

A COMPARISON OF RELATIVE CLAUSE CONSTRUCTIONS
IN TWO COAST SALISH LANGUAGES

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O. Introduction

A comparison of two Coast Salish languages, Halkomelem (Cowichan) and Puget Sound Salish or Lushootseed (Skagit), shows virtual formal identity of relative clause constructions, where the clause type corresponds to the understood relationship between the relative clause and the adjunct head to which it is attributive.¹

A relative clause may be marked with a so-called nominalizing prefix or not, depending on the syntactic role the adjunct head is understood to play within the relative clause. Further, depending on this role, either the s- nominalizer or the instrumental prefix may appear.² The distributional identity of these elements in two Coast Salish languages seems highly significant, suggesting a genetic basis for these constructions which bears investigation in related languages.

We are labeling as *relative clauses* clausal constituents which (normally) follow an adjunct head in Cowichan or Skagit.³ The internal form of relative clauses varies, as noted above, depending on the understood relationship between the adjunct head and the clause. By "understood relationship" we mean the syntactic role the head plays in a corresponding independent

clause. In English, for example, this relationship may be overtly marked by an inflected relative pronoun.

Charles shot the lad whom Myrtle loved.

Myrtle loved the lad.

Skagit and Cowichan lack such relative pronouns, yet the appropriate understood relationship between the adjunct head and the relative clause is by and large determinable due to other grammatical devices.

1. Direct (Nonoblique) Relations

1.0 Introduction

The syntactic relationship of an adjunct to a predicate may be classified as either *direct* or *oblique*. A direct adjunct is not preceded by a prepositional element, such as the catch-all preposition ʔə , while an oblique adjunct is.⁴

1. $\text{ʔuʔabyic ti stubš ʔə kʷi talə}$.

DIRECT OBLIQUE

Skagit: *The man gave me some money.*

$\text{ʔu-ʔabyit-s ti stubš ʔə kʷi talə}$
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

1	completive	5	man
2	give	6	oblique
3	me	7	article
4	article	8	money

2. $\text{niʔ ʔaməšəamʔšəs zə swəyʔqeʔ ʔə kʷəə telə}$.

DIRECT OBLIQUE

Cowichan: *The man gave me some money.*

$\text{niʔ ʔaməst-Samʔš-əs zə swəyʔqeʔ ʔə kʷəə telə}$
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

1 nonproximal	6 man
2 give	7 oblique
3 me	8 article
4 3rd agent	9 money
5 article	

Direct adjuncts correspond functionally to person markers which we call *subject clitics* and *goal suffixes*.

SUBJECT CLITICS

SKAGIT			COWICHAN	
	singular	plural	singular	plural
first	čəd	čəɬ	cən	ct
second	čəx ^w	čələp	č	ceep

GOAL SUFFIXES

SKAGIT			COWICHAN	
	singular	plural	singular	plural
first	-s	-ubuɬ	-(ə)amʔʂ ⁵	-alʔx ^w
second	-sid	-ubuɬəd	-(ə)amə	-alə

That is, although the person markers are distributionally distinct from adjuncts, either an adjunct or a person marker may mark a given relationship (such as agent or patient). For reference here, we term those direct adjuncts which are interpreted analogously to goal suffixes as *goal adjuncts* and those which correspond to subject clitics as *subject adjuncts*.

The syntactic status of direct adjuncts is an open question. It is not obvious, for example, that the traditional subject-object distinction yields significant generalizations about the syntax of these languages.

When an adjunct head is interpreted as standing in a direct adjunct relationship to the relative clause which modifies it, no nominalizer is present. We discuss examples for Skagit and Cowichan below.

1.1 Subject Adjunct

1.1.1 Skagit

When the adjunct head is interpreted as subject adjunct of the relative clause, a Skagit relative clause contains no marker indicating subordination. And, in fact, it could stand as an independent sentence.

3. ?es(h)aydx^w čex^w ?u ci sšadey? ?užild ti dbad ?e te sʔuladx^w.

Do you know the woman who gave my father the salmon?

