
mani wi- gishEnEn -a -En niw Odabyan -En
Mary FUT- buy.s.o\TA -DIR -OBV.I that.OBV car -OBV

Mary will buy the car. (POEX00039)

- (2) Mikjéwimget ne?
mikEjéwi -mEgEd nE
work\AI -AUG.O.I Q

Does it work? (POEX00045)

- (3) Mani wgi-gzibyénan mine
 mani wE- gi- gEzibyén -a -En minE
 Mary 3- PST- wash.s.t\TI -OBJ -OBJ.I and
- wgi-bégwabke'anen niw nagnen.
 wE- gi- bégwabEke' -a -En -En niw nagEn -En
 3- PST- dry.s.t\TI -OBJ -OBJ -PL.OBJ.I that.OBV dish -PL

Mary washed and dried the dishes. (POEX00146)

Conjunct verbs are used in subordinate clauses. Examples are given below of complement clauses (4) – (5) and adverbial clauses (6) – (7). Conjunct verbs are underlined:

- (4) Ndenéndan Mani é-wi-gishnenat
 nEd- Enénd -a -En mani é- wi- gishEnEn -a -Ed
 1- think.thus.of.s.t\TI -OBJ -3/0.I Mary FCT- FUT- buy.s.o\TA -DIR -3.C
- niw wdabyanen.
 niw Odabyan -En
 that.OBV car -OBV

I think that Mary will buy the car. (POEX00040)

- (5) Ni pi je éje-bmoséwat?
 ni pi jE CH.EjE- bEmOsé -wad
 where in.a.certain.direction- walk\AI -35.C

Where are they walking? (POEX00266)

- (6) Zagech zhyayen, gizho'on.
 zagEj Ezhya/é -yEn gizho'o -En
 outside go\AI -2.C dress.warmly\AI -2.IMP

If you go outside, dress warmly. (POEX00019)

- (7) É-mnadénjegét, mno-ye
 é - mEnadénEjegé -Ed mEnO- EyE
 FCT- be.respectful\AI -3.C good- be.in.a.place\AI.I

Because she is respectful, she lives well. (POEX00011)

4.3 Conjuncts that take the *é-* preverb

A verb in the conjunct form is frequently preceded by the preverb *é-*. It is unclear exactly how this morpheme should be translated. Hockett noted in his work on Potawatomi in the 1940's that the preverb *é-* is a mark of the storytelling style, glossing it as a 'narrative' preverb:¹

"First-position Preverbs. ?ε, with conjunct mode only, *narrative*: ?ε κι μιοτ *he died*. Translation usually cannot show the force of this preverb; it is the mark of a certain style, namely that of story-telling and the like, in contrast to statements made about what has happened, in reality, to the speaker." (Hockett, 1948b, p. 139)

There is also a tradition of calling *é-* an aorist, going back to Bloomfield's use of the term for Fox (Bloomfield, 1927). He seems to have used it to refer to its function in traditional narrative where it can be glossed as a past tense:

"The changed conjunct of stems containing a particle eeh (this is the changed form; the simple form does not occur) is common in C[ree]: eeh-takohteet "when he arrived." It occurs occasionally in O[jibwa]; in F[ox] this form serves also for nonsubordinate statements in hearsay narrative: eeh-pyaa_i "when he came; he came (it is said)." (Bloomfield, 1946, p.101)

Goddard (1990) also uses 'aorist' for Fox, however he treats the preverb plus conjunct as an unchanged conjunct form.

¹ The historical provenience of the preverb *é-* is unclear. It is perhaps the changed form of a preverb (short vowel) *a-* which is only attested in the related language Ottawa, of which Bloomfield says "[it] is used with conjunct verbs only; it denotes place or person" (1958, p. 62). Two examples can be found in the text, both of which are locative in function: *a-nmadbid* 'where he sat' (1958, p.178) and *a-bmi-noogseg* 'train station' (1958, p. 62) (literally, "where the train stops" (Rhodes, 1985, p.1)) In younger speakers of Ottawa, *é-* is taking over as an invariant form of initial change (Costa, 1996; Rhodes, 1985), this may be happening for some speakers of Potawatomi as well, but for the speakers cited here initial change is still maintained.

