

The Coincident from Conception to Death

Mary Onwá:ri Tekahawáhkwen McDonald

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1. Introduction

In Kanien'kéha there is a verbal prefix often referred to as the coincident. I wanted to focus on this prefix as a speaker and teacher. In Kanien'kéha this verbal prefix is often referred to as 'when something happened' or 'when something took place,' and this prefix is always word-initial.

- (1) **shontontáhsawen**
shon-ta-w-atahsaw-en
COIN-CIS-NA-start-STAT
'when it started'
- (2) **sha'á:wen'ne'**
sha'-iaw-en'n-e
COIN-NP-happen-PUNC
'when it happened'
- (3) **shonteweién:ta'ne'**
sh-wa-w-ateweienta'n-e'
COIN-FACT-NA-end-PUNC
'when it ended'
- (4) **sha'katón:ni**
sh-wa'-k-at-onni
COIN-FACT-1sgA-SRFL-make.PUNC
'when I was concieved'
- (5) **shikónhne'**
shi-k-onhn-e'
COIN-1sgA-alive-STAT
'when I was alive'

The coincident is a difficult area of the language to teach and for learners to learn, for two reasons. The first problem of the coincident is that the meaning of this prefix that we teach is "when something happened," which is only part of its meaning; it can also mean "while." When it's with verbs it is usually predictable:

- (6) **sha'kató:ri**
sh-a'-k-atori
COIN-FACT-1sgA-drive.PUNC

- ‘when I drove’
 (7) shiwakekhón:ni
 shi-wake-khw-onni
 COIN-1sgP-food-make.STAT
 ‘when I was cooking’
 (8) shonkenonhwákten’
 sh-wa-wake-nonhwakt-en-’
 COIN-FACT-1sgP-sick-BEN-PUNC
 ‘when I got sick’
 (9) shiwakenonhwaktaníhahkwe’
 shi-wake-nonhwakt-ani-hahkwe’
 COIN-1sgP-sick-BEN-FORM.PST
 ‘while I was sick’

However, the second problem is that sometimes it could mean “the same as something” like when it is used with nouns:

- (10) shon’thé:ra
 sha-w-a’thera
 COIN-NA-basket
 ‘the same basket’
 (11) sha’ka’seréhta’
 sha’-ka-’seréhta’
 COIN-NA-car
 ‘the same car’
 (12) sha’tetiótte’
 sha’-te-t-io-att-e’
 COIN-DUP-CIS-NP-high-STAT
 ‘it is the same height’

As a Kanien’keha speaker it is very important for you to know how to use this prefix. The discussion of the importance of the coincident will show how good of a speaker you are to other speakers and how you are able to talk about events in time. You will want to be able to paint a picture or scenario by the words you use. The words below will take you to when the event or action takes place.

- (13) **shiwatohserenhá:wi**
 shi-w-at-ohser-enhawi
 COIN-NA-SRFL-year-time.of.STAT
 ‘in that year’

- (14) Kénh **shiwatohserenhá:wi tetewahtén:ti tsi nón:we'** wa'tetewanákerehkwe'.
 kenh shi-w-at-ohser-enhawi te-tew-ahtenti tsi nonwe'
 then COIN-NA-SRFL-year-time.of.STAT CIS-1pl.inclP-go.STAT that place
 wa'-te-tewa-nakere-hkwe'
 FACT-CIS-1pl.inclP-live-FORM.PST
 'That was the year that we moved from where we lived.'
- (15) **shontaió:karahkwe'**
 shon-t-a-io-kara-hkwe'
 COIN-CIS-FACT-NP-dark-FORM.PST
 'when it got dark'
- (16) **sha'katkétsko'**
 sh-wa'-k-at-ketsko-'
 COIN-FACT-1sgA-SRFL-raise-PUNC
 'when I got up'

This is a difficult area of the language to teach, as a young person growing up in the longhouse you got to hear many of the other speakers tell narratives of our legends and history. For learners of today they will have to hear how speakers use this form by listening to podcasts or radio shows to hear how it's used. One meaning of this is when an event or action took place. You are looking at the start of an event, or you wish to focus on a part of the event that is happening and/or when the event ended like in the examples below. As you can see in (17)-(19), this conveys to the person that you are telling a story to that they will be able to understand the sequence of events that took place in your telling of your work event. The verb for 'work' can have different forms of the coincident that gets used to convey it.

