Complex predicate-argument relations in Bella Coola¹

Hank Nater

Abstract: Bella Coola, a head-marking and polysynthetic PSO language, has a few predicate-internal suffixes that are linked with two syntactic arguments; vice versa, such arguments can relate to two or three predicate components. Although these suffixes are paralleled by similar suffixes in other Salish, they (with the exception of CAUS -{(s)tu-}) differ from those in function and/or origin.

Keywords: Salish, Bella Coola, morpho-syntax, divalency, redirection

1 Introduction

In this brief report on valency-related phenomena in Bella Coola, I consider the morpho-semantics of the predicate base, different types of divalent suffix, relations between the predicate and syntactic arguments, and areal-etymological aspects of the divalent suffixes.

As concerns predicate base properties, note that morpho-semantic traits of Bella Coola verbo-nominals warrant a four-way partition of this class: TR stative / ITR stative / TR active / ITR active (cf. Nater 1984, p. 34). Of these, ITR stative verbs are generally unaccusative, while most ITR active verbs are unergative. (But certain ITR verbs – e.g. those that convey perception or a bodily function, where the degree of subjective control/purpose may vary – can be ambiguous.) This division also holds – but on a distributional, rather than morpho-semantic, basis – where verbo-nominals accept a divalent suffix. For instance, benefactive -{tu-} is compatible only with ITR active (antipassive) bases, CAUS -{tu-} with ITR active/stative and detransitive bases, NC CAUS -{nix} with ITR stative (including adjectival) bases. (In addition, there are ambitransitive verbs and transitive-vizible nouns and adjectives, for which see Nater 1984, pp. 59–60.)

On the other hand, and regardless of TR-ITR and active-stative distinctions, divalent -{alst} DEPR combines specifically with bases associated with removal or displacement, and applicative suffixes are often found with bases conveying a ritual, artistic expression, mood, or need.

Divalent suffix types and valency structures are outlined in Section 2 below, and BASE–ARGUMENT and SUFFIX–ARGUMENT linking details as such are described in Sections 2.1–2.3. The status of Bella Coola divalent suffixes within Salish is examined in Section 3.

¹ Abbreviations used in this paper are: ADJ adjunct, ART article, CAUS causative, DEM demonstrative, DEPR deprivative, DIM diminutive, DIR direct, GEN genitive, IMP imperative, INC inclusive, ITR intransitive, NC non-control, OBJ object, OBL oblique, PART participial, PASS passive, PL plural, POSS possessive, PREP preposition, PROG progressive, RDR redireective, REFL reflexive, SG singular, SUB(J) subject, TR transitive. Bella Coola examples are copied from my field notes, and Dutch analogues are provided by myself. Contact info: hanknater@gmail.com

A Bella Coola verbo-nominal (noun, verb, adjective) can be combined with one or more suffixes to form a clausal predicate:

(a) \[\text{staltmx-c} \]
    chief-1SG.SUBJ
    ‘I am a chief’

(b) \[\text{sta:taltmx-uu}li-wa-liwa-t\chi^w} \]
    chief.PL-appearance-...like-3PL.SUBJ-optative
    ‘let them look like chiefs!’

Within the predicate, which has a \((( ( [\text{BASE}] \text{suffix}) \text{suffix}) \text{suffix}) \ldots)\) structure (prefixes being disregarded), suffixes occupy the positions shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BASE</th>
<th>-alst(n) deprivative ← lexical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2  aspect</td>
<td>transition – development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>stative – completive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  RDR</td>
<td>TR -m, -amk applicative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-nix NC causative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ITR causative – communal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  voice</td>
<td>transitive, medium, antipassive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>reflexive, reciprocal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>desiderative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>inchoative, modifying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>-t past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>-(s)tu- causative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>-t\chi^w optative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1** Predicative suffixation

A verb base can itself consist of a root or stem followed by one or more suffixes (subscript numbers are the position indicators used in Figure 1):
2.1 Benefactive and deprivative suffixes

In Bella Coola clauses with a benefactive/deprivative-marked TR predicate, predicate constituents and arguments are interlinked as follows:
2.1.1 The benefactive suffix

X-(s)tu-B-A ‘A causes B to X’, where X is an \( \text{itr} \) active (antipassive) base describing a result-oriented/creative act, can translate into English as benefactive (cf. Nater 1984, pp. 40, 67). The core meaning is here ‘A enables B to get something X-ed’, from which one can derive (i) ‘A gets B to X something’ and (ii) ‘A X-s something for/to B, A benefits B with one’s X-ing’. For the structure of (i) see Figure 9 in Section 2.3.2.1 below, while that of (ii) is presented in Figure 3. Examples are provided in (1)–(3).

