The distribution of possessive applicatives in Interior Salish Languages

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Interior Salish languages differ in the number of redirective applicative suffixes they have. The Northern Interior languages have only the general redirective suffix *-xi, which is used in a variety of applicative constructions such as Dative, Benefactive, Malefactive, and Possessive. In the Southern Interior languages, a couple of other applicative suffixes have developed, encroaching on the semantics of the general applicative suffix. In this paper, I examine 'possessor' constructions with -I. I show that the applied object in -I applicatives is not always the possessor of the theme and also that the theme object does not always take possessive marking. I propose that the key unifying feature of possessive applicatives is that they place more focus on the theme NP than other applicative constructions do.

1 Introduction

The Salish family consists of 23 languages spoken in British Columbia, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington. Salish languages are famous for their polysynthetic properties, and the verb consists of a stem as a base and one or more affixes and clitics. The applicative is one type of verbal suffix. Applicative suffixes appear on the verb when the grammatical direct object refers to a non-thematic noun phrase, such as a recipient, beneficiary, possessor, goal, or psychological stimulus. Kiyosawa (1999, 2002) has shown that Salish languages have from two to six different applicative suffixes, and that Salish applicatives suffixes fall into two types—redirective and relational. This paper addresses redirective applicatives.

In redirective applicative constructions, the verb stem is usually transitive, and the direct object role is redirected to a non-theme nominal—the applied object. For example, we can see the syntactic effect of the applicative suffix by comparing (1a) with (1b):¹

¹ I have standardized hyphenations and glosses in the cited examples and regularized the orthography following Kroeber (1999). The following abbreviations are used in glossing the data: ART article, ASP aspect, AUX auxiliary, BEN benefactive applicative, DET determiner, ERG ergative, INCHO inchoative, IMP: imperative, LOC locative, NOM nominalizer, OBJ object, OBL oblique, PL plural, POS possessor applicative, POSS possessive marker, PTC particle, Q interrogative, RDR redirective applicative, REL relational applicative, SG singular, SUB subject, TR transitive.
(1) **Shuswap**

a. \( m \- k\-ul \- n \- \( o \- 0 \- s \) \ y \- m\-i\-m\-x \. \)
PERF-make-TR-3SG.OBJ-3SG.SUB DET-basket
'She made the basket.' (Dwight Gardiner p.c.)

b. \( m \- k\-ul \- x \- t \- \( o \- 0 \- s \) \ y \- n\-u\-\( a\-n\-x \) \ t\-m\-i\-m\-x \. \)
PERF-make-RDR-TR-3SG.OBJ-3SG.SUB DET-woman OBL-basket
'She made a basket for the woman.' (Gardiner 1993: 31)

The verb in (1a) is transitive, and the verb is suffixed with the general transitive suffix -\( n(t) \). The third person transitive subject determines ergative agreement. The patient ‘basket’ is a direct object, and it appears as a plain NP. Example (1b) is a benefactive applicative. The verb is suffixed with the benefactive applicative -\( x(i) \). The benefactive ‘woman’ is the direct object and the patient ‘basket’ appears with an oblique marker.

Salish languages have one to three redirective suffixes. See Table 1:

| Branch | Lang | # | Redirecive
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Table 1: Distribution of redirective applicatives

Basically, Salish languages have at least one redirective suffix, usually *-xi the general redirective suffix. The exceptions to this are Bella Coola, which has a general applicative -amk, Sliammon/Comox and Sechelt, which have a different redirective suffix *-VmV instead of *-xi, and Halkomelem, which has developed two new redirective suffixes: a dative marked with -as and a benefactive marked with -ie. Upper Chehalis has three redirective forms: *-xi, *-VmV, and -tux "-tx τ. The semantic difference among them is not clear from the English glosses, but according to Kinkade (1998) *-xi marks datives, *-VmV marks datives and benefactives, and -tux "-tx τ marks possessors.

In the case of the Interior languages, Northern Interior Salish languages have only one redirective applicative, *-xi, while Southern Interior Salish languages have innovated a couple of additional applicative suffixes, -l and -túk. These new suffixes have encroached on the territory of the general redirective suffix *-xi. In so doing, the redirective suffixes in Southern Interior specialize in their semantics and also add distributional requirements not present in other branches. In this paper, I examine the properties of the applicatives more closely, focusing especially on the nature of the theme.