- (17) **shonkió'te**
 sha-wak-io't-e
 COIN-1sgP-work-STAT
 'when I started working'
- (18) **shiwakió'te'**
 shi-wak-io't-e'
 COIN-1sgP-work-STAT
 'when I was working'
- (19) **sha'kio'tenhserén:ta'ne'**
 sh-wa'-k-io'ten-hser-enta'n-e'
 COIN-FACT-1sgP-work-NMLZ-end-PUNC
 'when I finished working'

2. Proposals:

I propose that the meaning of the coincident is (kind of) restricted to the past, which is why you have been a ghost in the story in Section 3 to describe your past life. The form of the coincident also depends on other specifics of the verb.

In the next section I am going to look at the vocabulary showing the coincident in all the forms showing how the words are used to show the narrative of your past life from conception to death. Note that you are a ghost recapping your life events to the Creator.

3. The coincident from conception to death

In this story, I have passed into the afterlife, and I am telling the Creator these are the things that I did while I was alive. Every verb in this story uses the coincident.

- (20) sha'katón:ni
sh-wa'-k-at-onni
COIN-FACT-1sgA-SRFL-make.PUNC
'when I was conceived'
- (21) sha'kenákarate'
sh-wa'-ke-nakarat-e'
COIN-FACT-1sgA-be.born-PUNC
'when I was born'
- (22) sha'kón:ken
sh-wa'-kon-ken
COIN-FACT-1sg>2sg-see.PUNC
'when I saw you'
- (23) sha'katè:sere'
sh-wa'-k-ate-'ser-e'
COIN-FACT-1sgA-SRFL-drag-PUNC
'when I crawled'
- (24) Sha'tékta'ne'
sh-wa'-te-k-ta'n-e'
COIN-FACT-DUP-1sgA-stand.up-PUNC
'when I stood up'
- (25) sha'katá:ti
sh-wa'-k-atati
COIN-FACT-1sgA-speak.PUNC
'when I talked'
- (26) sha'keno'tsió:ten when I started to have teeth
sh-wa'-ke-no'tsi-ot-en
COIN-FACT-1sgA-tooth-stand-STAT
'when I started to have teeth'

- (27) sha'kahtén:ti
sh-wa'-k-ahenti
COIN-FACT-1sgA-walk.PUNC
'when I started to walk'
- (28) sha'kateweienhstà:na'
sh-wa'-k-ateweienhst-ahn-a'
COIN-FACT-1sgA-study-PURP-PUNC
- (29) sha'tkatóhetste'
sh-wa'-t-k-atohetst-e'
COIN-FACT-DUP?-1sgA-pass-PUNC
'when I graduated'
- (30) shiwakió'te'
shi-wak-io't-e'
COIN-1sgP-work-STAT
'when I was working'
- (31) Sha'tkatonhnaté:ni
sh-wa'-t-k-at-onhn-ateni
COIN-FACT-DUP-1sgA-SRFL-life-change.PUNC
'when I reached puberty'
- (32) Shonksóhtshen
sh-wa-wak-sohtsh-en
COIN-FACT-1sgP-menstruate-PUNC
'when I started to menstruate' (moon came to me)
- (33) sha'kià:tase'ne'
sh-wa'-k-ia't-ase-'n-e'
COIN-FACT-1sgA-body-new-INCH-PUNC
'when I reached my teens' (female)
- (34) sha'kenekenhterónta'ne'
sh-wa'-ke-nekenhteronta-'n-e'
COIN-FACT-1sgA-young.man-INCH-PUNC
'when I reached my teens' (male)
- (35) shonkskaraién:ta'ne'
sh-wa-wak-skar-a-ienta'n-e'
COIN-FACT-1sgP-partner-JR-get-PUNC
'when I got a boyfriend or girlfriend'
- (36) sha'katonkwe'tí:sha
sh-wa'-k-at-onkwe-'t-is-ha'
COIN-FACT-1sgA-SRFL-person-NMLZ-finish-HAB
'when I became an adult'
- (37) shonkéniake

