

ʔayʔajuθəm Lexical Categories*

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Abstract: Salish languages have famously been claimed not to differentiate lexical categories of verbs, nouns, and adjectives (e.g., Kuipers 1967; Kinkade 1983; Jelinek and Demers 1982, 1994). However, these claims have been countered with evidence for distinct lexical categories in a number of languages, including St'át'imcets (e.g., Van Eijk and Hess 1986; Demirdache and Matthewson 1995; Davis and Matthewson 1999; Davis 2011), Straits (Montler 2003), Nsyilxcən (Lyon 2013), and Hul'q'umi'num' (Gerdt and Schneider 2023). In this paper, I argue that distinct lexical categories of noun, verb, and adjective are also found in ʔayʔajuθəm (a.k.a. Comox-Sliammon). I present syntactic evidence for these categories drawing on tests developed for St'át'imcets (e.g. Davis 2011; Davis and Matthewson 1999; Demirdache and Matthewson 1995). I also present morphological evidence building on observations in Watanabe (2003). These findings reinforce the increasingly prevalent view that nouns, verbs, and adjectives exist throughout the Salish language family.

Keywords: ʔayʔajuθəm (Comox-Sliammon), lexical categories, syntax, morphology

1 Introduction

Lexical categories such as noun, verb, and adjective play an important role in the organization of a language's sentence structure, or **syntax**. Words of the same lexical category share a distribution. In English, for example, nouns appear immediately following determiners and adjectives: *the big {dog, news, building}*. Knowing a word's lexical category is therefore useful for language learners figuring out where the word can appear in a sentence. Establishing lexical categories cross-linguistically is also of interest for our understanding of human language more broadly, since we ultimately want to know whether categories such as noun and verb exist universally across languages (as claimed in, e.g., Chomsky 1965).

Salish languages have famously been claimed to lack lexical categories of verbs, nouns, and adjectives, having a single open class category (e.g., Jelinek and Demers 1982, 1994; Kinkade 1983; Kuipers 1967). However, a series of papers provide important evidence for distinct categories of nouns, verbs, and adjectives in St'át'imcets (e.g., Van Eijk and Hess 1986; Demirdache and Matthewson 1995; Davis and Matthewson 1999; Davis 2011). These arguments have also been replicated for Nsyilxcən (Lyon 2013), and evidence for distinct lexical categories is also available for Lushootseed (Van Eijk and Hess 1986), Straits (Montler 2003), and Hul'q'umi'num' (Gerdt and Schneider 2023).

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In this paper, I extend these arguments to ʔayʔaʃuθəm (a.k.a. Comox-Sliammon; Central Salish). Watanabe (2003:72–76) provides initial evidence from **morphology** (word formation) for lexical categories in ʔayʔaʃuθəm. Building on this evidence, I show that there are distinct categories of nouns, verbs, and adjectives in ʔayʔaʃuθəm, providing both syntactic and morphological evidence for these categories. In the process, I also note where the results of applying the tests used in previous work are inconclusive or give different results for ʔayʔaʃuθəm.

The organization of this paper is as follows. In Section 2, I provide language background for ʔayʔaʃuθəm and situate this paper relative to documentation projects underway. In Sections 3 and 4, I illustrate the difficulties for identifying lexical categories in ʔayʔaʃuθəm, due to the flexibility with which words of different categories are used in different syntactic roles and the prevalence of morphology that applies across categories. In Section 5, I argue for a category of nouns distinct from other open class elements. In Section 6, I argue that verbs and adjectives can also be distinguished for a three-way noun, verb, adjective contrast. In Section 7, I then apply these diagnostics to some challenging cases for categorization. Finally, in 8, I conclude with a discussion of the implications of these findings for the ongoing dictionary project as well as for our understanding of the status of lexical categories in the Salish language family.

2 Language background

ʔayʔaʃuθəm is a Central Salish language, the ancestral language of the Tlaʔamin, Homalco, Klahoose, and Kʔómoks Nations whose traditional territory lies along the northern Georgia Strait in BC. As of 2018, the First Peoples’ Cultural Council reported 47 first language speakers, all over 60, while in 2022, the First Peoples’ Cultural Council reported that only 3% of the population of the traditionally ʔayʔaʃuθəm-speaking peoples identify as fluent.

At the same time, 9% of the population identify as language learners, and there is a dedicated group of language champions documenting, learning, and teaching the language. The language is taught in local schools, a language nest in Homalco, various mentor-apprentice pairings, and adult language classes in Tlaʔamin and Homalco. Tlaʔamin, Homalco, and Klahoose are all contributing documentation to FirstVoices¹ webpages. In addition, the four nations are partnering with linguists on two major documentation projects: a dictionary and a teaching grammar. Both are targeted especially for learners and teachers of the language.

It is in the context of the dictionary project that the question of lexical categories in ʔayʔaʃuθəm is especially pertinent. Including lexical category information in a dictionary can be helpful to readers, especially language learners, aiding understanding of how the words may be used. However, in order for such categorization to accurately reflect the grammar of the language, it is necessary to determine whether/how these lexical categories are grammatically relevant in the language, and language-internal diagnostics for identifying lexical categories are needed. Relying on English translations can, of course, be misleading and risks imposing English grammar on the language.

3 Predicate-argument flexibility in ʔayʔaʃuθəm

The claim that Salish languages lack lexical categories is rooted in the flexibility with which words of different lexical categories are used. In characterizing this flexibility, it is useful to refer to **pred-**

¹ www.firstvoices.com

icates and **arguments**. So, what are predicates and what are arguments? Typical arguments are subjects and objects. A subject is the entity the sentence is about, and every sentence has a subject: *Rex is a dog, the dog barked*. A predicate typically carries the main information of a sentence, telling you something about the subject, such as what the subject is, does, or feels: *Rex is a dog, the dog barked, the dog is excited*. An object is an additional argument found with certain predicates, naming the entity towards which the action or state described by the predicate is directed: *the dog chased the squirrel, the dog loves the cat*. In ʔayʔajuθəm and other Salish languages, the predicate comes first, followed by its arguments.

In this section, I will show that nouns, verbs, and adjectives can all occur initially, functioning as the main predicate, or occur later in the sentence with a preceding determiner, functioning as an argument. In the literature on Salish languages, this is known as **predicate-argument flexibility**. Initial examples from Watanabe (2003) showing nouns, verbs, and adjectives behaving predicatively are given in (1).²

- (1) a. ʔamotč .
 ʔamut=č
 be.home=1SG.SBJ
 ‘I am at home.’ [VERB]
- b. mančxʷəm .
 man=čxʷ=əm
 father=2SG.SBJ=FUT
 ‘You’re going to be a father.’ [NOUN]
- c. Mary kʷətʰ nan .
 Mary kʷ=ətʰ=nan
 Mary DET=1SG.POSS=name
 ‘My name is Mary.’ [NOUN]
- d. pəq tətʰ ʔayεʔ .
 pəq tə=tʰ=ʔayaʔ
 white DET=1SG.POSS=house
 ‘My house is white.’ [ADJECTIVE]
 (Watanabe 2003:66–68)

² The abbreviations used in this paper are: 1=first person, 2=second person, 3=third person, ACT.INTR=active intransitive, CAUS=causative, CHAR=characteristic reduplication, CLD=clausal demonstrative, CLF.PRT=clefting particle, COMP=complementizer, CONJ=conjunction, COP=copula, COS=change-of-state reduplication, CTR=control transitive, DEM=demonstrative, DET=determiner, DIM=diminutive, DPRT=discourse particle, EPEN=epenthetic, ERG=ergative, EXCL=exclusive, EXCLAM=exclamative, F=feminine, FUT=future, INDEF=indefinite, INFER=inferential, INS=instrumental, INT=intensifier, MD=middle, NCTR=non-control transitive, NEG=negative, NMLZ=nominalizer, OBJ=object, OBL=oblique, PASS=passive, PL=plural, POSS=possessive, PRF=perfect, PROG=progressive, PST=past, Q=question particle, RPT=reportative, SBJ=subject, SBJV=subjunctive, SG=singular, STAT=stative, TR=transitive. The top line of each ʔayʔajuθəm example (following the context, if present) is an orthographic representation, while the second line is a roughly phonemic transcription using NAPA. ‘vf’ stands for ‘volunteered form’, a form offered by the speaker, while ‘sf’ stands for ‘suggested form’, a form supplied by the author for the speaker to judge for grammaticality and/or felicity in a given context.

Below, I provided additional examples with the same word serving both as the main predicate and as an argument.

