The Multi-functionality of the Indefinite/Interrogative *stab* in Lushootseed[1]

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This paper examines the textual distribution of the Lushootseed *stab* 'something/what?', which functions both as an indefinite and an interrogative. That the same set of words can be used for both these functions holds in various genetically-unrelated languages, which raises the question of whether this is due to homonymy or monosemy/underspecification (see Bhat 2000, 2004; Haspelmath 1997, 2011). Our research on *stab* indicates that its various functions, rather than being part of its inherent semantics, are contextually derived. Specifically, it seems that *stab* is semantically equivalent to the ontological category 'thing' and its interrogative and various indefinite interpretations are added to this common semantic core by a range of contextual devices.

KEYWORDS: *Lushootseed, Salish, indefinite words, interrogative words*

1 Introduction.

A number of genetically unrelated languages have words that function both as indefinites and interrogatives (Bhat 2000, 2004; Haspelmath 1997, 2011; Ultan 1978). This is illustrated below with data from Chinese (1) and Khmer (2):

(1)   Chinese (Sino-Tibetan)
          a. *shei* 'someone/who?'
          b. *shénme* 'something/what?'

(2)   Khmer (Austro-Asiatic)
          a. *qwəy* 'something/what?'
          b. *naa* 'somewhere/where?'

The dual function of such terms raises the question of whether we are looking at *homonymy* or *monosemy/underspecification* (see Bhat 2004, and references therein). Under the homonymy analysis, we are dealing with separate lexical items associated with an interrogative and an indefinite interpretation, respectively. Under the monosemy analysis, we are dealing with a single lexical item which are underspecified or indeterminate, and derive their indefinite/interrogative interpretations from the context of occurrence.[2]

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[2] A version of the "homonymy analysis" is supported by Haspelmath (1997: 27) who argues that indefinite and interrogative words are diachronically related through conversion. Various versions of the underspecification analysis are found in both the typological (e.g. Bhat 2000, 2004; Mushin 1995) and the

In this paper, we discuss data from Lushootseed, a critically endangered Central Salish language spoken in the Puget Sound region of Washington State. Specifically, we focus on Lushootseed *stab* 'something/what?' — the most frequent of the Lushootseed indefinite/interrogative words — and we consider its distribution in a corpus of 5,394 lines (23,656 words).[3] Based on its morphology and on its textual distribution, we argue that interrogativity and indefiniteness are not part of the inherent semantics of *stab*. Rather, *stab* is semantically equivalent to the ontological category 'thing', and its interrogative and various indefinite interpretations are contextually derived.

The paper is structured as follows. In section 2, we give some background information on the morphosyntax of *stab*. In section 3 we document its various indefinite and interrogative functions and we examine their textual distribution. Finally, in section 4 we argue in favor of its analysis as an underspecified element, and in section 5 we summarize our conclusions.

2   The morphological and syntactic properties of *stab*.

stab belongs to a set of Lushootseed words that function both as indefinites and interrogatives. In total, there are 7 of these, given in Table 1:[4]

stab	'something'	'what?'
gʷat	'someone'	'who?'
čal	'somehow'	'how?'
pədtab	'sometime'	'when?'
k'ʷid	'some amount'	'how much?'
čad	'somewhere'	'where?'
dxʷčad	'to somewhere'	'where to?'

Table 1. The inventory of indefinite/interrogative words in Lushootseed.

Etymologically-speaking, *stab* is most likely derived from the combination of the verbal radical √*tab* 'do' with the nominalizing prefix *s-* (Bates et al. 1994: 215; Beck in preparation: 2.6.2). It bears a morphological connection to *pədtab* 'sometime/when?' — which can be decomposed into √*tab* 'do' and the seasonal prefix *pəd* — but is unrelated to the other indefinite/interrogative words. Of these, *gʷat* 'someone/who?', *čad* 'somewhere/where?', *čal* 'somehow/how', and *k'ʷid* 'some amount/how much?' are monomorphemic, whereas *dxʷčad* 'to somewhere/to where?' is a complex word consisting of the directional particle *dxʷ* 'to' and the indefinite/interrogative *čad* 'somewhere/where?'.

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generative literature (e.g. Davis 2008; Kratzer & Shimoyama 2002).

[3] The corpus represents the language of the last generation of Lushootseed-dominant elder speakers and comprises thirty stories collected by Thomas M. Hess, Vi Hilbert, and Leon Metcalf (the latter transcribed by Hess and Hilbert). The stories are listed in the Appendix; examples taken from unpublished sources are cited throughout this paper by speaker's initials, title of text, and line number.

[4] There is an additional set of words that are used solely as interrogatives. This includes the words *čal* 'why?', *čədał* 'which?', *stabał* 'what kind of?', *liłčad* 'which way?', *tul'čad* 'from where?', as well as the verbs *ʔəx̌id* 'what happened?' and *ʔidigʷat* 'say what?'.

Syntactically, *stab* shows the distribution of ordinary Lushootseed nouns in that it may be used both as an argument and a syntactic predicate (Bates et al. 1994: 215; Beck in preparation: 2.6.2). Consider, for example, its syntactic use in (3) and (4):[5]

(3)   gʷəl luudəxʷ tiʔił stab
       gʷəl   lu–d=axʷ   tiʔił   stab
       SCONJ   hear–ICS=now   DIST   what
       'He hears something.'

(Beck & Hess 2014: 550, line 24)

(4)   stab kʷi gʷəsuʔəłəds
       stab   kʷi   gʷə=s=ʔu–ʔəłəd=s
       what   REM   SBJ=NM=PFV–feed.on=3PO
       'What could he eat?'

