

The distribution of possessive applicatives in Interior Salish Languages

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Interior Salish languages differ in the number of redirective applicative suffixes they have. The Northern Interior languages have only the general redirective suffix *-xi, which is used in a variety of applicative constructions such as Dative, Benefactive, Malefactive, and Possessive. In the Southern Interior languages, a couple of other applicative suffixes have developed, encroaching on the semantics of the general applicative suffix. In this paper, I examine 'possessor' constructions with -ʃ. I show that the applied object in -ʃ applicatives is not always the possessor of the theme and also that the theme object does not always take possessive marking. I propose that the key unifying feature of possessive applicatives is that they place more focus on the theme NP than other applicative constructions do.

1 Introduction

The Salish family consists of 23 languages spoken in British Columbia, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington. Salish languages are famous for their polysynthetic properties, and the verb consists of a stem as a base and one or more affixes and clitics. The applicative is one type of verbal suffix. Applicative suffixes appear on the verb when the grammatical direct object refers to a non-thematic noun phrase, such as a recipient, beneficiary, possessor, goal, or psychological stimulus. Kiyosawa (1999, 2002) has shown that Salish languages have from two to six different applicative suffixes, and that Salish applicative suffixes fall into two types—redirective and relational. This paper addresses redirective applicatives.

In redirective applicative constructions, the verb stem is usually transitive, and the direct object role is redirected to a non-theme nominal—the applied object. For example, we can see the syntactic effect of the applicative suffix by comparing (1a) with (1b):¹

¹ I have standardized hyphenations and glosses in the cited examples and regularized the orthography following Kroeber (1999). The following abbreviations are used in glossing the data: ART article, ASP aspect, AUX auxiliary, BEN benefactive applicative, DET determiner, ERG ergative, INCHO inchoative, IMP: imperative, LOC locative, NOM nominalizer, OBJ object, OBL oblique, PL plural, POS possessor applicative, POSS possessive marker, PTC particle, Q interrogative, RDR redirective applicative, REL relational applicative, SG singular, SUB subject, TR transitive.

Basically, Salish languages have at least one redirective suffix, usually *-xi the general redirective suffix. The exceptions to this are Bella Coola, which has a general applicative -amk, Sliammon/Comox and Sechelt, which have a different redirective suffix *-VmV instead of *-xi, and Halkomelem, which has developed two new redirective suffixes: a dative marked with -as and a benefactive marked with -íc.³ Upper Chehalis has three redirective forms: *-xi, *-VmV, and -tuxʷ/-txʷ. The semantic difference among them is not clear from the English glosses, but according to Kinkade (1998) *-xi marks datives, *-VmV marks datives and benefactives, and -tuxʷ/-txʷ marks possessors.

In the case of the Interior languages, Northern Interior Salish languages have only one redirective applicative, *-xi, while Southern Interior Salish languages have innovated a couple of additional applicative suffixes, -f and -túf. These new suffixes have encroached on the territory of the general redirective suffix *-xi. In so doing, the redirective suffixes in Southern Interior specialize in their semantics and also add distributional requirements not present in other branches. In this paper, I examine the properties of the applicatives more closely, focusing especially on the nature of the theme.

2 Semantic properties of redirective applicatives

The semantic role of the applied object in redirective applicatives is usually goal (2), benefactive (3), malefactive (4), or possessive (5).

• Goal

(2) *Spokane* (Carlson 1980: 24)

xʷíč-š-t-ən	ɫuʷ	Agnes	ɫuʷ	t	yámǰʷeʷ.
gave-RDR-TR-1SG.SUB	ART	Agnes	ART	OBL	basket

'I gave a basket to Agnes.'

• Benefactive

(3) *Okanagan* (N. Mattina 1993: 265)

Mary	ʰac-xít-s	iʷ	t	snkíčaʷsqáxaʷ	iʷ	ttwít.
Mary	tie-RDR:TR-3ERG	ART	OBL	horse	ART	boy

'Mary tied the horse for the boy.'

