An Initial Study of Some Adjectival Modifiers in Upper Chehalis

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Upper Chehalis Salish is shown to have a class of adjectives, identifiable on both morphological and syntactic bases. However, the use of determiners with adjectives appears inconsistent, although the most common (and expected) order is determiner - adjective - noun. A classification scheme is presented to help sort out this order and other variants. Proposals for further work on determiner and adjective usage in the language are suggested.

1 Introduction

What follows is a beginning at describing the use of modifiers in Upper Chehalis. The data considered here are strictly limited to descriptive adjectives, although occasional remarks may be made about other modifiers, such as quantifiers, demonstratives, and adverbs. These categories need further study to achieve an overall understanding of the use of modifiers in Upper Chehalis.

The data here are drawn strictly from texts collected in 1927 by Franz Boas from Jonas Secena, a recognized raconteur.[1] They are texts based on a single myth character, the Upper Chehalis trickster, X̣ʷənéx̣ʷənè. Stories by various narrators use different versions of this name: X̣ʷəní, X̣ʷə́ni, and X̣ʷə́n. The main text is a very long narrative, called by Boas "Adventures of X̣ʷənéx̣ʷənè". This source is supplemented by three shorter texts about X̣ʷənéx̣ʷənè, in one of which he is called X̣ʷəní, and another that is a prelude to the long myth, and X̣ʷəní is not named. Boas's manuscripts do not specifically attribute these four shorter stories to Jonas Secena, but evidence within the texts suggests that he is the source. Data from one speaker only were used so as not to complicate matters by possible idiolect or dialect differences, and yet to provide a large body of data from which to extract modifiers.

As stated, descriptive adjectives alone are considered here; this is for both syntactic and semantic reasons. The meanings of non-descriptive adjectives often appear to overlap in complex ways, and some often occur in different syntactic patterns from descriptive adjectives. These await further study, although I have extracted most of the relevant data (i.e. sentences and clauses in which they occur). Among the adjectival modifiers not included here are 'some', 'many', cardinal numerals, determiners and demonstratives, 'every', 'all', 'both', 'other', 'another', 'much', 'first' (etc.), 'this', 'that', or 'these'. No equivalents were found for 'each', 'few', 'most', 'no', or 'none'; some of these absences will not surprise anyone studying this category of words in Salish. 'Those' is also absent from these texts, undoubtedly because of its infrequency, and 'this' and 'that' were excluded because they are often expressed by simple articles (hereafter called determiners).

Adverbs are not considered here for several reasons: the syntax of some is not yet understood; more data on adverbs (and more adverbs) need to be extracted from texts; and some

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[1]The Boas texts in Upper Chehalis can be found in the American Philosophical Society Library in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. They are written out fully in Upper Chehalis, and are glossed, but not translated. Translations given here are my own, based on Boas's glosses and my familiarity with the language. The texts used are, specifically, "Adventures of X̣ʷənéx̣ʷənè," "X̣ʷənéx̣ʷənè and Crane", "X̣ʷənéx̣ʷənè and Witch," "X̣ʷəní and Rock" (note the shortening of the name), and what Boas calls "Before the Moon Story". These are, respectively, about 200 notebook pages in the Boas original (between 100 and 120 pages in the line-verse-act format that I use, following the work of Dell Hymes), 27 pages in my format, 10 pages, 5 pages, and just over 2 pages in length. The "Adventures of X̣ʷənéx̣ʷənè" myth appears to be a fusion of two distinct myth cycles, the first partly analogous to the Lushootseed Dúkʷibał stories, and the second part to the Lushootseed "Star Child" myth. The X̣ʷənéx̣ʷənè portion concerns the activities of a trickster, the second portion tells of the transformer "Moon". At least until recently, X̣ʷəní stories were still known, but disapproved of by some because of his frequent sexually disapproved activities.

