

**METATHESIS AS A GRAMMATICAL PROCESS IN CLALLAM**

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Metathesis is well attested as a historical development in languages the world over.<sup>1</sup> Besides the numerous familiar cases in Indoeuropean we may mention here, for example, discussion of the phenomenon in such diverse linguistic families as Muskogean (cf. Haas 1941:51, 53) and Penutian (cf. Hymes 1964:218, Shipley 1966:493). In fact, Pitkin (ms 1963) has formulated a patterning of historical metathesis in the context of continuants. In these terms we are scarcely surprised to find that Salishan comparisons show many cases of metathesized elements (e.g., brain: Nooksack mə́c̣q̣ín, Cowichan, Musqueam sméθ'q̣ən, Lummi smé́c̣q̣ən, but Snohomish, Skagit ṣə́bq̣íd, Thompson ṣə́mq̣ín).

On the synchronic scene, however, metathesis is far less common. We may call attention here to the exceptional cases noted by Bloomfield in Tagalog (1933:391) and Menomini (1962:88); and the more systematic morphophonemic alternations involving metathesis in Zoque, discussed by Wonderly (1951:117).

But we are not aware of reports of metathesized forms appearing in a language in such a way that the difference results in a semantic contrast.<sup>2</sup> Although Freeland (1951:12) names metathesis as a grammatical process in Sierra Miwok, and Hymes (1964:218) suggests that it may also have had a grammatical function at earlier stages of Penutian,<sup>3</sup> the cases involved seem again to belong to the realm of morphophonemic alternation: Broadbent (1964:37) makes clear that alternating stem shapes with consonants and vowels switching position are predictable in terms of immediately following suffixes. (Nor does Hamp 1966a, b make more of the matter in his criticism and reanalyses.)

The Miwok case may warrant some further consideration, however, especially now in the light of the fact that metathesis emerges clearly as a grammatical device, providing the only overt signal of a central aspectual contrast for many stems in Clallam, a Straits Salish language.<sup>4</sup>

This distinction is signalled primarily in the base (or root) of full words. Actual aspect is frequently signalled by infixes of several different sorts; e.g.,

six <sup>w</sup>	<u>wade</u>	s-eʔ-x <sup>w</sup>	<u>wading</u>
x <sup>w</sup> it	<u>jump</u>	x <sup>w</sup> -eʔ-t	<u>jumping</u>
čax <sup>w</sup>	<u>melt</u>	ča-ʔ-x <sup>w</sup>	<u>melting</u>
ŋak <sup>w</sup>	<u>chew</u>	ŋa-ʔ-k <sup>w</sup>	<u>chewing</u>
k <sup>w</sup> ič	<u>butcher, cut up</u>	k <sup>w</sup> -éʔwə-č	<u>butchering</u>
q <sup>w</sup> əč	<u>lock</u>	q <sup>w</sup> ə-ʔu-č	<u>locking</u>
k <sup>w</sup> an	<u>dispose of</u>	k <sup>w</sup> -əʔáʔ-n	<u>disposing of</u>

Some bases have reduplicative actuals (sometimes with other changes):

ʔux <sup>w</sup>	<u>go</u>	ʔú-ʔux <sup>w</sup>	<u>going</u>
ʔənʔə	<u>come</u>	ʔənʔə-ʔə	<u>coming</u>
cil	<u>stand</u>	c-cíl	<u>standing</u>
tuk <sup>w</sup>	<u>go home</u>	tú-tk <sup>w</sup>	<u>going home</u>
nəč	<u>laugh</u>	nəʔ-nəy	<u>laughing</u>

However, there is a large class of stems in which actual aspect is marked by metathesis; e.g.,

čtə	<u>crawl</u>	čət	<u>crawling</u>
k <sup>w</sup> sə	<u>count</u>	k <sup>w</sup> əs	<u>counting</u>
ščə	<u>pull</u>	šəč	<u>pulling</u>
xč <sup>3</sup> i	<u>scratch</u>	xič <sup>3</sup>	<u>scratching</u>
čk <sup>w</sup> u	<u>sting, shoot</u>	čuk <sup>w</sup>	<u>stinging, shooting</u>
k <sup>w</sup> iʔə	<u>spill, pour out</u>	k <sup>w</sup> əʔi	<u>spilling, pouring out</u>

Some combine metathesis with infixation of /-ʔ-/ (inserted /ə/ is automatic in the following examples):

q <sup>w</sup> uč	<u>lick, beat up</u>	q <sup>w</sup> -əʔ-čú	<u>licking, beating up</u>
suy	<u>swell up</u>	s-əʔ-yú	<u>swelling up</u>