The predicate-argument flexibility of verbs is shown in (2). Here, the verb *wuwuwum* ‘singing’ is first preceded by a determiner as the subject of the sentence in (2a) and then occurs as the main predicate in (2b), while the complex locative predicate *ne? ?ə ta?a* ‘be over there’ occurs as the main predicate in (2a) and then as the subject argument following the determiner *tə* in (2b).³

(2) a. [ne? ?ə ta?a] [tə wuwuwum].
 [ni? ?ə=ta?a] [tə=wu~wuw-əm]
 be.there OBL=DEM DET=PROG~sing-MD
 ‘The singing one is over there.’ (vf | EP.2022/09/16)

b. [wuwuwum] [tə ne? ?ə ta?a].
 [wu~wuw-əm] [tə=ni? ?ə=ta?a]
 PROG~sing-MD DET=be.there OBL=DEM
 ‘The one over there is singing.’ (vf | EP.2022/09/16)

Predicates with noun-like and adjective-like meaning show similar flexibility. In (3a), *čično?* ‘little dog’ appears as the direct object, preceded by the determiner *tə*, while in (3b), *čično?* ‘little dog’ appears in initial position as the main (nominal) predicate. The predicate in (3a), *k^winatəs* ‘s/he is carrying [it]’, appears as the argument in (3b), preceded by a determiner.

(3) a. *Context: We invited Betty for dinner, but she is a little later than we expected, so we’ve been looking out for her. Then I see her coming, and she’s carrying her dog.*
 q^woq^wol ti Betty. [k^winatəs] [tə čično?s].
 q^wə~q^wol=ti Betty [k^win-at-as] [tə=ča<č>nu<?>-s]
 PROG~come=CLD Betty carry-CTR-3ERG DET=dog<DIM>-3POSS
 ‘Betty is coming. She’s carrying her little dog.’ (sf | EP.2023/05/19)

b. *Context: I see Daniel carrying something down on the beach. I’m wondering what it is.*
 tam čε tə k^winatəs... [čično?]a?k^wa [tə k^winatəs].
 tam=ča tə=k^win-at-as [ča<č>nu?] =ala+k^wa [tə=k^win-at-as]
 what=INFER DET=carry-CTR-3ERG dog<DIM>=EXCLAM+RPT DET=carry-CTR-3ERG
 ‘I wonder what he’s carrying... Oh, it’s a puppy he’s carrying.’ (vf | EP.2022/10/29)

The same pattern is found with adjective-like words. The colour term *tat^oem* ‘red’ appears following a determiner to act as the subject in (4a), while the colour term *k^wusem* ‘blue’ appears initially as the main predicate in (4b).

(4) a. *Context: A bunch of kids are looking for Easter eggs. I help one of the kids out.*
 [ne? ?ə ta?a] [tə tat^oem].
 [ni? ?ə=ta?a] [tə=tat^o-im]
 be.there OBL=DEM DET=red-MD
 ‘There’s a red one over there.’ (vf | EP.2022/10/29)

³ The oblique marker *?ə* is often elided, especially in this construction with *ne?* ‘be there’.

- (6) *Context: I'm pointing out my younger brother in a crowd.*
- a. *[tə tumiʃ nɛ? taʔa] tətʰ qɛχ.
 [tə=tumiʃ ni? taʔa] tə=tʰ=qiχ̃
 DET=man be.there DEM DET=1SG.POSS=younger.sibling
 Intended: 'My younger brother is the man over there.'
- b. *[tətʰ qɛχ] tə tumiʃ nɛ? taʔa.
 [tə=tʰ=qiχ̃] tə=tumiʃ ni? taʔa
 DET=1SG.POSS=younger.sibling DET=man be.there DEM
 Intended: 'The man over there is my younger brother.'
- c. hɛʃ [tə tumiʃ nɛ? taʔa] ʔətʰ qɛχ.
 hiʃ [tə=tumiʃ ni? taʔa] ʔə=tʰ=qiχ̃
 COP DET=man be.there DEM CLF.PRT=1SG.POSS=younger.sibling
 'It's the man over there who is my younger brother.' (sf | EP.2023/06/16)

- (7) *Context: Introducing my younger sister.*
- [ʔətʰ qɛχ] θɛʔɛ.
 [ʔətʰ=qiχ̃] θiʔi
 1SG.POSS=younger.sibling F.DEM
 'This is my younger sister.' (vf | EP.2021/01/08)

Similarly, a prepositional phrase cannot occur initially as the main predicate, as shown in (8a). It must be accompanied by an overt verbal locative element, such as *nɛʔ* 'be there'.

- (8) *Context: I notice Felipe's glasses in the living room and figure he might go looking for them later, so I tell him.*
- a. *[ʔə tə kʷanačɫmawtxʷ] θ talahawustən.
 [ʔə=tə=kʷanač-əm-awtxʷ] θ=tala-h-awus-tən
 OBL=DET=sit-MD-room/building 2SG.POSS=dollar-EPEN-eye-INS
 Intended: 'Your glasses are in the living room.'
- b. nɛʔ [ʔə tə kʷanačɫmawtxʷ] θ talahawustən.
 niʔ [ʔə=tə=kʷanač-əm-awtxʷ] θ=tala-h-awus-tən
 be.there OBL=DET=sit-MD-room/building 2SG.POSS=dollar-EPEN-eye-INS
 'Your glasses are in the living room.'
 Consultant's comment: "You would say *nɛʔ*?" (sf | EP.2023/01/14)

Crucially, the overt copula *hɛʃ* is not found when nouns and adjectives are used predicatively, and there is no null copula, or (6a–b) and (8a) would be grammatical. Nouns and adjectives must therefore serve directly as the main predicate when they occur initially in examples like (1) to (5) and (7) above.

Before leaving this section, it is worth mentioning what determines which word appears as the predicate or argument. The predicate position is associated with **focus**, or emphasis, in Salish languages (Davis 2007; Koch 2008). This is illustrated in (9), for instance, repeated from (3) above. In (9a), the verb comes first, which is the default order. In (9b), focus is shifted to what is being

carried, and the noun *čično?* is initial as the predicate.⁵

- (9) a. *Context: We invited Betty for dinner, but she is a little later than we expected, so we've been looking out for her. Then I see her coming, and she's carrying her dog.*

q^woq^wol ti Betty. [k^winatəs] [tə čičnoʔs].
 q^wə~q^wol=ti Betty [k^win-at-as] [tə=ča<č>nu<?>-s]
 PROG~come=CLD Betty carry-CTR-3ERG DET=dog<DIM>-3POSS
 'Betty is coming. She's carrying her little dog.' (sf | EP.2023/05/19)

- b. *Context: I see Daniel carrying something down on the beach. I'm wondering what it is.*

tam čε tə k^winatəs... [čičnoʔ]aʔk^wa [tə k^winatəs].
 tam=ča tə=k^win-at-as [ča<č>nuʔ]=ala+k^wa [tə=k^win-at-as]
 what=INFER DET=caity-CTR-3ERG dog<DIM>=EXCLAM+RPT DET=caity-CTR-3ERG
 'I wonder what he's carrying... Oh, it's a puppy he's carrying.' (vf | EP.2022/10/29)

4 Morphology and lexical categories in ʔayʔajuθəm

The other main motivation for claims that Salish languages lack lexical categories is the prevalence of morphology that applies across lexical categories. In ʔayʔajuθəm, for instance, the same type of plural reduplication applies to nouns, adjectives, and verbs, as in (10).⁶ Applied to nouns, the interpretation is a plurality of entities described by the noun (10a), while applied to verbs, the interpretation is a plurality of the events described by the verb, distributed in time and space (10b) (see Huijsmans and Mellesmoen 2021). Adjectives with this plural reduplication are less frequent but also occur where the property holds multiple times of an entity, as in (10c), or holds of multiple entities.

- (10) a. gigat ga tεʔε təmtumtš?
 gi~gat=ga tiʔi təm~tumiš
 PL~who=DPRT DEM PL~man
 'Who are those men?' [NOUN] (vf | EP.2021/06/19)

- b. təqtəqtčux^w məmməmkeyustən.
 təq~təq-t=čax^w məm~məmkayustən
 PL~close-CTR=2SG.SBJ PL~window
 'Close all of the windows.' [VERB] (vf | FL.2022/04/21)

- c. pəqpəq tə čεʔ.
 pəq~white tə=čaʔ
 PL~white DET=ocean
 'The ocean is white.' (describing whitecaps) [ADJECTIVE] (vf | EP.2023?03?11)

Diminutive reduplication is another type of reduplication that applies to words of multiple categories (though it is less frequent on verbs).

⁵ There is another focus strategy for nouns as well: clefting. In clefts, the noun is preceded by the copula *hεł*, as in (6c) above.

⁶ Thank you to Gloria Mellesmoen for help with the reduplication facts discussed in this section.

- (11) a. q^wagi k^wut tə titol¹ məmχat¹ nε? tə=ʔasq.
 q^wa+gi k^wə[n]-t tə=titul¹ mi<m>χat¹ ni? tə ʔasq
 come+DPRT see-CTR DET=small bear<DIM> be.there DET=outside
 ‘Come, look at the little black bear outside.’ [NOUN] (vf | EP.2020/09/25)
- b. ʔεʔax^w
 ʔ<iʔ>ax^w
 snow<DIM>
 ‘snow a little bit’ [VERB] (Watanabe 2003:386)
- c. tūtait⁰εm θiθjεpoq^w.
 t<iʔ>at⁰-im θ<iθ>japuq^w
 red<DIM>-MD hat<DIM>
 ‘It’s a little red hat.’ [ADJECTIVE] (vf | EP.2022/12/17)

The past tense suffix also notably can appear on nouns and adjectives as well as verbs. On nouns, the interpretation is often that the described entity is deceased or destroyed (12a) (see Huijsmans 2022:103 for more on the possible interpretations),⁷ while on adjectives, the interpretation is that the property held formerly (12b). On verbs, the interpretation is that the event occurred in the past (12c) (or, for stative verbs, that the state held in the past).

