

Lexical comparisons between Bella Coola
and neighbouring languages

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The aim of this report is twofold: a) to point out lexical parallels between Bella Coola and geographically adjacent Indian languages; b) to determine which languages are responsible for the items involved.

I have excluded from my framework suffixes, personal pronouns, prepositions, articles, deictics and proper names.

The comparative work was made possible by an extensive lexical research of Bella Coola, Heiltsuk and, to a lesser extent, of Kwakiutl and Tsimshian.

The orthographies used in the books and papers consulted were maintained throughout the inventory.

I use the symbol /ʎ/ for the plain lateral affricate, /ʎ̥/ for the aspirated lateral affricate, /ʎ̥̥/ for the glottalic lateral affricate and /ɬ/ for the voiceless lateral fricative; /ʔ/ represents the glottal stop.

The following abbreviations are used: B (Boas), G (Grubb), H (Hindle & Rigsby), S (Swadesh), T (Turner); Bc (Bella Coola), Cd (Coeur d'Alene), Cw (Cowichan), He (Heiltsuk), Ka (Kalis-pel), Kw (Kwakiutl), Li (Lillooet), Se (Sechelt), Sh (Shuswap), Sq (Squamish), Th (Thompson), Ts (Tsimshian).

The alphabetical order in which the Bc items are listed is:

p p̣ m t ṭ c c̣ s n l ɬ ʎ k ḳ x k^o k^o x^o q q̣ ʃ q^o q^o ʃ^o h a i u
y w

Inventory

- (1) l-pl-i thin, flat: He pl-, Kw(B) pEl-; Se pí-pEl
- (2) pays flounder: He páys, Kw(B) pā's-nEkWEla "to carry id."
- (3) s-pak^o ank skate, ray: He bág^oáná, Kw(B) bā'gwanē
- (4) piq̣ wide: He páq- "to lie flat", Kw(B) pāq!; Se píq̣
- (5) pus-m to swell up: He pús-à, Kw(B) pōdz-il "swell in house";
Cd puʔus "swell, bubble, ferment"

- (6) s-pu^l lump: Kw(B) bō^l-
(7) pu^k°s Sasquatch: He p^k°-s, Kw(B) bE^klu's (bE^k°- "man")
(8) pu⁷ya⁷s Indian tea: He p^uyás, Kw(T) p^uyás
(9) p^s to bend: He p^{ás}-lá
(10) p^{la}-la to blink eyes: He p^l-p^l-á, Kw(B) p^lE^l-
(11) pⁱ7^ǰ steam: He(B) p^lE^lx- "fog", Kw(S) p^lX id.
(12) p^{wi} halibut: He p^{wá}y, Kw(G) p^{'ó}7i; Sq pu^{ai}7
(13) mtm sea urchins: He à^md^m ((B) à^mtá "to gather sea eggs"),
Kw(B) 7^áá[']mt-la⁷yo "means of getting sea urchins"
(14) mⁿl-at-a to measure: He mⁿc-à, Kw(B) 7^mE[']ns-a
(15) mⁿk excrements: He mⁿák, Kw(B) m^Ena[']k'; Sh mⁿek, Ka mⁿek
(16) ma- one: He mⁿ-, Kw(B) 7ⁿEm
(17) mal-i⁷ǰ° to mix: He m^l-lá "to stir", Kw(B) ma[']l-aq-a;
Sq mil-, mal- "be mixed up" (mal-q° "be mixed")
(18) max^ou⁷li water hemlock: He(B) wau[']xwiyale, southern Kw(T)
wax^wax^uli
(19) mayas raccoon: He máyás, Kw(B) mā'yus; Se/Sq m^Elalus,
Cw m^ElEs
(20) mus four: He múk°, Kw(B) mō; Sh/Cd/Ka mus, Puget Sound bus,
Tillamook was
(21) mux^o-muk^ot blue grouse: Ts(H) max^meek
(22) mu⁷ǰ°a to stutter: He á^mq°-à
(23) s-tp freckle, tu-tup trout: Kw(B) t^óp-a "to put specks on"
(cf. t^upiwas)
(24) tmx^o river: He d^mx^s "sae", Kw(B) d^Emsx' id.
(25) tx(n)xni owl: He txtxni ((B) tx'a "owl hoots"),
Kw(B) d^Ex[']d^Ex[']ilí[']l
(26) t(a)mk^oa to eat cured salmon eggs: He tá^mk°-à
(27) tas to push: He ts-á
(28) ti⁷l (to) bait: He tí^l-à (tí^lí "bait"), Kw(B) tē^l-
(29) ti⁷ǰ°-a-ma sledgehammer: He dí^ǰ°-áyú "piledriver", Kw(B)
dē^q°- "to punch, drive in"
(30) s-tls cranberries: He t^lE^ls "Viburnum berry", Kw(B) t^lE^ls
"crabapple" (??); Se t^lE^ls (B)
(31) t^x° to sweep: Li t^x°éyluptn "broom", Ts(H) t[']axw
(32) t^ǰ-t stone: Kw t^lǰq- "round things lie on ground"(B),
t^lēs- "stone"(B)
(33) t^ǰ°sus cloverroot: He(B) t^lE^x°sō's "cinquefoil roots"
(t^lE^q°'L "to get id."(B)), Kw(B) t^lE^x°sō's