2 Semantic properties of redirective applicatives

The semantic role of the applied object in redirective applicatives is usually goal (2), benefactive (3), malefactive (4), or possessive (5).

• Goal

(2) Spokane (Carlson 1980: 24)

x*icš-t-ən ḥu? Agnes ḥu? t yám̓xʷe?.
gave-RDR-TR-1SG.SUB ART Agnes ART OBL basket
‘I gave a basket to Agnes.’

• Benefactive

(3) Okanagan (N. Mattina 1993: 265)

Mary wac-xit-s i? t sn̓ k̓ ċaʔsqáx̱aʔ i? ttwit.
Mary tie-RDR:TR-3ERG ART OBL horse ART boy
‘Mary tied the horse for the boy.’

• Malefactive

(4) Thompson (Thompson & Thompson 1980: 28)

?uqʷeʔ-x-cm-s tə tfiy.
//ʔuqʷeʔ-xi-t-sem-es//
drink-RDR-TR-1SG.OBJ-3ERG OBL tea
‘She drank my tea up on me.’

3 See Gerdts and Hinkson (1996, 2003) for the discussion of how the Halkomelem redirective suffixes developed from lexical suffixes.
Possessive

(5) **Okanagan** (N. Mattina 1993: 265)
Mary 'àc-l-t-s iʔ ttwit iʔ kəwáp-s.
Mary tie-POS-TR-3ERG ART boy ART horse-3POSS
'Mary tied the boy's horse (for him).'

It is not unusual for languages to have a single applicative morpheme that is used in a variety of applicative constructions including Dative, Benefactive, and Possessive. Languages that exemplify this are Swahili (Driever 1976), Mayan languages (Aissen 1987), and Mixean languages (Zavala 1999). In fact, it is generally the case that possessive applicative constructions (aka "possessor ascension" or "external possession constructions") do not have simple possessor semantics, but rather have an additional semantic "kick" indicating that the possessor is "affected" by the action (cf. Fried 1999). But, rarely, in other languages, for example Kinyarwanda (Kimenyi 1980), Tukang Besi (Donohue 1999), and Yimas (Foley 1991), there may be two or more applicative morphemes, correlating to the difference in the semantic role of the applied object.

In Interior Salish languages, we find both types of patterns. To be more precise, in the Northern Interior Salish languages (Lillooet, Shuswap, and Thompson), a single morpheme is used for all the redirective applicative constructions, thus arising in ambiguities. For example, Thompson uses the general redirective suffix -xi for dative (6a), benefactive (6b), malefactive (6c), and possessive (6d) usages:

(6) **Thompson** (Thompson and Thompson 1980: 27, 28, 32)

a. kʰiʔxtis.
//kʰʔ-xi-t-ey-es//
show-RDR-TR-1PL.OBJ-3SUB
'She shows it to us.'

b. cʰyáqxcms.
//cʰʔy=aqs-xi-t-sem-es//
burn=nose-RDR-TR-1SG.OBJ-3SUB
'He turned on the light for me.'

c. ʔúqʰeʔxcms
//ʔúqʰ-eʔ-xi-t-sem-es//
drink-RDR-TR-1SG.OBJ-3SUB OBL tea
'She drank my tea up on me.'

d. ʔe piʔ-p-xi-cm-xʷ
tə n-ʔwísqn.
might lose-INCHO-RDR-TR:1SG.OBJ-2SG.SUB OBL 1SG.POSS-ax
'You might lose my ax.'
Notice that ‘tea’ in example (6c) does not appear with a possessive marker, yet the English translation indicates that ‘tea’ belongs to the sufferer ‘me’, which is the applied object. According to Thompson and Thompson (1980), the following example also conveys malefactive semantics, although the malefactive is presented as a possessor:

\( (7) \) Thompson (Thompson and Thompson 1980: 28)

\[ \text{má} \text{̃-x times} \quad \text{tā} \quad \text{s-zél-t ép.} \]

//má̃-xi-t-uym-es//

break-RDR-TR-2PL.OBJ-3SUB OBL NOM-dish-2PL.POSS

‘He broke you people’s dish.’

Similarly, examples from Lillooet and Shuswap show the ambiguity between benefactive and possessive applicative usage as follows:

\( (8) \) Lillooet (Van Eijk 1997: 115)

\[ \text{txʷus-mín-xí-c-kaxʷ} \quad \text{ni} \quad \text{n-čqáxʔ-a.} \]

look-REL-RDR-1SG.OBJ-2SG.SUB DET 1SG.POSS-horse-PTC

‘Look out for my horse for me!’