(Beck & Hess 2014: 523, line 12)

In (3), *stab* occupies a post-predicative position and is preceded by a determiner. These are the two properties that are typically associated with Lushootseed arguments. In (4), on the other hand, *stab* shows the properties that are typically associated with Lushootseed predicates: it is clause initial and lacks a determiner.[6] Note that the change in syntactic use is accompanied by a change in semantic function. Thus, the argument *stab* receives an indefinite interpretation (3), whereas the predicative *stab* receives an interrogative interpretation (4). A detailed exploration of the contextual devices—phonological, morphological, and syntactic — that license the functions of *stab* is taken up in the next section.

[5] The abbreviations used in this paper are as follows: –: morpheme boundary, =: clitic boundary, •: lexical suffix boundary, 1: first person, 2: second person, 3: third person, ADD: additive, ADNM: adjunctive nominalizer, ALTV: allative applicative, ATTN: attenuative, AUTO: autonomous, CNTRPT: centripetal, CONJ: conjunction, CONT: continuous, COORD: coordinative, CSMD: causative middle, DC: diminished control, DIST: distal, DMA: demonstrative adverbial, DSTR: distributive, FOC: focus, HAB: habitual, ICS: internal causative, INCH: inchoative, INT: interrogative, INTJ: interjection, IRR: irrealis, MD: middle, NEG: negative, NM: nominalizer, PASS: passive, PFV: perfective, PL: plural, PO: possessive, PR: preposition, PRLV: prolative, PROG: progressive, PROX: proximal, PRTV: partitive; PTCL: particle, QTV: quotative, REFL: reflexive, REM: remote/hypothetical, SBJ: subjunctive, SCONJ: sentential conjunction, SG: singular, SPEC: specific, SS: secondary suffix, STAT: stative, SUB: subject, UNQ: unique.
[6] Like other Salish languages (Czaykowska-Higgins and Kinkade 1998; Kroeber 1999), Lushootseed is predominantly predicate initial and draws its predicates from a variety of word classes, including the class of nouns (Beck 2002, 2010, 2013). Word order and the presence/absence of determiners are the main, though not always infallible, diagnostics used to distinguish between predicates and arguments in Salish languages (on the syntactic distribution of determiners in Salishan, see Matthewson 1996).

3   The textual distribution of *stab*.

stab occurs 216 times in our corpus. The relative frequency of its indefinite and interrogative functions is summarized in Table 2:

Indefinite		Interrogative		Totals	
#	%	#	%	#	%
150	69	66	31	216	100

Table 2. Interrogative and Indefinite uses of *stab*.

In 150 (69%) out of the collected 216 examples, *stab* functions as an indefinite argument, whereas in the remaining 66 examples (31%), it functions as an interrogative predicate. In what follows, we consider these two functions in turn and we identify the contextual devices that license them.

3.1   Indefinite functions.

The indefinite function of Lushootseed *stab* is illustrated with (5):

(5)   ɬubək'ʷucid čələp ʔə kʷi stab ɬusʔəɬədləp
        ɬu=bək'ʷ•ucid   čələp   ʔə kʷi stab   ɬu=sʔəɬəd–ləp
        IRR=scavenge•mouth   2PL.SUB   PR REM   what   IRR=food•mouth–2PL.PO
        'You guys will pick up in your mouths things that will be your food.'

                                                    (Beck & Hess 2014: 235, line 275)

In this configuration, *stab* is an indefinite argument and receives an interpretation comparable to the English 'something'. Furthermore, depending on the morphological devices with which it combines, *stab* may have a range of interpretations within the category of indefinites. Specifically, it may be interpreted as a specific indefinite (section 3.1.1.), a non-specific indefinite (section 3.1.2), a negative indefinite (section 3.1.3), and, finally, a universally quantified expression (section 3.1.4).

3.1.1   Specific and non-specific indefinite: The role of the determiner system.

The specific and the non-specific readings of *stab* appear to be derived from the determiner introducing it. Thus, when introduced by the proximal determiner *tiʔəʔ* or the distal determiner *tiʔiɬ*, *stab* is always interpreted as a specific indefinite. For example, in (6), which we repeat from (3) above, the narrator uses *tiʔiɬ stab* to refer to a certain sound that his protagonist heard.

(6)   gʷəl luudəxʷ tiʔiɬ stab
        gʷəl   lu–d=axʷ   tiʔiɬ   stab
        SCONJ   hear–ICS=now   DIST   what
        'He hears something.'

                                                    (Beck & Hess 2014: 550, line 24)

Furthermore, as is made evident in the continuation of the story (7), he is able to identify the sound as the loud thumping caused by Big Rock.

(7) a. lətuk'ʷucut
     lə=tuk'ʷu–t–sut
     PROG=thump–ICS–REFL
     'It is making a thumping sound.'

(Beck & Hess 2014: 550, line 25)

b. hikʷ lətukʷucut ʔə tiʔɨɬ sətəčs ʔə tiʔɨɬ sčalads tiʔɨɬ sbiaw

hikʷ	lə=tukʷu–t–sut		ʔə	tiʔɨɬ	s=lə=təč=s
big	PROG=thump–ICS–REFL	PR	DIST	NM=PROG=roll=3PO	

ʔə	tiʔɨɬ	s̩=čala-d=s	tiʔɨɬ	sbiaw
PR	DIST	NM=chased–ICS=3PO	DIST	coyote

'He (Big Rock) is thumping loudly as he is rolling, as he chases Coyote.'

(Beck & Hess 2014: 550, line 29)

When introduced by the remote determiner *kʷi*, on the other hand, *stab* receives both specific and non-specific readings.[7] The specific reading of *kʷi stab* is illustrated in (8):

(8) huy gʷəl, tubəʔay'dubəxʷ ʔə kʷi stab

huy	gʷəl	tu=bə=ʔay'–dxʷ–b=axʷ	ʔə	kʷi	stab
SCONJ	SCONJ	PAST=ADD=find–DC–PASS=now	PR	REM	what

'Then (Basket Ogress) was found by something.'

