How do you say, "You are our father." in Salish?

Thom Hess

Indian Studies

University of Washington

In Puget Salish the paradigm that designates possession (among other things) has at some time in the past taken one of its forms, the first person plural, from a different series of person markers. In comparing Paradigm I with Paradigm II, it is seen that the form čəɫ of the first person plural occurs in both while each of the other persons and numbers has contrasting forms between the two sets.

dᵊbád	my father	ʔúx̌ʷ čəd	I go
adbád	your father	ʔúx̌ʷ čəxʷ	you go
báds	his father	ʔúx̌ʷ	he goes
bádčəɫ	our father	ʔúx̌ʷ čəɫ	we go
bádləp	father of you (pl)	ʔúx̌ʷ čələp	you (pl) go
Paradigm I		**Paradigm II**	

gʷəʔúx̌ʷəd	if I go
gʷəʔúx̌ʷəxʷ	if you go
gʷəʔúx̌ʷəs	if he goes
gʷəʔúx̌ʷəɫi	if we go
gʷəʔúx̌ʷələp	if you (pl) go
Paradigm III	

By comparing Paradigms II and III, it will also be observed that čə̀ɬ
actually consists of two elements, č- designating an independent predication
and -ə̀ɬ (with alternants -ə̀ɬi ~ -ɑ́ɬ ~ -ɑ́ɬi) marking first person plural. Never-
theless, at some level in the speakers' feeling for the language (and at some
time in the past), the čə̀ɬ was felt to be enough of a single unit that both its
constituents were brought into the absolute paradigm.[1]

However, the integration of this form to the absolute paradigm is not com-
plete. Besides its shape, there are three places in the grammar where -čə̀ɬ
betrays its different origin. One such place is the order of suffixes from the
root. In Paradigm IV it is seen that the absolute suffixes -ləp (~ -lɑ́p) 'sec-
ond person plural' and -s 'third person' occur before the aspectual suffix -əxʷ
(~ -həxʷ ~ -ɑ́xʷ ~ -hɑ́xʷ) 'change of condition' while -čə̀ɬ must follow it. This
position of -čə̀ɬ is the same as that of the subject forms. Compare Paradigms
IV and V.

dᵊsx̌ɑ̀ƛ̓ kʷi gʷədsʔùx̌ʷəxʷ	I want to go now.
dᵊsx̌ɑ̀ƛ̓ kʷi gʷ(ə)adsʔùx̌ʷəxʷ	I want you to go now.
dᵊsx̌ɑ̀ƛ̓ kʷi gʷəsʔùx̌ʷsəxʷ	I want him to go now.
dᵊsx̌ɑ̀ƛ̓ kʷi gʷəsʔùx̌ʷəxʷčə̀ɬ	I want us to go now.
dᵊsx̌ɑ̀ƛ̓ kʷi gʷəsʔùx̌ʷləpəxʷ	I want you (pl) to go now.

Paradigm IV

---

[1] The term _absolute_ is used in preference to _possessive_ because the latter implies
a narrower range of meaning and use than these affixes entail. The term is taken
from Mattina (pp. 37-38, 100) who credits L. C. Thompson for suggesting it.

ʔúx̌ʷəx̌ʷ čəd	I go now.
ʔúx̌ʷəx̌ʷ čəx̌ʷ	You go now.
ʔúx̌ʷəx̌ʷ	He goes now.
ʔúx̌ʷəx̌ʷ <u>čəɫ</u>	We go now.
ʔúx̌ʷəx̌ʷ čələp	You (pl) go now.

<center>Paradigm V</center>

A more dramatic difference in patterning between -<u>čəɫ</u> and the other absolutes is found in Paradigm VI. The expected form for 'You are our

adbád čəd	I am your father.	dᵊbád čəx̌ʷ	You are my father.
báds čəd	I am his father.	báds čəx̌ʷ	You are his father.
bádləp čəd	I am the father of you (pl).	*bádčəɫ čəx̌ʷ	REJECTED

dᵊbád (tiʔiɫ)	He is my father.	dᵊx̌əɫx̌əɫtəd čələp	You are my brothers-in-law.
adbád (tiʔiɫ)	He is your father.		
báds (tiʔiɫ)	He is his father.	x̌əɫx̌əɫtəds čələp	You are his brothers-in-law.
bádčəɫ (tiʔiɫ)	He is our father.	*x̌əɫx̌əɫtədčəɫ čələp	REJECTED
bádləp (tiʔiɫ)	He is the father of you (pl).		

How about "we are your..."?

<center>Paradigm VI</center>

father.', *<u>bádčəɫ</u> <u>čəx̌ʷ</u>, does not occur. Rather one must resort to the independent pronominal series saying either <u>bádčəɫ</u> <u>ti</u> <u>dəgʷí</u> or <u>dəgʷí</u> <u>tə</u> <u>bàdčəɫ</u>. (Both are glossed as 'You are our father.') Two members of the subject series cannot occur in the same predicate. Although functioning in the absolute paradigm, <u>čəɫ</u>

<center>3</center>

is nevertheless perceived to be sufficiently a member of the subject set that the
sequence -čəɬ čəxʷ is not said.

