

Noun and Verb in Salishan

Thom Hess
University of Victoria

Jan van Eijk
Mount Currie

0. Introduction. In recent years several linguists have claimed that Salish languages make no distinction between 'noun' and 'verb'.¹ However, at least two widely disparate languages most certainly do distinguish verb from noun morphologically. These are Lillooet of the Interior branch and Lushootseed of the Central Coast. There are two facets of the morphology in these languages which clearly establish a noun-verb dichotomy; these are presented in section 1. In section 2 we discuss predicates and complements showing that both nouns and verbs serve as heads for either of these syntactic constructions. Arguments that have been raised against the noun-verb distinction on the morphological level are refuted in section 3. In 4 the principal points of the paper are summarized.

1. Morphological opposition between 'noun' and 'verb' in Lillooet and Lushootseed. Using the term 'stem' for any word that can be subjected to reduplication and/or affixation,² we may divide Lillooet and Lushootseed stems into two partially overlapping classes, (1) transitive and intransitive stems, and (2) nominal and verbal stems (nouns and verbs). In both languages, transitive stems are always marked by an overt transitivity marker (i.e., a transitivity suffix), such as -ən and -an' in Lillooet q'əl-ən "to cook, roast, bake smt.", ?áçx-ən "to see smt.", káx-an' "to dry smt.", and -(ə)d in Lushootseed q'əl-d "cook smt.", yác-əd "tell smt.", šába-d "dry smt." Transitive stems are the only ones that can take pronominal object suffixes. (See section 2 for subject and object marking).

Intransitive stems (i.e., stems that do not have a transitivity marker) do not take object suffixes. Intransitive stems fall into three morphological types:

(1) Those marked as verbal, i.e., stems with an intransitivity marker (intransitivity suffix). Here belong Lillooet q'əl-əm "to cook, roast, bake smt.", ?íx-əm "to sing", ?áçx-əm "to see smt.", káx-xal "to dry smt." The suffixes -əm and -xal are intransitivity markers.³ Some Lushootseed examples are q'əl-b "cook, roast, bake smt.", yác-əb "tell smt.", šáb-əb "dry smt.", with the intransitivity marker -(ə)b.

(2) Stems marked as nominal which are those with the nominalizing prefix s-: Here belong Lillooet s-qayx "man", s-q'əm "mountain", s-yap "tree", and Lushootseed s-k'uy "mother", s-bádil "mountain", s-čútč "halibut".

(3) Unmarked stems, i.e., those with neither an intransitivity marker nor s-: these comprise on the one hand nouns and on the other intransitive verbs (corresponding semantically to English intransitive verbs, adjectives and numerals), e.g., Lillooet q'əl "(to be) ripe, done, cooked", káx "(to be) dry", ?áçx "(to be) seen", ?áma "(to be) good", pála? "(to be) one", tmix "land", q'u? "water", citx "house"; and Lushootseed q'əl "(be) ripe", šáb "(be) dry", sáli? "(be) two", bád "father", q'u? "water", ?ál'al "house".

Marked and unmarked intransitive verbs may themselves become nominalized, e.g. Lillooet s-q'əl "berry, fruit", s-q'əl-əm "cooked, baked, roasted food (esp. roasted salmon)", s-?íx-əm "song", Lushootseed s-q'əl-b "smt. baked", s-yác-əb "news".⁴

Thus in both languages there are transitive stems (all overtly marked and all verbal) and intransitive stems (marked and unmarked; verbal and nominal). The various possibilities are summed up in the following charts:

Lillooet (see next page)

Lillooet

		Marked		Unmarked		
Trans.	q'əl-ən "to cook smt."	?áçx-ən "to see smt."				Verbs
	káx-an' "to dry smt."					
Intransitive	q'əl-əm "to cook smt."	?áçx-əm "to see"	q'əl "ripe, done"	?áçx "seen"	káx "dry"	Verbs
	?íx-əm "to see"	káx-xal "to dry smt."	?áma "good"	pála? "one"		
	s-qayx "man"	s-q'əm "mountain"	tmix "land"	q'u? "water"		Nouns
	s-yap "tree"	s-q'əl-əm "smt. cooked"	citx "house"			
s-q'əl "berry, fruit"	s-?íx-əm "song"					

Lushoots.