(Beck & Hess 2014: 351, line 216)

In this example, the narrator asserts that a certain entity found the Basket Ogress. However, unlike the narrator of "Coyote and the Big Rock" (see 6, above), she is unable to remember the exact identity of this entity (9a–b).[8]

(9) a. diɬ ʔu tiʔacəc ʔi qaw'qs ʔi stab

diɬ	ʔu	tiʔacəc	qaw'qs	ʔi	stab
FOC	INT	UNQ	raven	CONJ	what

'Would it be Raven or something?'

(Beck & Hess 2014: 351, line 217)

b. diɬ čəd ʔəsbaliicəxʷ tiʔɨɬ

diɬ	čəd	ʔas–balii–c=axʷ	tiʔɨɬ
FOC	1SG.SUB	STAT–forget–ALTV=now	DIST

'I forget what it was.'

(Beck & Hess 2014: 352, line 216)

The non-specific reading of *kʷi stab* is forced in irrealis contexts, such as imperatives, possibility contexts, and epistemic clauses. For example, in (10) *kʷi stab* appears in the

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[7] In this respect, *kʷi* differs from St'át'imcets *kʷu* 'non assertion of existence' which is confined to irrealis contexts. On the distribution and the semantic contribution of the latter, see Matthewson (1996, 1999).
[8] The contrast in interpretation between *tiʔɨɬ stab*, which is used when the speaker knows the referent, and *kʷi stab,* which is used when the speaker does not know the referent, is reminiscent of Gillon's (2009) distinction between deictic determiners and non-deictic determiners. The former, but not the latter, locate the referent in space and/or time.

context of a second person singular indicative, which in Lushootseed can be used for issuing commands (Beck in preparation: chapter 8.5).

(10) x̌ʷul' čəxʷ ʔugʷəč'əb ʔə kʷi stab, [s]əsliʔluʔ ʔə tiʔiɬ sbadil čxʷa šulagʷil
    x̌ʷul'   čəxʷ   ʔu–gʷəč'–b   ʔə   kʷi   stab   səsliʔluʔ
    only   2SG.SUB   PFV–search–CSMD   PR   REM   what   little.cave

    ʔə   tiʔiɬ   sbadil   čxʷa   šulu–agʷil
    PR   DIST   mountain   2SG.COORD   go.under–AUTO
  'You just look for something, a little cave in that mountain and you crawl in.'
<div align="right">(Beck & Hess 2014: 552, line 42)</div>

In this example, the speaker advises Coyote to hide in a small cave. Significantly, he does not have a specific cave in mind. Rather, the conveyed meaning is that any small cave would serve Coyote's purposes (11a–b).

(11) a. tux̌ʷ ʔiɬʔəsmiʔman
      tux̌ʷ ʔiɬ–ʔas–miʔman
      just PRTV–STAT–small
      'Just a small (one).'

    b. xʷiʔ [kʷi] gʷədəxʷšulagʷildubut ʔə tiʔiɬ č'ƛ'aʔ
      xʷiʔ kʷi   gʷə=dəxʷ=šul–agʷil–dxʷ–but   ʔə   tiʔiɬ   č'ƛ'aʔ
      NEG   REM   SBJ=ADNM=go.under–AUTO–DC–REFL   PR   DIST   stone
      'Rock cannot get in.'
<div align="right">(Beck & Hess 2014: 552, lines 43–44)</div>

Similar observations apply to (12), where *kʷi stab* appears in the scope of the irrealis *ɬu*, and to (13), where it appears within the the scope of the epistemic adverb *xʷuʔələʔ* 'maybe, perhaps, I guess, must be' (on the meaning of this adverb, see Bates et al. 1994: 254).

(12) hay gʷəl ɬuxʷiʔxʷiʔəxʷ ʔə kʷi   stab
      hay   gʷəl   ɬu=xʷiʔxʷiʔ=axʷ   ʔə   kʷi   stab
      SCONJ   SCONJ   IRR=hunt=now   PR   REM   what
      'So he will fish for something.'
<div align="right">(Beck & Hess 2014: 295, line 248)</div>

(13) gʷəl bələʔəy'dub xʷuʔələʔ kʷədiʔ tustabəs
      gʷəl   bə=lə=ʔəy'–dxʷ–b   xʷuʔələʔ   kʷədiʔ   tu=stab=as
      SCONJ   ADD=PROG=find–DC–PASS   maybe   REM.DMA   PAST=what=3SBJ
      'And maybe something else was found.'
<div align="right">(Beck & Hess 2014: 401, line 249)</div>

In both examples, the expression *kʷi stab* receives a non-specific interpretation.

    The hypothesis that specificity is licensed by the determiner system receives independent support from ordinary DPs (Beck, in preparation). Consider, for example, the use of the distal *tiʔiɬ* in (14a) and (14b):

(14) a. ʔuluud tiʔiɬ luλ’ [ʔal] tudiʔ t’aq’t

      ʔu–lu–t   tiʔiɬ   luλ’   ʔal   tudiʔ   t’aq’t
      PFV–hear–ICS DIST old at   DIST.DMA   inland
      ‘He hears an old man up there on shore.’

    b. ləcup’ayəq ʔə tiʔiɬ sdiʔdəxʷiɬ

      ləcu–p’ayəq   ʔə   tiʔiɬ   sdiʔ–dəxʷiɬ
      CONT–hew   PR   DIST   ATTN–hunting.canoe
      ‘He was making a small hunting canoe.’

<div align="right">(Beck & Hess 2014: 562, lines 33–34)</div>

These examples describe a scene where the protagonist of the story hears a certain man (i.e. *tiʔiɬ luλ’* ‘an old man’) making a certain thing (i.e. *tiʔiɬ sdiʔdəxʷiɬ* ‘a small hunting canoe’). Significantly for the hypothesis we are exploring, both *tiʔiɬ luλ’* ‘an old man’ and *tiʔiɬ sdiʔdəxʷiɬ* ‘a small hunting canoe’ DPs are interpreted as specific indefinite expressions.