Purpose clause:³

- (14) Odanek nwi-zhya wisnewen é-wi-gishnedoyan.
 odan -Eg nE- wi- Ezhya/é wisEnEwEn é - wi- gishEnEd -o -yan
 town -LOC 1- FUT- go\AI.I food FCT- FUT- buy.s.t\TI -OBJ -1.C

I am going to town in order to buy food. (POEX00015)

Durative clause:

- (15) Odanek é-gi-bme-yeyan, Wayne
 odan -Eg é- gi- bEmE- EyE -yan Wayne
 town -LOC FCT- PST- during- be.in.a.place\AI -1.C Wayne

gi-binchege.
 gi- binEchEgé
 PST- clean.things\AI.I

While I was in town, Wayne cleaned. (POEX00036)

Iterative clause:

- (16) É-gish-wisnet, neko mbé.
 é - gizh- wisEn -Ed nEko nEba/é
 FCT- finish- eat\AI -3.C used.to sleep\AI.I

Whenever she finished eating she used to sleep. (POEX00015)

Universal clause:

- (17) É-gmeyak, zhoshkwa.
 é - gEmEya -Eg zhoshEkwa
 FCT- rain\II -O.C be.slippery\II.I

Whenever it rains, it is slippery. (POEX00015)

³ Purpose clauses are in a sense hypothetical, since they always occur in the future with respect to the main clause. However, because of their semantic similarity, reason and purpose adverbial clause types are formed the same way in many of the world's languages (Thompson and Longacre, 1985, p. 185). Linguistic motivation for the use of é- in purpose clauses may thus be in conformance with this observed tendency.

- (22) Anwe zhe penojéwet, mbwaka.
 anwE EzhE EpEnojéw -Ed nEbwaka/é
 although EMPH be.a.child\AI -3.C be.wise\AI.I

Even if she is young, she is nevertheless wise. (POEX00025)

- (23) Anwe zhe é-penojéwet, mbwaka.
 anwE EzhE é - EpEnojéw -Ed nEbwaka/é
 although EMPH FCT- be.a.child\AI -3.C be.wise\AI.I

Although she is young, she is nevertheless wise. (POEX00026)

‘Before’ clauses take the particle *bwamshe* ‘before’ and do not take *é-* as in (24)

and (25):

- (24) Odanek bwamshe zhyayan, nge-wjanda.
 odan -Eg bwamEshE Ezhya/é -yan nE- gE- Ojanda
 town -LOC before go\AI -1.C 1- FUT- cook\AI.I

Before I go to town, I’ll cook. (POEX00033)

- (25) Ngi-wjanda bwamshe majiyán.
 nE- gi- Ojanda/é bwamEshE maji -yan
 1 PST cook\AI.I before leave -1.C

I cooked before I left. (POEX00229)

James (1983) for Moose Cree suggests that the absence of *é-* in ‘before’ clauses is due to the fact that they are always in the future with respect to their main clauses, and from that perspective can be considered hypothetical. More generally though, *é-* is not used in any temporal clause that expresses futurity, as shown by (26) as compared with

(27):

- (26) Odanek zhyayan, wisnewen nda-gishnedon.
 odan -Eg Ezhya/é -yan wisEnEwEn nE- da- gishEnEd -o -n
 town -LOC go\AI -1.C food 1- MOD- buy.s.t\TI -OBJ -1/0.I

When I go to town, I can buy food. (POEX00035)

- (27) Odanek é-gi-zhyayan, wisnewen ngi-gishnedon.
 odan -Eg é- gi- Ezhya/é -yan wisEnEwEn nE- gi- gishEnEd -o -n
 town -LOC FCT-PST- go\AI -1.C food 1- PST- buy.s.t\TI -OBJ -1/0.I

When I went to town, I bought food. (POEX00274)

Likewise, ‘after’ clauses in the future do not take *é-* as in (28):

- (28) Bama zhe gish-ggwadman node mkeznen
 bama zh E gizh- gOgwad -man nodE mEkEzEn -En
 later EMPH finish- sew.s.t.\TI -1/0.C these.INAN moccasin -PL
 nwi-mba.
 nE- wi- nEba/é
 1- FUT- sleep\AI.I

After I finish sewing these moccasins, I’ll go to bed. (JTNB3p53n2)

However, ‘after’ clauses in the past occur with initial change, which is generally found in factive-like contexts where the proposition in the clause is presupposed. In (29) it is registered in the preverb *ga-*, which is the changed form of past tense *gi-*:

- (29) Ga-mbayan, gi-wép-boni.
 CH.gi - nEba/é -yan gi- wéb- boni
 PST- sleep\AI -1.C PST- start.to- snow\II.I

After I slept, it started to snow. (POEX00275)

4.4 The distribution of conjuncts in main clauses

Besides the subordinate clause use of the conjunct as described above, there are a few contexts where the conjunct can be used in a main clause, often with an accompanying particle, as illustrated in (30) with the particle *bédo* ‘wish that’ (conjunct underlined):