- (12) a. k^wak^wa q⁰ətχ^w k^w ʔayεʔos.
 k^wa=k^wa=q⁰ətχ^w k^w=ʔayaʔ-**uʔ**-s.
 RPT=CLD=burn DET=house-PST-3POSS
 ‘His house burnt down (I heard).’ [NOUN] (vf | EP.2019/06/29)
- b. hεhεw tihmotoʔ tə q^wətəm.
 hihiw tih-mut-**uʔ** tə=q^wətəm
 really big-INT-PST DET=RIVER
 ‘The river was really big.’ [ADJECTIVE] (vf | EP.2023/06/10)
- c. čε k^wa šε k^wasta yεp⁰ʔ sk^wiʃoʔ?
 ča=k^wa šə=k^wasta yəp⁰-**uʔ** sk^wiʃuʔ
 where=CLD DET=cup get.broken-PST this.morning
 ‘Where is the cup that broke this morning?’ [VERB] (vf | EP.2023/01/28)

These are illustrative cases, but certainly not the only cases of morphology that apply across categories. As aptly put by Montler (2003:132), it is striking that despite the morphological richness of Salish languages, “there seems to be a scarcity of general, simple, morphological tests for membership in syntactic categories.”

Nevertheless, in the following sections I will argue that nouns, verbs, and adjectives can be distinguished in ʔayʔajuθəm. I show that words from different lexical categories can be differentiated based on their syntactic distribution, despite the predicate-argument flexibility illustrated in the preceding section. I also present morphological evidence for nouns and adjectives (building on Watanabe 2003:72–76), despite the prevalence of morphology that applies across categories. I first argue for a lexical category of nouns (Section 5) and then differentiate adjectives from verbs (Section 6).

⁷ See also Burton (1997) for Halq'eméylem and Matthewson (2005) for St'át'imcets.

5 Nouns

In this section, I present syntactic evidence for the category of noun in ʔayʔajuθəm (Section 5.1) and then additional morphological evidence (Section 5.2). Finally, I discuss two tests for nounhood found in previous literature that are not conclusive in ʔayʔajuθəm: relative clauses (Section 5.3) and possessives (Section 5.4).

5.1 Syntactic evidence

Demirdache and Matthewson (1995) and Davis and Matthewson (1999) show several environments where nouns are permitted but non-nouns are not. The first is heading complex nominal predicates. Complex nominal predicates are multi-word predicates consisting of a noun preceded by one or more modifiers. The modifiers may be adjectives, as in (13) to (15), or nouns, as in (16) to (17). This complex forms an intransitive predicate which is followed by its argument.⁸

- (13) a. [ʔaʔsəm tumʔš] Daniel.
 [ʔaʔs-əm tumiʔ] Daniel
 strong-MD man Daniel
 ‘Daniel is a strong man.’
- b. [χaχaʔ tumʔš] Daniel.
 [χaχaʔ tumiʔ] Daniel
 tall man Daniel
 ‘Daniel is a tall man.’ (sf | BW.2022/09/09; EP.2022/09/22)
- (14) *Context: Gloria is going to get one of a litter of kittens. There are some fluffy grey ones, some fluffy black ones, and some short-haired grey ones. She wants one of the fluffy grey ones, though she hasn't picked one specific one yet.*
- [qʷəʂɪm ʔoq məmmaʷ] kʷ χaʔs Gloria.
 [qʷəʂ-im ʔuq mi<m>maʷ] kʷ=χaʔ-s Gloria
 fluffy-MD grey cat<DIM> DET=desire-3POSS Gloria
 ‘Gloria wants a fluffy grey cat.’ (sf | EP.2022/10/29)
- (15) *Context: I'm picking out a new mug and there are all different sizes and shapes at the store. I decide I want one of the big blue ones and tell the lady:*
- [tih kʷoʂem kʷasta] ʔətʰ χaʔ.
 [tih kʷəʂ-im kʷasta] ʔətʰ=χaʔ
 big blue-MD cup 1SG.POSS=desire
 ‘I want a big blue mug.’ (sf | EP.2022/11/05)

⁸ In examples (14) to (17), the argument of the complex nominal predicate is a headless relative clause. In (15) and (17), the determiner preceding the headless relative is elided. Determiner elision is quite common in ʔayʔajuθəm (Reisinger, Huijsmans, and Matthewson 2021:752, fn. 2; Kroeber 1991:91–92; Watanabe 2003:379).

- (16) *Context: I'm looking for a family doctor, and I'd like to have a female one.*
 [sałtx^w daktə] k^wut^θ i^θei^θey^θʔəm.
 [sałtx^w dakta] k^w=ət^θ=i^θi~i^θiy-ʔəm
 woman doctor DET=1SG.POSS=PROG~search-ACT.INTR
 'I'm searching for a female doctor.'
 (sf | EP.2023/02/04)

- (17) *Context: I'm looking into getting a dog, and I want to get a male one.*
 [tumiš ču^čno?] ʔət^θ xa^ł.
 [tumiš ča<č>nu?] ʔət^θ=xa^ł
 man dog<DIM> 1SG.POSS=desire
 'I want a male puppy.'
 (sf | EP.2023/02/04)

While in St'át'imcets only individual-level adjectives are permissible as modifiers (Davis and Matthewson 1999), in ʔayʔajuθəm the modifier can be a stage-level adjective, as in (18) to (19), or an individual-level adjective, as in (13) to (15) above.

- (18) *Context: I'm at a bakery choosing what to buy. There are some loaves of bread that just came out of the oven and are still warm. I really want one of the loaves that's fresh from the oven but I haven't settled on which kind, so I say to the lady:*
 [k^was saplən] k^wut^θ xa^ł.
 [k^was saplin] k^w=ət^θ=xa^ł
 hot bread DET=1SG.POSS=desire
 'I want a hot loaf.'
 (sf | EP.2023/01/14)

- (19) *Context: Someone asks me if I'd like something to drink: tea, coffee, or water. I just want some cold water to cool down since it is a hot day. I say:*
 [čumčum qa^yε] k^wut^θ xa^ł.
 [čəm~čəm qa^ya] k^w=ət^θ=xa^ł
 cold~CHAR water DET=1SG.POSS=desire
 'I want some cold water.'
 (sf | EP.2023/01/14)

The order of the adjectives seems to be flexible:

- (20) [pəq q^wəšum məmmaw] k^w xa^łs Gloria.
 [pəq q^wəš-im mi<m>ma^w] k^w=xa^ł-s Gloria
 grey fluffy-MD cat<DIM> DET=desire-3POSS Gloria
 'Gloria wants a fluffy grey cat.' (cf. (14))
 (sf | EP.2022/10/29)

- (21) [k^wusem tih k^wasta] ʔət^θ xa^ł.
 [k^wəs-im tih k^wasta] ʔət^θ=xa^ł
 blue-MD big cup 1SG.POSS=desire
 'I want a big blue cup.' (cf. (15))
 (vf | EP.2022/11/05)

Crucially, however, the final word of this type of complex, which acts as the head, must be a noun. Other individual-level predicates cannot head the complex, despite semantic plausibility.

- (22) * [χαχα† λ̇α†səm] Daniel.
 [x̄αx̄a† λ̇α†s-ə̄m] Daniel
 tall strong-MD Daniel
 Intended: ‘Daniel is a tall strong one.’ (sf | BW.2022/09/09; EP.2022/09/22)
- (23) *Context: Same as (14).*
- a. * [mɛmmaw̄ qʷəšim p̄oq̄] kʷ χaλ̇s Gloria.
 [mi<m>maw̄ qʷəš-im p̄uq̄] kʷ=x̄aλ̇-s Gloria
 cat<DIM> fluffy-MD grey DET=desire-3POSS Gloria
 Intended: ‘Gloria wants a fluffy grey cat.’ (sf | EP.2022/10/29)
- b. * [p̄oq̄ mɛmmaw̄ qʷəšim] kʷ χaλ̇s Gloria.
 [p̄uq̄ mi<m>maw̄ qʷəš-im] kʷ=x̄aλ̇-s Gloria
 grey cat<DIM> fluffy-MD DET=desire-3POSS Gloria
 Intended: ‘Gloria wants a fluffy grey cat.’ (sf | EP.2022/10/29)
- c. * [qʷəšim mɛmmaw̄ p̄oq̄] kʷ χaλ̇s Gloria.
 [qʷəš-im mi<m>maw̄ p̄uq̄] kʷ=x̄aλ̇-s Gloria
 fluffy-MD cat<DIM> grey DET=desire-3POSS Gloria
 Intended: ‘Gloria wants a fluffy grey cat.’ (sf | EP.2022/10/29)
- (24) *Context: Same as (15).*
- a. * [tih kʷasta kʷos̄em] ?ət̄ χaλ̇.
 [tih kʷasta kʷos̄-im] ?ət̄=x̄aλ̇
 big cup blue-MD 1SG.POSS=desire
 Intended: ‘I want a big blue mug.’ (sf | EP.2022/11/05)
- b. * [kʷasta tih kʷos̄em] ?ət̄ χaλ̇.
 [kʷasta tih kʷos̄-im] ?ət̄=x̄aλ̇
 cup big blue-MD 1SG.POSS=desire
 Intended: ‘I want a big blue mug.’ (sf | EP.2022/11/05)
- c. * [kʷos̄em kʷasta tih] ?ət̄ χaλ̇.
 [kʷos̄-im kʷasta tih] ?ət̄=x̄aλ̇
 blue-MD cup big 1SG.POSS=desire
 Intended: ‘I want a big blue mug.’ (sf | EP.2022/11/05)

