Directive Phrases
A consideration of one facet of Puget Salish syntax


Puget Salish has sentences in which directive phrases introduced by {ʔə} immediately follow the predicate.[1] Constituent relationships between the predicate and these phrases are of two types. The difference is revealed in three ways: by relative order in expanded sentences, by cooccurrence restrictions with the suffix {-(ə)b}, and by a comparison of agnate sentences.

Consider the following:

1)  /ʔupúsutəb ʔə tiʔəʔ wìwʔsu/        'The children threw something at it.'
    (threw at) ( the children )


2)  /ʔupúsutəb ʔə tiʔəʔ čǰàʔ/        'Someone threw rocks at it.'
    (threw at) (the rock(s))

If meaning is to be the end product of language and not the means by which language is analyzed, then (1) and (2) look the same. Their surface structures are identical.

However, expansions of (1) and (2) show  this similarity to be illusory:

3)  /ʔupúsutəb ʔə tiʔəʔ wìwʔsu (tiʔił sqʷəbàyʔ) ʔə tiʔəʔ čǰàʔ/[2]
    (threw at) ( the children )(   that dog   ) (the rock(s))

    'The children threw rocks at (that dog).'


4)  */ʔupúsutəb ʔə tiʔəʔ čǰàʔ (tiʔił sqʷəbàyʔ) ʔə tiʔəʔ wìwʔsu/[2]
    (threw at) (the rock(s)) (   that dog   ) (the children)
    *'The rocks threw children at (that dog).'

The directive phrase underlined once (referred to as A) always precedes the one underlined twice (B).[3] In fact, the most frequent order puts the former immediately after the predicate and before all else including attributive phrases (/ti?ił sq$^w$əbay?/ in these examples).

Very occasionally, the attributive phrase and directive phrase A are reversed:[4]

5)  /?upúsutəb ti?ił sq$^w$əbày? <u>?ə ti?ə? wìw?su</u>/
    (threw at) (   that dog ) ( the children )

    'The children threw something at that dog.'

This relatively rare alternative order results in identical surface structures again.  Compare (5) with (6).

6)  /?upúsutəb ti?ił sq$^w$əbày? <u>?ə ti?ə? čλ̓à?</u>/
    (threw at) (   that dog  ) (the rock(s))
    'Someone threw rocks at that dog.'

In (6), of course, the position of B is the only one possible.

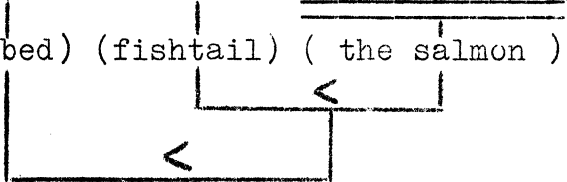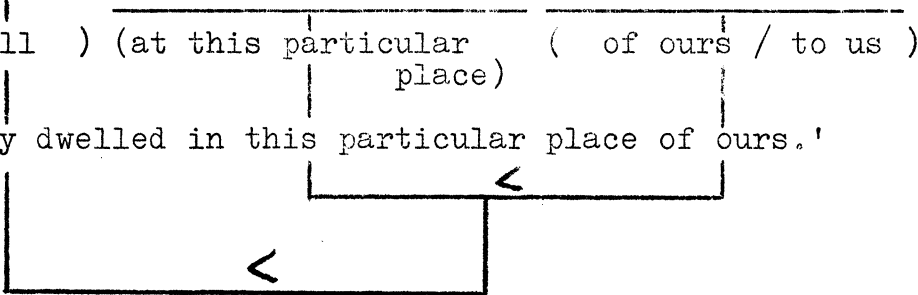This difference in order between the two directive phrases reflects the fact that A is intimately bound to predicates having the suffix sequence /-t ⎰⎱ plus /-(ə)b/. Without /-t-əb/, for example, A is
        ⎧ tu ⎫
        ⎨ du ⎬
        ⎩ s  ⎭
          c /
impossible. There is no such restriction on B.  Rather B can be attributive to a variety of constructions.  Three possibilities are illustrated with the following diagrams:

7)  /?upúsud (ti?ił sq$^w$əbày?) <u>?ə ti?ə? čλ̓à?</u>/[5]      'Someone threw rocks
         |            |              |                             at that dog.'
    (threw at) (that dog )    (the rock(s))
        |_____<_____|         |
              |_____<_____|

8) /ʔukʷədád tə sčətšad ʔə tə sʔuládxʷ/     'Someone grabbed the
   (grabbed) (fishtail) ( the salmon )        tail of the salmon.'

9) /ʔəsɫáɫlil ʔal tiʔəcəc swàtixʷtəd ʔə tiʔiɫ gʷəɫ dibəɫ/[6]
   ( dwell  ) (at this particular    (  of ours / to us )
                         place)

   'They dwelled in this particular place of ours.'