(30) O, bédó wi na bkenagéyan!
 o bédó wi na bEkEnagé -yan
 oh wish.that EMPH EMPH win\AI -1.C

Oh, I wish I would win! (POEX00261)

Because these contexts pose a problem for a simple distributional statement of the conjunct as a subordinate clause verb form, the traditional means of handling them has been to define the particles as subordinators.⁴ This solution is more satisfying for the few particles which always require the presence of a conjunct. However, for many particles, the presence of a conjunct is optional; moreover, the conjunct can also occur in a main clause without a particle. Clearly, in order to be able to explain these sentences, an explanation that does not rely on an overt subordinating particle is needed. In this section, I will show that rather than being simply idiosyncratic, the use of the conjunct in these contexts is well-motivated in that the apparently dissimilar main clause contexts have a common semantics involving speaker subjectivity. Moreover, this shared semantics motivates calling these contexts subordinative, even in the absence of an overt subordinator.

4.4.1 Adverbial particles that can take a main clause conjunct

Many adverbial particles commonly co-occur with a main clause conjunct, but do not require its use. The particles that fall into this ‘optional use’ category, all have modal semantics, encoding the speaker’s attitude towards the propositional content of the utterance. Examples of these particles are given below in (31) – (38), taken from

⁴ Bloomfield, for Eastern Ojibwa, calls them ‘predicative particles’ (1958, p. 141).

elicitations and quoted speech in narrative texts (which behaves like everyday conversation with respect to the use of verbal paradigms).

Anaké ‘maybe’. The most common use of *anaké* is as a disjunctive, in which case it is used with a main clause independent, as in (31).

- (31)

Nin	<u>anaké</u>	gin	gda-kwabmamen			penojéyek.
nin	anaké	gin	gE-da-	kEwabEm	-a	-EmEn EpEnojé#y -Eg
I.EMPH	or	2.EMPH	2- MOD-	watch.over.s.o\TA-DIR-12.I	child	-PL

You or I should watch the kids. (POEX00208)

However, as a subordinating particle, it is best translated as ‘maybe’, as in (32). In this example, the speaker indicates a mental stance towards the addressee’s behavior, without specifying exactly what that is. This indirect tactic leaves it to the addressee to work out the mild criticism:

- (32)

Gwi-gwdemojgé	ne?	<u>Anaké</u>	(zhe)	bama	<u>gmeyamgek</u> .
gE- wi-	gOdEmojEgé	nE	anaké	zhE	bama gEmEya -mEgEg
2- FUT-	fish\AI.3.I	Q	maybe	EMPH	wait rain\II -AUG.O.C

Are you going fishing [when the weather is fine]? Maybe you should wait until it rains. (POEX00258)

Iw zhe anwe ‘okay’. This particle phrase is commonly used on its own, as in response to the query, *Ni je ezh-bmadzeyen?* ‘How are you doing?’ Here it is used to give an appraisal of someone’s speaking ability:

- (33)

<u>Iw</u>	<u>zhe</u>	<u>anwe</u>	<u>é-neshnabémot</u> .
iw	zh E	anwE	é - EnEshEnabémO -d
that.INAN	EMPH	all.right	FCT- speak.Indian\AI -3.C

‘He’s getting to talk Indian okay now.’ (POEX00272)

Wéte ‘really’. The particle *wéte* is generally used to indicate the speaker’s attitude. Thus in (34), the Lazy Grasshopper tells the Busy Bee he doesn’t care what the Bee thinks, and implies something like ‘and I shouldn’t, either’ (compare ‘*I don’t care*

- (36) I je o shebzhi néyap é-gi-zhyat
 iw jE ow mEshEbEzhi néyab é - gi- Ezhya/é -d
 and that.AN lion back FCT- PST- go.there\AI -3.C
- é-gi-widmowat niw wshkabéwsen,
 é - gi- widEmEw -Ewad niw wEshkabéwEs -En
 FCT- PST- tell.s.o\TA -3/3'.C that.OBV helper -OBV
- "Jo mamda é-wi-nsek," é-gi-nat.
 jo mamda é - wi- nEs -Eg é- gi- En -ad
 not possible FCT- FUT- kill.s.o.\TA -1/3.C FCT-PST- say.to.s.o\TA -3/3'.C

So the lion went back and told the attendants "I couldn't kill him." (JS.4.1.032)