(1) tamsul-tu-Ø-t  ?ac  John
   PREDCATE  SUBJ  DIR  OBJ
   construct.house-CAUS-3SG.OBJ-3PL.SUBJ  DEM  John
   (i) ‘these people get John to build a house’
   (ii) ‘these people build a house for John’
(2) kståʷ-a-l-tu-Ø-c ta_mna-c_tč
   PREDICATE DIR OBJ
make-antipassive-past-CAUS-3SG.OBJ-1SG.SBJ ART_son-1SG.POSS_ART
   xₜuₜ΄’ksnimtaₜ’้าčʷ
   OBL OBJ
PREP_ART_arrow_DEM
   (i) ‘I got my son to make those arrows’
   (ii) ‘I made those arrows for my son’

(3) ?ałac’i-tu-ti-c wa_qiqipiı_cʔała_c’kta_ck
   PREDICATE DIR OBJ OBL OBJ
narrate-caus-3pl.obj-1sg.subj art_kids_art prep.art.doings_supposedly
   (i) ‘I get the kids to tell about the things that supposedly happened’
   (ii) ‘I tell the kids about the things that supposedly happened’

But where the base does not imply a desired result or creation, benefactive interpretations are not acceptable:

(4) ?ustståʷ-tu-ti-c ma wa_ʔlkʷ’lk_c
   PREDICATE DIR OBJ
enter-CAUS-3PL.OBJ-1SG.SBJ maybe ART_elders_ART
   ‘I may let the elders in’ (NOT *‘I may go in for the elders’)

(5) ?ałps-l-tu-Ø-xʷ’a ła_stan-sʔiħ
   PREDICATE DIR OBJ
eat-past-CAUS-3SG.OBJ-2SG.SBJʔa ART_mother-3SG.POSS_ART
   ‘did you give his mother something to eat?’ (NOT *‘did you eat something on behalf of his mother?’)

2.1.2 The deprivative suffix

The suffix -ałst(n) ‘deprivative’ (Nater 1984, p. 71) is associated with a sense of loss implicated by the base (denoting removal or displacement) it combines with. When -ałst(n) is deleted from such constructions, the OBL.OBJ becomes the ITR.SUBJ or TR.DIR.OBJ, and the possessor appears as a GEN.ADJ, as shown in examples (7) and (9) below. Such redirection also characterizes constructions involving a classifying suffix (see Section 2.2), and is similar to applicative-related redirection considered in Section 2.3 below. The allomorph -ałstn occurs in TR forms (Figure 4), while -ałst goes with ITR ones (Figure 5).
Compare (6) with (7):

(6) knix-alstn-i-xʷ_mas ti_mαn-c_tx
    PREDICATE                  DIR OBJ
    eat-DEPR-3SG.OBJ-2SG.SUBJ_forever! ART_father-1SG.POSS_ART
    x_α_sqaluc-s_c
    OBL OBJ
    PREP_ART Berries-3SG.POSS_ART
‘you are forever eating my father1 out of [his1] berries!’

(7) knix-i-xʷ_mas wa_sqaluc-s_c
    PREDICATE                  DIR OBJ
    eat-3SG.OBJ-2SG.SUBJ_forever! ART_berries-3SG.POSS_ART
    ti_mαn-c_tx
    GEN ADJ
    ART_father-1SG.POSS_ART
‘you are forever eating my father’s berries!’