    We may further consider ordinary nouns introduced by the remote determiner *kʷi*. As the case was with *kʷi stab*, ordinary DPs introduced by *kʷi* receive both specific (15) and non-specific interpretations (16):

(15) λ’uɬiq’ʷtəb k’ʷəɬ ʔə tul’ʔaɬx̌ad kʷi tudsqa

    λ’u=ɬiq’ʷ–t–b   k’ʷəɬ ʔə   tul’–ʔaɬx̌ad
    HAB=hooked–ICS–PASS QTV PR   CNTRPT–downstream

        kʷi   tu=d–sqa
        REM   PAST=1SG.PO–older.brother
    ‘My older brother was taken by those from downstream’

<div align="right">[DS Star Child, line 210]</div>

(16) ʔibəš čxʷa gʷəč’əd kʷi luλ’ p’q’ac qʷəɬayʔ čxʷa q’pud

    ʔibəš   čxʷa   gʷəč’–d   kʷi   luλ’ p’q’ac   qʷəɬayʔ
    travel   2SG.COORD   search–ICS REM old rotten.wood   stick

        čxʷa   q’pu–d
        2SG.COORD   gathered–ICS
    ‘Go and look for old rotten logs and gather them up.’

<div align="right">[DS Star Child, line 77]</div>

To be precise, in (14), *kʷi tudsqa* ‘my older brother’ is used to refer to a specific entity, the older brother of the speaker, whereas in (15) *kʷi lu·λ’ p’q’ac qʷəɬayʔ* ‘some old rotten logs’ is used to refer to a non-specific set of old rotten sticks.

    In view of the above parallelism, the hypothesis that specificity derives from the determiner system seems plausible. Specifically, the proximal *tiʔəʔ* and the distal *tiʔiɬ* appear to be responsible for the specific reading of *stab*, whereas the remote *kʷi* appears to be unspecified with respect to specificity. Whether *kʷi stab* will end up receiving a specific or a non-specific interpretation depends on the more general context of occurrence. Thus, in realis contexts, it is interpreted as a specific indefinite (8), whereas in irrealis contexts, it is interpreted as a non-specific indefinite (11–13).

3.1.2 Negative indefinites: The role of the negator *xʷiʔ*.

Lushootseed *stab* may also function as a negative indefinite similar to English *nothing* or as a polarity item similar to *anything.* This function becomes available in the scope of the morpheme *xʷiʔ*, which in Lushootseed functions as a general negator (Beck, in preparation: chapter 2.6)*.* Consider, in this regard, (17) and (18):

(17) xʷiʔ kʷi stab gʷələčaldxʷ tiʔəʔ xʷəxʷaʔxʷəʔ titčul'bixʷ
      xʷiʔ   kʷi   stab   gʷə=lə=čal–dxʷ   tiʔəʔ xʷəxʷaʔxʷəʔ titčul'bixʷ
      NEG   REM   what   SBJ=PROG=chased–DC   PROX swift   small.animal
      'There is nothing able to overtake this swift little animal.'
                                               (Beck & Hess 2010: 18, line 95)

(18) gʷəl xʷiʔəxʷ kʷi stabəxʷ gʷəšudub ʔə kʷi gʷəčad
      gʷəl   xʷiʔ=axʷ   kʷi   stab=axʷ   gʷə=s=šuɬ–dxʷ–b
      SCONJ NEG=now   REM   what=now   SBJ=NM=see–DC–PASS

          ʔə   kʷi   gʷə=čad
          PR   REM   SBJ=where
      'And nothing can be seen anywhere.'
                                        (Beck & Hess 2014: 463, line 119)

In both examples, the negator *xʷiʔ* functions as the syntactic predicate, whereas the remaining constituent, which is initiated by the remote determiner *kʷi*, functions as its subject. According to this analysis, (17) literally means 'something that is able to overtake this swift little animal does not exist'. Likewise, a more literal translation for (18) would be 'something that could be seen somewhere does not exist'.

That *xʷiʔ* functions independently as a negator in Lushootseed is shown in (19):

(19) ti də(xʷ)xʷiʔəxʷ kʷi gʷəsƛ'alqəb ʔal ti šqabac
      ti   dəxʷ=xʷiʔ=axʷ   kʷi   gʷə=sƛ'alqəb   ʔal ti   šq•abac
      SPEC   ADNM=NEG=now   REM   SBJ=monster   at   SPEC   high•body
      'Which is why there are no monsters up there.'
                                           (Beck & Hess 2014: 347, line 183)

Thus, whereas in (18) *xʷiʔ* negates the existence of *kʷi stab* 'some thing' that is able to overtake a swift little animal, in (19) *xʷiʔ* negates the existence of *kʷi gʷəsƛ'alqəb* 'some monsters'.

The parallelism between the two types of examples allows us to conclude that *stab* receives its negative interpretation from the morpheme *xʷiʔ* (Beck, in preparation: chapter 2.6).

3.1.3 Universally quantified expressions: The quantificational adverb *bəkʷʷ*.

Finally, in addition to its above indefinite functions, *stab* may also function as a universally quantified expression similar to English 'everything' or 'all the things' (Beck, in preparation: chapter 2.6). This function becomes available in the scope of the quantificational *bəkʷʷ* and is illustrated with (20) and (21):

(20) hudud   əlgʷəʔ tiʔəʔ bək'ʷ stab
      hudu–d   əlgʷəʔ tiʔəʔ bək'ʷ   stab
      burn–ICS PL   PROX all   what
      'They burned everything.'

(21) ʔux̌ʷəxʷ liɬʔal tiʔəʔ lək'aw'k'aw' ʔə tiʔəʔ bək'ʷ stab
      ʔux̌ʷ=axʷ   liɬ–ʔal   tiʔəʔ lə=k'aw'–k'aw'   ʔə tiʔəʔ   bək'ʷ   stab
      go=now   PRLV–at   PROX   PROG=DSTR–bump   PR PROX   all   what
      'She went through there and she was bumping into everything.'