- (34) tupiwas fawn: He(B) t!ō'piʔo ((B) t!ō'pa, t!ō'ʔmid "make a spot, to flicker") (cf. s-tp, tu-tup)
- (35) s-tux^osi big wave: He tux^o-sustiwá (tux^o-à "wave, undulate")
- (36) cap bone: Ts(H) sip
- (37) cał lake: Kw(B) dzɛʔlā'ł; Se cɛlál, Li čelél, Chehalis(S) całł
- (38) caʔxa to chase out: He cáq-/cáx-
- (39) cimani big clam: He cím-áni "horseclam" (cím "dip up", -ani "bent")
- (40) cik^o-m to move: He zík^o-à
- (41) cyap coat: Kw(B) tsāp "apron"
- (42) cupe (be) plug(ged): He zup-/zum- "to plug"
- (43) cm index finger: He cm, Kw(B) ts!Em- "to show"
- (44) cla basket: He clá, Kw(B) ts!Elā'ʔ; Ts ts!Elā'(B); Li čEléʔ, Th cíʔa
- (45) capax branches of red/yellow cedar: He/Kw(B) ts!ā'plax
- (46) cawikał long snowshoes: He(B) ts!ā'ʔwik'al (ts!ā'ʔwik'ełba "nose of octopus"(B)) (? caw-ik-al: Bc -al "foot")
- (47) cima guts: He cym (cís-à "to wind up"), Kw(B) ts!Eyf'm; Ts(H) ts'im "inside"; Sh s-cm-enk (s-cm-qín "brain")
- (48) cik^oa clam: He cik^oà
- (49) cupakt mittens (? cup-ak-t: Bc -ak "hand"): Kw ts!ō'p!ax. (B)
- (50) cučq^o having sores: He cūčł "person with a boil" (cūs-)
- (51) stulk^o dolphin: He sdulk^o
- (52) (a)scl-cli bush of dwarf blueberry: He(B) tsɛ'tslē "a berry"
- (53) sniniq a fabulous monster: ? cf. Kw dzō'noql^u-(B)
- (54) sq^oal-k^o ashes: He q^oálúm (cf. Bc q^oal- "to scorch")
- (55) sacm big spring salmon: Kw(G) sáts'em ((B) sās- "to get id.")
- (56) sak^om bracken fern: He(B) sā'gum "fern", Kw(B) sāk^u- "get id."
- (57) si-syuł double-headed sea-serpent: Kw(B) sisiul
- (58) nan grizzly bear: He nán, Kw(B) nān
- (59) nałm, nałn ling cod: He náłm, Kw(B) nā'łEm
- (60) nał-nł mallard duck: He niłnák; Ts naxnaaxt(H)
- (61) s-ninya earthquake: He níniyà
- (62) nułski soapberry: He nułsk, southern Kw(T) nexweskén
- (63) lac sea cucumber: He alás, Kw(B) alás (V-als); Se ʔElás, Sq ʔElás
- (64) la-laqa to fry: He láqà-k^o "biscuit"
- (65) łk^o-lx old (cf. łk^o "big"): He łk^o-áni "old woman", Kw(B) łk!wā'nē id.

