

The Morph /-(ə)b/ in Snohomish¹

The morph /-(ə)b/² occurs as a verb suffix in a variety of environments. In most cases its significance is elusive. The problem is to determine how many different morphemes are represented by it and, if possible, their meaning or grammatical function.

/-b/ has cognates in most, if not all, Salish languages. In the Straits group it is realized as /-ŋ/.³ In Tillamook it is /-w/. In all other languages, so far as I know, it is /-m/. Thus the problem is of general Salish interest. It is hoped that our combined knowledge will provide new insights.

1 Snohomish is a northern dialect of Puget Salish.

I am indebted to Professor Laurence C. Thompson to whom I owe a very large share of my present understanding to the language.

2 The /ə/ is epenthetic. It occurs when /-b/ is preceded by a consonant other than /l/ and is either final or followed by /ə/.

3 In Lummi a few cognate forms are found with /-m/ in stead of the usual /-ŋ/.

/-b/ occurs in the following general environments:

1. as a theme constituent
2. as a derivational suffix
3. as an inflectional suffix
4. as a component in pronominal object suffixes.

The details of these environments are as follows.

1. root - b This construction is a theme. Themes are the fundamental descriptive unit of the Snohomish verb. (There are three other theme types.) The roots involved belong to two classes, those always bound to /-b/ and those that can occur with other suffixes or none.

Themes characterized by the suffix /-b/ belong to several subclasses on the basis of the kind of transitive expansion possible.

1.i. Most members of this class are never found with a transitive suffix. The few that are take {-T} 'general transitive'.⁴ These themes express inherent qualities such

4 This morpheme has the shape /-(e)d/ under the same conditions listed for the morph /-(e)b/ in footnote 2. Its other allomorphs are discussed as they appear in subsequent sections of the paper.

{-T} is variously glossed as 'him, her, it, them' as context requires. However, it is a transitive marker. It is not a pronominal suffix.

as taste, size or shape, and conditions of weather. They also designate involuntary physical reactions. Examples:

/xá l əb/	salty	/q ^w əš ə b/	smoke
/q ^w á g wəb/	sweet	/q ^w š á b/	fog
/č á pəb/	sour	/l é cəb/	light rain
/t á cəb/	bitter	/q á xəb/	cloud
/s á jəb/	tall	/p á həb/	haze
/cq ^w á b/	tight	/č é bəb/	shiver
/p ú k ^w əb/	pile, hill	/č é lpəb/	itch
/q é lb/	rain	/h á səb/	sneeze

A very few members of this class do take a transitive suffix, {-T}, e.g., /xá**l**əb-əd/ 'salt it' and /p**ú**k^wəb-əd/ 'pile it up'. (On the basis of /xá**l**əbəd/ one would expect */q^wá**g**wəbəd/ and */č**á**pəbəd/ meaning 'sweeten it' and 'make it sour'. However, neither is possible.)

1.ii. Themes of this group can take the transitive suffix {-tu} 'causative'. Most of them express various vocalizations and intransitive motions. Compare the following:

/t í lib/	sing	/t í lib-tx ^w / ⁵	play radio, phonograph
/x á yəb/	laugh	/x á yəb-tx ^w /	smile at him
/x ^w ú y ub/	sell	/x ^w ú y ub-tx ^w /	sell him
/s á x ^w əb/	jump, run	/s á x ^w əb-tx ^w /	kidnap him
/t í čib/	wadc, swim	/t í čib-tx ^w /	make him wade out

Many of these themes can be expanded by means of a

5 /-tx^w/ is an allomorph of {-tu}.

secondary stem suffix {-i-}. These secondary stems always take {-T}:

/xáyəb-i-d/ laugh at him
/x^wúyub-i-d/ sell to him
/sáx^wəb-i-d/ run after him
/fíčib-i-d/ wade out after him

1.iii. The roots in the themes of this group are not bound to /-b/; and /-b/ contrasts with {-T}:

/łíči-b/	cut cattails for mats	/łíči-d/	cut it
/yíqi-b/	make baskets	/yíqi-d/	weave it
/yéc-əb/	inform	/yéc-əd/	report him
/xág ^w ə-b/ ⁶	make mats	/xág ^w ə-d/	stitch it
/yáxə-b/ ⁶	carry water	/yáxə-d/	dip it out

Several of these themes resemble subclass 1.ii in that they occur with {-tu}, e.g., /łíč-b-tx^w/ 'take her along to cut cattails for mats'; /yéc-əb-tx^w/ 'inform him'.