?es-haydx^w čex^w ?u ci sšadey? ?u-žilt ti d-bad ?e te sʔuladx^w
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14

1 static aspect	8 give (food)
2 know	9 article
3 you	10 my
4 question	11 father
5 article	12 oblique
6 woman	13 article
7 completive aspect	14 salmon

1.1.2 Cowichan

When the adjunct head is interpreted as subject adjunct of the relative clause, a Cowichan relative clause is marked by the absence of a third person agent suffix, -es, if the clausal predicate is transitive.

4. nii č ?ew? statelʔstex^w že sšeni? ni? ?ex^weʔt k^wše ne
men ?e k^wše sceežten.

Do you know the woman who gave my father the salmon?

ni? ?ə č ?əw? statel?stex^w 4ə sʔeni? ni? ?ex^we?t k^wəə nə
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

men ?ə k^wəə sceeʔten.
 12 13 14 15

1 nonproximal	9 give (food)
2 question	10 article
3 you	11 my
4 conditional	12 father
5 know	13 oblique
6 article	14 article
7 woman	15 salmon
8 nonproximal	

The corresponding independent sentence form has the third person agent suffix -əs.

4a. ni? ?ex^we?tes k^wəə nə men ?ə k^wəə sceeʔten

(He, she, it) gave my father the salmon.

If, however, the relative clause predicate is intransitive, then the relative clause is homophonous with an independent sentence, since independent clause intransitive constructions do not take the agent suffix.

1.1.3 Summary

In neither language is there an overt relative clause marker when the adjunct head is interpreted as standing in a subject adjunct relationship to the relative clause. Cowichan, however, differs from Skagit in that the absence of an agent suffix when the relative clause predicate is transitive is significant, since Cowichan, unlike Skagit, marks third person agents of independent clause transitive constructions with the -əs agent suffix.

1.2 Goal Adjunct

1.2.1 Skagit

When the adjunct head is interpreted as goal adjunct of the relative clause, a Skagit relative clause again contains no marker indicating subordination.

5. tuhuydx^w čəʒ ti sqig^wəc tuq²ux^wəd čəd.

We ate the deer which I butchered.

tu-huydx^w čəʒ ti sqig^wəc tu-q²ux^wəd čəd
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

1 remote	5 deer
2 eat	6 remote
3 we	7 butcher
4 article	8 I

There seems to be a potential for ambiguity between subject or goal interpretation when the relative clause contains no adjuncts or person markers. It is not obvious, for example, why the following sentence is not ambiguous (other than the bizarreness of one interpretation).

6. tuʒiltubuʒ ʔə ti sqig^wəc tuq²ux^wəd.

(He) gave us the deer which he butchered.

not: *(He) gave us the deer which butchered him.*

tu-ʒilt-ubuʒ ʔə ti sqig^wəc tu-q²ux^wəd
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

1 remote	5 article
2 give (food)	6 deer
3 us	7 remote
4 oblique	8 butcher

A subject interpretation is apparently possible, as in the following example.

7. ʔufig^witəb ʔu ʔə tad syaʔya ti stubš ʔuʒild ʔə tə sʔuladx^w.

Did your brother thank the man who gave him the salmon?

ʔu-tig^hit-b ʔu ʔə tə ʔad syaʔya ti stubš ʔu-šilt ʔə
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13

tə sʔuladx^w
 14 15

1	completive	9	article
2	thank	10	man
3	passive	11	completive
4	question	12	give (food)
5	oblique	13	oblique
6	article	14	article
7	your (sg.)	15	salmon
8	friend		

That is, in (6) the adjunct head sqig^wec is interpreted as the goal adjunct while in (7) the adjunct head stubš is interpreted as the subject adjunct of the relative clause.

1.2.2 Cowichan

When the adjunct head is interpreted as goal adjunct of the relative clause, a Cowichan relative clause exhibits subordinate clause morphology, marking the subject with the subordinate clause suffix forms of the subject clitics.⁶

SUBORDINATE SUBJECT MARKERS

	singular	plural
first person	-(e)nʔ	-ət
second person	-əx ^w	-ələp
third person		-əs

8. niʔ ct šeyxt k^wəe sməyəθ niʔ-əx^w k^wičət.