There are also no morphological or phonological differences that could account for the different distribution of nouns and adjectives above. Many of the lexical items in the examples, both nouns and adjectives, are monomorphemic. Adjectives with the middle suffix do not behave differently than those that are bare. Phonologically, the nouns and adjectives are of similar weight. Since the restriction on the head of complex nominal predicates cannot be explained in semantic, morphological, or phonological terms, I conclude that this restriction is a syntactic restriction: complex nominal predicates require something of the syntactic category noun as a head.

There are two other cases that seem to distinguish between nouns and non-nouns. The first is following $\chi^w o \chi^w$ ‘a long time’. The predicate of the subjunctive clause modified by $\chi^w o \chi^w$ can be a verb (25), but not a stage-level noun like *tic̄e* ‘teacher’ (26a) or *hegus* ‘chief’ (27), despite semantic

plausibility. Note that stative verbs are grammatical (26b) in this position, so the contrast cannot be characterized as in terms of stative vs. eventive predicates.

(25) a. $\chi^w o \chi^w o \dagger k^w a$ $? \dagger k^w u k^w t \dagger m a s$.
 $\check{x}^w u \check{x}^w - u \dagger = k^w a$ $? \dagger = k^w \dagger \sim k^w t - \dagger m = a s$
 long.time-PST=RPT COMP=PROG=sick-MD=3SBJV
 ‘She’s been sick for a long time.’ (vf | EP.2019/06/29)

b. $\chi^w o \chi^w m o \dagger$ $? \dagger p \dagger p \dagger e m \dagger s$ $? i$ $k^w a$ $h o y$.
 $\check{x}^w u \check{x}^w - m u t - u \dagger$ $? \dagger = p \dagger p \dagger i - m = a s$ $? i y$ $k^w a = h u y$
 long.time-INT-PST COMP=WORK-MD=3SBJV CONJ CLD=finish
 ‘He worked for a long time, and now he’s retired.’ (vf | EP.2022/02/18)

(26) *Context: We’re talking about a teacher who just recently retired.*

a. $* \chi^w o \chi^w m o \dagger$ $? \dagger t i \check{c} h \dagger s$.
 $\check{x}^w u \check{x}^w - m u t - u \dagger$ $? \dagger = t i \check{c} a = a s$
 long.time-INT-PST COMP=teacher=3SBJV
 Intended: ‘He was a teacher for a long time.’ (sf | EP.2023/02/04)

b. $k^w a k^w a$ $h o y$ $\check{s} u m s$ $t i \check{c} h o \dagger$. $\chi^w o \chi^w m o \dagger$
 $k^w a = k^w a = h u y$ $\check{s} \dagger = m s = t i \check{c} a - h - u \dagger$ $\check{x}^w u \check{x}^w - m u t - u \dagger$
 RPT=CLD=finish DET=1SG.POSS=teacher-EPEN-PST long.time-INT-PST
 $? \dagger n i \check{s} \dagger s$.
 $? \dagger = n i \check{s} = a s$
 COMP=be.here=3SBJV
 ‘Our teacher is retiring. He was here a long time.’ (vf | EP.2023/02/04)

(27) *Context: We’re talking about someone who was chief in Tla’amin for a long time, but is not currently chief.*

$* \chi^w o \chi^w o \dagger$ $? \dagger ? \dagger m s$ $h e g u s \dagger s$.
 $\check{x}^w u \check{x}^w - u \dagger$ $? \dagger = ? \dagger m s = h i g u s = a s$
 long.time-PST COMP=1PL.POSS=chief=3SBJV
 Intended: ‘He was our chief for a long time.’ (sf | EP.2023/02/04)

Note that nouns are compatible with the subjunctive in the right context, so this also is not a morphological restriction.

(28) *Context: A response used in pictionary (a game where one player draws and other players guess what is being drawn) to a wrong guess.*

$x^w a ?$, $x^w a ?$ $\check{q} a y k^w \dagger s$.
 $x^w a ?$, $x^w a ?$ $\check{q} a y k^w = a s$
 NEG, NEG eagle=3SBJV
 ‘No, it’s not a eagle.’

This then appears to be a syntactic restriction. Though the test is only applicable to stage-level predicates, it also points to a difference between the lexical categories of noun and verb.

5.2 Additional morphological evidence for nouns

The other means for distinguishing nouns is morphological and is pointed out in Watanabe (2003). Nouns, but not verbs, can take the possessive *-hV-* affix (where V stands for a copy vowel). This affix derives a stative verb.⁹

(25)	a.	<i>ʔayehaʔ</i>	/ʔaya<ha>ʔ/	‘have a house’	(<i>ʔayεʔ</i>	/ʔayaʔ/	‘house’)
	b.	<i>q^wasaham</i>	/q ^w asa<ha>m/	‘have a flower’	(<i>q^wasəm</i>	/q ^w asam/	‘flower’)
	c.	<i>nux^wehεł</i>	/nəx ^w i<hi>ł/	‘have a canoe’	(<i>nux^wεł</i>	/nəx ^w ił/	‘canoe’)
	d.	<i>*ʔemahaš</i>	*/ʔima<ha>š/	–	(<i>ʔemaš</i>	/ʔimaš/	‘walk’)
	e.	<i>*hasahəm</i>	*/hasa<ha>m/	–	(<i>hasəm</i>	/hasam/	‘sneeze’)
	f.	<i>*jεhεł</i>	*/ji<hi>ł/	–	(<i>jł</i>	/jəł/	‘run’)

(Watanabe 2003:73)

Preliminary investigation, as illustrated in (26) to (30), confirms Watanabe’s generalization and indicates that adjectives also are not compatible with the *-hV-* affix (28) to (29).

(26) *č̣εʔnohoč̣.*
č̣ənu-hu=č̣
 dog-POSS=1SG.SBJ
 ‘I have a dog.’ [NOUN] (sf | EP.2023/02/11)

(27) *Context: I see Gloria with an umbrella on a rainy day.*
ɪ^əaytehən Gloria.
ɪayti<hi>n Gloria
 umbrella<POSS> Gloria
 ‘Gloria has an umbrella.’ [NOUN] (sf | EP.2023/02/11)

(28) *Context: Gloria and I were each given a scarf. I got a red one and she got a blue one.*
**k^wusehəm* Gloria.
k^wəs-i<hi>m Gloria
 blue-MD<POSS> Gloria
 Intended: ‘Gloria has a blue one.’ [ADJECTIVE] (sf | EP.2023/02/11)

(29) *Context: Answering the question č̣εʔnohohač̣x^w? ‘Do you have a dog?’*
**ʔεʔ, titohołč̣.*
ʔiʔ titu<hu>ɪ=č̣
 yes small<POSS>=1SG.SBJ
 Intended: ‘Yes, a small one.’ [ADJECTIVE] (sf | EP.2023/06/16)

⁹ If lexical categories did not exist in Salish languages, the presence of such apparently category-shifting morphology would be quite puzzling, as pointed out in Gerdtz and Schneider (2023).

- (30) *Context: We're talking about the strange pets some people have, and we start discussing spiders. I tell you that Daniel has a pet spider that jumps.*

*kʷi kʷi tʰe m Daniel.
 kʷi <kʷ> i tʰe m Daniel
 jump<PL>-MD<POSS> Daniel
 Intended: 'Daniel has a jumping one.'

[VERB] (sf | EP.2023/02/11)

5.3 Relative clauses as a non-test

In St'át'imcets, evidence for a distinction between nouns and words of other lexical categories is also found in relative clauses (e.g., Davis and Matthewson 1999; Demirdache and Matthewson 1995). **Relative clauses** are embedded sentences that add additional descriptive content modifying a noun. In the sentence *I recognize [the man [who is standing over there]]*, there is a relative clause *who is standing there* embedded in the determiner phrase. This relative clause modifies the noun *man*, providing additional information to help identify the individual being referred to. The modified noun *man* is the **head** of the relative clause.

In St'át'imcets, relative clauses can be headed or headless (e.g., Davis 2010, 2011). If headed, the head must be a noun (e.g., Davis 2010, 2011; Demirdache and Matthewson 1995). This rules out examples like the following, where the relative clause is headed by a non-noun, namely a verb or adjective.