- sh-wa'-wake-niak-e
COIN-FACT-1sgP-get.married-STAT
'when I got married' (marriage came to me)
- (38) shonkewiraién:ta'ne'
sh-wa-wake-wir-a-ienta'n-e'
COIN-FACT-1sgP-baby-JR-get-PUNC
'when I had a child' (child came to me)
- (39) shonke'ksténha'ne'
sh-wa-wake-'kstenha-'n-e'
COIN-FACT-1sgP-elder-INCH-PUNC
'when I became a elder' (old age came to me)
- (40) sha'kateré:shen
sh-wa'-k-atere-shen
COIN-FACT-1sgA-grandchild-have.relation.STAT
'when I got grandchild'
- (41) shonkwaterhe'ónhskwe'
sh-wa'-wakw-aterhe'onhskw-e'
COIN-FACT-1sgP-become.widow-PUNC
'when I became a widow'
- (42) shonkenonhwákten
sh-wa-wake-nonhwakt-en-'
COIN-FACT-1sgP-sick-BEN-PUNC
'when I got sick'
- (43) sha'kiheie'
sh-a'-k-ihei-e'
COIN-FACT-1sgA-die-PUNC
'when I died'

4. Previous work on the coincident

The previous work on Kanien'kéha and other Northern Iroquoian languages hasn't said much about the coincident! However the author Nora Deering, who is another native speaker of Kanien'kéha, said a lot about the coincident and I found this interesting and dug into it a little more than maybe what was needed, but glad I did.

Bonvillain (1973) considers the coincident as basically a locative prefix, expressing the idea that two or more states or actions can occur at the same time.

Bonvillain says that the coincident expresses temporal subordination – the idea that a state or action occurs at a certain time when other events also happen. This is shown in the following examples. (47), (48) and (54) show the equivalent word in Oneida.

- (44) **sha'**ehiatonhserón:ni
sh-wa'-ie-hiatonhser-onni
COIN-FACT-FIA-paper-make.PUNC
'when she made a will'
- (45) shé:kon **shiwakió'te'**
shekon shi-wak-io't-e'
still COIN-1sgP-work-STAT
'while I was still working'
- (46) **shihanákere'**
shi-ha-nakere-'
COIN-MsgA-live-STAT
'when he was alive'
- (47) a. **tsikenikΛhtúha'**
tsi-ke-nikΛhtuha'
COIN-1sgA-young.man
'when I was a young man' (Oneida; Lounsbury 1976)
- b. **shikenekénhteron**
shi-ke-nekenhteron
COIN-1sgA-young.man
'when I was a young man'
- (48) a. **tša'ákwawe'**
ts-wa'-iakwa-w-e'
COIN-FACT-1pl.exclA-arrive-PUNC
'when we arrived' (Oneida; Lounsbury 1976)
- b. **sha'ákwawe'**
sh-wa'-iakwa-w-e'
COIN-FACT-1pl.exclA-arrive-PUNC
'when we arrived'

Another meaning of the coincident according to Bonvillain is temporal reference which expresses the idea that a state or actions occurs in relation to a particular time or time.

- (49) Ó:nen **shii**onkwata'shwáhton ne aionkwatà:wha'.
onen shi-ionkw-ata'shwaht-on ne a-ionkwa-ita'w-h-a'
now COIN-1plP-?-STAT NE OPT-1plP-sleep-PURP-PUNC
'We had already put out the lights so we could all go to sleep.'
- (50) Wahón:nise' **shikon**ia'tisakonhacie's.
wahonnise' shi-kon-ia't-isak-on-hakie-'s
long.time COIN-1sg>2sg-body-look.for-STAT-PROG-HAB
'It has been a long time since looking for you.'

- (51) **Shiwentákta**
 shi-wentakta
 COIN-Saturday
 ‘this past Saturday’

Finally, Bonvillain says that the coincident expresses simultaneity – the idea that two or more events are coincident in time.