- (37) Jo mamda zhode bidek da-je-wdemayen.
 jo mamda zhodE bidEg da-jE- OdEma/é -yEn
 not possible here indoors MOD- smoke.tobacco\AI -2.C

You can't smoke in here. (JT.03.41.006)

- (38) Jo wi zhe gégo jagdéwpegzewat.
 jo wi zh E gégo jagEdéwpegOze -wad
 not EMPH EMPH something taste.burnt\AI -35.C

It doesn't matter if they (potatoes) taste burnt. (JT.3.35.018)

4.4.2 Particles that require the use of a main clause conjunct

There are a few particles that require the use of a main clause conjunct. These include *bédo* and *bégesh*⁶ 'wish that' and *yédek* 'it must be that', *édgwén* 'I wonder' and *nmed se na* 'I don't know' (with allegro forms *nmej zhe na* and *nmej na*). Examples are given below in (39)–(46):

- (39) Bédo (wi) na gmeyamgek.
 bédo wi na gEmEya -mEgEg
 wish.that EMPH EMPH rain\II -AUG.O.C

I wish it would rain! (POEX00262)

⁶ Different speakers use one or the other particle. *Bégesh* has cognates in Ojibwe and Ottawa.

- (40) "O, bégesh na ézhi gaméyek
 o bégEzh na ézhi gaméyEg
 oh would.that EMPH over.there across.the.river
- gshketoyan é-byayan,"
 gEshEkEt -o -yan é - bya/é\AI -yan
 be.able.to.do.s.t\TI -OBJ -1.C FCT- come -1.C
- é-kedot... A, bégesh na ibe zhyayan."
 é - EkEdO -d a bégEzh na ibE Ezhya/é -yan
 FCT- say\AI -3.C ah would.that EMPH there go.there\AI -1.C
- "Oh, I wish I was able to get across over to there," he said... Ah, I wish I could go over there."* (MD102694.007, 010)

- (41) "Iw se zhye yédek é-wi-byawat nmezodanek,"
 iw sE zh yE yédEg é - wi- bya/é -wad nE- mEzodan -Eg
 that.INAN EMPH EMPH must.be FCT- FUT- come\AI -35.C 1- parent -PL
- é-zhedé'at.
 é - EzhEdé'a -d
 FCT- think\AI -3.C

"So now must be my parents will come," he thought. (AS.2.3.080)

- (42) "I je bzhe gagyaw yédek é-gi-mot."
 iw jE bzhe gagyaw yédEg é - gi- mEw -Ed
 and EMPH anyhow must.be FCT- PST- eat.s.o.\TA -2/3.C

Well, must be you ate him anyway. (AS.2.1.029)

- (43) "A, iw zhe yédek é-wi-dkemozh'ewat
 a iw zhE yédEg é- wi- dEkEmozhE' -Ewad
 ah that.INAN EMPH must.be FCT- FUT- take.s.o.across\TA -35/1.C
- gode," zhedé'é o wabozo.
 godE EzhEdé'a/é ow wabozo#y
 these.AN think\AI.3.I that.AN rabbit

"Ah, must be they will take me across," thinks the rabbit. (MD102694.027)

- (44) I je o neshnabé é-nat, "Édgwén se na
 iw jE ow EnEshEnabé é- En -ad édEgwén sE na
 and that.AN person FCT-say.to.s.o\TA -3/3'.C I.wonder EMPH EMPH
- a-je-gshke'nán nsheké."
 a- EjE- gEshkE' -Enan nEshEké
 MOD- towards- be.able.to.do.s.t.to.s.o.\TA -1/2.C alone

And the man told him, "I don't see how I'll be able to do that alone." (JS.4.5.013)

Yes-no questions, on the other hand, are similar in form to the corresponding statement, taking a main clause independent verb, with a second position question particle:

(50) Gdébsémen ne éwi-piekéygo?
 gE- débEsa/é -mEn nE é - wi- pieké -yEgo
 2- have.enough\AI -15.I Q FCT- FUT- make.pie\AI -15.C

Do we have enough (berries) to make a pie? (JT.03.037.008)

Related languages show variability in the use of the changed conjunct with content questions. In Ottawa, for example, Valentine reports that “questions of location that do not involve a relative root do not show initial change” (2001, p. 983). In Potawatomi, a relative preverb is added, and the verb shows initial change:

(51) Ni pi je ga-je-toyen?
 ni pi jE CH.gi- EjE- Et -o -yEn
 where CH.PST- where- put.s.t.\TI -OBJ -2.C

Where did you put it? (JT.03.13.009)