Other versions (not used here for data) of the long story exist in English (Jackson 1906, Adamson 1934). A number of short X̣ʷəní stories exist in Upper Chehalis, including others collected by Boas from other speakers, and one he got from Jonas Secena that is properly part of the long text; some I collected in 1960 and 1961 from Silas Heck (these include a shorter version of the X̣ʷənéx̣ʷənè and Moon text and one short story about X̣ʷə́n); and short versions of the X̣ʷənéx̣ʷənè and Moon text told to Leon Metcalf by Murphy Secena and Silas Heck. Very few of the stories in English in Palmer (1925) correspond to X̣ʷəní in the other sources, and may properly be Nisqually Dúkʷibał stories.

occur occasionally following determiners, and may in these cases have to be considered to be adjectives (or even arguments). There is a tendency for the more interesting adverbs to occur clause-initial.

Adjectives, like other word classes in Salish, are subject to shifting from one class to another for various syntactic reasons. My reason for presenting this limited description of some adjectives in Upper Chehalis is that there has not been a great deal written on adjective usage in Salish overall (although determiners and quantifiers are treated thoroughly for some languages in Matthewson 1998, Demirdache, et al. 1994, and a few other places), and good information can be found on adjectives in the standard grammars of some Salishan languages (e.g. Kuipers 1967:175ff., Thompson and Thompson 1992:161ff., Vogt 1940:42ff., etc.). Adverbs are treated more widely. Adjectives are given less specific treatment because the are a subcategory of verbs, and are not often looked at in their noun modifying function.

2 Adjectives as a word class in Upper Chehalis

At the very least, adjectives can be viewed as a subclass of predicates, as in other Salishan languages. However, they do have at least two qualities that set them apart. (a) There is a special plural suffix -*ti* that occurs on some adjectives. It is not clear how widely this suffix can be used, but it is found exclusively on members of the class of words equivalent to adjectives in English. Examples can be seen below in sentences 3, 13, and 15. (b) These words occur between a determiner (or where one would expect a determiner) and a following noun. Even though the use of determiners in Upper Chehalis is poorly understood, the class is easily recognizable. Their patterning is superficially simple, and is so described in Boas (1934:103-104) and Kinkade (1964:258-259). Their actual use in texts is quite complicated, however, and needs more study. In particular, one member of the set (*?it*) is the usual marker of a perfective verb, although other determiners can also occur in this position, and *?it* can function elsewhere as a regular determiner. Most problematic is *t* (and its feminine counterpart *c*), which both Boas and I labelled 'indefinite article'; reading of texts shows that this is clearly an inadequate label, and it needs further study.

An additional problem with Upper Chehalis determiners is that all the non-feminine ones (but not the demonstrative adjectives 'this', 'that', etc.) end in *t*, and Boas frequently missed hearing this *t* (a problem that has plagued researchers of other Salishan languages as well). This being the case, it is often impossible to know if the "indefinite" article *t* is absent, or was simply not heard. There are enough instances in the texts that lack a determiner, specifically *t*, before a noun or adjective-noun sequence that constructions without a determiner must be considered as real, and require an explanation (which I cannot give).

3 Classification of syntactic constructions in which adjectives occur

I have developed a classification of determiner - adjective - noun use, shown in Table 1, in order to see clearly the instances in which a determiner is absent before an adjective - noun sequence. This is a position where a determiner would be expected in Upper Chehalis, because determiners are nearly always used before nouns in this language. Their absence requires explanation, as well as their use following an adjective or both before and after one.

The organization of Table 1 is based on three things:
a) the use as adjectives as main predicates
b) the use of adjectives in noun phrases which are arguments, direct or oblique
c) the presence or absence of determiners before (or after) adjectives
Table 1 follows.

1. PREDICATIVE	2
2. PREDICATIVE WITHOUT A LEXICAL ARGUMENT	1
3. FOCUS + WI + PREDICATIVE WITHOUT ANOTHER LEXICAL ARGUMENT	2
10. PREDICATIVE + DET + N (SUBJECT)	8
11. PREDICATIVE + DET + ADJ + N (SUBJECT)	+
12. FOCUS + WI + PREDICATIVE + DET + N (SUBJECT)	2