As indicated above, argument role switching also pertains where the base is ITR
stative (unaccusative), as in (8) versus (9):

(8) ?atq̃-alst-s ta_staltmx_χ x_τa_mna-s_τχ
    PREDICATE                  SUBJ                 OBL OBJ
    die-DEPR-3SG.SUBJ ART_chief_ART PREP_ART_son-3SG.POSS_ART
‘the chief1 had his1 son die on him’

(9) ?atma-s_c’ ta_mna-s_τχ ta_staltmx_τχ
    PREDICATE                  SUBJ                 GEN ADJ
    die-3SG.SUBJ_now ART_son-3SG.POSS_ART ART_chief_ART
‘now the chief’s son died’
In example (8), divalency patterns are as shown below:

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>base</th>
<th>-alst</th>
<th>SUBJ suffix</th>
<th>ITR SUBJ</th>
<th>OBL OBJ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>victim</td>
<td></td>
<td>experiencing loss</td>
<td>person lost</td>
<td>person having X-ed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

- *alst continues proto-Salish *-als(t) ‘rock, round object’ (Kuipers 2002, p. 205, where Squamish -uy? ‘large object, piece, chunk’ is also mentioned) → ‘bulk, importance’. Hence, *knixalstn ‘to eat someone else’s food’ derives from ‘to eat from A what is important for A to have’, *patmnalst ‘to have someone die on oneself’ from ‘to lose someone important to death’. (Compare Dutch *be-storven ‘having become orphaned or widowed’ ← *be-sterven ‘to become orphaned or widowed’ ← *sterven ‘to die’.)

### 2.2 Lexical suffixes

Like *-alst(n), lexical suffixes (specifically metaphoric suffixes and classifiers) can bring about argument redirection after TR bases (Nater 1984, pp. 85–87). But unlike *-alst(n), they define the type (use, texture) of property (and are mono-valent rather than divalent), whereas the “loss” or “benefit” connotation is here conveyed by the base alone (which is di- or trivalent). Compare (10) with (11):

(10) ?ulχ-iixʷ-l-im ma ta _man-c_t͡ʃ | PREDICATE | SUBJ
   steal-hat-past-3SG.PASS may be | ART _hat-past-1SG.Poss ART |
   x _ta qayt-1-s_t͡ʃ | OBL OBJ
   PREP _ART hat-past-3SG.Poss ART
   ‘somebody may have stolen my father1’s hat from him1’

(11) ?ulχ-ɬ-im ma ta _qayt-1-s_t͡ʃ | PREDICATE | SUBJ
   steal-past-3SG.PASS may be | ART hat-past-3SG.Poss ART |
   _ta _man-c_t͡ʃ | GÉN ADJ
   ART _hat-past-1SG.Poss ART
   ‘my father’s hat may have been stolen’
The structure of example (10) is:

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 6** Morpho-syntactic relations in re lexical suffix PASS

Next, compare (12) with (13):

(12) kic’-an-ɬ-i-s
    ḥa_kikya-c_ʔi责令
    PREDICATE
    wash-cloth-3SG.OBJ-3SG.SUBJ
    ḥa_stan-c_ʔi责令
    DÍR OBJ
    ART_mother-1SG.POSS_ART
    ART_mother-1SG.POSS_ART
    ‘my grandmother washed my mother’s shirts for her’

(13) kic’-i-s
    ḥa_kikya-c_ʔi责令
    PREDICATE
    wash-3SG.OBJ-3SG. SUBJ
    ḥa_stan-c_ʔi责令
    DÍR OBJ
    ART_shirts-3SG.POSS_ART
    ART_mother-1SG.POSS_ART
    ‘my grandmother washed my mother’s shirts’

The structure of example (12) is presented in Figure 7:

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 7** Morpho-syntactic relations in re lexical suffix TR
2.3 Applicative and causative suffixes

Like benefactive -tu-, but unlike -alst(n) and the classifiers considered in Section 2.2, applicative and causative suffixes are strictly transitivizing.