- (66) lq to slap: Kw(B) Lā'-Laq!-a
- (67) laqa kind of shark: He ʎáǵà
- (68) laqs edible seaweed: He lqst (lqa "to gather id."), Kw(T) lhək'ás; Se lÉqsta, Sq lÉqEs; Ts hlak'asxw(H)
- (69) la7ǵalta shoulderblade: He ʎáq^odñ
- (70) luk^oala Indian doctor: He Lō'gwe7 "supernatural power"(B), ((B) Lō'gwala "to find a treasure, obtain supernatural power"), Kw(B) Lōg^u- "supernatural power"; Sh tÉk^o-ílx "medicine man", Cd tē7k^o-ílš
- (71) ʎa black bear: He ʎà, Kw(B) Liā'7ē
- (72) ʎa7laya beads: He(B) Lia7yā'la "marble for game"
- (73) ʎak^oani elbow: He ʎák^o(-ání)
- (74) ʎawq^o tobacco: He ʎáwq^oà, Kw(T) tl'ók^uw'i
- (75) ʎina eulachon grease: He ʎíná, Kw(B) Liē'7na
- (76) ʎiǵin sea lion: Kw(B) Liēx-
- (77) ʎupana cormorant: He Liō'bana(B), Kw(B) Liō'banē ((B) Liō'b-as "cormorant rock")
- (78) klax^o muskrat: He k'flā'k^o(B), Kw(B) kEla'k^u; Sh s-kléx^oe7, Th s-kE-kÉléx^oe7, Cd čélex^o
- (79) kaḡay humpback salmon: He káḡi
- (80) kanani bracket fungus: He kánáná, Kw(B) k'ā'nē
- (81) kix stuck on: He kix- "bandage a wound"
- (82) s-l-kl-a7ǵ-t crystal, icycle (? s-kl "ice" + -a7ǵ "tail"): He kík^uláq
- (83) kaqas crow: He káqà
- (84) kipt red elderberry: He k'!ī'bat(B) ((B) k'!ī'pa "to pick id.")
- (85) kita₁ little finger: He kídà, Kw(B) klēd- "3rd finger (sic)"
- (86) kita₂ herringrake: He kíd-áyú ((B) k'!ē'ta "to catch herrings with rake"), Kw k'!ē'ta "gather grass"(B), Ts(B) k'!EdE'
- (87) kinax^o crab: He kínák^o, Kw(B) k'!ī'nwis "spider crab"
- (88) kis-, kil- without: Ke kís "no(t)", Kw(B) k'!ēs- "no(t)"
- (89) kix^o-m to gnaw: He kì-x^o "carved object", Kw(B) k'!ē- "carve"
- (90) k^oáyalaqs bluejay: He k^oáyalàqs
- (91) k^oit to pry loose: He k^oít-, Kw(B) kiwēt-
- (92) k^oult porpoise: Kw k'!ō'lōt!(B); Sq k^oúnut
- (93) u-k^ouk skunk cabbage: He k^ok^oúk^oà, southern Kw(T) k'a7úkw'i
- (94) k^ouxani nick clam: He k^oúx^o-ání
- (95) x^on-al spring of water: He x^on-ís "fountain"
- (96) s-qapc old springsalmon: He qáps; Sh sqepc "spring"