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20. <u>PREDICATIVE + N</u> (NO DET)	7
21. *<u>PREDICATIVE + DET + ADJ + N</u> (NO DET BEFORE PREDICATIVE)	*
22. <u>FOCUS + WI + PREDICATIVE + N</u> (NO DET BEFORE PREDICATIVE)	11
23. <u>ʔacwé·x + DET + ADJ + N</u>	4
30. <u>ADJECTIVE → N</u> (with DET)	ca. 29
40. <u>DET + ADJ + N AS SUBJECT</u>	8
41. <u>ADJ + N AS SUBJECT</u>	2
42. *<u>DET + ADJ + DET + N AS SUBJECT</u>	*
43. <u>DET + ADJ + FOCUSSED N SUBJECT + WI + PREDICATE...</u>	1
44. *<u>ADJ + FOCUSSED N SUBJECT + WI + PREDICATE...</u>	*
50. <u>DET + ADJ + N AS DIRECT OBJECT</u>	21
51. *<u>ADJ + N AS DIRECT OBJECT</u>	*
52. <u>DET + ADJ + DET + N AS DIRECT OBJECT</u>	1
53. *<u>DET + ADJ + FOCUSSED N OBJECT + WI + PREDICATE...</u>	*
54. <u>ADJ + FOCUSSED N OBJECT + WI + PREDICATE...</u>	+
60. <u>PREP + DET + ADJ + N</u>	32
61. <u>PREP + ADJ + N</u>	2
62. <u>PREP + DET + ADJ + DET + N</u>	1
70. <u>DET + ADJ + ADJ + N</u>	4
71. <u>ADJ + ADJ + N</u>	2
72. <u>DET + ADJ + ADJ + FOCUSSED N + WI + S</u>	1
73. <u>DET + ADJ + DET + ADJ + N</u>	+
74. *<u>ADJ + DET + ADJ + N</u>	*
75. *<u>DET + ADJ + ADJ + DET + N</u>	*
76. *<u>ADJ + ADJ + DET + N</u>	*
77. *<u>DET + ADJ + DET + ADJ + DET + N</u>	*
78. *<u>ADJ + DET + ADJ + DET + N</u>	*
80. <u>N + ADJ ORDER</u>	+
90. <u>ADVERBS</u>	

Table 1. Noun Phrases in Upper Chehalis

In this classification, each decade represents a basically different kind of syntactic construction. Zero through the twenties are all ways of using an adjective as a main predicate in a clause. Type 40 through the 60s, the use of adjectives in a noun phrase that is an argument, do not actually represent different types of adjective usage, but were convenient divisions for me to make in sorting out the many occurrences of adjectives. The 70s, should be like 40 through the 60s, but the occurrence of *two* adjectives in a noun phrase allows for different patterns of determiner usage. 80 is rare; my one instance involves a quantifier. I have reserved the 90s for adverbs (which also sometimes occur following determiners).

Abbreviations in the Table are standard: ADJ = adjective, N = noun, PREP = preposition, and DET = determiner. Both subjects and objects may be focussed by moving them to the beginning

of the clause, adding the copula *wi*, and then proceeding with the sentence, which will be predicate-initial.[2]

Figures are given on the right for the number of instances of each (possible) noun phrase type that includes an adjective; several of these instances within a type are identical strings — a not uncommon sort of thing found in this kind of text. In the numbers of occurrences of each phrase type, an asterisk indicates that no examples were found, while a plus sign indicates that examples were found among quantifiers (which have not yet been examined carefully enough to include them systematically).

4 Examples and comments

Note that most non-occurring phrase types should not even be expected, although some unexpected ones do occur. Type 42 does not occur, and should not be expected, yet the sequence does occur in 52 and 62. The following are examples (sometimes full sentences, sometimes only single clauses) of each occurring type of adjective-noun phrase, with comments where it seems useful. The phrase type from Table 1 is given at the right margin. In a few cases I will give two examples of a phrase type, particularly when that is all there are. I will also give examples with quantifiers if I have identified such types, and if no example with a descriptive adjective is available. I identify examples taken from the short tales as XC for "X̌ʷənéx̌ʷənè and Crane," XW for "X̌ʷənéx̌ʷənè and Witch," XR for "X̌ʷənéx̌ʷənè and Rocks," and BM for the "Before the Moon" story; all other examples come from the long myth. The adjective is in boldface, and relevant determiners are underlined.[3]

(1)   x̌áwas ʔúlax̣i-t-n x̌ʼé[·]š̌[a]x̌š̌, ʔac-k̓ʷál[a]x̌ʷ=iq.   1
         first gather-TR-3SUBJ wood/tree[DMN][PL] ST-hollow[PL]=inside
         First he gathers little sticks, **hollow inside.**

(2)   tʼúqʷitn t núkʷ ɬ tit smáqʷmumš̌ ʔac-x̣ə́pɬ ...   1
         find-TR-3SUBJ DET some OBL DET grass ST-dry
         He finds some **dry** grass ...