(Beck & Hess 2014: 575, line 42)

In (20) the DP *tiʔəʔ bək'ʷ stab,* which is the object of the verbal predicate *hudud,* is translated as 'everything'. Likewise, in (21) the PP *ʔə tiʔəʔ bək'ʷ stab,* which is the object of the verbal predicate *lək'aw'k'aw',* is translated as 'into everything'.

That *bək'ʷ* functions independently as a universal quantifier is shown in (22):

(22) gʷətulək'ʷəd bək'ʷ tiʔəʔ wiw'su gʷəxʷiʔəs tiʔəʔ sgʷəlaltəbs
      gʷə=tu=lək'ʷ–d   bək'ʷ   tiʔəʔ   wiw'su
      SBJ=PAST=eaten–ICS   all   PROX   children

      gʷə=xʷiʔ=as   tiʔəʔ   s=gʷəlal–t–b=s
      SBJ=NEG=3SBJ   PROX   NM=harmed–ICS–PASS=3PO
      'She would have eaten all the children if she hadn't been killed.'

[AW Basket Ogress, line 111]

Thus, whereas in (21) *bək'ʷ* takes scope over *stab*, in (22) it takes scope over an ordinary DP (i.e. *tiʔəʔ wiw'su* 'the children'). Once again, the pattern suggests that *stab* receives its universal interpretation from *bək'ʷ* (Beck, in preparation: chapter 2.6).

Summing up, in this section we considered the textual distribution of the indefinite *stab* and we argued that its various indefinite interpretations are licensed from a range of co-occurring free morphemes. Specifically, we argued that the specific interpretation is licensed by the determiners *tiʔəʔ* and *tiʔiɬ*, the negative reading is licensed by the negative morpheme *xʷiʔ,* and, finally, the universal reading is licensed by the quantifier *bək'ʷ*. In what follows, we move on to the second major function of *stab*, which is its interrogative function.

3.2 Interrogative functions.

The interrogative function of *stab* is illustrated in (23):

(23) stab əw'ə dᶻəɬ tiʔiɬ ʔəswəliʔ šəq
      stab   əw'ə   dᶻəɬ   tiʔiɬ   ʔəs–wəliʔ   šəq
      what   PTCL   PTCL   DIST   STAT–visible high
      'What are those up in the air?' (lit. 'Those things up in the air [are] what?')

[DS Star Child, line 399]

As shown in section 2, in this configuration, *stab* is used as the interrogative predicate of an information question and receives an interpretation equivalent to the English 'what?'. The question that needs to be addressed concerns the devices that license its interrogative interpretation. Typological work has shown that in languages with words that are not morphologically marked as interrogatives, interrogation is usually conveyed by the use of an interrogative particle, the use of focus, and/or the use of intonation (Bhat 2000, 2004; Haspelmath 1997; Ultan 1978). Below, we consider these possibilities in turn. As will become evident, the data that we have at our disposal suggest that Lushootseed information questions lack interrogative particles (section 3.2.1.) and that the interrogative function of *stab* is more likely the result of focusing (section 3.2.2.) and intonation (section 3.2.3.).

3.2.1 Lack of interrogative particles.

It is true that in Lushootseed, as in other Salish languages (Kroeber 1997; Matthewson 1996), polar questions are frequently marked with an interrogative particle (Bates et al. 1994:19; Hess 1995; Beck in preparation: chapter 8.4.1). In Lushootseed, this role is taken up by the particle *ʔu,* whose use is exemplified in (24):

(24) ƛ'uɬčil ʔu tiʔiɬ adʔalalš
      ƛ'u=ɬčil   ʔu   tiʔiɬ   ad–ʔal–alš
      HAB=arrive   INT   DIST   2SG.PO–PL–cross.sex.sibling
      'Do your brothers arrive?'

(Beck & Hess 2014: 84, line 87)

That the particle *ʔu* is regular in polar questions receives textual support: our research showed that it is present in all 32 polar questions of our corpus. However, it is always absent from information questions, and so cannot be the source of the interrogative interpretation of *stab,* or of any other indefinite/interrogative word found in information questions in Lushootseed.

A further possibility that needs to be considered is that information questions contain an interrogative particle that is morphologically distinct from that of polar questions.[9] Information questions in Lushootseed are found with the particle *əw'ə*:

(25) stab əw'ə tiʔəʔ č'ƛ'aʔ cəxʷyaw' ʔut'asbil
      stab   əw'ə   tiʔəʔ   č'ƛ'aʔ d=dəxʷ=yaw' ʔu–t'as–b–il
      what   PTCL   PROX   stone   d=ADNM=only.if   PFV–pay–MD–INCH
      'What indeed is this rock that I should pay?'

(Beck & Hess 2014: 549, line 21)

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[9] This strategy is uncommon in the Salish language family. To our knowledge, Tillamook is the only Salish language that has been argued to mark information and polarity questions with different particles (Kroeber 1997).

This predicate particle conveys the attitude of the speaker (Hess 1995: 88), and it might be suggested that its role is to convey interrogativity in information questions. Even though this alternative analysis appears appealing, we believe it is implausible, because the presence of *əw'ə* — or of its variants *haw'əʔ* and *həw'əʔ* — in information questions is very infrequent. Specifically, it is only attested in 6 out of 66 examples. In view of the above facts, we will conclude that interrogativity in Lushootseed is not conveyed by a morphological device.