We ate the deer which you butchered.

niʔ ct šeyxt k^wəe sməyəθ niʔ-əx^w k^wičət
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

1	nonproximal	5	deer
2	we	6	nonproximal
3	eat	7	you
4	article	8	butcher

The subject and goal type relative clauses in Cowichan may be treated under one analysis, if we assume that the subject marker of the relative clause is transformationally deleted whenever it is coreferential with the head. In both types, then, we would claim that the clause is marked as subordinate, by the presence of subordinate subject markers when the head is interpreted as the goal, and by the absence of such markers when the head is interpreted as the subject of the relative clause.

1.3 Summary

When an adjunct head is interpreted as standing in a direct relationship to a relative clause which modifies it, Skagit and Cowichan are syntactically parallel in that the relative clause has no nominalizer. They differ, however, in that Cowichan uses subordinate clause subject affixes (when the head is interpreted as the goal of the relative clause) while Skagit does not. Further, when the adjunct head is interpreted as the relative clause subject, the lack of an -es agent suffix is significant in Cowichan (as independent clause transitive constructions require one) but not in Skagit.

It is compatible with the Cowichan data to analyze un-nominalized relative clauses as subordinate, in the sense of requiring subordinate clause subject markers, with a rule deleting the subject marker if it is coreferential with the adjunct head. A deletion analysis is suggested by the conspicuous absence of the agent marker under the appropriate conditions. This could be extended to cases where the adjunct head is

coreferential with an understood relative clause goal, although third person goals are unmarked in the person system. While the deletion of person markers is compatible with the Skagit data, we have no supporting evidence, since both third person agent and goal are unmarked in the person systems.

2.0 The s- Nominalizer In Relative Clause Constructions

The s- nominalizing prefix in a relative clause marks the oblique object relationship between an adjunct head and a relative clause which modifies it. Many predicates permit an adjunct in addition to those corresponding to slots in the person systems (subject or goal). Such adjuncts, which are introduced by the preposition ?ə, are called here *oblique objects*. The transitive predicate ?abyit 'give' in Skagit, for example, permits an oblique object.

9. ?u?abyit ti dbad ?ə ti sduuk^w.

My father gave me a knife.

?u-?abyit-s ti d-bad ?ə ti sduuk^w
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

1	completive	6	father
2	give	7	oblique
3	me	8	article
4	article	9	knife
5	my		

2.1 Skagit

The following example illustrates the use of the s- nominalizer in signalling an oblique relation between an adjunct head and the relative clause which modifies it.

10. tušabad čəɪ ti sʔuladx^w tuʔadsɪiltubuɪ.

We dried the salmon which you gave us.

tu-šabad čəɪ ti sʔuladx^w tu-ʔad-s-ɪilt-ubuɪ
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

1 remote	6 remote
2 dry	7 your (sg.)
3 we	8 s-nominalizer
4 article	9 give (food)
5 salmon	10 us

This may be compared to the following independent clause, where ɪilt, like ʔabyit, permits an oblique object.

11. ʔuɪiltubuɪ ti stubš ʔə ti sʔuladx^w.

The man gave us the salmon.

ʔu-ɪilt-ubuɪ ti stubš ʔə ti sʔuladx^w
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

1 completive	5 man
2 give (food)	6 oblique
3 us	7 article
4 article	8 salmon

The use of ʔad- "your" rather than čəx^w "you" in the relative clause of (10) illustrates the switch from subject clitics to possessive affixes when a nominalizer is present. That is, the subject relationship of unnominalized clauses corresponds to the possessives of nominalized clauses.

SKAGIT POSSESSIVE AFFIXES

	singular	plural
first person	d-	-čəɪ
second person	ʔad-	-ləp
third person		-s

2.2 Cowichan

The situation in Cowichan is parallel, where the oblique object relation is signalled in relative clauses by the s-nominalizer.

12. ni? ct čəy?x^wt k^wə səeɪtən ?i ?ən?s[?]ex^we[?]tal[?]x^w.