Still others add also a reduplicative element:

suk <sup>ʷ</sup>	<u>bathe</u>	saʔ-sk <sup>ʷ</sup> ú	<u>bathing</u>
ʔiŋ	<u>step</u>	ʔaʔ-ŋí	<u>stepping</u>
ʔix	<u>scrape</u>	ʔaʔ-xí	<u>scrapping</u>

It should be apparent from these examples that metathesis is meaningfully identified as a process, since this effectively generalizes the pattern. That is, in the first group above (čtə vs. čət, etc.) we might consider that the actual stem has the characteristic vowel inserted between C<sub>1</sub> and C<sub>2</sub>, but the last case in that group (k<sup>w</sup>iʔə vs. k<sup>w</sup>əʔi) already begs the question whether this is the best treatment, and it is certainly inappropriate for the examples of the second set (q<sup>w</sup>uč vs. q<sup>w</sup>-əʔ-čú, etc.), where the actual has rather its characteristic vowel shifted to the position following C<sub>2</sub>; similarly with the reduplicative forms (suk<sup>ʷ</sup> vs. saʔ-sk<sup>ʷ</sup>ú, etc.).

If this is not in itself convincing, a further phenomenon surely clinches the matter. In many more complex forms the actual is marked not in the basic stem, but in the suffixal portion. Among the suffixes, fixed orders are observed, as we might expect. But -i persistent precedes -t control in non-actual forms, while the order is reversed in actual forms:

ʔk<sup>w</sup>-í-t hold (something)    ʔk<sup>w</sup>-t-í holding something

Thus the principle of metathesis to mark the actual--non-actual opposition is extended to embrace polymorphemic bases.

In these terms, it seems clear that Clallam makes use of metathesis as a grammatical device.

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## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Sturtevant (1961:50-1, 64-5; 1947:89, 92-3) saw instances as primarily developments from speech lapses. Other treatments seem to agree that the developments are in any case sporadic (cf. for example, Bloomfield 1933:391; Hockett 1958:391; Lehmann 1962:169-70).

<sup>2</sup>Unless, of course, we admit such cases as inversion of word order, as in English he can vs. can he?, or apparent inversion of stress elements as in English ìmpòrt vs. ìmpòrt, etc. (We are indebted to R. H. Robins for reminding us of these parallels.) It also seems possible that certain contrasts in Arabic might be handled as metathesized forms, but as we understand the cases there is nothing to support a preference for this explanation over the usual treatment. (We are grateful to Gordon Fairbanks for calling our attention to these phenomena.) In his introduction to morphological analysis Nida (1949:16-7) mentions metathesis in the context of phonologically defined morphophonemic alternations, referring to Sudan Colloquial Arabic and Zoque. Elson and Pickett (1967:44-5) also draw on Zoque for illustration of this kind of problem. Gleason (1961:86) mentions a similar case in Hebrew.

<sup>3</sup>We are grateful to M. Dale Kinkade for calling our attention to the Miwok parallel and for furnishing us the Hymes and Freeland references.

<sup>4</sup>Clallam was spoken in aboriginal times in a number of villages along the north coast of Washington's Olympic Peninsula. Only a handful of elderly speakers remain. Material for the present study was collected as time permitted over the last four years from Mrs. Elizabeth Prince of Jamestown, Washington, and Mrs. Martha John, of Little Boston, Washington. We gratefully acknowledge here the support of the National Science Foundation through grants to the University of Washington and the University of Hawaii. We have prepared a preliminary grammatical sketch of

(Footnotes - 2)

the language (Thompson and Thompson, in press). Examples in this paper are cited in the phonemic transcription presented there, which may be rapidly summarized as follows. Vowels are /u/ back rounded; unrounded /i/ high to upper mid front, /e/ lower mid front; and with some rounded allophones, /a/ low, and /ə/ central and centralized. Consonants fit a typical Salishan pattern: glottalized stops and affricates /p̚ t̚ c̚ ʔ̚ ʔ̚ q̚ k̚<sup>w</sup> q̚<sup>w</sup>/, plain stops and affricates /p t c ʃ k q k<sup>w</sup> q<sup>w</sup> ʔ/, voiceless spirants /s ɬ ʃ ɣ x<sup>w</sup> ɣ<sup>w</sup> h/, voiced continuants /m n l y ŋ w/. Syllables are primary-stressed /á/, secondary-stressed /ǎ/ or unstressed (unmarked). Intonations need not be discussed here, since no intonational contrasts figure in the examples.