3.2.2 Focus.

A more promising source of interrogativity is to be found in the information structure of Lushootseed questions. Recall from section 2 that the interrogative *stab* is always predicative. The predicative nature of the interrogative *stab* in Lushootseed — and more generally of interrogative words in the Salish language family — is well supported in the literature (see Davis et al. 1993 for Northern Interior Salish; Davis 2008 for St'át'imcets; Hukari 2010 for Halkomelem; Jelinek 1998 for Lummi; and Kroeber 1999: chapter 4 for an overview of information questions in Salish). To reiterate, *stab* is always clause initial, it is never preceded by a determiner, it is occasionally associated with predicate particles such as *əw'ə* (24), and, finally, it is followed by a constituent that is an uncontroversial argument (a subject clitic, a simple DP, or a headless relative). What is of relevance for our purposes is that in this configuration *stab* is the focused part of the utterance (or, the 'Rheme', in Beck's 2010 terms), whereas the constituent that follows (i.e. its subject) is the known, Thematic, or Given part of the utterance (on the structural equivalence between information questions and focus constructions in Lushootseed, see Beck 2010; and Hess 1995: chapter 19). In other words, it seems that focus is one of the devices that marks the use of *stab* as interrogative.

3.2.3 Intonation.

Finally, there are a few examples in our corpus where indefinite/interrogative words receive a non-interrogative interpretation despite being focused. Because we haven't come across an example of *stab* being used as an indefinite in a predicative position, we will provide data involving the word *dxʷčad* 'to somewhere/where to'. We may compare, for example, (26), where the predicative *dxʷčad* receives an interrogative meaning, with (27), where it receives an indefinite meaning:

(26) dxʷčad tiʔəʔ ʔuqadadid
     dxʷ–čad   tiʔəʔ   ʔu–qada–di–d
     CNTRPT–where   PROX PFV–steal–SS–ICS
     'Where have those who have stolen from him gone?'

                                        (Beck & Hess 2014: 123, line 380)

(27) dxʷčad kʷi sugʷax̌ʷs əlgʷəʔ dxʷʔal tiʔiɬ tusq'əlbs əlgʷəʔ

     dxʷ–čad   kʷi   s=ʔu–gʷax̌ʷ=s   əlgʷəʔ
     CNTRPT–where   REM   NM=PFV–walk=3PO   PL

     dxʷ–ʔal   tiʔiɬ   tu=s=q'əlb=s   əlgʷəʔ
     CNTRPT–at   DIST   PAST=NM=make.camp=3PO   PL
   'They stroll all over until they camp.' (lit. 'Their walking around [is] anywhere until
     they make camp.')

The spectrogram of the sentence in (26) is shown below in Figure 1:
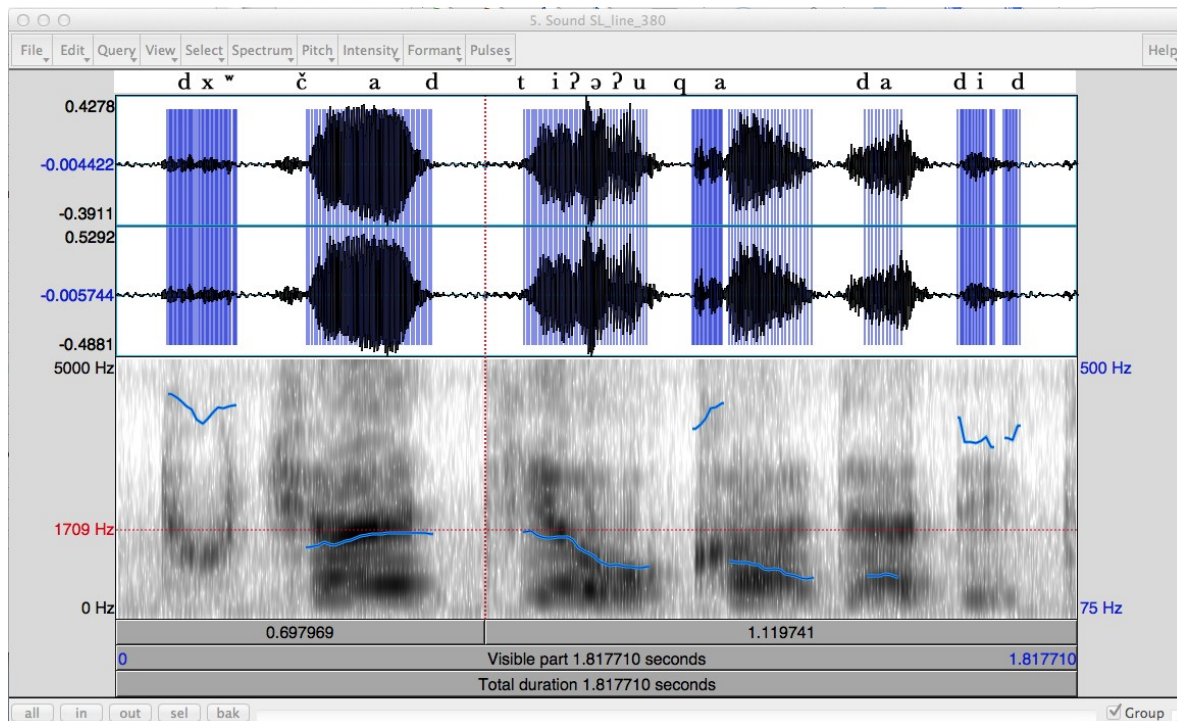