2.3.1 Applicative suffixes

The two Bella Coola applicative suffixes occur in the following environment:

- Act of X-ing, state of being X
- Include in one’s (being) X(-ing)

**Figure 8** Morpho-syntactic relations in re applicative

2.3.1.1 Applicative -m

The most versatile among all valency-affecting suffixes is -m ‘medium’ (Nater 1984, pp. 61–63). Broadly, ITR verbs with -m are denominal active (unergative), detransitive active (unergative, valency reducing), detransitive stative (unaccusative (mainly anticausative), valency reducing), or detransitive reflexive (valency reducing). Here, we consider transitivizing -m ‘make or find … the object or goal of one’s …ing’, which increases valency (and is not related to ITR -m, see Section 3.1). This is a truly applicative suffix insofar as the OBL OBJ following a predicate without this suffix becomes the DIR OBJ after addition of transitivizing -m to the base, as in (14)–(16).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>with -m</th>
<th>without -m</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>talaws-m-i-c c’ayx</td>
<td>talaws-c ?aɬ_c’ayx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marry-INC-3SG.OBJ-1SG.SUBJ DEM</td>
<td>marry-1SG.SUBJ PREP DEM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I’m marrying her’</td>
<td>‘id.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.3.1.2 Applicative -amk

Transitivizing -amk ‘be caused/urged/inspired to (be) … about/with …’ (Nater 1984, pp. 63–64) is, like transitivizing -m, an applicative suffix. (Both suffixes are like Dutch be- ‘to X regarding Y in particular/detail’, as in: ze bespreken de zaak ‘they discuss the matter’ vs. ze spreken over de zaak ‘they talk about the matter’, hij bekeek het huis ‘he viewed the house’ vs. hij keek naar het huis ‘he looked at the house’.) Examples are presented in (17)–(19):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{(with -amk)} & \quad \text{(without -amk)} \\
(17) & \quad \text{yayaatw-amk-ii-ti-c t’ayx} & \quad \text{yayaatw-ii-c aṭ t’ayx} \\
\text{PREDICATE} & \quad \text{DIR OBJ} & \quad \text{PREDICATE} & \quad \text{OBL OBJ} \\
\text{happy-INC-DIM-3SG.OBJ-1SG.SUBJ DEM} & \quad \text{happy-DIM-1SG.SUBJ PREP_DEM} & \quad \text{‘I am happy about this’} & \quad \text{‘id.’} \\
(18) & \quad \text{nuyamł-amk-i-c tx} & \quad \text{nuyamł-c aṭ tx} \\
\text{PREDICATE} & \quad \text{DIR OB} & \quad \text{PREDICATE} & \quad \text{OBL OBJ} \\
\text{sing-INC-3SG.OBJ-1SG.SUBJ DEM} & \quad \text{Sing-1SG.SUBJ PREP_DEM} & \quad \text{‘I am singing a song about him’} & \quad \text{‘id.’} \\
(19) & \quad \text{ʔalac’-amk-ii-ti-c ti qʷaχʷ tx} & \quad \text{ʔalac’-ii-c t} \text{̓i qʷaχʷ tx} \\
\text{PREDICATE} & \quad \text{DIR OBJ} & \quad \text{PREDICATE} & \quad \text{OBL OBJ} \\
\text{tell story-INC-DIM-3SG.OBJ-1SG.SUBJ ART Raven ART} & \quad \text{tell story-DIM-1SG.SUBJ PREP_ART Raven ART} & \quad \text{‘I am telling a story about Raven’} & \quad \text{‘id.’}
\end{align*}
\]

2.3.2 Causative suffixes

Bella Coola has two causative suffixes: -(s)tu- and -nix. These differ from one another in degree of control/purpose and affiliated pronominal suffix paradigm.
2.3.2.1 Causative -(s)tu-

I mentioned -(s)tu- ‘CAUS TR’ in Section 2.1.1 above. This suffix is compatible with ITR bases, and the associated CAUS template differs from the non-CAUS TR one (Nater 1984, pp. 37–40). It increases valency by adding an argument (causer) to the act described by the base, and ITR SUBJ → DIR OBJ, as in Figure 9. Two examples are given in (20) and (21).