		Marked		Unmarked		
Trans.	q'əl-d "cook smt."	yác-əd "tell smt."				Verbs
	šába-d "dry smt."					
Intransitive	q'əl-b "cook smt."	yác-əb "tell smt."	q'əl "ripe"	?šátəd "eat"		Verbs
	šáb-əb "dry smt."		šab "dry"	sáli? "two"		
	s-k'uy "mother"	s-bádil "mountain"	bád "father"	q'u? "water"		Nouns
	s-čútč "halibut"	s-q'əl-b "smt. baked"	?ál'al "house"			
s-yác-əb "news"	s-?šátəd "food"					

One important difference between nouns and (intransitive and transitive) verbs in both Lillooet and Lushootseed is that nouns can take possessive affixes, while verbs cannot. Hence, from Lillooet tmix "land" and s-?íx-əm "song" we derive n-tmix "my (n-) land" and n-s-?íx-əm "my song"; but we can not combine possessive affixes with ?íx-əm or any other verb. Likewise, from Lushootseed bád "father" and s-?šátəd "food" are derived d-bád "my (d-) father" and d-s-?šátəd "my food", but *d-?šátəd from ?šátəd "eat" does not exist.

A second clear difference between noun and verb in the morphology of these two languages is marked by aspectual operations. Aspectual operations are limited to those stems that, according to the criteria given above, are verbs (i.e. stems that do not take possessive affixes); nouns do not allow these operations, although a verbal stem with an aspectual marker may at a higher level of derivation be nominalized.

In Lillooet, aspectual operations comprise, among others, so-called final reduplication (expressing an ongoing process, as in pút-ət "(to be) boiling", from the root pút- "to get boiled"). Another aspectual operation is the addition of the stative prefix s-, as in s-pút "boiled" (= "to be in a boiled state"): N.B., the stative prefix s- must not be confused with the nominalizer s-: s-pút is not a noun and does not take possessive markers. In Lushootseed, there is a high frequency class of five aspectual prefixes bound to transitive and intransitive verb stems but never to noun stems. Three examples from

this class are ʔəsʔitut "asleep" (stative), ʔuʔitut "fell asleep, slept" (punctual), and ʔəsʔitut "being moved while sleeping" (progressive state).⁵

2. Morphosyntax: predicates and complements. The noun-verb distinction, which is so important on the morphological level in Lillooet and Lushootseed, is irrelevant on the syntactic level. Both languages have a set of person markers for subject which are suffixes in Lillooet but clitics in Lushootseed. By combining a stem with a subject marker, a preposition (or sentence-word) is formed. In Lillooet the same suffixes occur with nouns and intransitive verbs:

- (a) sqayxʷ-kan "I (-kan) am a man (sqayxʷ)" (predication based on noun)
 (b) nkʷap-kan "I am a coyote (nkʷap)" (predication based on noun)
 (c) ʔak-kan "I go (ʔak)" (predication based on verb)
 (d) qʷəŋqʷánt-kan "I am poor (qʷəŋqʷánt)" (predication based on verb)

The third person singular has no overt marker:

- (e) sqayxʷ "he is a man"
 (f) nkʷap "it is a coyote"
 (g) ʔak "he goes"
 (h) qʷəŋqʷánt "he is poor"

The object suffixes of the Lillooet transitive paradigm precede the subject suffixes; and in this paradigm as opposed to the intransitive one there is an overt marker for third person singular object, namely -as. Contrast (i) and (j):

- (i) núkʷʔ-an-c-as "he helped (núkʷʔ-) me" (-an transitivizer, -c first singular object, -as third singular transitive subject)
 (j) núkʷʔ-an-as "he helped him" (-as third singular transitive subject; third singular object suffix (expected before -as) is zero).

In Lushootseed, on the other hand, the subject clitics are the same with both transitives and intransitives; and there is no third person singular clitic for either (except in the dependent clause where as (cognate with Lillooet as of the transitive paradigm) indicates third person in both).

- (a-1) stúbš ʔəd "I (ʔəd) am a man (stúbš)"
 (e-1) stúbš "he is a man"
 (c-1) ʔúxʷ ʔəd "I go"
 (g-1) ʔúxʷ "he goes"
 (i-1) kʷáxʷ-a-c "he helps me" (-c ← -t "transitive" plus -s "me")
 (j-1) kʷáxʷ-a-d "he helps him" (-d ← -t when final)

In both languages a predicate with a third person object or subject can combine with an article to serve as an object or subject complement to another predicate, and this latter can have as its head constituent a noun. (In the following examples, the Lillooet article is a composite construction consisting of ti. and an obligatory reinforcing enclitic .a).