• Malefactive

(4) *Thompson* (Thompson & Thompson 1980: 28)

ʷúqʷeʷ-x-cm-s	tə	tíy.
//ʷúqʷeʷ-xi-t-sem-es//	OBL	tea

drink-RDR-TR-1SG.OBJ-3ERG

'She drank my tea up on me.'

³ See Gerds and Hinkson (1996, 2003) for the discussion of how the Halkomelem redirective suffixes developed from lexical suffixes.

• Possessive

(5) *Okanagan* (N. Mattina 1993: 265)

Mary	ʕác-ł-t-s	iʔ	ttwít	iʔ	kəwáp-s.
Mary	tie-POS-TR-3ERG	ART	boy	ART	horse-3POSS

'Mary tied the boy's horse (for him).'

It is not unusual for languages to have a single applicative morpheme that is used in a variety of applicative constructions including Dative, Benefactive, and Possessive. Languages that exemplify this are Swahili (Driever 1976), Mayan languages (Aissen 1987), and Mixean languages (Zavala 1999). In fact, it is generally the case that possessive applicative constructions (aka "possessor ascension" or "external possession constructions") do not have simple possessor semantics, but rather have an additional semantic "kick" indicating that the possessor is "affected" by the action (cf. Fried 1999). But, rarely, in other languages, for example Kinyarwanda (Kimenyi 1980), *Tukang Besi* (Donohue 1999), and *Yimas* (Foley 1991), there may be two or more applicative morphemes, correlating to the difference in the semantic role of the applied object.

In Interior Salish languages, we find both types of patterns. To be more precise, in the Northern Interior Salish languages (Lillooet, Shuswap, and Thompson), a single morpheme is used for all the redirective applicative constructions, thus arising in ambiguities. For example, Thompson uses the general redirective suffix *-xi* for dative (6a), benefactive (6b), malefactive (6c), and possessive (6d) usages:

(6) *Thompson* (Thompson and Thompson 1980: 27, 28, 32)

a. kʷiʔxtis.

//kʷiʔ-xi-t-ey-es//
show-RDR-TR-1PL.OBJ-3SUB
'She shows it to us.'

b. ʕʷyáqsxcms.

//ʕʷəy=aqs-xi-t-sem-es//
burn=nose-RDR-TR-1SG.OBJ-3SUB
'He turned on the light for me.'

c. ʔúqʷeʔxcms tə tífy.

//ʔúqʷeʔ-xi-t-sem-es//
drink-RDR-TR-1SG.OBJ-3SUB OBL tea
'She drank my tea up on me.'

d. ʔe piʔ-p-xí-cm-xʷ tə n-ǰwísqn.
might lose-INCHO-RDR-TR:1SG.OBJ-2SG.SUB OBL 1SG.POSS-ax
'You might lose my ax.'

(13) *Okanagan* (A. Mattina 1985: 279)

kʷu ʃaʔ-ł-t-is axáʔ iʔ skəkʰákaʔ.
 1SG.OBJ look.for-POS-TR-3SG.SUB DEICTIC ART bird
 'He looked for the (i.e. someone's) birds for me.'

The English translation still implies that the themes are possessed. The suffix *-ł* is also used for a dative construction with the implication of a definite theme. Compare (14a), which is a dative construction with *-xit*, with (14b):

(14) *Okanagan* (A. Mattina 1994: 210)

- a. haʔ kʷu a-ks-xʷíć-łt-əmʔ
 Q 1SG.OBJ 2SG.POSS-ASP-give-RDR:TR-m
 'Are you going to give things to me?' (something indefinite)
- b. haʔ kʷu a-ks-xʷíć-ł-t-əmʔ
 Q 1SG.OBJ 2SG.POSS-ASP-give-POS-TR-m
 'Are you going to give it to me?' (something definite)

Although it is not clear from examples (14a, b), themes are oblique phrases in the general redirective constructions with *-xit*, as in (3) above, and bare phrases in redirective constructions with *-ł* in Okanagan⁶ as well as the other Southern Interior Salish languages.⁷ It is not unexpected for oblique NPs to get indefinite readings while bare NPs get definite readings.