(52) Ni pi je éje-ték?
 ni pi jE CH.EjE- té -g
 where in.a.certain.direction- be.in.a.certain.place -0.C

Where is it? (JT.03.13.007)

The use of the changed conjunct in wh-questions likely reflects the fact that wh-questions trigger presuppositions, whereas yes-no questions do not. Or more precisely, ‘*why are you hungry?*’ presupposes ‘*you are hungry*’, whereas the yes-no question, ‘*are you hungry*’ carries only the vacuous presupposition ‘*either you are hungry or you are not hungry*’ (Levinson, 1983). As a context for presupposition, the changed conjunct is not unexpected here (as with completed adverbial clauses discussed

in Section 3.2 with example 29), and is likely grammaticalized in wh-questions for precisely this reason.

4.4.4 Unaccompanied main clause conjunct

Hockett (1948a) reports that the conjunct can also be used alone to express a wish, as in (53):

(53) Byat!
 bya/é -d
 come\AI -3.C

If he would only come!

Rather than using this construction to express a wish, speakers today generally prefer to use either of the particles *bédo* or *bégesh* as in (39) and (40) above.

There are, however, other uses of a main clause conjunct without a particle. As with other main clause conjuncts that co-occur with a particle, these utterances imply that the speaker is taking an attitudinal stance with respect to the proposition. For example, someone might say (54) if the addressee wasn't gone as long as was expected (the addressee might respond with something like, 'well, I didn't get a chance to see the doctor'):

(54) O, é-gi-gish-odankéyen?
 o é - gi- gish- odanEké -yEn
 oh FCT- PST- finish- go.to.town -2.C

Oh, you finished everything in town? (POEX00251)

In (55), the speaker expresses his excitement over a fast car ride by using the conjunct, which injects a certain vividness (this sentence was translated by the speaker as 'we were going to beat hell!'):

(55) O, é-yapich-bozyak!
 o é - yapich- boz -yag
 oh FCT- to.such.an.extent- take.a.ride\AI -15.C

How fast we were going! (POEX00263)

In (56), a teasing folk saying, the speaker suggests that the unusual act of the addressee's cutting wood caused a weather event:

(56) É-gi-mneséyen, wi yé i
 é - gi- mEnEsé -yEn wi yé iw
 FCT-PST-cut.wood\AI-2C EMPH PRED that.INAN

 wéch-gmeyamgek.
 CH.wEjE- gEmEya -mEgEg
 CH.the.reason.why-rain\II-AUG.O.C

You cut wood; that's why its raining! (POEX00259)

When asked, the speaker would also accept an independent verb in the main clause, but explained that it didn't have the same force as a conjunct, that somehow the implication that the act caused the rain was not as strong.

(57) Ggi-mnesé, wi yé i
 gE- gi- mEnEsé wi yé iw
 PST- cut.wood\AI.I EMPH PRED that.INAN

 wéch-gmeyamgek.
 CH.wEjE- gEmEya -mEgEg
 CH.the.reason.why- rain\II -AUG.O.C

You cut wood; that's why its raining! (POEX00260)

4.4.5 Summary

The fact that main clause conjuncts are found (sometimes grammaticalized) with particles that express propositional attitude suggests that the conjunct is being used in a subordinate context, only that the subordinator is a particle rather than the typical propositional attitude predicate. However, this argument cannot be maintained exactly as such when presented with examples such as those in the previous section which do not have a subordinating verb or particle. These examples suggest that the important aspect

for the use of the conjunct is the expression of speaker subjectivity, whether or not this is overtly expressed by a particle. When this is available contextually, it acts as a functional subordinator and the attitude is indirectly registered by the use of the main-clause conjunct.

4.5 The Conversational Construction (CC)

This chapter has outlined the uses of independents and conjuncts in everyday discourse. While independents are always used in a main clause, conjuncts are found in both subordinate and main clauses. If we take the subordinate clause use of the conjunct to be its basic use, then we can explain its main clause use as signalling functional subordination to an implied propositional attitude.

The preverb *é-*, which becomes important in the narrative behavior of the conjunct, has its basic use in everyday discourse as a marker of factivity. It is found only in non-hypothetical subordinate clauses: in complement clauses, it expresses speaker confidence—probability versus possibility; in adverbial clauses, it is not used in hypothetical clauses including clauses expressing futurity.

I will call this basic distribution of the independent, conjunct and preverb *é-* the *Conversational Construction (CC)*, to distinguish it from the pattern of independents, conjuncts, and the preverb *é-* which will be found in narrative discourse (discussed in Chapter 6).

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