These both probably consist of two clauses, with the last word of each (stative aspect verbs in both cases, which are often found used as adjectives) being or beginning the next line of the narrative. Otherwise, they are type 80, a rare construction type.

(3)   x̣ém-ti yawmš̌. XC   2
         heavy-PL 3PL
         They are **heavy.**

(4)   "ʔó·· tit ʔa-kʷanátwiwi wi k̓ʷə́pɬ ʔóʃ·]x̌ʷɬ."   3
         oh DET 2SG.POSS-weapon COP right different[DMN]
         "Oh··, your 'weapon' is very **strange.**"

(5)   "t čʼús ʔə́y ɬ ʔa-sqʷə́lm."   10
         DET always good DET 2SG.POSS-heart
         "Your heart will always be **good.**"

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[2]"Copula" is a simplified label for *wi*, but adequate for present purposes. It can be used in an imperfective form *winn*, which is often nominalized with possessive inflection added. *ʔacwé·x̣* in type 23 is a stative form of *wi* (*ʔac-* 'stative') with a suffixed *x̣* 'definite'; *é·* is the lengthened form of *i*, and usually indicates 'diminutive', but its function in this derivative is unclear. *wi* can also be transitivized, and then means 'have, own' or the like. For examples of its various inflections and derivations see Kinkade (1991:153-154).

[3]The following conventions and abbreviations are used in the example sentences: + separates the parts of a compound word; [ ] surround an infix in Chehalis and follow an English gloss; = precedes a lexical suffix; • marks reduplication; 2SG.POSS = second person singular possessive; 3OBJ = third person object; 3POSS = third person possessive; 3SUBJ = third person subject; APPL = applicative; COP = copula; DEF = definite; DET = determiner, article; DETRANS = detransitive; DISTR = distributive plural; DMN = diminutive; F.DET = feminine determiner; FUT = future; HAB = habitual; IMPF.3PL.SUBJ = imperfective aspect third plural subject; IRR = irrealis; MDL = middle voice; NEG = negative; OBL = oblique (a preposition); PL = plural; PREP = preposition; ST = stative aspect; SUB.PASS = subordinate passive; TR = transitive. There are several kinds of plural in Upper Chehalis; only distributive plural is distinguished here from the others.

The argument in this type is often possessed, but not necessarily so:

(6)   "...qas ʔə́y tanin <u>ʔit</u> šé[·]wɬ." XC   10
        because good now DET road[DMN]
        "...because the trail is **good** now."

(7)   "táxʷl qə́x̣ɬ <u>tit</u> s-cə́niy-as qʷáľɬ, ..."   11
        although many DET S-he/she-3POSS pitchwood
        "Although there is **much of her own** pitchwood, ..."

(8)   wi[4] tit táwɬ sɬánay wi ʔə́y ḷ s-x̣áwqʼ-m-s šaɬ tit nuɬtámš. XW   12
        and DET big woman COP good DET S-talk-MDL-3POSS to DET person
        And the big woman talks **nicely** to the person.

(9)   ƛ̓áq=awq sɬánay̓,   20
        long=leg woman
        She is a **tall** woman,

(10)   wi tit[5] sɬánay̓ wi **táwɬ** sɬánay̓.   22
        and DET woman COP big woman
        And the woman is a **big** woman.

(11)   wi ta[t][6] támš wi časə́kʷ támš; XR   22
        and DET earth COP wild earth
        And this land is **wild** country;

(12)   we ʔac-wé··x̣ ḷ x̣ʷé[·]ľ cá[·]pš. XC   23
        and ST-be-DEF DET small[DMN] stream[DMN]
        And there is a **small** creek.

