Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

of

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"When *if* is *when* and *when* is *then*: The particle *nįd*è in Tłįchǫ"

Department of Linguistics

Thursday, October 10, 2019
10:00 A.M.
Clearihue Building
Room B007

<u>Supervisory Committee:</u>
Dr. Leslie Saxon, Department of Linguistics, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Martha McGinnis, Department of Linguistics, UVic (Member)
Dr. Catherine Léger, Department of French, UVic (Outside Member)

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Dr. Sarah Wright Cardinal, School of Child and Youth Care, UVic

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Abstract

The purpose of this dissertation is to account for the syntactic and semantic traits of Tłįchǫ modal clauses within a cross-linguistic typology of conditional clauses.

This dissertation provides a comprehensive description and analysis of clauses that are introduced by *nįdè*, a Tłįchǫ word with cognates in many Dene languages. Clauses that are introduced by *nįdè* are modal adjuncts, which cover predictions about the future (future temporal adverbial clauses, *when*), hypothetical scenarios (conditional clauses, *if*) and generic or habitual generalisations about the world (restrictive clauses, *whenever*).

I provide a unified account for all of these uses by showing that they are all in the realm of modality. I then hypothesise that *nįdè* is a complementiser which introduces a modal adjunct clause. I follow von Fintel (2006) and Kratzer (2012) and suggest that *nįdè* restricts a modal operator in its apodosis. This account explains apparent gaps in the Tłįchǫ grammar, and in particular within concessive adjunct clauses ('even though...'), which cannot be introduced by *nįde*, and attributes this mismatch to the difference between the factivity of concessive adjunct clauses on the one hand and modality in clauses introduced by *nįdè* on the other hand. I contrast this with concessive conditional clauses ('if.... even...'), which can be introduced by *nįdè*, and in which *nįdè* scopes over the concessive adverb *kò* (following Bennett, 1982, 2003).

This work highlights the ways in which Tłįchǫ conditionals are different from, and similar to, previous cross-linguistic generalisations. Conditionals in Tłįchǫ and other Dene languages differ from many accounts of conditionals, which focus on the role of the verbal form in communicating speaker attitudes about the hypotheticality of the proposition in the conditional (Iatridou, 2000; Karawani, 2014). In contrast, Tłįchǫ uses verb aspect inside clauses to indicate the boundedness or unboundedness of an action, much like in matrix clauses. Tłįchǫ speakers communicate their attitudes of the likelihood and hypotheticality of the proposition using other means, such as adverbs and evidentials.

However, Tłįchǫ is also similar to other languages, in extending the modal nature of conditional clauses to a subtype of conditionals called premise conditionals, which communicate rhetorical devices and a variety of metatextual comments (Dancygier, 1993, 1999). This is unexpected, as I argue that *nįdè* must introduce a modal clause, whereas

premise conditionals seemingly deal with facts. I argue that despite first impressions, Tłįchǫ premise conditionals are still within the realm of modality, as they are either used to express propositions that are not accepted as fact by the speaker, or are used to restrict a modal in the adjoined clause, much like hypothetical conditionals. The structure of Tłįchǫ premise conditionals is likewise similar to the structure that has been proposed in the past for other languages (Haegeman, 2003, 2010).