Some roots in 1.iii have two allomorphs. With {-T} the shape is CVCV-; with /-b/ it is CVC, e.g., /píl-əb/ 'flat', /píli-d/ 'flatten it'; /súb-əb/ 'emit odor', /súbu-d/ 'smell it'.

1.iv. root-á-b Secondary themes are formed by the suffix

6 This /ə/ is not epenthetic. It occurs in place of weakly stressed /a/.

{-a-} 'specialized'. Some of these are characterized by /-b/ thus forming subclasses of groups 1.i - 1.iii:

Secondary themes		Primary themes	
/q ^w cáb/	slip	/q ^w éc-əd/	slide it
/q ^w šáb/	fog	/q ^w éšəb/	smoke
/(sə [?] -)sx ^w áb/	broad jump ⁸	/sáx ^w əb/	jump, run

2. stem - b As a derivational suffix (and not a theme constituent) /-b/ occurs in four environments.

2.i. theme - lexical - b Here /-b/ is partner to forms comprising a theme plus lexical suffix(es). In this environment, as in 1.iii above, it contrasts with {-T}. This post lexical /-b/ resembles the medio-passive of Indo-European languages by indicating an act performed in connection with one's own being or possessions:

Suffix /-b/		Suffix /-d/	
/dág ^w -abəc-əb/	wash own body	/dág ^w -abəc-əd/	wash his body
/ɣág ^w -ida-b/	take own clothing off	/ɣág ^w -ida-d/	take his clothing off
/ɣíč [?] -ači-b/	cut own hand	/ɣíč [?] -ači-d/	cut his hand

⁸ More specifically, this form designates a contest similar to the broad jump but involving two successive leaps.

Lexical suffixes also follow themes characterized by

/-b/, i.e., 1.i - 1.iv:

/čəlpəb-ábəc/ itch on body

/təs-əb-áʔɫ-dəɫ/ chapped lips

/q^wc-á-b-šəd/ foot slipped

However, these forms never take post lexical /-b/. That is, there is no form consisting of root - b - lexical - b. This complementary distribution suggests that 2.i belongs to the same morpheme as 1.

2.ii. stem - b-i-T⁹ Here /-b/ is a member of the constitute /-b-i-d/. This constitute follows all theme classes except those characterized by /-b/. /-b/ alone cannot occur wherever /-b-i-d/ is possible. Compare /x^wúyubid/ 'sell to him' (page 3) and /ʔúɸbid/¹⁰ 'seat self on his lap'. The structures are different. In the former, the root /x^wuyu/ never occurs without /-b/, and /x^wúyub/ does occur without /-i-d/. In the latter, the root /ʔup(u)/ is found with /-b/ only when /-b/ is a member of the constitute /-b-i-d/. This complementary distribution indicates that /-b/ of themes and the /-b/of /-b-i-d/ are the same.

9 Compare /-wi/ and /-win/ in Tillamook. May M. Edel, The Tillamook language, IJAL 10.28, 32 (1939).

10 Compare with /ʔúɸ/ 'happen to sit on his lap', /ʔúɸu-d/ 'he holds her on his lap', /ʔúɸ-tx^w/ 'seat her on someone else's lap'. Neither */ʔupub/ nor */ʔupəb/ is possible.

2.iii. $dx^w/?ex^w$ - stem - b /-b/ is a suffix to secondary stems formed by the compositional prefixes $\{dx^w-\}$ and $\{?ex^w-\}$. As in 2.i, "medio-passive" seems to fit the significance of /-b/:

$/?u-dx^w-lid^wus-\underline{eb}/$ He painted his face.
 $/?ex^w-slék^w\acute{e}d-\underline{eb}/$ He wants to eat it.
 $/?ex^w-slèk^w\acute{e}dx^wyít\acute{e}b-\underline{eb}/^{11}$ They want to eat it in place of her.
 $/?u-dx^w-sx^w\acute{a}?\acute{i}lu\acute{z}-\underline{eb}/$ He needs to urinate.