- (52) Tsi ná:he **shikónhne’** **shiwakatí:wen**
 tsi nahe shi-k-onhn-e’ shi-wak-atiwen
 that since COIN-1sgA-alive-STAT COIN-1sgP-thin.STAT
 ‘Since I have been alive I was always thin.’
- (53) Ó:ia ní:ioht kohsaténhsne **sha’**tetewakenonniáhkwén teióntsne atahkwé:nia
shiwaká’tston.
 oia ni-io-ht kohsaténhs-hne
 other PART-NP-be.how barn-LOC
 sh-wa’-te-te-wake-nonniáhkw-en te-ion-at-sne
 COIN-FACT-DUP-CIS-1sgP-dance-STAT DUP-FIA-SRFL-take.care.STAT
 atahkwénia shi-wak-atst-on
 uniform COIN-1sgP-wear-STAT
 ‘It would be odd if I were dancing and wearing a nurse’s uniform.’
- (54) a. **Tsathatíyá:tane.**
 ts-wa-t-hati-ya’t-ane
 COIN-FACT-CIS-MplA-body-fall-PUNC
 ‘They all fell off at the same time.’ (Oneida)
- b. **Shontahatíià:ten’ne’.**
 shon-t-wa-hati-ia’t-en’n-e’
 COIN-CIS-FACT-MplA-body-fall-PUNC
 ‘They all fell off at the same time.’

Lounsbury (1976) says it acts as temporal subordination, akin to *when*, *at the time that*.

Finally, Deering, who was also a teacher, went into more detail. She says that it expresses the temporal aspects, but also includes sameness. It was interesting to see another teacher’s perspective go into more detail on this prefix since it’s really important for kids to learn.

The coincident is always word-initial, no matter what form it’s in, as seen in the story. It precedes all modal prefixes as well as all other verbal prefixes with which it can co-occur.

- (55) **shà:tie**
 sh-wa’-k-ie

- COIN-FACT-1sgA-wake.up.PUNC
 ‘when I woke up’
 (56) Wà:tie.
 wa’-k-ie
 FACT-1sgA-wake.up.PUNC
 ‘I woke up.’

In (55), the coincident comes before the factual, which is another verbal prenominal prefix; (56) shows the same word without the coincident, which shows that the coincident attaches to the very beginning.

4. The form of the coincident

The examples in (1)-(5) in the introduction show the different surface forms of the coincident. But the different forms are predictable once you know what kind of a verb it is attaching to.

The coincident prefix is affected by the following morphophonemic rules (according to Bonvillain (1973):

{s-} > s/-v
 -hy
 si/-c (non-y, -hy)

The following rules are from Deering (1976):

- a. shi + ni (partitive) becomes shi-
- b. sh + wa’ (factual) becomes sha’-
- c. sh + wa (factual) becomes sha-
- d. sh + wa’ + wa (factual + wa) becomes shon-

The form of the coincident is entirely predictable by the following material.

If there are no prenominal prefixes, we get the form shi- for the coincident.

As Deering shows in Rule (b), the factual and the coincident merge into sha’-, so if your verb has a factual on it and you want to add the coincident you use sha’-.

Rule (b) doesn’t capture all the forms with sha’-, because sha’- is also the form of the coincident before dualic verbs, as in (57).

- (57) sha’teiohtòn:ne
 sha’-te-io-ht-on-hne
 COIN-DUP-NP-be.how-STAT-REM.PST

‘They two were the same.’

This form is a stative verb shown by the *-on* suffix, and the fact that the remote past *-hne* can only attach to stative forms. Statives don’t use the factual, so there’s no factual in this verb form. This shows that *sha’-* is the form before dualic verbs regardless of if they occur with a factual.

Shon- is the pronunciation of the sequence *sh-a’wa-*; every time you have the *a’wa* you pronounce it as *on-*, so this form of the coincident is just the coincident *sh-* on the sequence *a’wa*.

The form in (63) is in the factual.

- (58) Wakenia:khe’
wake-niak-h-e’
1sgP-get.married-PURP-PUNC
‘I am getting married.’
- (59) Shonké:niake
sh-wa-wake-niak-e
COIN-FACT-1sgP-get.married-PUNC
‘when I got married’

This verb in (59) then underlyingly uses *wake-* and so underlyingly the word is *sh-a’-wake-niak-e*, so the form *shon-* arises because the *a’wa* sequence is formed. You only get *shon-* if an *a’wa* sequence is created.

Shon- is also the form before the repetitive and the cislocative, which is just something special about the repetitive/cislocative.