We dried the salmon which you gave us.

ni? ct čəy?x^wt k^wə səeɪtən ?i ?ən?-s-?ex^we[?]t-al[?]x^w
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

1 nonproximal	6 proximal
2 we	7 your (sg.)
3 dry	8 s-nominalizer
4 article	9 give (food)
5 salmon	10 us

This may be compared to the following independent clause, where ?ex^we[?]t permits an oblique object.

13. ni? ?ex^we[?]tal[?]x^wəs k^wə sye?yeɪt ?ə k^wə səeɪtən.

Our friend gave us the salmon.

ni? ?ex^we[?]t-al[?]x^w k^wə sye?yeɪt ?ə k^wə səeɪtən
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

1 nonproximal	6 our
2 give (food)	7 oblique
3 us	8 article
4 article	9 salmon
5 friend	

As in Skagit, the possessive forms are used instead of subject clitics when a clause is nominalized, so in the relative clause of sentence (12) the subject is signalled by the possessive prefix ?ən?- "your" rather than the second person singular clitic čəx^w.

COWICHAN POSSESSIVE AFFIXES

	singular	plural
first person	nə-	-ct
second person	ʔənʔ-	ʔənʔ-...-ələp
third person		-s

3. The Instrumental Prefix In Relative Clause Constructions

The instrumental prefix is used in Skagit and in Cowichan when the adjunct head is interpreted as playing the role of instrument, locative or translocative within the relative clause that modifies it.

3.1 Instrumental

3.1.1 Skagit

When an adjunct head is interpreted as standing in the role of instrument in a relative clause which modifies it, the instrumental prefix *dəx^w-* or *sox^w-* is used. As with the *s-* nominalizer, the clausal subject role is then expressed by a possessive.

14. *šudx^w čəx^w ʔu ti čʰa cəx^wpus.*

Did you see the rock that hit me?

šudx^w čəx^w ʔu ti čʰa d-səx^w-pus
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

1 see	5 rock
2 you	6 my
3 question	7 instrumental
4 article	8 hit

That this is instrumental, not subject, is illustrated by the corresponding independent clause.

15. ʔupus čəd ʔə ti čʰa.

I was hit with-by a rock.

ʔu-pus čəd ʔə ti čʰa
1 2 3 4 5 6

1	completive	4	oblique
2	hit	5	article
3	I	6	rock

3.1.2 Cowichan

Similarly in Cowichan the instrumental prefix š(x^w)- appears when the adjunct head is interpreted in the role of instrument within the relative clause that modifies it.

16. niʔ cən yəq^wt k^wə sčəšt ʔi ʔənʔšq^waq^wəθamʔš.

I burned the stick you clubbed me with.

niʔ cən yəq^wt k^wə sčəšt ʔi ʔənʔ-š-q^waq^wət-Samʔš
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

1	nonproximal	6	proximal
2	I	7	your
3	burn	8	instrumental
4	article	9	club
5	stick	10	me

3.2 Place

When the adjunct head is interpreted as a locative or translocative within the relative clause which modifies it, the instrumental prefix is also used.

3.2.1 Skagit

17. ʔabyic ʔə ti yiq^wus dəx^wəsdek^w ʔə ti sčʰiʔyu.

Give me the basket which the strawberries are in.

ʔabyit-s ʔə ti yiq^wus dəx^w-as-dək^w ʔə ti sčʰiʔyu
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

1	give	7	static
2	me	8	be-in
3	oblique	9	oblique (possessive here)
4	article	10	article
5	basket	11	strawberry
6	instrumental		

This may be compared to a corresponding independent sentence, where the locative relation is expressed by the preposition-predicate ?al.

18. ?əs-dək^m ?u ti sçi²?yu ?al ti yiğ^mus.

Are the strawberries in the basket?

?əs-dək^m ?u ti sçi²?yu ?al ti yiğ^mus
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

1 static	5 strawberry
2 be-in	6 locative preposition
3 question	7 article
4 article	8 basket

The instrumental is also used when the relation between the adjunct head and the relative clause is translocative.