- (97) qacǎ starfish: He ġázàǎ, Kw(B) ġā'ǎzEq; Ts(H) ġasġaats
- (98) qalayu gaffhook: He ġáǎ-áyú, Kw(G) ġádlayu; Sq qálayu
- (99) qaǎ rabbit: Ts(H) ġax
- (100) qayt hat: qáyť; Ts(H) ġayť
- (101) qinǎ shoes: He qínáǎ
- (102) qpst to taste: He pàq-, Kw(B) p!aq-/p!Eq-
- (103) qlsx^o rope: He qál-à "to braid" (qál-k^o "braided"), Kw(B) q!Elx^u- "to coil"
- (104) l-qllis giant kelp with herring spawn: southern Kw(T) k'áxk'elis
- (105) qlaǎ fence: He qláǎh; Ts(H) ġalaaxan; Sq qíáǎan, Sh qléǎ- "round", Cw q!EléǎctEn; Chinook kullagh
- (106) qatm chisel: He qád-áyú (qát-à "use a chisel")
- (107) qay poor: He qí
- (108) qis stink currant: He(B) q!ēse'na ((B) q!ē'sa "to pick id."), southern Kw(T) k'is
- (109) qil- cut to scratch oneself: He q^ol-á, Kw(B) q!wEl
- (110) ǎaqanc crane: He qáqáns; Ts ġasġá's(E)
- (111) ǎayaqa barnacle: He ǎáyáqà
- (112) ǎayul west wind: He ǎáyul, Kw(B) xa7yō'lisēxtá7ē "east wind"
- (113) ǎawis tin: He ǎáwísgm
- (114) q^ot-uc carving knife ("crooked knife"): Ts(B) k^udūs
- (115) q^oalas lizard: He ġ^oálás, Kw(B) ġwá'las
- (116) q^oaq^oaws sawbill duck: He q^oġ^oáws, Kw(B) ġogō's
- (117) q^oaǎ^o raven: He ġ^owí ((B) ġāx "cry of raven"), Kw(B) ġwa7-; Ts(H) ġaak
- (118) q^ouna thumb: He q^oúná, Kw(G) kúma
- (119) q^oala empty, gone: He(B) q!wá'la "to be destroyed"
- (120) q^oulun beaver: He q^oúlún; Sh s-qléw, Sq s-qlau7, Ka s-qalé7u
- (121) q^ou7ǎ^ou7ǎ swan: He q^oġ^oúq^o, Kw(B) ġġgō'q
- (122) q^oaq^oina dogfish: He q^oáġ^oíná (q^oáġ^ois "mudshark")
- (123) q^oay to blacken: Kw(B) q!wāx^u-; Sh q^oiy- "black", Ka q^oai id.
- (124) q^oum high in rank: Kw(B) q!ōm- "rich"
- (125) q^oumsxiwa white man: He q^om'xsiwà; Ts(H) k'amksiwa
- (126) ǎ^os-an-im gamble (cf. ǎ^ois-m "to play"): Ts(H) xsan
- (127) hauhau mythical bird: He(B) hau'au; Ts(B) hauhau'
- (128) apx^o to lift up: Ts(H) aapxin "light of weight"
- (129) aml spring salmon: He(B) ǎǎ'mLē "salmon" (mythical name)
- (130) acaya fox: He(B) ā'tsa7ya

- (131) alk^o messenger for a feast: Kw ǎlk^u "chief's attendant"(B)
 ((B) ǎlk^u "speaker")
- (132) aʎa to build a canoe: He áʎ-à
- (133) ak^o na sea canoe: Kw(G) xwák^wʎəna, Rivers Inlet(B) xwā^ˈk!ǎna
- (134) ax^oni small kind of bird: He ǎx^oʎǎx^oni "thrush"
- (135) iǎiǎi snow goose: He ǎiǎiǎi
- (136) i7ǎsa medicine: He íǎsá (íq- "to heal", íq-às "Kurort")
 (N.B. Bc nu-7i7ǎsn-uc-ta "poison")
- (137) yatn rattle: He yádñ, Kw(B) yat- "to rattle"
- (138) yaw hi, hullo!: He yáw
- (139) uq^ou7ni throat: He q^oúq^oúni, Kw(S) ququna
- (140) wac dog: He wácà (wás-à "to hunt with dogs"), Kw(B) 7was-;
 Th wacama "to bark" (? cf. Ts(B) wa'ts!a "otter")
- (141) walasya lynx: He(B) 7wa'lasya (wálà "big", -(x)sya "tooth"),
 Kw(B) 7wā'lasx'ǎ ("large-toothed")
- (142) waǎcya corona around moon: He wáq^o-k^o nùsiyǎx^o ("cape")
- (143) waǎ-waǎcya offspring: He wǎx^o-úyá
- (144) way well, OK: He(B) wai-, Kw(B) wǎ; Ts(B) wai
- (145) win-a (wage) war: He wíná, Kw(B) wīn-
- (146) wiǎax antler: He wǎm, Kw(B) wuL!ǎ'x

We observe the following sound-correspondences:

- a) Bc /p/ vs. /a/: 9, 12, 13, 15, 31, 32, 63, 66, 84, 97, 101, 102, 103. One can assume, that Bc has dropped the vowel, as it often has;
- b) Bc /c/ vs. /s/: 36, 63, 96, 110. This, too, appears to be a typical Bc innovation;
- c) Bc /ɬ/ vs. /ʎ/, /ʎ/: 57, 66, 69, 70, 98, 129. To be expected, since Bc lacks both /ʎ/ and /ʎ/;
- d) Bc /ǎ/ vs. /q/: 38, 82, 110. Quite common within Bc itself;
- e) Bc /x/, /ǎ/ vs. /x^o/, /ǎ^o/: 93, 94, 121. In Bc velars and uvulars are usually delabialized after /u/: e.g. tu7tk^oni diminutive of tuka "mink" (*tuk^on)