Agnates of examples (1) and (2) also reveal structural differences between A and B. There is a transformation[7] of (1) such that the directive phrase becomes the predicate (occurring initially) and the director {ʔə} drops. The former predicate becomes an attributive phrase restricted to second position and the suffix {-(ə)b} drops. A determiner (in this case /tiʔəʔ/) no longer modifies /wiwʔsu/, the new predicate; but one does modify the verb /ʔupusud/, now attributive to /wiwʔsu/. Compare (1) and (10), (3) and (11).

10) /wíwʔsu tiʔəʔ ʔupùsud/[8]   'It was the children who threw something at
    (child-  ( threw at  )       it.'
        ren)

11) /wíwʔsu tiʔəʔ ʔupùsud tiʔiɫ sqʷəbày ʔə tiʔəʔ čx̌àʔ/
    (child-  ( threw at ) (  that dog  ) (the rock(s))
        ren)

    'It was the children who threw rocks at that dog.'

Identical changes operate on (2) with this crucial addition. When B is transposed, the verb always requires a substantive prefix, either {s-} or {dexʷ-}, and a possessive affix. (In these examples, the third person possessive {-s} is given.) Because there is no direct structural

relationship between B directive phrases and the suffix {-(ə)b}, this suffix can remain. Compare (2) with (12) and (3) with (13).

12) /čλ̓á? ti?ə? dəxʷupùsutəbs/  or  /čλ̓á? ti?ə? dəxʷupùsuj/[9]
  (rock)(   threw at   )       (rock)(   threw at   )

  'It was rocks that someone threw at it.'


13) /čλ̓á? ti?ə? dəxʷupùsutəbs ?ə ti?ə? wìw?su ti?ił sqʷəbày?/
  (rock)(   threw at   )   (the children ) (  that dog  )

  'It was rocks that the children threw at that dog.'

                    or

  /čλ̓á? ti?ə? dəxʷupùsuj ti?ił sqʷəbày?/[9]
  (rock)(   threw at   ) (   that dog   )

  'It was rocks that someone threw at that dog.'


Directive phrases in {?ə} are not limited to Puget Salish. They are found in neighboring Clallam[10] and in Sliammon much further north. Significantly, however, they do not occur in Squamish.[11] Such distribution has interesting historical implications. We should like to know how many and which Salish languages have directive phrases of the sort described here; and whether or not both types of constituent relationships between predicate and directive phrase are found. We suspect for Puget Salish that directive phrases in {?ə} may have, in more recent times, been pressed into service as agents dependent on {-(ə)b} predications; and that originally, they were found only in relationship B. But, whatever the origin, it is important that they be distinguished.

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Footnotes

1 The predicate is the head of a clause. In all examples given here, no sentence is more than a single clause.

This paper is concerned with the relation of directive phrases to the rest of the sentence and not with the structure of the phrases themselves. It is sufficient to describe them briefly as consisting of a director {ʔə} and an axis. The axis is a very short attributive phrase. Typically, it includes a determiner and noun. For purposes of this discussion, it is convenient to liken directive phrases in Puget Salish to English prepositional phrases. The structure of directive phrases is described in Hess, <u>Snohomish Grammatical Structure</u>, University of Washington Dissertation, 1967, p.88.

2 Parentheses around /tiʔił sq$^w$əbayʔ/ 'that dog' indicate that a sentence is possible in which this portion is omitted, e.g.,

   /ʔupúsutəb <u>ʔə tiʔəʔ wìwʔsu</u> <u>ʔə tiʔəʔ čʎ̓àʔ</u>/

   'The children threw rocks at it.'

As will be apparent with subsequent examples, no phrase except the predicate is obligatory.

3 It is the <u>relationships</u> between the predicate and these phrases that are being distinguished and not the phrases themselves.

4 Note this similarity ot Squamish. See Aert H. Kuipers, <u>The Squamish Language</u> (The Hague, 1967) p. 170.

5 An utterance */ʔupúsud <u>ʔə tiʔəʔ wìwʔsu</u> tiʔił sq$^w$əbàyʔ/ is impossible. The final /-d/ of /ʔupúsud/ is a member of the same morpheme as /-t-/ in /ʔupúsutəb/. The parentheses around /tiʔił sq$^w$əbàyʔ/ are explained in footnote 2.

6    /ʔal tiʔəcəc swǎtixʷtəd/ is a directive phrase with the same sort of relations to the rest of the Puget Salish sentence as B.  {ʔal} is the director.  Thus, while {ʔə} is the only director in A, both {ʔə} and {ʔal} occur as directors of B.  See Hess, op. cit. p. 88.

7    'Series of transformations' would be more accurate, but the details have yet to be worked out.

8    The single and double underlining is continued to show what becomes of the directive phrases in the corresponding agnate sentences.
    See the second sentence of footnote 5.

9    /j/, a voiced alveolar affricate, replaces the sequence /d/ plus /s/.

10   Laurence C. and M. Terry Thompson, Clallam: A Preview, (unpublished).

11   Compare the Squamish 'relative case'.  Kuipers, op. cit. p. 136.