Lillooet	Lushootseed	Glosses for both languages
(k) ʔak ti.nkʷáp.a	ʔúxʷ ti.sbiáw	"the coyote goes"
(l) nkʷap ti.ʔak.a	sbiáw ti.ʔúxʷ	"it is a coyote that goes"
(m) núkʷʔ-an-c-as ti.sqayxʷ.a	kʷáxʷ-a-c ti.stúbš	"the man helped me"
(n) sqayxʷ ti.núkʷʔ-an-c-ás.a	stúbš ti.kʷáxʷ-a-c	"it is a man who helped me"

The sentences (a)-(n) show that on the syntactic level the difference between noun and verb is irrelevant, because both nouns and verbs can be the head constituent of either a predicate or a complement. Note particularly Lillooet sentence (n). The complement has an overtly marked subject suffix -as based on the predicate in (m), which strongly suggests that ti.nkʷáp.a and ti.ʔak.a in (k) and (l) are not merely based on the stems nkʷap and ʔak but rather that these complements too are based on full predicates, namely nkʷap "he is a coyote" and ʔak "he goes".⁶

3. Counter-arguments. There is a general consensus among Salishists that the labels 'noun' and 'verb' have no meaning on the syntactic level. However, some Salishists also

object to the idea of a noun-verb dichotomy on the morphological level. Arguments against a noun-verb distinction follow:

(1) The difference between 'noun' and 'verb' (i.e. between stems that take possessive affixes and those that do not) is semantically conditioned. For example, one does not combine Lillooet ʔixʷ-əm "to sing" with possessive affixes, because ʔixʷ-əm refers to an action, something that is considered to be semantically incompatible with the notion of possession (in contrast to s-ʔixʷ-əm "song"). As we shall see under point (5) below, possessive affixes in Salishan are compatible with the notion of an action. But the semantic objection also fails to invalidate the noun-verb dichotomy for inherent reasons. We may either state that there is a morphological (i.e., formal) difference between nouns and verbs, which is paralleled on the semantic plane, or (conversely) that there is a semantic difference between nouns and verbs that is mapped onto the morphological plane. To chalk up the morphological difference between nouns and verbs to semantic factors and then declare these semantic factors to be null and void is dabbling in voodoo linguistics.⁷

The above objection seems to confuse the difference between combinations that are semantically odd and those that are grammatically wrong. For instance, "green ideas" is semantically odd, but grammatically correct, while "furiously ideas" is grammatically wrong (and as a result, semantically neither odd nor normal, but completely incomprehensible). In Salishan, combinations of, say, Lillooet ʔixʷ-əm or Lushootseed ʔstəd plus possessive affixes are not just semantically odd, but grammatically completely incorrect (i.e., such combinations would be completely incomprehensible to the native speakers of these languages; referring to Black (1972:39-40), we could say that the reaction to such combinations would be "I can't believe my ears!", while the reaction to a merely semantically odd utterance would be: "Why do you say that?").

(2) Certain word-building rules operate on both nouns and verbs, i.e., they intersect with the boundary between nouns and verbs as is has been established in section 2. (In other words, the difference between 'noun' and 'verb' is irrelevant for the application of some word-building rules.) Thus, in Lillooet, Lushootseed, and in most - if not all - Salish languages there is so-called full reduplication (or total reduplication) which echoes the first two consonants of a root, be it nominal or verbal. In nouns this reduplication generally expresses plurality or collectivity while in verbs it conveys repetition or intensity. (These concepts, plurality/collectivity and repetition/intensity, belong to the same semantic continuum which could be labeled augmentative.) Lillooet examples:

- (a) s-núkʷ-aʔ "friend, relative" (noun) → s-nəkʷ-núkʷ-aʔ "friends, relatives"
 (b) s-yap "tree" (noun) → s-yəp-yáp "trees"
 (c) túpuŋ "to punch smb." (verb) → təp-túpuŋ "to beat smb. up"
 (d) cíqin "to stab smb." (verb) → cəq-cíqin "to stab smb. all over"

Lushootseed examples:

- (e) s-čstxʷəd "black bear" (noun) → s-čst-čstxʷəd "black bears"
 (f) ʔálʔal "house" (noun) → ʔál-ʔalʔal "houses"
 (g) sáqʷ "fly" (verb) → sáqʷ-sáqʷ "flying all about"
 (h) ʔúluʔ "travel by water" (verb) → ʔú-ʔúluʔ "move residence"