(13)   qʷáy[•qʷi]x̣ʼ-t-n ɬ ḷ tó·m̓[a]ɬ-ti.   30
        cut[•DISTR]-TR-3SUBJ OBL DET short[PL]-PL
        He cuts them up **small.**

The preposition ɬ followed by a determiner makes it clear that this is a nominalized adjective, a possibility common in many languages of the world, e.g. German *der Alte* 'the old man'. By no means all of the example sentences in Upper Chehalis are objects of prepositions, and this category could be subdivided to correspond to 40, 50, and 60. Sentence 13 corresponds to type 60; 14 and 15 correspond to 40 and 50, respectively. This accounts for the large number of sample sentences in this category.

(14)   kʷaná-mal-n tanin <u>tit</u> sx̣ʷ-ɬá·y̓•i-s ɬ t taw=ísq spatáln.   30
        take-DETRANS-3SUBJ now DET SUP-young•sup-3POSS OBL DET big=stone rock
        The **youngest one** takes a big rock.

(15)   wi t č̓ús nkʷs ʔə́x̣-t-n <u>tit</u> sáli ʔac-ná·w[a]ɬ-ti[7] wi cílačs q̓ám̓ay[a]ɬ-qʷlaľ-s.
        and DET always HAB see-TR-3SUBJ DET two ST-big/old[PL]-PL COP five
                daughter[PL]-PL-3POSS
        And he constantly sees the two **old ones** and their five daughters.   30

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[4]This *wi* is essentially a discourse line marker, although I translate it as 'and' where that translation is not awkward. It is not syntactically necessary. It is unrelated to the copula *wi*.

[5]Although there is a set of feminine determiners, they are often not used when expected.

[6]In this case I assume that Boas missed a final *t*. The proclitic *ta* means 'past', and there is no reason to expect that morpheme here.

[7]Note the adjective plural suffix on what is basically a stative verb form.

(16) qé[·]lx̣-mal-n <u>tit</u> ťúš̌ł yá[·]mc.   40
      light.up[DMN]-DETRANS-3SUBJ DET tall Douglas.fir[DMN]
      The **tall** tree lights up.

(17) wi nkʷs ťa ławá-wali-n-n <u>tit</u> x̣ás=łt̄ṃš̌ čawałó[·]mš̌.   40
      and HAB again desert-T.O.-EPEN-3SUBJ DET bad=ones woman[DMN]
      And the **bad** girls leave her.

I make no distinction in this category between subjects of intransitive verbs (as in 16), subjects of
transitive verbs (as in 17), or patient subjects of passive verbs.

(18) "nkʷs sáʔa-stš̌ ʔəy cə́qiyačʼa, qʼíc̣x̣ n-qʼi s-ʔé[ʔ]x̣-n-m." XC   41
      HAB make-IMPF.PASS good basket, thus 1SG.POSS-REAL S-see[DMN]-APPL-MDL
      "**Good** baskets are always made like what I always see."

(19) wi <u>tit</u> táwł słánay wi ʔə́y t s-x̣áwqʼ-m-s š̌ał tit nułtámš̌. XW   43
      and DET big woman COP good DET S-talk-MDL-3POSS to DET person
      And the **big** woman talks nicely to the person.

(20) "wi ł t múx̣ʷ-n č̌ł <u>t</u> s-qʼʷíx̣ łáx̣łn."   50
      and OBL DET pay-3OBJ 1PL.SUBJ DET S-blue blanket
      "And we will pay him a **blue** blanket."

(21) ... n ťúqʷi-t-n <u>t</u> ʔac-qʼʷáył <u>t</u> spaqáln.   52
      and find-TR-3SUBJ DET ST-wilt DET flower
      ... and he finds a **wilted** flower.

(22) "wi x̣ʷáqʷ u ta pə́sa? wi ʔit yúca-x̣ʷ čn ʔał tit támš̌."   54
      and all yet past monster COP DET kill-3CAUS.OBJ PREP DET earth
      "And I killed **all** the monsters in the world."

I assume that this *ta* is 'past', rather than being a determiner with a missing final *t*, since all the
monsters are gone at the time of speaking.

(23) łə́m-š̌i-t-n ł t ťamé[·]łnʼ š̌ał <u>t</u> x̌áqł x̌apʼúx̣ʷ=nʼł.   60
      tie-APPL-TR-3SUBJ OBL DET rope[DMN] PREP DET long hazel=plant
      He ties it with a string to a **long** hazel pole.