To summarize, we see that conditions like the following apply to possessive applicatives in Southern Interior Salish:

- (15) a. The applied object and the possessor of the theme have to be coreferential.
 b. The theme has to be possessed, but does not have to be coreferential with the applied object.
 c. The theme has to be definite.

I claim that these conditions developed historically from (15a) to (15b) and then to (15c). Most data, such as (5) and (10), are consistent with (15a). Some data, such as (11) and (13), contradict (15a), but still the theme has to be marked

⁶ Note that the theme NP is case-marked differently in the two types of applicatives. The theme is a direct case NP in the possessor applicative construction as in example (5). The theme is an oblique phrase in the general redirective applicative construction as in example (3). N. Mattina (1996: 47, 48) points out that though the theme nominals are case-marked differently, they both undergo extraction, even though other oblique phrases cannot extract. This leads her to claim that 'they are neither direct nor oblique arguments.'

⁷ In *-xi* applicatives in Northern Interior Salish, themes are oblique phrases in Thompson and Shuswap, but bare phrases in Lillooet.

possessive and thus conforms to (15b). In rare cases, such as (14b), possession is no longer an issue; the status of the theme NP though is relevant.

It is thus more plausible to conclude that the referentiality of the theme is the key to the applicative suffix *-ɬ*, rather than the semantic role of the applied object as possessor. In other words, the function of 'possessive' applicatives to express possessors as applied objects no longer pertains in all cases.

4 Spokane *-ɬ*

Applicative constructions with *-ɬ* in Spokane exhibit more variety than in the other Southern Interior Salish languages. Recall that the applicative morpheme *-tuɬ* is not found in Spokane. Besides possessor (16a), *-ɬ* also takes applied objects labeled by Carlson (1980) as 'informant' (16b) and 'source' (16c):

(16) *Spokane* (Carlson 1980: 25, 26)

- a. *mús-ɬ-t-ən* *ɬuʔ* Albert *sənʔurʃícti-s*.
 feel-POS-TR-1SG.SUB ART Albert stove-3POSS
 'I felt Albert's stove.'
- b. *séw-ɬ-t-ən*.
 ask-POS-TR-1SG.SUB
 'I asked about that of him.'
- c. *kʷúɬi-ɬ-t-ən*.
 borrow-POS-TR-1SG.SUB
 'I borrowed it from him.'

Both informant and source applied objects can be interpreted as possessors. The translation in (16b) implies that the information belongs to 'him', and also the borrowed item in (16c) belongs to 'him' as well.

When full NPs appear in the possessive applicative construction, the applied objects get split into two types in Spokane. Example (17a) is a simple transitive construction. In (17b), a *-ɬ* applicative, the benefactive 'you' is the applied object.

- (17) a. *Spokane* (Carlson 1980: 24)
 ʔulə-nt-en.
 burn-TR-1SG.SUB
 'I burned him/her/it.'

- b. *Spokane* (Carlson 1972: 89)
 ʔul-ɪ-cí-n.
 //wil-ɪ-t-si-e-n//
 burn-POS-TR-2SG.(S)OBJ-1SG.SUB
 'I burned it for you.'

In contrast, the benefactive NP is in a prepositional phrase in example (18), even though the verb takes the applicative suffix.

- (18) *Spokane* (Carlson 1980: 24)
 kʷúl-ɪ-t-ən ɪuʔ yámxʷeʔ ɪuʔ xʷəl Agnes.
 make-POS-TR-1SG.SUB ART basket ART for Agnes
 'I made a basket for Agnes.'

If this were a possessive applicative construction, both NPs should be bare phrases as in (19):

- (19) *Spokane* (Carlson 1980: 25)
 mús-ɪ-t-ən ɪuʔ Albert sənʔuršícti-s.
 feel-POS-TR-1SG.SUB ART Albert stove-3POSS
 'I felt Albert's stove.'