It might be suspected that the ungrammaticality of this sequence is a special
limitation on these two forms. (Such particular restrictions are reported in some
Salish languages.[2]) However, an examination of dependent clauses shows that the
restriction is not thus limited but rather involves all logical sequences of -čəɬ
and subject forms. See Paradigm VII.

gʷ(ə)adx̌əɬtədád	If I am your brother-in-law.	gʷadx̌əɬtəd´axʷ	If you are my brother-in-law.
gʷəx̌əɬtədsád	If I am his brother-in-law.	gʷəx̌əɬtədsáxʷ	If you are his brother-in-law.
gʷəx̌əɬtədləpád	If I am the brother-in-law of you (pl).	*gʷəx̌əɬtədčəɬaxʷ	REJECTED

gʷədx̌əɬtədás	If he is my brother-in-law.	gʷ(ə)adx̌əɬx̌əɬtədáɬi	If we are your brothers-in-law.
gʷ(ə)adx̌əɬtədás	If he is your brother-in-law.		
gʷəx̌əɬtədás	If he is his brother-in-law.	gʷəx̌əɬx̌əɬtədsáɬi	If we are his brothers-in-law.
*gʷəx̌əɬtədčəɬás	REJECTED	gʷəx̌əɬx̌əɬtədlápəɬi	If we are the brothers-in-law of you (pl).
gʷəx̌əɬtədlápəs	If he is the brother-in-law of you (pl).		

gʷədx̌əɬx̌əɬtədáləp	If you are my brothers-in-law.
gʷəx̌əɬx̌əɬtədsáləp	If you are his brothers-in-law.
*gʷəx̌əɬx̌əɬtədčəɬáləp	REJECTED

Paradigm VII

---

[2] For example, in both Halkomelem and Squamish, a third person subject form and a
second person suffix do not cooccur. (Suttles, Constructions; and Kuipers 1967 p.89)

In order to express 'If you are our brother-in-law', one must resort to a construction outside Paradigm VII, e.g., ʔəbíl čəxʷ gʷəx̌əɬtədčəɬ which entails two clauses with čəxʷ in one and -čəɬ in the other: ʔəbíl čəxʷ 'Perhaps you' (independent clause) and gʷəx̌əɬtədčəɬ '(if) our brother-in-law' (dependent clause).

Independent clauses have no overt form for third person in the subject series. Hence, a statement such as bádčəɬ 'He is our father.' is grammatical and appears to fit in Paradigm VI. However, dependent clauses do have a surface third person subject suffix; and again -čəɬ and the subject suffix are mutually exclusive. One cannot say *gʷəbádčəɬəs but must instead say ʔəbíl gʷəbàdčəɬ 'Perhaps he (if) our father.', i.e., 'If he is our father.'

The same limitations prevent sequences of -čəɬ plus either the dependent or independent forms of the second person plural -aləp and čələp. See Paradigms VII and VI.

The fact that -čəɬ is not well integrated into the absolute series suggests that this borrowing is relatively recent. However, comparative evidence points the other way, to a fairly old period when the adoption of -čəɬ occurred. First, the dual role of the first person plural is found in such widely dispersed languages as Thompson and Tillamook. Those known to me are Thompson (Thompson and Thompson n.d. p. 51), Squamish (Kuipers pp.85-87), Halkomelem (Suttles, Pronouns), Upper Chehalis (Kinkade pp. 32-33, 251-252), and Tillamook (Edel pp. 29, 43-44):

	absolute	subject
Thompson	-ket	k-et (for indicative intransitive)
Squamish	-č(a)t	č-(a)t
Halkomelem	-ct	c-(ə)t
Puget	-čəɬ	č-əɬ (-aɬi)

	absolute		subject	
Upper Chehalis	-čɬ		čɬ	(for completive)
Tillamook	-yɪɬ		yɪɬ	

Second, the source formation, i.e., the subject suffix plus the "stem" c̓-, k̲-, etc., has evolved into quite different distributions. For example, in Thompson the source, k̲-et̲, is limited to indicative predications which are intransitive (Thompson and Thompson n.d. pp. 22-51) while in Puget ˇc-əɬ is found in all independent clauses and in no dependent ones regardless of the transitivity of the predicate. Presumably this adoption of the first person plural from one class to another occurred before the diverse developments of the source formation. (Of course, parallel development, i.e. drift, may instead account for the similar adoptions of forms from one paradigm to another.)

Finally, at least two other Salish languages have similar restrictions on the co-occurrence of the first person plural absolute and the second person subject. These are Squamish and Spokane. In factual constructions of the former language both subject and possessive (i.e., absolute) forms are required except for the first person plural which has only the possessive. (Kuipers pp.87, 90-92) In Spokane the first person plural absolute is simply not marked so that k̲ʷ sqélixʷ means either 'You are our Indian.' or 'You are an Indian.' (Carlson pp. 128-129)

It would be interesting to know whether the other Salish languages that have a common first person plural form for absolute and subject also exhibit the limitations of co-occurrence discussed here. It would also be enlightening to know whether or not similar restrictions obtain for languages such as Clallam and Comox which have separate formations for these two classes. (Thompson and Thompson 1971, pp. 261, 286) The study of historical problems depends as much on answers to these sorts of questions as it does on phonological correspondences.

References Cited

Carlson, Barry F. 1972 A grammar of Spokan: a Salish language of Eastern Washington. Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Hawaii.

Edel, May M. 1939 The Tillamook language. IJAL 10: 1-57.

Kinkade, M. Dale. 1963-1964 Phonology and morphology of Upper Chehalis: I-IV. IJAL 29: 181-195, 345-356; 30; 32-61, 251-260.

Kuipers, Aert H. 1967 The Squamish language. The Hague: Mouton.

Mattina, Anthony. 1973 Colville grammatical structure. Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Hawaii.

Suttles, Wayne n.d. Constructions. Dittoed.

_____ n.d. Halkomelem Personal Pronouns. Dittoed.

Thompson, Laurence C and M. Terry Thompson. 1971 Clallam: a preview in Studies in American Indian languages, Jesse Sawyer, ed.

_____ n.d., The Thompson language. Pre-publication version.