\( (9) \) Shuswap (Kuipers 1992: 49)

\[ \text{mlmalqw-x-t-Sj} \quad \text{ta} \quad \text{citxʷ-sk.} \]

paint-RDR-TR-3SG.SUB, OBL house-3POSSk

‘He paints his house for himk. / He paints his house.’

In contrast, in Southern Interior languages, different semantic roles may be marked by different applicative morphemes—two different suffixes in Spokane/Kalispel and three different morphemes in the other languages, as I summarize in Table 2; in general, -\( I \) marks possessors and -\( tůł \) marks datives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Benefactive</th>
<th>Malefactive</th>
<th>Dative</th>
<th>Possessive</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>NIS (Li, Sh, Th)</td>
<td>*-xi</td>
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<td>SIS Sp/Ka</td>
<td>*-xi</td>
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<td>SIS Ok, Cr, Cm</td>
<td>*-xi, -tůł</td>
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Table 2: Redirective applicatives in Interior Salish

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4 The Thompson example in (6c) shows that the possessed NP does not necessarily appear with a possessive marker. However, most of the examples in the sources I examined for Northern Interior Salish languages in fact have a possessive marker when a possessive meaning is given in the translation.

5 The usage of -\( tůł \) is not yet clear: applied objects in the -\( tůł \) applicatives can also denote benefactive and source. The Coeur d'Alene data are especially complex.
We see then that the innovated applicative suffixes have encroached on the semantics of *-xi. However, the new suffixes specialize in their semantics, as discussed below.

3 Possessive applicative -l

All the Southern Interior languages use the applicative suffix -l for indicating possessor applied object, and the possessed NP, referred to here as the theme, usually appears with a possessive marker, as shown in the following Columbian example:

(10) **Columbian** (Kinkade 1980: 34)

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{break-POS-TR:1SG.OBJ-2SG.SUB} & 1SG.POSS-pot \\
\text{ma~w-I-c-xw} & \text{?in-1káp.} \\
\end{array}
\]

‘You broke my pot.’

Kinkade (1998) defines -l as ‘genitive’ since the applied object can be interpreted the possessor of the theme in an applicative construction with -l. As a result, the applied object and the possessor of the theme are usually coreferential. However, this is not always the case, as seen by the following Okanagan data:

(11) **Okanagan** (N. Mattina 1993: 276)

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{Fred} & \text{Fred} \\
\text{buy-POS-TR-2SG.(S)OBJ-1SG.SUB} & \text{ART car-3SG.POSS} \\
\text{n\textsuperscript{?}iy-I-t-s-n} & \text{?úyxan-s.} \\
\end{array}
\]

‘I bought you Fred’s car.’

N. Mattina (1996: 49) notes that, in Okanagan, the themes in applicative constructions with -xi and -l ‘differ in terms of their referentiality.’ She also states that ‘dative themes [in a -xit applicative] cannot be possessed (unless in unrealized mood), and possessive themes [in a -l applicative] must be possessed.’ Thus we see that the non-coreferential reading for (11) is required in Okanagan.

Furthermore, the theme can appear without a possessive marker (12, 13):

(12) **Coeur d’Alene** (Doak 1997: 146)

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{call-POS-TR-1SG.(S)OBJ-3SUB} & \text{mouse} \\
\text{g*nlíces} & \text{\textit{k*ítn.}} \\
\text{//g* nit-l-t-sel-s} & \text{\textit{k*ítn/}} \\
\end{array}
\]

‘He asked for my mouse.’
(13) **Okanagan** (A. Mattina 1985: 279)

kʷu ʰaʔ-1-t-ís  axáʔ iʔ skəkʷákaʔ.

1SG.OBJ look.for-POS-TR-3SG.SUB DEICTIC ART bird

'He looked for the (i.e. someone’s) birds for me.'

The English translation still implies that the themes are possessed. The suffix -í is also used for a dative construction with the implication of a definite theme. Compare (14a), which is a dative construction with -xít, with (14b):

(14) **Okanagan** (A. Mattina 1994: 210)

a. haʔ kʷu a-ks-xʷíč-xt-əmʔ?