![Figure 9 Morpho-syntactic relations in re -(s)tu-](image)

(20) ?aɭps-tu-Ø-s ḡa stanʔiɭ
PREDICATE SUBJ
eat-CAUS-3SG.OBJ-3SG.SUBJ ART_mother_ART
ta_mna-s xₜuʔspuxₚₜₓʷ
DIR OBJ OBL OBJ
ART_son-3SG.POSS PREP_ART_eulachon_ART
‘the mother gave her son the eulachons to eat’

(21) kə_ɬaxpaaqʷuu-stu-ti-cₜₘa wacʷ-ɐks-nuʔc
PREDICATE DIR OBJ
future afraid-CAUS-3PL.OBJ-1SG.SUBJ maybe ART_dog- PL-2SG.POSS_ART
x tiʔac’ta t’ayx
OBL OBJ
PREP_ART_paddle_DEM
‘maybe I will scare your dogs with this paddle’

2.3.2.2 Causative –nix

-nix (and -nixʷ, -nuxʷ) ‘NC CAUS’ (Nater 1984, pp. 68–69) combines with ITR stative (unaccusative-adjectival) bases, and accepts the non-CAUS TR paradigm. It differs from -(s)tu- in that it implies lack of control or purpose: ‘accidentally or unwittingly cause X to …’, ‘find that X has …ed’, ‘find (that) X (is) …’. Like -(s)tu-, -nix is valency-increasing (and ITR SUBJ → DIR OBJ), as in Figure 10. Examples are presented in (22)–(24).
Diachrony and areal typology

Here, I treat both archaic and innovative aspects of Bella Coola divalent suffixes.

### 3.1 Etymologies

The Salish origin of the divalent suffixes discussed in this report is as tabulated in Figure 11 below:
Bella Coola | Other Salish
---|---
-­nx, -­n(u)xʷ ‘NC CAUS’ | -­nəxʷ ‘TR (CAUS) NC’
-(s)tu-, -(s)txʷ ‘control CAUS (benefactive)’ | -(s)­t(-­əw/-­əxʷ) ‘CAUS’
-alst ‘deprivative’ | -­als(t) ‘rock’
-m(­i­-) , -­amk ‘applicative’ | -­mi(n) ‘relational applicative’
 | -(a)min ‘OBL OBJ, means’

**Figure 11** Salish cognates of Bella Coola divalent suffixes

For CAUS *-­nəxʷ*, see Section 4. Note that -­mi- replaces applicative -­m before the reflexive suffix -­cut (Nater 1984, p. 65). Unlike myself, Kiyosawa & Gerdts (p. 46) do not equate Bella Coola -­mi(n) with other Salish -­mi(n) (but in fn. 19, they do connect -­mi(n) with -(a)min, for which see -­amk further below). However, the primary meaning (‘use, contact, involvement’) of TR -­m is evinced by TR active verb + somatic suffix + TR -­m ‘to … something with one’s …’:

(25) cp-­ak-­m-­i-­c
    wipe-hand-contact-3SG.OBJ-1SG.SUBJ
    ‘I wipe it with my hand’

(26) ?­ał-­tmp-­aaχalic-­m-­i-­c
    PROG-insert-teeth-contact-3SG.OBJ-1SG.SUBJ
    ‘I’m holding it between my teeth’

(27) ?­iƛ’-­aal-­m-­t-­χ
    move-foot-contact-3SG.OBJ.PART-­IMP.SG
    ‘move it with your foot!’

-amk is originally complex. I gather that -­amk continues *­amǝ(n)-­k ‘means-back, middle’ in view of the following points:

- its formal, semantic, and functional resemblance to TR -­m (which suggests that …k is suffixal in origin);
- the flexible use/meaning of Salish -(a)min (‘implement, means, oblique-applicative’, see Kuipers, pp. 79 & 132; Van Eijk, p. 417; Speck, pp. 70–71);
- the lack of clear cognates (*­amǝk, *­amik, or the like) in other Salish.

As regards *­amǝn-­k → *­amǝ-­k, elision of a morpheme-left-adjacent consonant is not uncommon in Bella Coola: *­qluq’s ‘eye’ ← *­q­lu­m-­aq-­us, *­sq­ma ‘chest’ ← *­s-­q­wp-­mǝn ‘breast’, *­su:­qʷ­wux’in ‘tadpole’ ← *­s­-­qʷ­um-q­in ‘large-headed’, *­qʷ­waxχ ‘old mountain goat’ ← *­qʷ­uy-­ʔq ‘wilted-crotch’, *­am­xʷ ‘by oneself, autonomously’ ← *­al-­m­əxʷ ‘individual’, *­am­s ‘jaw’ ← *­ap­-­mǝs ← *­ap­-­nǝs
(‘base-teeth’) (Nater 2013 and 2014). *-amǝn also underlies Bella Coola -(a)ma, -(a)mn- ‘tool, implement’.