Figure 1: Interrogative _dxʷčad_

The interrogative word here is pronounced with a fairly flat intonational contour, rising from about 1318 Hz to a peak of 1709 Hz; the final /d/ is unreleased and there is a pause of about 0.076 seconds between the end of the voicing of the consonant to the beginning of the /t/ at the beginning of the following word. These features contrast somewhat with those seen in the spectrogram of (27):
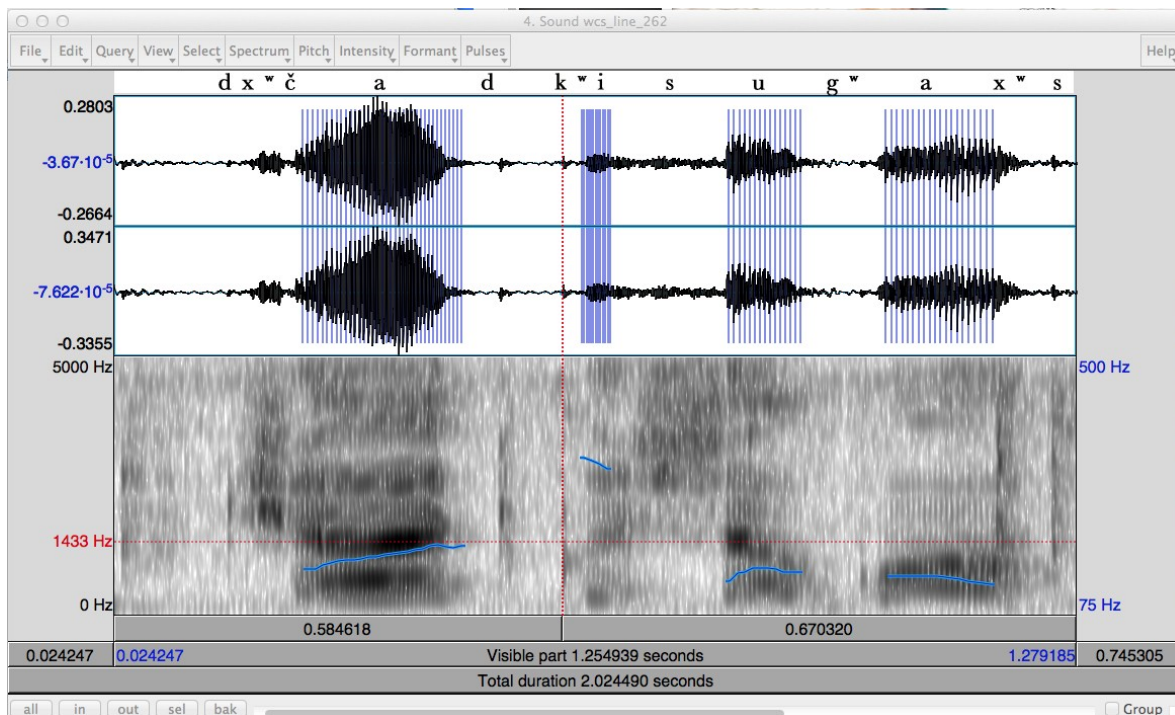
Figure 2: Indefinite *dxʷčad*

Here there is a much sharper rising pitch on the indefinite form, beginning at 848 Hz and peaking at 1433 Hz, and the final /d/ is actually devoiced and pronounced with a noisy release; the transition to the next part of the sentence is slightly more rapid, at about .06 seconds. In the absence of detailed and more extensive phonetic studies of Lushootseed, these figures have to be taken as suggestive only, but they do lend some support to the impressionistic observation that intonation is the only device the differentiates an interrogative from an indefinite interpretation (Beck in preparation: chapter 2).

Summing up, in this section we considered the interrogative function of *stab* and we concluded that it can be taken to be the result of focusing and intonation. In what follows, we will turn to the second goal of this paper, which is to develop an analysis that can accommodate the observed functional distinctions.

4   Accounting for the functions of *stab.*

The dual indefinite/interrogative function of Lushootseed *stab* can, in principle, be analyzed as an instance of homonymy or as an instance of underspecification. Under the homonymy analysis, we are dealing with two distinct lexical items that are associated with an interrogative and an indefinite interpretation, respectively (28):

(28)   *stab₁* = 'what'
         stab₂ = 'something'

Under the underspecification analysis, we are dealing with a single lexical item semantically equivalent to a general concept/ontological category (29):

(29)   *stab* = 'thing'

We believe that the morphological make-up and the textual distribution of Lushootseed *stab* render the underspecification analysis more likely.

Consider, first, the morphological make-up of *stab*. In most languages, indefinite and interrogative words display a dual morphological structure consisting of a morpheme that denotes their function (i.e. interrogativity and/or indefiniteness) and a morpheme that denotes a general concept/ontological category (i.e. person, thing, etc.).[10] For instance, the English interrogative pronouns *what* and *who* have been argued to derive from the incorporation of an ontological category into the interrogative operator *wh-*.[11] A more straightforward example is provided by the English indefinites *something/somebody,* and *anything/anybody*. These pronouns can be clearly decomposed into an indefinite marker (*some* and *any*, respectively) and a generic noun (*thing* and *body*). The Lushootseed *stab*, on the other hand, is not amenable to such a decomposition. The comparison with the other words of its paradigm (Table 1) reveals that it does not contain a morpheme that could be related to indefiniteness (such as the *some* morpheme in *something*) or to interrogativity (such as the *wh-* operator, in *what*). In other words, there is no positive (morphological) evidence that *stab* is inherently interrogative or indefinite.

Consider, next, the distribution of the presumably indefinite *stab*. Indefinite pronouns usually occur in series that contrast with each other with respect to the range of indefinite functions that they may cover. In Haspelmath's (1997: 58) terms, "Two series of indefinite pronouns seems to be the minimum for languages that do not make extensive use of alternative strategies." For instance, in English the *some*-series (*somebody, something*, etc) covers the specific and the non-specific functions, the *any*-series (*anybody, anything*, etc) covers the free choice and the negative function, and the *no*-series (*nobody, nothing*, etc.) covers the negative function. In Lushootseed, on the other hand, *stab* does not compete with any other indefinite word with respect to the range of indefinite functions that it may cover. Rather, it co-occurs with a range of unbound morphemes which enable it to cover the whole range of specific and non-specific functions (see section 3.1.).[12] Under the homonymy account, we would have to postulate a highly multifunctional indefinite *stab*. Furthermore, we would have to assume that the various indefinite functions are marked both on contextual devices and on *stab* per se. Under the underspecification account, on the other hand, *stab* is monosemous and the observed multi-functionality derives exclusively from the context of occurrence, as suggested in (30):

(30) a. *tiʔəʔ/tiʔił*   'SPEC' + *stab* 'thing'
      b. *xʷiʔ*   'is not/does not exist' + *kʷi stab* 'something'
      c. *bək'ʷ*   'every' + *stab* 'thing'

It seems that this latter explanation is both theoretically simpler and empirically justified.