Q 1SG.OBJ 2SG.POSS-ASP-give-RDR:TR-m

'Are you going to give things to me?' (something indefinite)

b. haʔ kʷu a-ks-xʷíč-l-t-əmʔ?

Q 1SG.OBJ 2SG.POSS-ASP-give-POS-TR-m

'Are you going to give it to me?' (something definite)

Although it is not clear from examples (14a, b), themes are oblique phrases in the general redirective constructions with -xít, as in (3) above, and bare phrases in redirective constructions with -í in Okanagan⁶ as well as the other Southern Interior Salish languages.⁷ It is not unexpected for oblique NPs to get indefinite readings while bare NPs get definite readings.

To summarize, we see that conditions like the following apply to possessive applicatives in Southern Interior Salish:

(15) a. The applied object and the possessor of the theme have to be coreferential.

b. The theme has to be possessed, but does not have to be coreferential with the applied object.

c. The theme has to be definite.

I claim that these conditions developed historically from (15a) to (15b) and then to (15c). Most data, such as (5) and (10), are consistent with (15a). Some data, such as (11) and (13), contradict (15a), but still the theme has to be marked

⁶ Note that the theme NP is case-marked differently in the two types of applicatives. The theme is a direct case NP in the possessor applicative construction as in example (5). The theme is an oblique phrase in the general redirective applicative construction as in example (3). N. Mattina (1996: 47, 48) points out that though the theme nominals are case-marked differently, they both undergo extraction, even though other oblique phrases cannot extract. This leads her to claim that 'they are neither direct nor oblique arguments.'

⁷ In -xít applicatives in Northern Interior Salish, themes are oblique phrases in Thompson and Shuswap, but bare phrases in Lillooet.
possessive and thus conforms to (15b). In rare cases, such as (14b), possession is no longer an issue; the status of the theme NP though is relevant.

It is thus more plausible to conclude that the referentiality of the theme is the key to the applicative suffix -l, rather than the semantic role of the applied object as possessor. In other words, the function of ‘possessive’ applicatives to express possessors as applied objects no longer pertains in all cases.

4 Spokane -l

Applicative constructions with -l in Spokane exhibit more variety than in the other Southern Interior Salish languages. Recall that the applicative morpheme -tul is not found in Spokane. Besides possessor (16a), -l also takes applied objects labeled by Carlson (1980) as ‘informant’ (16b) and ‘source’ (16c):

(16) Spokane (Carlson 1980: 25, 26)

a. múš-l-t-ən  luʔ Albert səŋʔuršfecti-s.
   feel-POS-TR-1SG.SUB ART Albert stove-3POSS
   ‘I felt Albert’s stove.’

b. səw-l-t-ən.
   ask-POS-TR-1SG.SUB
   ‘I asked about that of him.’

c. kʷúli-l-t-ən.
   borrow-POS-TR-1SG.SUB
   ‘I borrowed it from him.’

Both informant and source applied objects can be interpreted as possessors. The translation in (16b) implies that the information belongs to ‘him’, and also the borrowed item in (16c) belongs to ‘him’ as well.

When full NPs appear in the possessive applicative construction, the applied objects get split into two types in Spokane. Example (17a) is a simple transitive construction. In (17b), a -l applicative, the benefactive ‘you’ is the applied object.

(17) a. Spokane (Carlson 1980: 24)
   ʔula-nt-en.
   burn-TR-1SG.SUB
   ‘I burned him/her/it.’
b. *Spokane* (Carlson 1972: 89)

\[ ?ul-l-ct-n. \]
\[ //wil-l-t-si-en// \]
\[ burn-POS-TR-2SG.(S)OBJ-1SG.SUB \]

'I burned it for you.'

In contrast, the benefactive NP is in a prepositional phrase in example (18), even though the verb takes the applicative suffix.

(18) *Spokane* (Carlson 1980: 24)

\[ k^{*}\bar{u}-l-t-o\-n \quad lu? \quad y\acute{a}m\acute{e} x^{*}e? \quad lu? \quad \bar{x}^{*}ol \quad \text{Agnes.} \]
\[ \text{make-POS-TR-1SG.SUB} \quad \text{ART} \quad \text{basket} \quad \text{ART} \quad \text{for} \quad \text{Agnes} \]

'I made a basket for Agnes.'