- (31) a. áts'x-en=lhkan [na=sáq'w=a spzúza7]
 see-tr=1sg.sbj [det=fly-exis bird]
 'I saw a flying bird.'
- b. *áts'x-en=lhkan [na=sáq'w=a kwikws]
 see-tr=1sg.sbj [det=fly-exis small]
 'I saw a flying small (thing).'
- c. *áts'x-en=lhkan [na=kwikws=a sáq'w]
 see-tr=1sg.sbj [det=fly-exis small]
 'I saw a flying small (thing).'

(Davis 2011:4)

In ʔayʔajuθəm, relative clauses can precede or follow the head noun (32). In both cases, the relative is introduced by a single determiner, and attempts to include a second determiner are judged ungrammatical.¹⁰

- (32) *Context: I've been learning to sew in a sewing class. When we're in town, I see the lady who has been teaching me and point her out.*

a. nɛʔ taʔa ʔə saɬtxʷ [(ʔə) titiwšɛmstomš].
 niʔ taʔa ʔə=sɬtxʷ (*ʔə)=ti~tiwš-ɛm-st-umš
 be.there DEM DET=WOMAN (*DET)=PROG~teach-MD-CAUS-1SG.OBJ
 'The lady that's teaching me is over there.'

(sf | EP.2023/01/14)

¹⁰ The third person ergative suffix *-as*, which usually marks third person subject agreement in indicative transitive clauses, is not found on the predicate of the subject-centered relative clause *titiwšɛmstomš* 'who is teaching me'; this suffix is absent where there is subject extraction (Watanabe 2003:126–127).

- b. nɛ? taʔa ɬə [titiwšɛmstomš] (*ɬə)=saɬtx^w.
 ni? taʔa ɬə=ti~tiwš-əm-st-umš (*ɬə)=saɬtx^w
 be.there DEM DET=PROG~teach-MD-CAUS-1SG.OBJ (*DET=)woman
 ‘The lady that’s teaching me is over there.’ (sf | EP.2023/01/14)

It is possible to stack relative clauses without an overt nominal head, with one relative clause appearing to serve as the head for the other (33b) to (35). The cases I include here all involve a tense mismatch between the two relative clauses to rule out an alternate interpretation where these are serial verb constructions within a single relative clause (see Montler 2008 on serial verb constructions in Klallam and Schneider 2021, 2022 on serial verb constructions in Hul’q’umi’num’).

- (33) *Context: At a gathering, you strike up a conversation with a few people and one is a lady from Klahoose that I don’t recognize. Later, I ask you:*

- a. gɛt ga ɬ saɬtx^w tawa ʔək^w toʔq q^wɛq^waysx^wax^woɬ?
 gat=ga ɬ=sɬɬtx^w tawa ʔə=k^w=toʔq q^wi~q^way-sx^w-ax^w-uɬ
 who=DPRT DET=woman from OBL=DET=Squirrel.Cove PROG~talk-CAUS-2SG.ERG-PST
 ‘Who is the woman from Squirrel Cove that you were talking to?’
- b. gɛt ga ɬ tawa ʔək^w toʔq q^wɛq^waysx^wax^woɬ?
 gat=ga ɬ=tawa ʔə=k^w=toʔq q^wi~q^way-sx^w-ax^w-uɬ
 who=DPRT DET=from OBL=DET=Squirrel.Cove PROG~talk-CAUS-2SG.ERG-PST
 ‘Who is the woman from Squirrel Cove that you were talking to?’ (sf | EP.2023/06/10)

- (34) *Context: A weaving workshop was offered in Tla’amin, and you and I attended. A few different ladies came from different places to teach different techniques. One was from Homalco but I didn’t know her. I think you did recognize her, so the next day, I ask:*

- gɛt ga ɬ tawa ʔək^w ʔop titiwšɛmstumoɬ sʝesəɬ?
 gat=ga ɬ=tawa ʔə=k^w=ʔop ti~tiwš-əm-st-umuɬ sʝasəɬ
 who=DPRT F.DET=from OBL=DET=Church.House PROG~teach-MD-CAUS-1PL.OBJ yesterday
 ‘Who is the lady from Homalco who was teaching us yesterday?’ (sf | EP.2023/06/10)

- (35) *Context: I was at a weaving workshop yesterday. Today I see one of the other workshop participants at a gathering, talking with some other ladies. I want to know who she is, so I ask Gail, who was also at the workshop and seemed to know her:*

- gɛt ga ɬ nɛ? taʔa nɛ?oɬ χ^woχ^wopeʔɛč snanatəɬ?
 gat=ga ɬ=ni? taʔa ni?-uɬ χ^wu~χ^wupiʔič snanat-uɬ
 who=DPRT DET=be.there DEM be.there-PST PROG~weave evening-PST
 ‘Who is the lady over there who was at weaving yesterday?’ (sf | EP.2023/06/10)

The following examples show that a relative clause can also directly follow an adjective in the absence of a head noun, as in (36b) and (37); here, the adjective appears to head the relative clause.

(36) *Context: I needed help getting something down from up high at a gathering. A young guy helps me but I don't get a chance to get his name. After, I think to myself.*

- a. gɛt čɛ šɛ ɣaɣaɫ tumiʃ čɛgaθoɫ.
 gat=ča šə=xaɣaɫ tumiʃ čag-aθ-uɫ
 who=INFER DET=tall man help-CTR;1SG.OBJ-PST
 'I wonder who the tall man who helped me is.'
- b. gɛt čɛ šɛ ɣaɣaɫ čɛgaθoɫ.
 gat=ča šə=xaɣaɫ čag-aθ-uɫ
 who=INFER DET=tall help-CTR;1SG.OBJ-PST
 'I wonder who the tall one who helped me is.'

(37) *Context: I'm at a bakery choosing a cookie. There are chocolate chip cookies and oatmeal raisin cookies. A batch of each kind just came out of the oven, and they are still hot and some have already been out for a while and cooled. I really want one that's fresh from the oven, so I say to the lady:*

- hɛhɛw ʔaʃɛqapmot tə cookies. hɛɫ tə kʷas nɛʔ taʔa ʔət ɣaʌ̌
 hihiw ʔəʃ-aqap-mut tə=cookies hiɫ tə=kʷas niʔ taʔa ʔət^θ=xaʌ̌
 really good-smell-INT DET=cookies COP DET=hot be.there DEM 1SG.POSS=desire
 'The cookies smell so good. I'd like one of the hot ones over there.' (sf | EP.2022/11/05)

Unlike in St'át'imcets, then, an overt head of a relative clause does not have to be a noun, which means that relative clauses cannot be used to distinguish between nouns and non-nouns in ʔayʔajuθəm. It is beyond the scope of this paper to give an analysis of the syntax of these relative clause structures. It may be that despite appearances, these structures are headed by a noun, but this noun is unpronounced. The analysis of St'át'imcets relative clauses found in Davis (2003, 2010), for instance, posits a null *pro* NP in headless relative clauses. In addition, Hukari (1983) and Gerdts and Hinkson (2004) observe noun elision occurring in Hul'q'umi'num' (Island Halkomelem), and Davis (2003, 2011) also observes this in St'át'imcets, given the right discourse context.¹¹ Regardless of how these structures are ultimately analyzed, however, they cannot serve as a diagnostic for the syntactic category of noun as they do in St'át'imcets, so I leave them aside here.

5.4 Possessives as a non-test

Van Eijk and Hess (1986) for St'át'imcets and Gerdts and Schneider (2023) for Hul'q'umi'num' discuss possessive inflection as another useful test for nounhood: nouns are inflected with possessive affixes, whereas predicates of other categories must be nominalized before being inflected with possessives. In ʔayʔajuθəm, unfortunately, this is not a clear test for nouns (as also pointed out in Watanabe 2003:75).

ʔayʔajuθəm has lost all prefixes, including the nominalizer prefix *s-*. The absence of the prefixal nominalizer *s-* means that predicate nominalization is only visible via possessive morphology, as in (38).

¹¹ The cases of noun elision discussed in the cited works all involve elision of a noun following an adjective, however, while in (33b) to (35), there is no adjective preceding the noun. Thanks to Henry Davis, p.c., 2023, for raising this point.

- (41) *Context: I don't have enough cups for a gathering and I want my brother to bring some. He has several sets, and I think his blue ones would look nice and festive. I tell him:*

qətɛx^w šɛt^θ k^wɪsk^wasta. q^wolstaʔamčx^w ga
qət<i>x^w šə=t^θ=k^wəs~k^wasta q^wəl-st-aʔam=čx^w=ga
run.out<STAT> DET=1SG.POSS=PL~cup come-CAUS-ACT.INTR=2SG.SBJ=DPRT
ʔə šɛθ k^wuɛm k^wɪsk^wasta.
ʔə=šə=θ=k^wəs-im k^wəs~k^wasta
OBL=DET=2SG.POSS=blue-MD PL~cup
‘I don’t have enough cups. Please bring your blue cups.’ (vf | EP.2023/02/11)

The possessive morphology found marking possession on nouns and subjects of nominalized clauses is therefore frequently indistinguishable.