Since full reduplication and other operations are applicable to both nouns and verbs, Demers and Jelinek (1984) claim that there is no distinction between nouns and verbs.⁸ We do not accept this claim. It is quite normal for languages to have intersecting boundaries between operations without these boundaries invalidating each other. Consider such English suffixes as -ize and -ish. The former is bound to adjectives like vocal, tender, and social, but also to a noun like woman. Similarly, -ish is attached to numerals and adjectives, e.g., sixish, greenish, and also to nouns, e.g., womanish, girlish, boyish. The class-free applicability of a few such affixes does not, however, gainsay the existence of the classes themselves.⁹

(3) The aspectual operations (as discussed in section 1) are usually not all applicable to all verbal stems. For instance, Lillooet allows final reduplication on many, but not all verbal stems; the same holds true for the stative prefix s-. One could argue then that, besides noun-verb, there is also a class which takes final reduplication vs. one

that takes no final reduplication (or one that takes s- vs. one that does not take s-). This argument is valid, but it does not diminish in any way the aspectual argument in favor of a distinction noun-verb. Aspectual operations are class-bound (in contrast to, say, total reduplication, see point (2)), and together the aspectual operations serve to mark off verbs from nouns.

(4) According to some linguists, the terms 'noun' and 'verb' are too burdened with philosophical connotations to be useful. Moreover, nouns and verbs in one (type of) language often behave differently from nouns and verbs in another (type of) language. It is therefore better to do away with the words 'noun' and 'verb' and create new terms like 'pleenk' and 'ploork' instead. This argument has little merit. Lillooet and Lushootseed nouns and verbs do not pattern so radically different from, say, Indo-European nouns and verbs that it is necessary or even helpful to coin special terms for them. The last thing that linguistics needs is another set of strange and redundant terms, especially at a time when many linguistic publications already use a terminology that by comparison makes "Jabberwocky" a marvel of perspicacity.¹⁰

(5) Salishan languages allow the use of s- (the nominalizer discussed in section 1) to form so-called factuals, or factualized constructions. These factuals form clauses with glosses like "the fact of my, your, etc. doing smt., being smt.". As a rule, factuals based on intransitive stems take possessive markers to refer to the pronominal subject, while transitive factuals take markers that exclusively express "subject". In Lillooet we have, on the basis of the word for "to sing":

- (a) ?ixəm "to sing" (intransitive verb)
 (b) s-?ixəm "song" (nominalizer form = noun) → n-s-?ixəm "my song"
 (c) n-s-?ixəm "the fact of my singing" (factualized form with n- referring to the subject).

One may argue that forms with the nominalizer s- are nothing but factuals (in other words that s- is no nominalizer at all). The form n-s-?ixəm in (b) is indeed identical to n-s-?ixəm in (c). However, Lillooet allows a "complex" paradigm using wa? "to be (busy with, involved in)", which corresponds to the English progressive tense. In this complex paradigm there is a clear difference between nouns and factuals:

- (d) wa? ?ixəm "to be singing"
 (e) wa? n-s-?ixəm "to be my song" (in complement-form ti.wa?ən-s-?ixəm "that which is my song"; the dropping of ə after wa? is regular).
 (f) nswa?ixəm "the fact of my being busy singing" (with wa?, in the shape wa, combined with n- and s- into one proclitic construction; this construction also has the complement-form tənswa?ixəm, with tə a remnant of ti). Note the difference between the nominal construction in (e) and the factual construction in (f).

In the pertinent points, Lushootseed subordinate clauses are constructed like Lillooet factuals. At any rate, however one analyses the nominalizer s-, one still has cases of unmarked nouns (like Lillooet tmix "land", Lushootseed bád "father".)

4. Summing-up. As we have seen in sections 1-2, there is a clear morphological difference between nouns and verbs in Lillooet and Lushootseed (and probably in most Salishan languages), in that nouns, but not verbs, take possessive affixes, while on the other hand verbs, but not nouns, may undergo aspectual operations. On the syntactic level the difference between nouns and verbs is irrelevant since (a) both nouns and verbs may combine with subject markers into predications (the subject markers not being formally differentiated for nouns or verbs), and (b) nouns and verbs may occur both in predicates and in complements. Hence, 'noun' and 'verb' are strictly morphological terms with no syntactic relevance. Attempts to explain away the morphological difference between nouns and verbs fail, at least for Lillooet and Lushootseed.

NOTES.

1. See Kuipers 1968, Kinkade 1976, Thompson and Thompson 1980, Demers and Jelinek 1982, Kinkade 1983, Demers and Jelinek 1984. For a discussion of word-classes in Wakashan, geographically adjacent to Salishan, see Jacobsen 1976.

2. Reduplication and affixation are productive processes in most Salish languages. Certain words (mainly particles) do not allow these processes, however.