If this were a possessive applicative construction, both NPs should be bare phrases as in (19):

(19) *Spokane* (Carlson 1980: 25)

\[ \text{mus-I-t-o\-n} \quad lu? \quad \text{Albert} \quad \text{s\~on}\text{\~ur\~si\~cti-s.} \]
\[ \text{feel-POS-TR-1SG.SUB} \quad \text{ART} \quad \text{Albert} \quad \text{stove-3POSS} \]

'I felt Albert's stove.'

We can speculate that the reason why the benefactive in (18) is a prepositional phrase is that *Spokane* cannot have two bare NPs, unless the theme is marked possessive. Similarly, in the *Columbian* example (20), the benefactive 'Mary' appears in a prepositional phrase, and the theme is not marked possessive:

(20) *Columbian* (Kinkade 1980: 34)

\[ ?acy\~a-y-l-t-o\-n \quad \text{stt\~a\~nta\~m} \quad \text{\~k}l \quad \text{Mary.} \]
\[ \text{weave-POS-TR-1SG.SUB} \quad \text{bag} \quad \text{LOC} \quad \text{Mary} \]

'I’m weaving a bag for Mary.'

In contrast, in (21) the theme 'letter' is marked possessive, and the benefactive 'Mary' is a bare phrase.

(21) *Columbian* (Kinkade 1980: 34)

\[ \text{\~qi\~y-I-t-o\-n} \quad \text{\~qi\~m\~m\~n-s} \quad \text{Mary!} \]
\[ \text{write-POS-TR-IMP} \quad \text{letter-3POSS} \quad \text{Mary} \]

'Write a letter for Mary!'

Why then is the benefactive in (18, 20) in a prepositional phrase?

It might be insightful to compare the *Spokane* data in (18) (repeated here as (22a)) with that in (22b):
As seen in (22b), the theme appears in an oblique phrase in the general redirective construction with \(-\xi\) (*-xi). Having the theme in the \(-t\) applicative in (22a) as a plain NP rather than in a prepositional phrase allows it to be differentiated from the theme of the general redirective construction. In addition, as Carlson (1980: 24) explains, the difference between (22a) and (22b) is a question of focus. Although it is not obvious from the translations, he says (22a) puts focus on the theme while (22b) puts focus on the benefactive.

We might speculate that the notion of “focus” might in fact be subsumed under the concept of “referentiality”. Perhaps by degrading the benefactive in (22a), the implication that the benefactive is the possessor of the theme no longer pertains. So Spokane example (22a) would parallel Columbian example (20). In both cases, ‘possessive’ applicatives no longer function solely to express that the possessor is the applied object.

5 Conclusion

Northern Interior Salish has the general redirective suffix: \(*-xi\), which is used in a variety of applicative constructions such as Dative, Benefactive, Malefactive, and Possessive. The concept of redirective applicative has become differentiated in Southern Interior Salish as shown in Table 3.

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<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Dative</th>
<th>Possessive</th>
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<td>*-xi</td>
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<td>SIS Ok, Cr, Cm</td>
<td>*-xi, -tul</td>
<td>*-xi</td>
<td>-t</td>
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Table 3: Redirective applicatives in Interior Salish

The Southern Interior languages not only have reflexes of *-xi but other redirecives as well. The redirective suffix \(-t\) appears in all Southern Interior Salish languages, and the redirective suffix \(-tul\) appears in Okanagan, Columbian, and Coeur d’Alene, but not in Spokane/Kalispel. In this paper, I examined various redirective constructions, focusing on ‘possessor’ constructions with \(-t\). As shown in examples (11)–(14), and also summarized in (15), the applied object in the “possessive” applicative is not always the possessor of the theme NP.
Given the current distribution of -I, it is reasonable to claim that it started as a marker for possessive applicatives. Perhaps the drive to disambiguate the general redirective applicative construction led to the innovation of additional applicative morphology. However, the function of 'possessive' applicatives as having possessors for applied objects has become unnecessary in some constructions. Possessors do not have to be specified, since it is usually the possessor that benefits from the action affecting the theme object or that will own the theme object as a result of a transaction. Instead of the possessor, the theme NP gets focused for two reasons; (a) the theme is definite by virtue of being possessed and (b) the theme NP appears without a preposition or oblique case marker. Focused theme NPs in possessive applicatives thus contrast with theme NPs in the general redirective constructions, which are indefinite and expressed as obliques. Therefore, the referentiality of the theme NP is relevant in all the Southern Interior languages.

References