19. Ćad ti yiğ^mus ?adex^mdəğ^maš ti sçi²?yu.

Where is the basket you put the strawberries in?

Ćad ti yiğ^mus ?ad-dəx^m-dəğ^maš ti sçi²?yu
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

1 be-where	5 instrumental
2 article	6 put-in
3 basket	7 article
4 your	8 strawberry

This may be compared to the following independent clause, where the translocative is indicated by the preposition dx^m?al 'to, toward'.

20. dəğ^maš ti ləbetulqid dx^m?al ti ĩuiqs.

Put the wool in the box.

dəğ^maš ti ləbetulqid dx^m?al ti ĩuiqs
1 2 3 4 5 6

1 put-in	4 to
2 article	5 article
3 wool	6 box

3.2.2

The Cowichan forms are parallel to the Skagit. The instrumental prefix is used when the adjunct head is interpreted as standing in a locative relationship to the relative clause which modifies it.

21. *ni ʔaməsəamʔs ʔə zə x̣əəm niʔ ṣ(s)ənʔiwʔs kʷəə seyʔ.*⁷

Come give me the box the wool is in.

(hə)mʔi ʔaməst-Samʔs ʔə zə x̣əəm niʔ ṣ-s-hənʔiwʔ-s kʷəə seyʔ
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13

1 come	7 nonproximal
2 give	8 instrumental
3 me	9 static
4 oblique	10 be-in (resultative of <u>newʔ</u> "in")
5 article	11 third possessive
6 box	12 article
	13 wool

This compares to the following independent sentence, where the locative is introduced by the oblique preposition ʔə.

22. *niʔ ʔə sənʔiwʔ kʷəə seyʔ ʔə kʷəə x̣əəm.*

Is the wool in the box?

niʔ ʔə s-hənʔiwʔ kʷəə seyʔ ʔə kʷəə x̣əəm
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

1 nonproximal	6 wool
2 question	7 oblique
3 static	8 article
4 be-in	9 box
5 wool	

Similarly, when the relationship between an adjunct head and a relative clause is translocative, the instrumental is used.

23. *niʔ ʔəncə kʷəə x̣əəm niʔ ʔənʔšnewʔəš kʷəə seyʔ.*

Where is the box you put the wool in?

ni? ?əncə kʷə ʔə ʔəəm ni? ?ən?-š-nəwʔəš kʷə ʔə sey?
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

1 nonproximal	6 your (sg.)
2 be-where	7 instrumental
3 article	8 put-in
4 box	9 article
5 nonproximal	10 wool

This may be compared with the following independent sentence.

24. nəwʔəš zə sey? ?ə zə ʔəəm.

Put the wool in the box.

nəwʔəš zə sey? ?ə zə ʔəəm
 1 2 3 4 5 6

1 put-in	4 oblique
2 article	5 article
3 wool	6 box

3.3 Summary

In both Cowichan and Skagit the instrumental prefix is used when the adjunct head is interpreted as standing in one of three relationships to a relative clause which modifies it: instrumental, locative or translocative. That these languages should show this formal parallel can hardly be attributed to mere coincidence. There is no reason *a priori* to expect instrumentals and locatives to follow the same pattern. One would expect, in fact, instrumentals to pattern like oblique objects, since they are formally identical in independent clauses, both oblique adjuncts and instrumentals being preceded by the preposition ?ə.

4. An Explanation

Only the direct grammatical relations of subject and goal are expressible without nominalizers in the relative clause.

This is a fact that requires an explanation, and any natural explanation should somehow link this with the fact that only direct relations are expressible within the person system.

One hypothesis, which we tentatively suggest here, is that only subject and goal relations are relativizeable. Our claim is that relativization in these languages involves co-referentiality between an adjunct head and an element of the person system (subject or goal). This state of affairs is not particularly surprising since these languages exhibit no relative pronouns, so oblique relations would not be recoverable if relativization were a simple deletion rule, where any relative clause adjunct could be transformationally deleted by identity with the adjunct head.