The Bc-Wakash correspondences are by far in the majority: they constitute over 75% of the inventory. A fair number of them can be identified as being of Wakashan origin:

- a) a suffix may give evidence for this: 35, 39, 70, 73, 77, 94, 98, 136, 141;

- b) the Wakashan equivalent may be older: 1. Bc has dropped the vowel (sound-corr. a): 9, 23, 84, 92, 97, 101, 103; 2. Bc has /t/ vs. /ʔ/ or /tʰ/ (sound-corr. c): 57, 66, 67, 69, 70, 98, 129 (it is improbable, that Wakash has borrowed these from Bc: in that case it would have preserved /tʰ/); 3. Bc /c/ vs. /s/ (sound-corr. b): 63, 96, 110; 4. Bc C vs. Ć: 79, 141; 5. Bc /K/ continues * /K^o/ (sound-corr. e): 93, 94, 121; 6. Bc lacks a phoneme: 133, 139, 140; 7. Bc /x̣/ continues * /q/ (sound-corr. d): 110;
- c) it may concern a cultural item, flora or fauna: these items are restricted to Bc and He + Kw: therefore it seems likely that they go back to Wakashan: 2, 3, 7, 8, 13, 18, 19, 25, 28, 29, 33, 43, 45, 56, 58, 59, 62, 70, 71, 74, 75, 77, 80, 85, 86, 87, 91, 93, 97, 102, 108, 109, 112, 115, 116, 118, 121, 137, 139, 140, 141, 145, 146 and probably also 12, 30, 63, 98, though the latter have Salish equivalents.

The items that stand these three criteria, are open to further comparison: 10, 11, 14, 22, 43, 65, 85, 88, 89, 91, 118, 145, 146.

The Wakash-Salish parallels form about 10% of our corpus.

Of them, 37, 78 and 120 can probably be traced back to proto-Salish. Problematic are: 1, 4, 5, 15, 17, 20, 123, 140.

4, 17, 123 and 140 were noted by neither Boas nor Swadesh.

As to their origin, one should not venture upon speculations.

To label them as Mosan would be premature, as additional data might prove them to belong to either the Wakashan or the Salishan stock (or to some substratum). The Mosan reconstructions of some Bc items as suggested by Swadesh are far-fetched and in some cases unwarranted due to incorrect morphological interpretation:

Swadesh suggests Mosan nay- underlying Bc ni7x̣^o "fire", while this obviously goes back to n(u)-i7x̣^o, cf. i7x̣^o "to burn";

for nuyam̩ "song" Swadesh reconstructs Mosan na(w)-, law-: this item should, however, be interpreted as nu-yam̩, cf. kis-yam̩ "person that can't sing", nu-s-yam̩ "good singer";

Mosan lay(m)- is reconstructed for Bc alixlix "boiled": here we are dealing with a mis-spelling or -recording of a-lixlix, a- meaning "in a ... state", lix-lix "ripe, done, cooked".

Bc-Ts: 21, 36, 99, 114, 126, 128.

Bc-Ts-Wakash: 60, 97, 100, 110, 117, 125, 127, 144.

Salish-Ts: 31.

Salish-Ts-Wakash: 44, 47, 68, 105.

At this point we are left with a relatively high number of undiscussed items: with the exception of 16, 24 and 53, which contain rather doubtful correspondences, they concern exclusive Bc-He and Bc-Kw parallels. Presumably of Wakashan origin: 26, 34, 48, 51, 52, 55, 76, 81, 83, 90, 104, 106, 111, 122, 130, 131, 132, 134, 135. Of undecided (so far) status are: 6, 27, 40, 41, 42, 46, 49, 50, 52, 54, 61, 64, 72, 95, 107, 113, 119, 124, 138, 142, 143.

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Errata in "Lexical comparisons between Bella Coola and neighbouring languages", Dutch contributions to the 9th international conference on Salish languages.

- Page 8: 9th line from the top: add 82
- 10th " " " " : read " ... flora and fauna or parts
of the body"
- 13th " " " " : add 30, 52, 57, 67, 69, 76, 79, 84
- 14th " " " " : add 92, 94, 96, 98, 101, 103, 110
omit 91
- 15th " " " " : add 129, 133
omit 140, 145
- 16th " " " " : omit 98
- 18th " " " " : omit 43, 85, 118, 146
- Page 9: 8th " " " " : omit 52
- 9th " " " " : omit 76
- 11th " " " " : omit 52