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[10] On the dual morphological structure of pronouns, see Bhat (2004: chapter 7).

[11] See Klima (1964) for a version of this analysis.

[12] In this respect, Lushootseed differs from Chinese and western Indo-European languages, in which indefinite/interrogatives are restricted to non-specific functions (on this restriction, see Haspelmath 1997: 173-174). In other words, the functional distribution of indefinites/interrogatives does not appear to be homogeneous cross-linguistically, a fact, which suggests that they might be amenable to different analyses.

5   Conclusion

In this paper we documented and analyzed the textual distribution of the indefinite/interrogative *stab* in Lushootseed. We showed that, in addition to its interrogative interpretation, *stab* is amenable to a range of indefinite interpretations including that of a specific indefinite, a non-specific indefinite, a negative indefinite, and a universally quantified expression. This dual function of *stab* raised the question of whether we are dealing with two lexical items associated with an interrogative and a range of indefinite interpretations, respectively, or with a single lexical item that is underspecified with respect to indefiniteness/interrogativity. Based on morphological and distributional considerations, we concluded that *stab* is semantically equivalent to an ontological category meaning 'thing' and that its interrogative and various indefinite functions are contextually derived. In particular, we argued that interrogativity is the result of focusing and intonation, whereas indefiniteness derives from a range of co-occurring unbound morphemes. Thus, the specific indefinite reading was attributed to the determiners *tiʔəʔ* and *tiʔiɬ,* the negative indefinite readings were attributed to the negative morpheme *xʷiʔ* 'is not/does not exist', and, finally, the universal reading was attributed to the quanitificational element *bəkʼʷ* 'every'. Whether this analysis can be extended to indefinite/interrogative words in other Salish languages is a topic for further research.

Appendix: List of Stories

1. 'Black Bear and Ant' as told by Edward Sam to T. M. Hess at Tulalip in the summer of 1963 (Hess 1995; Beck & Hess 2014)
2. 'Black Bear and Fish Hawk' as told by Edward Sam to T. M. Hess at Tulalip in the summer of 1963 (Hess 1995; Beck & Hess 2014)
3. 'Changer' as told by Martha Lamont to T. M. Hess at Tulalip in the summer of 1963 (Bierwert 1996; Hess 1998; Beck & Hess 2014)
4. 'Coyote and his Daughter' as told by Martha Lamont to T. M. Hess at Tulalip in the summer of 1963 (Hess 1998; Beck & Hess 2014)
5. 'Coyote and the Big Rock' as told by Edward Sam to T. M. Hess at Tulalip in the summer of 1963 (Hess 1995; Beck & Hess 2014)
6. 'Coyote's son had two wives' as told by Martha Lamont to T. M. Hess at Tulalip in the summer of 1963 (Hess 2006; Beck & Hess 2014)
7. 'Crow is Sick I' as told by Martha Lamont to Leon Metcalf at Tulalip in 1953 (Hess 1998; Beck & Hess 2014)
8. 'Crow is Sick II' as told by Martha Lamont to T. M. Hess at Tulalip in the summer of 1963 (Hess 1998; Bierwert 1993; Beck & Hess 2014)
9. 'Little Diver was the wife of Heron' as told by Martha Lamont to T. M. Hess at Tulalip in the summer of 1963 (Hess 2006; Beck & Hess 2014)
10. Mink and Tutyika as told by Edward Sam to T. M. Hess at Tulalip in the summer of 1963 (Hess 1995; Beck & Hess 2014)
11. 'Owl lives there' as told by Martha Lamont to T. M. Hess at Tulalip in the summer of 1963 (Hess 2006; Beck & Hess 2014)
12. 'Pheasant and Raven' as told by Martha Lamont to T. M. Hess at Tulalip in the summer of 1963 (Hess 1998; Beck & Hess 2014)

13. 'Stealing daylight' as told by Harry Moses to Leon Metcalf (published as "How Daylight was stolen" in Hilbert & Hess 1977; Beck & Hess 2010; Beck & Hess forthcoming)
14. 'Basket Ogress' as told by Martin Sampson to Leon Metcalf (Beck & Hess forthcoming)
15. 'Basket Ogress' as told by Dewey Mitchell to Leon Metcalf (Beck & Hess forthcoming)
16. 'Basket Ogress' as told by Agnes James to Leon Metcalf (Beck & Hess 2014)
17. 'Basket Ogress' as told by Alice Williams to Leon Metcalf (Beck & Hess forthcoming)
18. 'Basket Ogress' as told by Louise Anderson to Leon Metcalf (Beck & Hess forthcoming)
19. 'Basket Ogress' as told by Julie Siddle to Leon Metcalf
20. 'Basket Ogress' as told by Martha Lamont to T. M. Hess (Beck & Hess 2014)
21. 'Lady Louse' as told by Elizabeth Krise to T. M. Hess (Beck & Hess 2014)
22. 'Mink and Tutyika I' as told by Martha Lamont to Leon Metcalf (Beck & Hess 2014)
23. 'Mink and Tutyika II' as told by Martha Lamont to T. M. Hess (Beck & Hess 2014)
24. 'The brothers of Pheasant's wife' as told by Martha Lamont (published as "The story of the seal hunters" in Bierwert 1996; Beck & Hess 2014)
28. 'Star Child' as told by Dora Salomon to Vi Taq'šəblu Hilbert (Beck & Hess forthcoming)
29. 'Star Child' as told by Harry Moses to Leon Metcalf (Beck & Hess 2010; Beck & Hess forthcoming)
30. 'Star Child' as told by Mary Willup to Leon Metcalf (Beck & Hess forthcoming)

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