Running counter to this claim is the fact that various oblique relations are expressible in relative clause constructions by means of nominalizing prefixes. We suggest that these prefixes are immediate constituents at the lexical, not the clausal, level and that syntactically the understood relationship between an adjunct head and a relative clause is that of subject. Consider the following construction involving the predicate qada 'steal' in Skagit.

25. ?uqada ti stubš ?e ci?i? sladey?.

The man stole the woman.

?u-qada ti stubš ?e ci?i? sladey?
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

1	completive	5	oblique
2	steal	6	article
3	article	7	woman
4	man		

This predicate may also be nominalized as sqada and this may, in turn, function predicatively.

26. *tusqada ci sšadey?*

The woman was stolen.

tu-s-qada ci sšadey?
1 2 3 4 5

1 remote	4 article
2 s- nom.	5 woman
3 steal	

Note that in this case the subject is the patient, while in (25) the subject was the agent and the patient was an oblique object.

Given these two constructions, it seems plausible to say that in both of the following sentences the adjunct head is interpreted as the subject of the relative clause which modifies it.

27. *?u?eydx^m čed ti stubš tugada ?e ci sšadey?*

I found the man who stole the woman.

?u-?eydx^m čed ti stubš tu-qada ?e ci sšadey?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

1 completive	6 remote
2 find	7 steal
3 I	8 oblique
4 article	9 article
5 man	10 woman

28. *?u?eydx^m čed ci sšadey? tusqada ?e ti stubš.*

I found the woman whom the man stole.

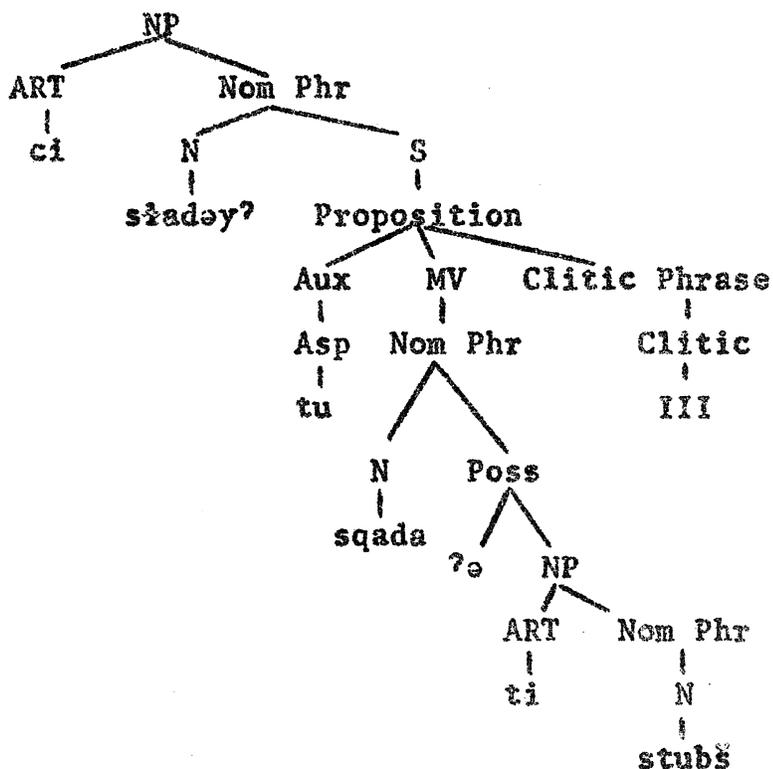
?u-?eydx^m čed ci sšadey? tu-s-qada ?e ti stubš
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

1 completive	7 s- nom.
2 find	8 steal
3 I	9 oblique (possessive here)
4 article	10 article
5 woman	11 man
6 remote	