Out of all this complexity, one possible morphological diagnostic remains, but requires caution. Predicate nominalization is fairly restricted in ʔayʔajuθəm, documented only in oblique-object centered relative clauses (Watanabe 2003:135–140). If a third person possessive or second person plural possessive is attaching as an affix rather than a clitic, it is therefore likely marking possession on a noun rather than marking the subject of a nominalized clause. However, care must be taken to rule out an alternate analysis in terms of predicate nominalization.

Watanabe (2003:76) also points out that the interpretation of possessives differ semantically with nouns and verbs. With nouns, possessives are interpreted as possessors, whereas a possessive associated with a verb is interpreted as a participant in the eventuality described by the verb. Therefore, though possessives provide at best only subtle morphological evidence for distinguishing between nouns and verbs, the shift in semantic interpretation is another possible cue to lexical category.

5.5 Summary

In this section, I argued that a lexical category of noun must be distinguished in ʔayʔajuθəm. I presented syntactic evidence from complex nominal predicates and morphological evidence involving the possessive *-hV-* affix for this claim. I then discussed certain tests for nounhood used in other Salish languages that do not work well for ʔayʔajuθəm, in order to illustrate where there is variation between languages in the evidence available for this category.

6 Adjectives

In this section, I turn to distinguishing adjectives from nouns and verbs. I first present syntactic evidence that adjectives are a distinct lexical category (Section 6.1) and then provide additional morphological evidence (Section 6.2). The result is a three-way distinction between nouns, verbs, and adjectives.

6.1 Syntactic evidence for adjectives

Davis (2011) provides evidence for a distinction between verbs and adjectives in St’át’imcets based on word order. While verbal predicates can be nominal modifiers in pre- or post-nominal relative clauses, adjectives must *precede* the noun they modify. The same pattern holds in ʔayʔajuθəm.

As noted in Section 5.3, relative clauses can be precede or follow a head noun in ʔayʔajuθəm, as in (42).

(42) *Context: I need help with something during a gathering. There's one guy just sitting and few others busy with various tasks.*

a. gayett^əəm tə [nɛ? taʔa k^wanáč] tumiš.
 gay-at=t^ə=əm tə=ni? taʔa k^wanáč tumiš
 ask-CTR=1SG.SBJ=FUT DET=be.there DEM sit<STAT> man

b. gayett^əəm tə tumiš [nɛ? taʔa k^wanáč].
 gay-at=t^ə=əm tə=tumiš ni? taʔa k^wanáč
 ask-CTR=1SG.SBJ=FUT DET=man be.there DEM sit<STAT>
 'I'll ask the man who is sitting there.'

(vf | EP.2022/09/16)

In contrast to relative clause modifiers, adjectives must precede the noun they modify, as illustrated in (43) to (45).

(43) *Context: I need help moving something that's on a high shelf. There's a tall guy standing nearby with a few others.*

a. gayett^əəm tə **χaxaɫ** tumiš.
 gay-at=t^ə=əm tə=**χaxaɫ** tumiš
 ask-CTR=1SG.SBJ=FUT DET=tall man
 'I'm going to ask the tall man.'

b. *gayett^əəm tə tumiš **χaxaɫ**.
 gay-at=t^ə=əm tə=tumiš **χaxaɫ**
 ask-CTR=1SG.SBJ=FUT DET=man tall
 Intended: 'I'm going to ask the tall man.'

(sf | EP.2022/09/16)

(44) *Context: I bought a new table second hand, and I'm really happy with it. I tell you:*

a. čk^wi yəqʔəmʔit ʔə šɛ **ʔimot** θɛwθɛtən
 č=k^wi yəq-ʔəm-ʔəyt ʔə=šə=**ʔəj-mut** θiwθitən
 1SG.SBJ=CLD buy-ACT.INTR-PRF OBL=DET=good-INT table
 ʔə šɛ muk^wumawtx^w.
 ʔə=šə=mək^wəmawtx^w
 OBL=DET=second.hand.store

'I bought a really nice table at the secondhand store.'

b. *čk^wi yəqʔəmʔit ʔə šɛ θɛwθɛtən **ʔimot**
 č=k^wi yəq-ʔəm-ʔəyt ʔə=šə=θiwθitən **ʔəj-mut**
 1SG.SBJ=CLD buy-ACT.INTR-PRF OBL=DET=table good-INT
 ʔə šɛ muk^wumawtx^w.
 ʔə=šə=mək^wəmawtx^w
 OBL=DET=second.hand.store

Intended: 'I bought a really nice table at the secondhand store.' (vf/sf | EP.2022/11/05)

(45) *Context: We're approaching my house, and I see someone has stuck a paper to one of my windows. I say to you:*

- a. kʷonetačxʷ tə pipa? nɛ? pɛʔɛʔɛt tə **tihmot**
kʷən-i-t=a=čxʷ tə=pipa ni? piʔi-ʔ-it tə=**tih-mut**
see-STAT-CTR=Q=2SG.SBJ DET=paper be.there stuck-EPEN-STAT DET=big-INT
məmkeyustən.
məmkaɣustən
window
‘Do you see the paper? It is stuck on the big window.’
- b. *kʷonetačxʷ tə pipa? nɛ? pɛʔɛʔɛt tə məmkeyustən
kʷən-i-t=a=čxʷ tə=pipa ni? piʔi-ʔ-it tə=məmkaɣustən
see-STAT-CTR=Q=2SG.SBJ DET=paper be.there stuck-EPEN-STAT DET=window
tihmot.
tih-mut
big-INT
Intended: ‘Do you see the paper? It is stuck on the big window.’ (sf | BW.2022/08/30)

The distinction cannot be reduced to a difference between eventive and stative predicates, since the relative clause in (42) involves only stative predicates, yet is not restricted to occurring pre-nominally. The contrast also cannot be reduced to a difference between individual-level and stage-level predicates, since stage-level adjectives also cannot follow the noun they modify.

- (46) *Context: We’re leaving some dough on the counter to rise and my husband goes to grab one of the hand towels hanging in the kitchen to cover it with. I tell him:*
- a. hɛsxʷ **ʔaʔyɯs** tʰukʷamamɛn ʔəθ pənʔost.
hi[ɬ]-sxʷ **ʔaʔyəs** tʰəkʷ-am-amin ʔəθ=pən-ʔus-t
COP-CAUS clean wipe-dish-INS 2SG.POSS=cover-face-CTR
- b. *hɛsxʷ tʰukʷamamɛn **ʔaʔyɯs** ʔəθ pənʔost.
hi[ɬ]-sxʷ tʰəkʷ-am-amin **ʔaʔyəs** ʔəθ=pən-ʔus-t
COP-CAUS wipe-dish-INS clean 2SG.POSS=cover-face-CTR
Intended: ‘Use a clean towel to cover it.’ (sf | EP.2022/12/09)

Davis (2011) is also careful to show that the pattern cannot be explained by a preference for lighter material to precede the head noun and heavier material to follow it. While relative clauses tend to be heavier than adjectives, the same pattern holds even with prosodically heavier adjectives and lighter relative clauses. For instance, in (47), a monosyllabic relative clause is permissible both preceding and following the head noun (and was volunteered following it).

- (47) *Context: I notice one guy is sleeping during a meeting. I whisper to you:*
- a. gɛt čɛ ga tita **ʔiçt** tumɯšʔ
gat=ča=ga təyʔta **ʔ<i>çt** tumiʃ
who=INFER=DPRT DEM sleep<STAT> man
‘Who is that man that’s sleeping?’
- b. gɛt čɛ ga tita tumɯš **ʔiçtʔ**
gat=ča=ga təyʔta tumiʃ **ʔ<i>çt**
who=INFER=DPRT DEM man sleep<STAT>
‘Who is that man that’s sleeping?’ (vf/sf | EP.2022/11/05)

In contrast, bisyllabic adjectives cannot follow the noun they modify, as shown in (43) to (46) above, and even phrasal adjectives are barred from appearing post-nominally, as in (48) and (49).