3.2 Innovations and retentions

Bella Coola applicatives are functionally unlike those in other Salish: they are not used as benefactives or deprivatives (malefactives). On the other hand, where Bella Coola benefactive formations involve a causative suffix with a range of glosses including ‘… something for somebody’, and where deprivative verbs contain a suffix whose function is derived from another morphological category, other Salish as a rule uses applicatives. Although in Halkomelem, the causative suffix can also be used benefactively, -stǝxʷ is here added to a TR base, which is not necessarily creation-oriented:

(28) Halkomelem (Kiyosawa & Gerdts, sample 103b)

nem̓ čə čeʔ qən-stǝxʷ tən̓ sal̓ sɨʔo
go 2SG.SUB FUT steal-CS DET:2POSS grandparent(PL)
ʔo kʷθə sciy̓ o.
OBL DET strawberry

‘You’re going to steal some strawberries for your grandparents.’

(29) Halkomelem (Kiyosawa & Gerdts, sample 104b)

niʔ ʔo čə calaʔl-stǝxʷ kʷθə John ʔo kʷ telə?
AUX Q 2SG.SUB borrow/lend-CSDET John OBL DET money

‘Did you borrow some money for John?’

The morpho-semantic and distributional mechanisms underlying Bella Coola divalent constructions, too, deviate from other Salish, where:

“Redirective applicatives are formed on transitive bases, and their precise interpretation—as benefactive, delegative, or malefactive—depends upon the context of the situation and the semantics of the verb. Most transitive verbs form redirecitives with benefactive meanings, but redirecitives formed on transfer verbs often express malefactive meanings, especially when a source or possessor is the applied object. Relational applicatives are formed on intransitive bases. They frequently have malefactive or adversative meanings, especially with natural or psychological events, and only rarely express benefactive meanings.” (Kiyosawa & Gerdts, p. 27)

The Bella Coola morpho-syntactic details discussed in this paper may also differ from those in other Salish. Nevertheless, the PREDICATE (+ SUBJ) + DIR OBJ + OBL OBJ clause type associated with benefactive/malefactive is found across Salish (note: in Interior Salish, the subject often precedes the predicate, and the OBL OBJ may precede the DIR OBJ), which is shown in (30)–(34).
(30) Halkomelem (Kiyosawa & Gerdts, sample 1)

niʔ ʔʷəl-əs ʔə ʔə kʷə ʔə səplil.
AUX bake-RDR-TR-3ERG DET woman OBL DET bread
‘He baked the bread for the woman.’

(31) Shuswap (Kiyosawa & Gerdts, sample 4)

m-kúl-x-t-s y núxʷn̓xʷ tə min̓x.
PERF-make-RDR-TR-3SUB DET woman OBL basket
‘She made a basket for the woman.’

(32) Comox (Kiyosawa & Gerdts, sample 28)

qʷuqʷu-ʔəm-θ-as ʔə ʔə tθ tiy.
drink-RDR-TR:1SG.OBJ-3SUB OBL DET 1SG.POSS tea
‘He drank my tea for me [when I could not finish it].’
‘He drank up my tea [on me].’

(33) Thompson (Kiyosawa & Gerdts, sample 25)

máʕ̓xt̓imes tə s-zèlt-ep.
//máʕ̓-xi-t-uym-es//
break-RDR-TR-2PL.OBJ-3SUB OBL NM-dish-2PL.POSS
‘He broke you people’s dish.’

(34) Okanagan (Kiyosawa & Gerdts, sample 52)

Mary ʕ̓ac-xi-t-s iʔ t snkʕcaʔsqáʔaʔ iʔ ttwit.
Mary tie-RDR-TR-3SUB ART OBL horse ART boy
‘Mary tied the horse for the boy.’