(24) č̌ís-n tanin t qʷc̣x̣ʷé ča <u>t</u> táwł cə́qiyačʼa-s. XC   60
      come-3SUBJ now DET Witch with DET big basket-3POSS
      Witch comes now with a **big** basket.

(25) "ł ťit š̌aná-mʼ š̌ał ťa ʔúx̌ʷł tanin słtámš̌."   61
      FUT ? marry-MDL PREP again different now man
      "they will marry a **different** man now."

(26) ... x̣ʷáqʷ u ʔac-ʔí t qʼał sáʔa-t ł <u>t</u> ʔə́y <u>t</u> nułtámš̌. XC   62
      all yet ST-question DET IRR do/make-SUB.PASS OBL DET good DET person
      ... in every way it could be done by a **good** person.

(27) ʔíkʷ-mal-iłti ł <u>t</u> ťúš̌ł ʔay=námc x̌ə́š̌x̌š̌ ...   70
      fetch-DETRANS-IMPF.3PL.SUBJ OBL DET good=body wood/tree
      They go after a **long smooth** pole ...

(28) x̣áwas tawíla-t-n t łukʷáł ča t pʼayə́ḳʷ x̌úǩʷ ʔał táwł ʔac-yáq̣ł x̌ə́š̌x̌š̌.   71
      first sit-TR-3SUBJ DET moon and DET bluejay top PREP big ST-fall.over wood/tree
      First Moon and Bluejay sit down on top of a **big fallen** tree.

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(29)   "c̲i̲c̲ ʔiy=álwn táwɬ sɬánayʼ wi nkʷs ʔupál-n t míyʼ•i+šawɬ." XC   72
F.DET good=appearance big woman COP HAB eat-3OBJ DET recently• +grow
"This **pretty, big** woman always eats young men."

(30)   máta-t-n t t̲i̲t̲ sáli t̲ ɬač̓=áɠa snó·kʷ-s.   73
grind-TR-3SUBJ DET DET two DET sharp=edge knife-3POSS
She sharpens her **two sharp-edged** knives.

(31)   "ʔó·· ʔac-wé·-x̣ t sšam'álaxʷ qáɠɬ míɬta laws lé[·]ʔ."   80
oh ST-be-DEF DET people many NEG too far[DMN]
"Oh, **many** people live not very far away."

These data show two particular problematic areas in noun phrases containing adjectives: (a) the occurrence of multiple determiners in such a noun phrase (one example in each of types 52, 62, and 73), and (b) the lack of a determiner in a noun phrase (this can occur with or without an adjective; note types 20, 22, 41, 54, 61, and 71). The first of these can hardly be a mistake — omission is more likely than commission. The second problem area is possibly a result of some missed determiners, but surely not in so many cases; one cannot just assume that Boas missed some instances of *t* such that these usages can be explained away.

5 Summary

This paper is obviously only first and primitive step in a description and understanding of the syntax of Upper Chehalis modifiers, but it does show that adjectives exist as a class, and how they are used. Sentences with quantifiers need to be added to the classification given here; some of them occur in large numbers, and will thus skew the numbers of examples of my various categories. That doesn't really matter, and instances of some of the other categories may turn up. Much of the understanding of such things as multiple determiners in a noun phrase or lack of a determiner hinge on an overall understanding of the uses of determiners in Upper Chehalis. This may or may not be possible, since texts are now the only source of information on the language, and sentences cannot be made up and tested for acceptability. It will also be useful to study the use of adverbs, because some of these also occur in constructions with determiners.

It may also help to look at the usage of other speakers. Boas recorded texts from other speakers of this downriver dialect of the language, but also got several from upriver dialect speakers. It may not be as useful to examine the texts that I collected from Silas Heck. He spoke the downriver (Oakville) dialect, but had a few upriver features in his speech, and he came from an upriver family (indeed, Boas got texts from an older brother, who spoke only the upriver dialect).

Finally, some, perhaps most, of the efforts to understand these problems will have to be made by linguists who have a better understanding of syntax (and semantics) than I do. That will be difficult, because linguists prefer to work on a living language where made-up constructions can be tested for grammatical acceptability, and because a better understanding of these Upper Chehalis problems probably can only be achieved by someone who has studied one or more other Salishan language.

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