3. The difference between an intransitive verb like ?áçx-əm "to see" and transitive ?áçx-ən "to see smb." is, as is indicated in section 1, that ?áçx-ən takes object suffixes, but ?áçx-əm does not (hence we have ?áçx-ən-cí-íkan 'I (-íkan) see you (-cí)', while *?áçx-əm-cí-íkan is excluded).

4. Not all nouns with the nominalizer s- are paralleled by forms without s-. For instance, there is no *qayx corresponding to s-qayx "man". Various derivations p:we, however, that in cases like s-qayx we do have the nominalizer s-: it does not belong to the root. In the case of s-qayx we have the total reduplication s-qáyqayx "men" (Total reduplication always involves the first two consonants of the root, but never involves prefixes).

5. One of these -as-/ʔas- is cognate with the Lillooet stative s-. See Hess and Hilbert 1978:99-103 for a discussion of these prefixes.

6. A more precise translation for the complements in (k) and (m) would in fact be "the one who is a coyote" and "the one who is a man" (because such translations would show that here the complements are based on predicates and not just on stems).

7. See also Hjelmslev (1970:92): "The semantic form is not distinct from the language; on the contrary, it is an important part of the language itself". Another remark from the same author (Hjelmslev 1973:111): "That the content substance should necessarily be more immaterial than the expression substance is pure delusion, but a wide-spread delusion having its roots far back in an arbitrary division into the physical and the psychic, which stems from antiquity and the Middle Ages".

8. Demers and Jelinek limit their discussion to Lummi ("...the lack of a noun-verb distinction in Lummi syntax is supported by the evidence from derivational morphology" - p. 48). However, in Lillooet and Lushootseed (where the morphological facts are for all practical purposes the same as in Lummi), the derivational morphology does not vitiate the distinction between nouns and verbs.

9. Demers and Jelinek do note that "...the -ing suffix which can be added freely to English verbs to form gerunds and participles, can also be added to nouns within a restricted semantic domain. It is used, for example, to form words such as flooring from floor, roofing from roof, carpeting from carpet, and so forth. The -ing added to nouns carries with it the notion of "material used for" and thus the nouns must be members of a particular narrow semantic field." (p. 47). These remarks do not change the fact that in English the suffix -ing operates on both verbs and nouns, without invalidating the noun-verb distinction.

10. Jespersen (1965:343) writes: "It would evidently be utterly impracticable to throw the whole traditional nomenclature overboard and create a totally new one".

REFERENCES.

- Black, M. 1972. The Labyrinth of Language. Pelican Books.
 Demers, R. A., and E. Jelinek. 1982. "The Syntactic Functions of Person Marking in Lummi". Pp. 24-47 of the preprints to the 17th ICSNL.
 —. 1984. "Word-building Rules and Grammatical Categories of Lummi". Pp. 39-49 of the preprints to the 19th ICSNL. Working Papers of the Linguistic Circle of the University of Victoria.
 Hess, T. M., and V. Hilbert, Taqʷəšblu. 1978. Lushootseed 2. Daybreak Star Press. Seattle.
 Hjelmslev, L. 1970. "The Content Form of Language as a Social Factor". Pp. 89-95 of Essais Linguistiques. Travaux du Cercle Linguistique de Copenhague, Vol. XII. Nordisk Sprog- og Kulturforlag.
 —. 1973. "A Causerie on Linguistic Theory". Pp. 101-118 of Essais Linguistiques II.

- Travaux du Cercle Linguistique de Copenhague, Vol. XIV. Nordisk Sprog- og Kulturforlag.
- Jacobsen, W. H., Jr. 1979. "Noun and Verb in Nootkan". Pp. 83-115 of The Victoria Conference on Northwestern Languages, Victoria, British Columbia, November 4/5, 1976. (B. S. Efrat, ed.). British Columbia Provincial Museum.
- Jespersen, O. 1965. The Philosophy of Grammar. W. W. Norton and Company Inc. (Originally published in 1924).
- Kinkade, M. D. 1976. "The Copula and Negatives in Inland Olympic Salish". Pp. 17-23 of IJAL 42.
- . 1983. "Salish Evidence Against the Universality of 'Noun' and 'Verb'". Pp. 25-40 of Lingua 60.
- Kuipers, A. H. 1968. "The Categories Verb-Noun and Transitive-Intransitive in English and Squamish". Pp. 610-626 of Lingua 21.
- Thompson, L. C., and M. T. Thompson. 1980. "Thompson Salish //xi-//". Pp. 27-32 of IJAL 46.