4 Conclusions

As concerns the status of Bella Coola divalent suffixes within Salish, it is clear that the only all-Salish applicative suffix that has survived in Bella Coola (as the transitivizing applicative -m(i-) is *-mi(n) ‘relational applicative’. *-mi(n) itself is derived from *-(a)min ‘OBL OBJ, means, tool’, which also underlies the other applicative suffix -(ank).

Of the three remaining divalent suffixes, the one malefactive (deprivative) suffix -alst(n) is originally lexical, and as such causes ITR SUBJ / TR DIR OBJ → OBL OBJ and GEN ADJ → DIR OBJ redirection. The latter of these is very similar to the OBL OBJ → DIR OBJ shift triggered by applicative suffixes: the role of the GEN ADJ (“victim”, see examples 7 and 9, and cf. example 11) is like that of the OBL OBJ in examples (14)–(19) (right column). Syntactically, however, the GEN ADJ is an adjunct rather than an argument: it is linked – via a POSS pronominal suffix – with the ITR SUBJ or DIR OBJ, not – via an OBL marker – with the predicate.
Both causative suffixes are valency-increasing insofar as an argument (causer/considerer) is added (and $\text{ITR SUBJ} \rightarrow \text{DIR OBJ}$). Unlike $-m(i-)\,$ and (to some extent) $-\text{alst}$, neither $-tu-\,$ nor $-nix$ have applicative properties. $-tu-$, though apparently Salish, differs from Salish counterparts in that it has changed its position within the predicate and merged with pronominal suffixes (which now differ from non-$\text{CAUS TR}$ suffixes).

The suffix $-nix/-nxʷ/-nuxʷ$ ‘NC CAUS’ continues $*-naxʷ$ ‘NC TR’. But $-naxʷ$ (and $-n…$ in general) also has a causative connotation in some other Salish: Squamish $-naxʷ$ ‘have …ed (non-volitional (CAUS))’ (Kuipers 1967, p. 77), Lillooet $-Vn/-Vn'$ ‘causativizer’ (et alia), $-nun/-nun'$ ‘to nourish a certain thought on …’ (i.e. ‘consider …’) (Van Eijk, pp. 425–426). It would thus appear that there was already a tendency in proto-Salish for $*-n-$ (and $*-naxʷ$) to have, or acquire, the feature CAUS. In Bella Coola, then, $-nix/-nxʷ/-nuxʷ$ became the standard NC CAUS suffix under the influence of $-tu-$ and the (innovative?) $-t-$ CONTROL vs. $-n-$ NON-CONTROL distinction (for which see Nater 1984, p. 60).

Within Salish, benefactor use of causative $-tu-$, strict $\text{PSO}_{\text{dir}}\text{O}_{\text{obl}}$ syntax, and $\text{OBL}$-marking prepositions are attributes that Bella Coola has in common only with Coastal Salish. These traits lend further support to my thesis that Bella Coola evolved after, rather than as too often assumed – before, the Coastal Salish $\leftrightarrow$ Interior Salish divide, i.e. it has descended from early Coastal (“pre-Coastal”) Salish (see Nater 2013 and 2014 for phonemic, lexical and morphological similarities). The model that reflects this view (Figure 12) differs therefore from e.g. Kiyosawa 2006 (p. 9, after Hinkson, p. 44), who places Bella Coola as having branched off from proto-Salish (and is not led to posit a pre-Coastal node). Note: Nater “Coastal” = Kiyosawa “Proto-Central-Tsamosan”, Nater “Central” = Kiyosawa “Proto-Central”, Nater “Tsamosan” = Kiyosawa “Proto-Tsamosan”, Nater “Interior” = Kiyosawa “Proto-Interior”.

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Figure 12 Bella Coola within Salish
In re PREDICATE–ARGUMENT interaction, it remains to be determined to what extent the morpho-syntax, semantic roles of the links, and combinatorial traits described in Sections 2 and 2.1–3 are matched in other Salish. In the meantime, I suspect, in view of the similarities shown in examples (28)–(29) and (30)–(34) (and conclusions drawn in Nater 2013 and 2014), that further research will reveal more morpho-syntactic resemblances between Bella Coola and Coastal Salish than we have seen to date.

References