We can speculate that the reason why the benefactive in (18) is a prepositional phrase is that Spokane cannot have two bare NPs, unless the theme is marked possessive. Similarly, in the Columbian example (20), the benefactive 'Mary' appears in a prepositional phrase, and the theme is not marked possessive:

- (20) *Columbian* (Kinkade 1980: 34)
 ʔacyáy-ɪ-n sttám̄tam̄ kíl Mary.
 weave-POS:TR-1SG.SUB bag LOC Mary
 'I'm weaving a bag for Mary.'

In contrast, in (21) the theme 'letter' is marked possessive, and the benefactive 'Mary' is a bare phrase.

- (21) *Columbian* (Kinkade 1980: 34)
 ǰíy-ɪ-taʔ ǰiʔmín-s Mary!
 write-POS:TR-IMP letter-3POSS Mary
 'Write a letter for Mary!'

Why then is the benefactive in (18, 20) in a prepositional phrase?

It might be insightful to compare the Spokane data in (18) (repeated here as (22a)) with that in (22b):

(22) *Spokane* (Carlson 1980: 24)

- a. kʷúl-ł-t-ən łuʔ yámχʷeʔ łuʔ χʷəl Agnes.
 make-POS-TR-1SG.SUB ART basket ART for Agnes
 'I made a basket for Agnes.'
- b. kʷúl-š-t-ən łuʔ Agnes łuʔ t yámχʷeʔ.
 make-RDR-TR-1SG.SUB ART Agnes ART OBL basket
 'I made a basket for Agnes.'

As seen in (22b), the theme appears in an oblique phrase in the general redirective construction with *-š* (*-*xi*). Having the theme in the *-ł* applicative in (22a) as a plain NP rather than in a prepositional phrase allows it to be differentiated from the theme of the general redirective construction. In addition, as Carlson (1980: 24) explains, the difference between (22a) and (22b) is a question of focus. Although it is not obvious from the translations, he says (22a) puts focus on the theme while (22b) puts focus on the benefactive.

We might speculate that the notion of "focus" might in fact be subsumed under the concept of "referentiality". Perhaps by degrading the benefactive in (22a), the implication that the benefactive is the possessor of the theme no longer pertains. So Spokane example (22a) would parallel Columbian example (20). In both cases, 'possessive' applicatives no longer function solely to express that the possessor is the applied object.

5 Conclusion

Northern Interior Salish has the general redirective suffix: *-*xi*, which is used in a variety of applicative constructions such as Dative, Benefactive, Malefactive, and Possessive. The concept of redirective applicative has become differentiated in Southern Interior Salish as shown in Table 3.

		Benefactive	Malefactive	Dative	Possessive
NIS (Li, Sh, Th)		*- <i>xi</i>			
SIS	Sp/Ka	*- <i>xi</i>			-ł
	Ok, Cr, Cm	*- <i>xi</i>	*- <i>xi</i> , - <i>tuł</i>	-ł	

Table 3: Redirective applicatives in Interior Salish

The Southern Interior languages not only have reflexes of *-*xi* but other redirectives as well. The redirective suffix *-ł* appears in all Southern Interior Salish languages, and the redirective suffix *-tuł* appears in Okanagan, Columbian, and Coeur d'Alene, but not in Spokane/Kalispel. In this paper, I examined various redirective constructions, focusing on 'possessor' constructions with *-ł*. As shown in examples (11)–(14), and also summarized in (15), the applied object in the "possessive" applicative is not always the possessor of the theme NP.

Given the current distribution of *-i*, it is reasonable to claim that it started as a marker for possessive applicatives. Perhaps the drive to disambiguate the general redirective applicative construction led to the innovation of additional applicative morphology. However, the function of 'possessive' applicatives as having possessors for applied objects has become unnecessary in some constructions. Possessors do not have to be specified, since it is usually the possessor that benefits from the action affecting the theme object or that will own the theme object as a result of a transaction. Instead of the possessor, the theme NP gets focused for two reasons; (a) the theme is definite by virtue of being possessed and (b) the theme NP appears without a preposition or oblique case marker. Focused theme NPs in possessive applicatives thus contrast with theme NPs in the general redirective constructions, which are indefinite and expressed as obliques. Therefore, the referentiality of the theme NP is relevant in all the Southern Interior languages.

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