

Discourse Particles in Menominee

This paper examines the syntactic positions and functions of three categories of discourse-marking particles in Menominee: some which appear clause-initially, some which appear in second position, and a set with relatively free ordering.

Discourse markers “[contribute] to the textual organization of a narrative or [contribute] some interpersonal or epistemic meaning in a way that accomplishes some kind of discourse work” (Fairbanks 2016:42).

Eleven discourse particles were found to occur clause-initially. This category appears to be a slot, rather than a single position, in which several discourse particles can sometimes appear together:

Nahāw, tāq enoh āec?
well what that one.an he say
'Well, then, what did he say?'
BM 101

A small set of discourse particles appear in second position. *Kāeh*, which has not previously been described as second position, has a strong preference for the position and in at least one instance displaces another second position particle, *taeh* ‘and,’ when both particles are used within a single clause. The particles *konemāw* ‘maybe’ and *cīnap* ‘is there any chance of it?’ also appear to be second position, but the available evidence is so limited that they cannot be definitively described as such.

Eneq **kāeh** ’s māehnow-pemātesetuaq mamāceqtawak, ...
it’s then at any rate they lived well Indians
'So now the Indians lived well, ...'
Ancient Man, pp. 78-79

Finally, there is also a class of discourse particle that can appear in one of several positions within the clause. For the most part, these particles must appear before the verb of the clause in which they appear.

"Hāw, napōp **ceyāw**, apāehsos-napōp pītōh," ewāh.
okay soup anyway deer- soup bring it he says so
"Okay, then bring me some soup, some of the deer soup," he said.
NT 111

ceyāw taeh nekātaŋ-yāh- mamaēn.

anyway and intend to-back-I take it TI CONJ
'and I intend to take it back.'
BC 038

References

Bloomfield, Leonard. 1928. Menomini Texts. Publications of the American Ethnological Society 12, New York.

Bloomfield, Leonard. 1962. The Menomini language, C. F. Hockett (Ed.). New Haven: Yale University Press.

Fairbanks, Brendan. 2016. *Ojibwe Discourse Markers*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.