

Lesson 2:2

Core concept: **QUANTITIES** up front!

In the previous lesson, we talked about how Northern Chinook Jargon puts important things first in a sentence. A short review:

CJ likes to blurt out, or “front”, the things that are most on the speaker’s mind, before saying the rest of the sentence.

And in intransitive sentences, having just a subject (with very little control over the situation) and a verb, the verb is considered the most important thing so it comes first.

Now is a good time to add to the list of things that you normally say first in a Jargon sentence: Quantities of all sorts really like to come first.

“Quantities” includes numbers, of course, like **ih̄t**, **mokwst**, and **tloon** “one”, “two”, and “three”. (*Fun fact: we also have **ih̄t-ih̄t** meaning “several; some”.*) Of course number-fronting extends to anything counted, such as saying things like “There’s 10 of us” (**Tatlam nesaika**) and this example (let’s highlight the quantities in orange):

Mokwst moon naika heilo tl’ap peipa kopa maika.

two month I not receive letter from you

“It’s two months that I haven’t gotten a letter from you.”

-- Joe, Canim Lake, BC

What else could you consider to be a quantity? Judging by how we talk Northern Dialect, this also includes the words for “a lot”, “a little”, “every/all of”, etc. (**haiyoo**; **tanās**; **kanawei**). No surprise there!

Dleit haiyoo yaka tilihum.

really lots her people

“She had lots of relatives.”

-- Pete Nhinaskrit, Alkali Lake, BC

Tanas yaka floosh, tanas heilo.

little.bit “it” good, little.bit not

“It’s sort of all right, sort of not.”

-- William Andrew, Head of the Lake, BC

Kanawei maika mamook-peipa kopa naika.

all you make-written to me

“You’ve written it all down for me.”

-- William (?) of Salmon Arm, BC

Haiyoo iktas naika tikki.

lots.of things I want

“There’s **lots of things** that I want.”

-- TW Prosch, Seattle, WA

The same applies with comparing quantities, such as “more” and “less”. (But in reality, those two ideas are rarely expressed in Northern Chinook Jargon. Speakers prefer to just say “a lot”, with an exaggerated tone of voice, when they mean “more / the most / too much”, for example!)

Another quantity that’s said first in a sentence is the word for “a long time” (**leili**):

Leili mitlait okok kopa post-ofis.

long.time be.there that book at post-office

“Those books were left at the post office **for a long time.**”

-- John Jackson, Lillooet, BC

Also, there are the much rarer Northern quantities, **mo** & **too-much**:

...poos litl-mo chikamin naika iskum

...when little-more money I get.on.purpose

“...when I pick up **a little bit more** money.”

-- William Waspulawh, Canoe Creek, BC

...iaka too-much tlahowyam poos mitlait kopa okok ilahi.

...he too-much poor in.order.to live on this earth.

“...he was **too poor** to live on this earth.”

-- Kamloops Wawa #152

And speaking of quantities and negatives, have you considered this yet? **Heilo** (“nothing; none”) is a quantity, a quantity of zero...so it also has to be said first in a sentence!

Heilo naika ikta tumtum kopa okok ilahi.

nothing I anything think about this world.

“I don’t think **at all** about this world.”

-- Charlie Chapman, Spuzzum, BC

We’re seeing a trend in these last few facts: All kinds of NEGATIVE stuff is treated as quantities in the Northern Dialect.

In fact, just about anything that starts with **weik-** “un-; non-” or **heilo** “not;none” works like this. And so, negative words get placed at the front of a sentence.

So, **weik-kata** “can’t; impossible; no way” always comes first. So do **heilo-tlaksta** and **heilo-tilihum**, which both mean “nobody”. Also coming first in sentences is **heilo-ikta** “nothing; no kind of”, and

weik-kantzih “never”. This same rule extends to “nowhere”, which is **heilo-kah**. And to say “not much”, you use **heilo-haiyoo**.

Heilo-haiyoo **naika tl’ap Shooswap-Wawa.**

not-much I catch Secwépemc-language

“I haven’t caught on to **much of** the Secwépemc language (in Chinook Writing).”

-- William Celestin, Salmon Arm, BC

A general point about how to turn anything negative: **Heilo** is the general, neutral negative in the Northern Dialect. So it covers everything from saying simply “No” to someone, to negating any sentence you want to, to expressing “none of” such concepts as things, people, and places.

Heilo masaika sik kopa naika!

not you.folks upset with me

“Don’t be upset with me!”

-- William Andrew, Head Lake, BC

Naika heilo chikmin poos peyei naika peipa.

my no(ne) money in.order.to pay my paper

“I have no money to pay for my newspaper.”