2.iv. noun -áb The noun suffix $\{-ab\}$ 'by means of' may prove to be derived from the secondary theme suffix $\{-a-\}$ 'specialized', 1.iv., plus the /-b/ in question. Compare the following constructions with those in 1.iv, pages 4 and 5:

$/sx\acute{e}y\acute{u}s-\underline{áb}/$ by means of the head
 $/sx\acute{e}y\acute{u}s\acute{a}b\ t\acute{e}\ s\acute{e}skliss./$ He is standing on his head.
 $/sx\acute{e}y\acute{u}s/$ head
 $/\acute{c}\acute{e}l\acute{e}s-\underline{áb}/$ by means of the hands
 $/\acute{c}\acute{e}l\acute{e}s\acute{a}b\ t\acute{e}\ s\acute{e}?\acute{i}b\acute{e}\acute{s}s./$ He is walking on his hands.
 $/\acute{c}\acute{a}l\acute{e}s/$ hand

11 /-yi-/ is one allomorph of the suffix $\{-I-\}$ 'in place of'. This morpheme is not a benefactive. Although it can mean to do something for someone as a favor; it also means the opposite. Here it means to steal from her.

The first morph /-eb/, not underlined, is discussed in 3., page 8.

- /pùt-áb/ (arrive) by boat
/pút/¹² boat
- /dìlbid-áb/ (arrive) by vehicle
/dílbid/¹³ vehicle (including any type of canoe)

3. /-b/ as an inflectional suffix signals syntactic relationships and often implies a primary interest in the recipient of an act. /-b/ is found after all transitive suffixes and after the secondary stem suffix {-i-}:

- /k^wədá-t-əb/¹⁴ He was grabbed.
/pús-du-b čəd/ Someone hit me by throwing something.
/sáx^wəb-tu-b čəx^w/ You were kidnapped.
/ʔúx^w-c-əb/ Someone came after him.
/xál-i-b/ It was put on her.

12 This form derives ultimately from English boat.

13 Compare with /díli-d/ 'load it' and /díl-ag^w-il/ 'board, mount'. The constitute /-b-i-d/ is discussed in 2.ii, page 6.

14 /-t-/ is an allomorph of {-T}. See footnote 4, page 2.

column 1 follow {-T} 'general transitive'; those in column 2 are found elsewhere.

Paradigms like the following suggest an analysis into four morphemes for (2) and (4) (e.g., /šú-du-b-š/, /šú-du-b-ut/) with /-b-/ in all four forms assigned to the same morpheme:

(1) /šúdub/ be seen

(2) /šúdubš/ see me

(3) /šúdubuž/ see us

(4) /šúdubut/ see self

Historically, such an interpretation is probably correct, but for two reasons it is less desirable synchronically. A consideration of forms with {-T}, e.g., /k^wədá-d/ 'grab it', points to a different analysis:

	theme	trans.	goal	
A 1	k ^w ədá-	t-	əb	be grabbed
2	šú-	du-	b	be seen
<hr/>				
B 1	k ^w ədá-	t-	s ¹⁶	grab me
2	šú-	du-	bš	see me
1	k ^w ədá-	t-	ubuž	grab us
2	šú-	du-	buž	see us
1	k ^w ədá-	c- ¹⁷	ut	grab self
2	šú-	du-	but	see self

16 The suffix sequence /-t-s/ is replaced by /c/.

17 /-c-/ is an allomorph of {-T}. See footnote 4, page 2.

There are two considerations. First, with this second analysis all verb classes have equivalent inflection. If B₂ were analyzed into /šú-du-b-š/ (and so on for the plural and reflexive), there would be nothing in B₁ corresponding to /-b-/.

Second, B₁ and B₂ occur in identical syntactic environments. The same is true for A₁ and A₂. Directive phrases expressing actor can follow both A forms but neither B₁ nor B₂. Pronominal particles like /čəž/ 'we, us' are recipients (goals) of the action in both A constructions, while they represent the actor in all B forms.

The second analysis makes distributional statements more facile and avoids the dilemma of an "extra" *{b} morpheme of an analysis like /-du-b-š/ which is semantically and syntactically parallel to /-t-s/.

I tentatively conclude that /-b/ in environments 1.i - 1.iv and 2.i - 2.iii represents the same morpheme. It seems to encompass inherent qualities and medio-passive significance. The suffix {-ab} 'by means of', 2.iv, is probably etymologically related to the secondary theme suffix {-a-} plus this /-b/. However, on the basis of the different morphologic and syntactic rôle of /-b/ in environment 3, it is thought to represent a second morpheme.¹⁸ The component /-b/ in environment 4 seems to be historically related to this /-b/ of 3.

Thom Hess
Pacific and Asian Linguistics Institute
University of Hawaii

18 Salishanists working on languages having cognates of this /-b/ have called it 'passive'.