(48) *Context: The last few times I made soup, my pot wasn't big enough, and I ended up dividing it into several pots. I tell Felipe:*

- a. hot^oəm yəqʔəm [ʔə][k^w k^wehet tih hənklala].
 hu=t^o=əm yəq-ʔəm [ʔə=][k^w=k^wih-ít tih hənklala]
 go=1SG.SBJ=FUT buy-ACT.INTR [OBL=]DET=increase-STAT big pot
 'I'm going to go buy a bigger pot.'
- b. *hot^oəm yəqʔəm [ʔə][k^w hənklala k^wehet tih].
 hu=t^o=əm yəq-ʔəm [ʔə=][k^w=hənklala k^wih-ít tih]
 go=1SG.SBJ=FUT buy-ACT.INTR [OBL=]DET=pot increase-STAT big
 Intended: 'I'm going to go buy a bigger pot.' (vf/sf | EP.2023/01/28)

(49) *Context: My friend Gloria is going to get one of a litter of kittens. There are some really fluffy grey ones, some medium haired grey ones, some fluffy black ones, and some short-haired grey ones. There is one grey one fluffier than all the rest that she wants.*

- a. hɛł [šɛ hɛhew q^wušimmot mɛmmaw] šuʔotəm [ʔə=]Gloria.
 hił [šə=hihiw q^wəš-əm-mut m<im>maw] šuʔ-ut-əm [ʔə=]Gloria
 COP DET=really fluffy-MD-INT cat<DIM> choose-CTR-PASS [OBL=]Gloria
 'Gloria chose the really fluffy grey kitten.'
- b. *hɛł [šɛ mɛmmaw hɛhew q^wušimmot] šuʔotəm [ʔə=]Gloria.
 hił šə=m<im>maw hihiw q^wəš-əm-mut] šuʔ-ut-əm [ʔə=]Gloria
 COP DET=cat<DIM> really fluffy-MD-INT choose-CTR-PASS [OBL=]Gloria
 Intended: 'Gloria chose the really fluffy grey kitten.' (sf | EP.2023/01/28)

Another type of evidence for distinguishing verbs and adjectives comes from complex nominal predicates. In the previous section, I showed that nouns and both stage-level and individual-level adjectives can precede the head noun. Verbs cannot precede the head noun as a modifier in a complex nominal predicate.

(50) *Context: My cousin is taking part in a performance, as one of the singers. There are other performers dancing. As the performance starts, I am looking for him, but haven't found him yet. I tell you:*

- *[wuwuwum tumiš] šet^o ʔayiš.
 [wu~wuw-əm tumiš] šə=t^o=ʔayiš
 PROG~sing-MD man DET=1SG.POSS=cousin
 Intended: 'My cousin is one of the men singing.' (sf | EP.2023/02/04)

(51) *Context: Remarking on someone's dog, which keeps barking nearby:*

- *[payɛ? guguhom čɛʔno] tita.
 [paya? gu~guh-um čaɲu] tɔyta
 always PROG~bark-MD dog DEM
 Intended: 'That's a really yappy dog.' (sf | EP.2023/02/04)

- (52) *Context: I'm showing an old picture to Daniel and Gloria. There are a few men smoking in it, and I remember Freddie told me that one of them is a former chief (but I don't remember which one).*

*[q̣ačeyɪnʔɛm tumiʃ] tə heɣusɔɫ.
 [q̣əč-ayin-ʔ<i>m tumiʃ] tə=higus-uɫ
 bite-end-ACT.INTR<STAT> man DET=chief-PST
 Intended: 'The former chief is a man that's smoking.'
 (sf | EP.2023/02/04)

We've seen already in Section 5.1 that adjectives, even if they are individual-level adjectives, cannot head complex nominal predicates. The class of adjectives can therefore be distinguished from both nouns and verbs by their behaviour in complex nominal predicates. At this point, we therefore have syntactic evidence for a three-way distinction between nouns, verbs, and adjectives.

6.2 Additional morphological evidence for adjectives

Having established that there are distributional differences between nouns, verbs, and adjectives, it is worth pointing out that these categories can also be distinguished on the basis of morphology. A set of adjectives can take ~VC reduplication (reported in Kroeber 1988 as a set of stative predicates). This reduplication derives a change-of-state eventive predicate, a verb.

- (53) *pəs* /pəs/ 'numb' *pəsəs* /pəsəs/ 'get numb'
čɪpɣ /čəpɣ/ 'get dirty' *čɪpəpɣ* /čəpəpɣ/ 'get dirty'
tih /tih/ 'big' *tihih* /tihih/ 'get big'
 (Kroeber 1988:143)

Predicates of other categories do not appear to be able to take this reduplication. It is ungrammatical applied to the following nouns, for instance, even though the meaning is plausible (and available for the plain nouns which seem to instead be zero-derived eventive predicates in this case):

- (54) a. *k^wi q^wol̩ saɫtx^w.*
k^wi=q^wəl̩ saɫtx^w
 CLD=come woman
 'She is becoming a woman.'
 b. **k^wi q^wol̩ saɫ<aɫ>tx^w.*
k^wi=q^wəl̩ saɫ<aɫ>tx^w
 CLD=come woman<COS>
 Intended: 'She is becoming a woman.'
 (sf | EP.2023/01/28)

- (55) *Context: We are observing a young man who's just starting to be a teenager.*
 a. *ti q^wol̩ tumiʃ.*
ti=q^wəl̩ tumiʃ
 CLD=come man
 'He is becoming a man.'
 (vf | EP.2023/01/28)

- b. *ti q^wol̩ tumomiš
 ti q^wol̩ tum<um>iš
 CLD come man<COS>
 Intended: ‘He is becoming a man.’ (sf | EP.2023/02/04)

It is also ungrammatical on verbs, though this is probably to be expected given that it is not clear what it would contribute semantically when applied to something already eventive.

(56) *Context: I see the berries are ripe on a bush.*

- a. ti q^wol̩ č̣εχ.
 ti=q^wol̩ č̣əχ̣
 CLD=come get.ripe
 ‘They’ve gotten ripe.’
- b. *ti q^wol̩ č̣εχəχ.
 ti=q^wol̩ č̣əχ̣~əχ̣
 CLD=come get.ripe~COS
 Intended: ‘They’ve gotten ripe.’ (sf | EP.2023/02/24)

(57) *Context: A cup came out of the dishwasher broken. When I see it, I say:*

- a. yɪp̩ tət^θ k^wasta.
 yəp̩ tə=t^θ=k^wasta
 get.broken DET=1SG.POSS=cup
 ‘My cup broke.’
- b. *yɪp̩əp̩ tət^θ k^wasta.
 yəp̩~əp̩ tə=t^θ=k^wasta
 get.broken~COS DET=1SG.POSS=cup
 Intended: ‘My cup broke.’ (sf | EP.2023/02/04)

As predicted given this change in category, a derived change-of-state verb can appear following a head noun in a post-nominal relative clause, as in (58).

(58) *Context: The rabbits in Edmonton turn white in the winter. I see one that is white earlier than expected. I tell Felipe:*

- k^wunux^wol̩č̣ ṣ̌ε tukle [k^wi pəqəq].
 k^wən-əχ^w-uɪ=č̣ ṣ̌ə=tukli [k^wi=pəq~əq]
 see-NCTR-PST=1SG.SBJ DET=rabbit CLD=white~COS
 ‘I saw a rabbit that had already turned white.’ (sf | EP.2023/06/10)

6.3 Summary

In this section, I have argued that adjectives can be distinguished from verbs based on word order: an adjective must precede a noun it modifies, whereas a verb can appear in a pre-nominal or post-nominal relative clause. In addition, adjectives, but not verbs, can precede a head noun in a complex

nominal predicate. Adjectives can also be distinguished from nouns, since only nouns can head complex nominal predicates, as discussed in Section 5.1. At this point, then, there is syntactic evidence for a three-way contrast between nouns, verbs, and adjectives. Adjectives are also distinguished morphologically from nouns and verbs by their ability to take change-of-state reduplication.

7 Applying the tests to ‘borderline’ cases

Now that I have established tests for lexical category, it is possible to examine some of the words that are difficult to categorize. For instance, the resultative stative — variably realized as a suffix *-ít*, an infix *-í-*, or pitch accent (´) — derives a stative predicate from an eventive one. The question is whether this is accompanied by a syntactic change of category from a verb to an adjective.

The results so far are mixed: sometimes statives are acceptable preceding and following the noun they modify and sometimes they are only accepted preceding it. It seems that statives derived from change-of-state roots behave as adjectives. They must precede a noun they modify:

(59) *Context: I’m looking for a little container for my seedling. I realize I can put a broken cup that I’m fond of to use.*

- a. hɛɭ[sɔm ʃɛ **yɛpɛt** kʷasta ʔə yeqáʃɛn.
 hiɭ=sɔm ʃə=**yɛp-ít** kʷasta ʔə=yəqá-aʃ-an
 COP=FUT DET=break-STAT cup CLF.PRT=USE-TR-1SG.ERG
 ‘I’ll use the broken cup.’
- b. *hɛɭ[sɔm ʃɛ kʷasta **yɛpɛt** ʔə yeqáʃɛn.
 hiɭ=sɔm ʃə=kʷasta **yɛp-ít** ʔə=yəqá-aʃ-an
 COP=FUT DET=cup break-STAT CLF.PRT=USE-TR-1SG.ERG
 Intended: ‘I’ll use the broken cup.’ (vf/sf | EP.2023/01/28)

(60) *Context: Instructions in a recipe.*

- a. miyqʷatčxʷ tə **ʃɛχʷɛt** pətə.
 miyqʷ-at=čxʷ tə=**ʃaχʷ-ít** pətə
 mix-CTR=2SG.SBJ DET=melt-STAT butter
 ‘Mix in the melted butter.’
- b. *miyqʷatčxʷ tə pətə **ʃɛχʷɛt**.
 miyqʷ-at=čxʷ tə=pətə **ʃaχʷ-ít**
 mix-CTR=2SG.SBJ DET=butter melt-STAT
 Intended: ‘Mix in the melted butter.’ (sf | EP.2023/05/19)