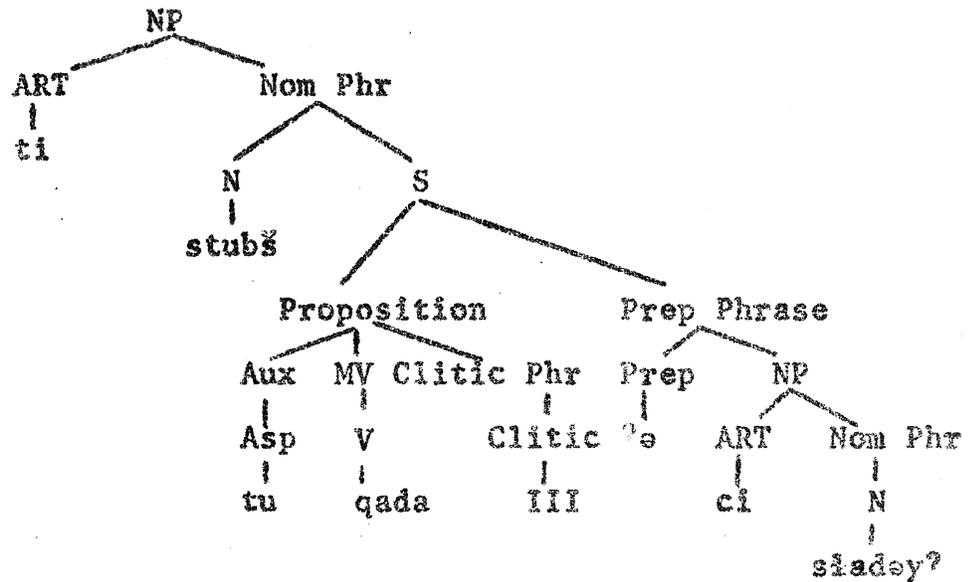
The relative clause of (27) is interpreted in the sense of (25), with stubš as its understood subject, while the relative clause of (28) is interpreted in the sense of (26), with sładəy? as its subject. In (28), we view the predicate as complex, including the possessive phrase ?ə ti stubš 'of the man'.

We hesitate to diagram these relations, as we are currently reviewing the syntactic base for Skagit, but the following trees accord roughly with the base proposal given by me at the 1974 Salish Conference.

... ci sładəy? tusqada ?ə ti stubš



... ti stubš tuqada ?e ci siadey?



We suggest that this analysis can be generalized to cover other cases where a nominalizing prefix occurs in relative clauses, so that such relative clauses consist of a nominal phrase occurring predicatively within the relative clause and the adjunct head (the N node circled in the diagrams above) is coreferential with the understood subject of the relative clause (the circled clitic in the diagrams above).⁸

Footnotes:

- 1 Lushootseed examples were elicited from Louise George, a speaker of the Skagit dialect living in Everson, Washington. Halkomelem (Cowichan) examples were elicited from Ellen White of Nanaimo (originally from the Kuper Island area) and from Ruby Peter of Cowichan proper. Strictly speaking, our discussion is confined to the dialects examined.
- 2 The reader may substitute the phrase "ubiquitous s" for "s- nominalizer" throughout this work if the latter phrase seems too heavily laden with linguistic implications.
- 3 Since a one-word predicate may function as a clause in these languages, a minimal relative clause may be a predicate which is attributive to a preceding adjunct head.
 Limiting the discussion to cases involving an adjunct head is somewhat artificial. To the best of my knowledge, given a construction of the following form:
 article - head - Relative Clause
 one can predict that the following is also grammatical:
 article - Relative Clause.
- 4 See Hilbert and Hess (1975) for a discussion of the preposition ?ə in Lushootseed.

- 5 I take the first and second singular goal suffixes to be -Sam[?]š and -Same, where S represents an element which combines with transitive -t to produce /ə/.
- 6 Cognate forms exist in Lushootseed, however they do not occur in this particular construction.
- 7 The static s- prefix of š(s)ən[?]iw[?]s elides in normal speech, although I detect it in deliberate speech.
- 8 My position, that the s- and instrumental prefixes are in construction with the relative clause predicate at the lexical level is empirically strong and can be verified, although I have not yet had the opportunity to do so. If these prefixes shift to adverbs or other elements modifying the lexical predicate, this would constitute a counterexample. A weaker hypothesis is that these prefixes are in construction with the predicate phrase.