- (60) shonsá:kewe’
shon-s-wa-ke-w-e’
COIN-REP-FACT-1sgA-arrive-PUNC
‘when I got home’
- (61) shontá:kewe’
shon-t-wa-ke-w-e’
COIN-CIS-FACT-1sgA-arrive-PUNC
‘when I got back there’

5. The meaning of the coincident

We know we can use the coincident in the past (“when x happened...”), like in *shitewakión:ha’* talking about when I was younger. That’s why you have to be a ghost to say all

of the sentences in the life experience “coincident from conception to death” story. It’s like a list provided for the reader about past events.

As a kid you can say:

- (62) Keksà:’a.
ke-ksa-’a
1sgA-child-DIM
‘I’m a kid.’

Then, to say when I was a kid you say:

- (63) shikeksà:’a
shi-ke-ksa-’a
COIN-1sgA-child-DIM
‘when I was a kid’

This shows the coincident must have past tense information.

But can we use it for events in the future? (“When x will happen...”), or is there a better/different way of expressing this? Not all verbs will let you use the coincident in the future. You have to dig to find the right verb to give you the forms to show a pattern. In (69), the verb “sing” is in the future, but the coincident can only be used when “sing” is in the past.

- (64) **En**katerennó:ten.
en-k-aterennot-en
FUT-1sgA-sing-PUNC
‘I will sing.’
- (65) **sha**’katerennó:ten
sh-wa’-k-aterennot-en
COIN-FACT-1sgA-sing-PUNC
‘when I sang’
- (66) **shiwakaterennó:te**’
shi-wak-aterennot-e’
COIN-1sgP-sing-STAT
‘while I was singing’
- (67) **shonkwaterennoktáhse**’
sh-wa-wakw-ate-renn-okt-ahs-e’
COIN-FACT-1sgP-SRFL-song-end-BEN-PUNC
‘when the song came to an end’

It’s expected that you can use it for something like “When I was a woman...” (from the

point of view that I've been turned into a fish), but this only works in a made up story, and this is still talking about the past.

- (68) **shikón:kwehkwe'**
 shi-k-onkwe-hkwe'
 COIN-1sgA-person-FORM.PST
 'when I was a woman'
- (69) ohén:ton ne kén:tsion **sha'ká:ton**
 ohenton ne ken-itsi-on sh-wa'-k-aton
 before NE NA-fish-NSF COIN-FACT-1sgA-become.PUNC
 'before I was transformed into a fish'
- (70) **Shiwakhwistaiéntáhkwe'** akwé:kon ionkenoronhkwáhkwe'.
 Shi-wak-hwist-a-ienta-hkwe' akwekon ionke-noronhkwa-hkwe'
 COIN-1sgP-money-JR-have-FORM.PST all 3pl>1sg-love-FORM.PST
 'When I had money everybody loved me.'

As far as using the coincident in the future, Deering has said that you can't use the coincident in the future – you can actually use it with the future, in just this one example:

- (71) **Sha'tenkaráhtate'** **enkatkwé:ni.**
 sha'-t-en-k-arahtat-e en-k-atkweni
 COIN-DUP-FUT-1sgA-run-PUNC FUT-1sgA-win.PUNC
 'When I run (for an election or physical), I will win.' (Deer, Marilyn)

This example seems to push it a little bit, but speakers accept it. However, in other contexts, it doesn't work in the future, such as in (72). As much as I tried to push this sentence, the speakers just weren't buying it. The context was talking about someday when I'm a woman, from the perspective of a little girl talking about the future.

- (72) *Shenkón:kwe'ne' nó:nen enkatehià:ron enwá:ton otsikhè:ta' kiótkon én:keke'.
 sh-en-k-onkwe-'n-e' nonen en-k-atehiahron
 COIN-FUT-1sgA-person-INCH-PUNC when FUT-1sgA-come.to.exist.PUNC
 en-w-aton o-tsikhe't-a' kiotkon en-ke-k-e'
 FUT-NA-possible.PUNC NP-candy-NSF always FUT-1sgA-eat-PUNC
 Intended: 'When I am a woman I will always eat candy.'

However, there's also another way to get a future, which is definitely right – tsi + partitive.

7. References

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