(61) *Context: Some kids are explaining the game they are playing.*

- a. tʰɛtʰɛyʔəmʃt ʔəkʷ **pənét** tala.
 tʰi~tʰiy-ʔəm=ʃt ʔə=kʷ=**pən-ít** tala
 PROG~search-ACT.INTR=1PL.SBJ OBL=DET=bury-STAT money
 ‘We’re searching for buried treasure.’
- b. *tʰɛtʰɛyʔəmʃt ʔəkʷ tala **pənét**.
 tʰi~tʰiy-ʔəm=ʃt ʔə=kʷ=tala **pən-ít**
 PROG~search-ACT.INTR=1PL.SBJ OBL=DET=money bury-STAT
 Intended: ‘We’re searching for buried treasure.’ (sf | EP.2023/05/19)

Preliminary evidence also suggests that stative predicates built from change-of-state verbs can serve as modifiers in complex nominal predicates, as expected if they are adjectives. This is shown in (62F).¹⁴

- (62) *Context: Felipe and I are walking on the beach, and I see something odd-looking up ahead.*
 Me: tam čε tita?
 tam=ča tǝyta
 what=INFER DEM
 ‘What is that?’
 F: **tanét** pǝmayitǝn.
tan-it pǝmayitǝn
 get.beached-STAT buoy
 ‘It’s a beached buoy.’ (sf | EP.2023/05/25)

In contrast, a stative derived from an atelic eventive predicate behaves syntactically like a verb; these can both precede and follow a noun they modify.

- (63) *Context: There is a picture with a lot of people, both men and women. One of the men is smoking. I ask you:*
 a. gεt ga tǝ tumiř **qǝčeyin?εm?**
 gat=ga tǝ=tumiř **qǝč-ayin-?<i>m**
 who=DPRT DET=man bite-end.of-ACT.INTR<STAT>
 ‘Who is the man with a cigarette hanging out of his mouth?’
 b. gεt ga tǝ **qǝčeyin?εm** tumiř?
 gat=ga tǝ=**qǝč-ayin-?<i>m** tumiř
 who=DPRT DET=bite-end.of-ACT.INTR<STAT> man
 ‘Who is the man with a cigarette hanging out of his mouth?’ (sf | EP.2023/01/14)

In addition, preliminary evidence indicates that statives built on atelic eventive predicates cannot be modifiers in complex nominal predicates, as shown in (64) (repeated from (52) above).

- (64) *Context: I’m showing an old picture to Daniel and Gloria. There are a few men smoking in it, and I remember Freddie told me that one of them is a former chief (but I don’t remember which one).*
 ***[qǝčeyin?εm** tumiř] tǝ hegusoł.
[qǝč-ayin-?<i>m tumiř] tǝ=higus-uł
 bite-end-ACT.INTR<STAT> man DET=chief-PST
 Intended: ‘The former chief is a man that’s smoking.’ (sf | EP.2023/02/04)

The stative morpheme therefore poses an interesting puzzle: in some cases it triggers a syntactic category change and in some cases it does not.

¹⁴ My consultant said that *tanét* wasn’t needed in (62F) since it would be redundant in the context, but it would be possible to answer like this.

Words with characteristic CəC reduplication are also difficult to categorize. Predicates like *gətʰ* ‘tease’ are reduplicated as *gətʰgətʰ*, and then variably translated as a noun: ‘a tease’, a verb: ‘always teasing’, or described as characterizing a person, which suggests a category of adjective. The tests developed here show that *gətʰgətʰ* patterns as a verb, since it is able to precede and follow a noun it modifies.

(65) *Context: There’s a group of people visiting and there’s one guy who’s a real tease, always making everyone laugh. I ask you:*

a. gət ga tiʔta gətʰgətʰ tumiʃ?
 gat=ga təyʔta gətʰ~gətʰ tumiʃ
 who=DPRT DEM tease man
 ‘Who is that man who is a tease?’

b. gət ga tiʔta tumiʃ gətʰgətʰ?
 gat=ga təyʔta tumiʃ gətʰ~gətʰ
 who=DPRT DEM man tease
 ‘Who is that man who is a tease?’

(sf | EP.2022/09/16)

More testing of predicates with characteristic reduplication is required, including checking if predicates of this type can serve as the modifier in complex nominal predicates.

Words with the indefinite object suffix *-anaq* are also often translated as if they were nouns: e.g., *titiwšemstanaq* as ‘one who teaches’ and *čəčəganaq* as ‘one who is always helping’, but pattern with eventive predicates in taking progressive reduplication. The tests developed here show them to be verbs. Neither *titiwšemstanaq* nor *čəčəganaq* can appear as the head of a complex nominal predicate, as shown in (66a) and (67a). The root *čag-* ‘to help’ instead appears in a derived noun *čəwtən* ‘helper’ in order to appear in the complex nominal predicate in (66b) and the borrowed noun *tičə* ‘teacher’ is used in (67b). Alternately, *titiwšemstanaq* can be modified instead by *čigat* ‘skilled’ (67c), which appears to be restricted to modifying eventive predicates.

(66) a. *[həhəw ʔimot čəčəganaq] Gail.
 [hihiw ʔəy-mut ča~čag-anaq] Gail
 really good-INT PROG~help-INDEF.OBJ Gail
 Intended: ‘Gail is a really good helper.’

b. [həhəw ʔimot čəwtən] Gail.
 [hihiw ʔəy-mut čaw-tən] Gail
 really good-INT help-INS Gail
 ‘Gail is a really good helper.’

(sf/vf | EP.2022/09/09)

(67) a. *[həhəw ʔimot titiwšemstanaq] Daniel.
 [hihiw ʔəy-mut ti~tiwš-əm-st-anaq] Daniel
 really good-INT PROG~learn-MD-CAUS-INDEF.OBJ Daniel
 Intended: ‘Daniel is a really good teacher.’

b. [həhəw ʔimot tičə] Daniel.
 [hihiw ʔəy-mut tiča] Daniel
 really good-INT teacher Daniel
 ‘Daniel is a really good teacher.’

(sf | EP.2023/06/16)

c.	həhəw	čɨgat	ʔək ^w	titiwšəmstanaq	Daniel.
	hihiw	čəgat	ʔə=k ^w =ti~tiwš-əm-st-anaq		Daniel
	really	skilled-INT	OBL=DET=PROG~learn-MD-CAUS-INDEF.OBJ		Daniel
	‘Daniel is a really skilled teacher.’				(vf EP.2023/06/16)

8 Conclusion

In this paper, I have argued for distinct categories of nouns, verbs, and adjectives in ʔayʔajuθəm, drawing especially on previous work on St’át’imcets for syntactic tests (Demirdache and Matthewson 1995; Davis and Matthewson 1999; Davis 2011) and Watanabe (2003) for morphological evidence. I showed that complex nominal predicates can only be headed by nouns, while only nouns or adjectives can appear as a modifier preceding the head noun. I showed that adjectives must precede a noun they modify, while verbal modifiers in relative clauses may precede or follow the noun they modify. In addition to this syntactic evidence, I presented morphological evidence for lexical categories, drawing on observations in Watanabe (2003). I showed that the possessive *-hV-* affix only applies to nouns, deriving a stative verb, while change-of-state *~VC* reduplication applies only to adjectives, deriving an eventive verb.

The existence of distinct lexical categories of noun, verb, and adjective has implications for the ʔayʔajuθəm dictionary in progress: category labels can be productively included. Going forward, the tests presented in this paper can be applied where the lexical category of an item is in question, as for the items discussed in the preceding section of this paper.

Including lexical category information in the dictionary will help learners anticipate where the words may appear in a sentence. When providing these categories, however, it is important that learners do not assume that nouns, adjectives, and verbs pattern in ʔayʔajuθəm as they do in English. In particular, it is important that predicate-argument flexibility is highlighted, perhaps in the introduction to the dictionary, so learners recognize that words of any lexical category may function as the main predicate or combine with a determiner to function as an argument (forming a relative clause in the case of a verb). Example sentences in the dictionary could also include cases where nouns and adjectives are used predicatively and where verbs appear in relative clauses to help illustrate the range of uses that are possible for words of each category.

More broadly, the findings of this investigation contribute to establishing that distinct lexical categories exist across the Salish language family. Evidence for lexical categories has now been amassed for St’át’imcets (e.g., Van Eijk and Hess 1986; Demirdache and Matthewson 1995; Davis and Matthewson 1999; Davis 2011), Lushootseed (Van Eijk and Hess 1986), Hul’q’umi’num’ (e.g., Gerdts and Schneider 2023), Klallam and Northern Straits (Montler 2003), and Nsyilxcən (Lyon 2013), as well as ʔayʔajuθəm, all of which exhibit the predicate-argument flexibility and non-selective morphology that originally prompted the claims that these categories do not exist in Salish languages. However, I have also shown that there is variation in the restrictions placed on words of these categories, which means that the same tests cannot always be applied. Hopefully, further cross-Salish investigation will establish which tests provide consistent results across languages, as well as uncovering a wider range of possible tests.

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