-- Mary Pete, Deep Creek, BC

Contrast that with how limited **weik-** is. **Weik** is rarely used the way **heilo** is. As the dash at the end of it shows us, **weik-** is normally just a prefix, needing to be attached to another word. There are just 3 common **weik-** words that we know in Northern Chinook Jargon:

- **weik-kata** “can’t; impossible; no way” (not-how)
- **weik-tloosh** “bad” (not-good)
- **weik-saiyaa** “almost; nearly” (not-far)

Exercises 2:2

With your understanding of quantities & negatives, put your hand to translating these real sentences into your normal way of talking English! (The Vocabulary is always a help.)

1 Yaka mimaloos kopa Sundei, weik-saiyaa mimaloos-sun.

she die on Sunday, almost dead-day (= evening)

-- Chief Emile Timnaskrit, Canim Lake, BC

2 Per Lejak yaka wawa, “Weik-tloosh!”

Father Le.Jacq he say, “bad”

-- Johnny Wilson/Tuamah, Williams Lake, BC

- 3 **Kanawei nesaika weik-saiyaa lost tumtum kopa st'iwi'etl.**
all us almost lose heart for pray
 -- Emile Timaskrit, Canim Lake, BC
- 4 **Weik-kata naika skookum kooli.**
unable I strongly walk
 -- Johnny Wilson, Lytton, BC
- 5 **Yaka wawa naika, "Heilo mukmuk mitlait kopa naika".**
he tell me, no food be.here for me
 -- Isaac Peter, North Bend, BC
- 6 **Haiyoo samon mitlait, pi heilo-kah tlaska tlatwa.**
lots.of salmon be.there, but no-where they go.
 -- Patrick Felix, Neskonlith, BC
- 7 **Naika tumtum, heilo-ikta naika mamook mesaachi.**
I think, nothing I do evil.
 -- Annie Edward, Enderby, BC
- 8 **Heilo-tlaksta help kopa naika kopa ikta, poos naika peyei okok Whit-man.**
nobody help to me with anything, when I pay that White-person.
 -- (name unknown), Salmon Arm, BC
- 9 **Heilo-haiyoo naika mamook-peipa kopa maika, Piyalis.**
not-much I make-writing to you, Pierriche.
 -- Jamie Michel, Quilchena, BC
- 10 **Pi yaka wawa, "Heilo naika kumtuks poos book k'o' yawa".**
but he say, "not I know if book arrive there"
 -- William Waspulawh, Canoe Creek, BC
- 11 **Too tousan mor mitlait kopa klahani.**
two thousand more be.there at outside
 -- Kamloops Wawa #201
- 12 **Haiyas-leili yaka tumtum kakwa.**
very-long.time she feel like.that
 -- Louis James, Spuzzum, BC
- 13 **Tl'oonas yaka wawa, haiyoo ikta naika mamook kopa yaka.**
maybe she say, lots.of thing I do for her.
 -- Louis James, Spuzzum, BC
- 14 **Kanawei okok naika tl'ap.**
all this I receive.
 -- John Jackson, Barkerville, BC

- 15 **Tanas naika kumtuks peipa.**
a.little I know writing
 -- William Andrew, Head Lake, BC
- 16 **Haiyoo tlaska mamook-peipa kopa naika man.**
many they make-writing to my husband
 -- Annie Edward, Enderby, BC
- 17 **Tl'oonas tloon sno okok tanas-man.**
maybe three year that little-male
 -- Charlie Frye, North Bend, BC

Tips for Southern speakers 2:2

For you Southern Chinuk Wawa-speaking folks, the Northern dialect is kind of inside-out! Our Northern **heilo** is our normal “not”, and our **weik-** is more limited. You’re used to saying ***wik*** practically all of the time for negatives, as in these sentences:

wik nayka kámtáks ‘I don’t understand.’

wik-íkta nayka kámtáks ‘I don’t know anything.’

You would be less likely to use ***hílu*** in the South to say these things. (Although you can, and you’d be understood there.)

But there is some overlap in **wik-** expressions, because the few that we have in the North seem to be preserved from a very old variety of Chinook Jargon, which was the ancestor of both the Southern and Northern dialects. So you shouldn’t find it hard to understand Northern CJ’s **weik-tloosh**, **weik-saiyaa**, and **weik-kata**. (But for that last one, you’re more used to saying ***xáwqal***. That’s an unknown word in the North.)

Also, the South doesn’t have **mor** (preferring ***íləp-***), and the North doesn’t have ***mánaqi*** (“more” as in a comparative) or ***t’úxəlq’a*** (“too” as in excessive).