Bella Coola and North Wakashan:
Convergence and diversity in the Northwest Coast Sprachbund*

Bella Coola and North Wakashan

The Northwest Coast Sprachbund stretches from the north of California to southern Alaska, extending at its widest point as far east as the Rocky Mountains of Alberta and Montana. It encompasses languages from about a dozen genetically unrelated families.

Three of these—Salishan (S), Wakashan (W), and Chimakuan (C)—constitute the Central Northwest group of languages (Map 1), a particularly cohesive areal unit; within this group:

- the Salishan Bella Coola is cut off from its relatives, bounded by the Wakashan languages Haisla, Heiltsuk, and Oowekyala, and two Athapaskan languages, Carrier and Chilcotin
- the Bella Coola were in close contact with these groups, particularly the Heiltsuk (Bella Bella), and show considerable grammatical influence
- judging by the nature and direction of lexical borrowings, the Bella Coola seem to have adapted themselves culturally to the maritime Wakashan culture
- the Bella Coola held the Wakashan in esteem and admired their knowledge of ceremonial lore and rituals, many of which originated with the Heiltsuk (McIlwraith 1948)

Grammatical changes in Bella Coola

Linguistically, the result of this intimate contact has been a move in Bella Coola away from pan-Salishan features towards patterns more typically Wakashan. In a number of cases, the changes in Bella Coola have resulted in divergence from areal linguistic patterns, illustrating a process of linguistic diversification under language contact.

1.1)   Word-order of the matrix clause

The unmarked word order for the matrix clause in Central Northwest languages is VSO.

- in **Salishan**, there is some intra-linguistic variation, most commonly VSO/VOS
  - Salishan languages use topical NP-deletion in transitive clauses, leaving a single non-oblique actant whose syntactic role is marked by verbal morphology (Kinkade 1990)
- **Bella Coola** has rigid VSO word-order and uses it as an interpretive device
- in **Northern Wakashan**, strict subject-object-oblique order of NP actants is observed

More generally, Central Northwest languages share the syntactic template in (1):

(1)   A Central Northwest syntactic template for unmarked matrix clauses

Adverb(=SUBJ Clitic)	Predicate(=SUBJ Clitic)	Subject NP	Objects / Adjuncts
Lushootseed (Salish)			
—	ʔu-təlawi-s-əb=**čəd** PNT-run-APPL-MD=1S	—	ʔə ti sqʷəbayʔ PR D dog
'the dog ran after me' (Hess 1993: 32)			
daỷ-əxʷ=**čəd** cickʼʷ indeed-now=1S very	ʔəs-laq-il STAT-late-INCH	—	—
'now I am very late indeed' (Hess 1993: 115 – 6)			
Quileute (Chimakuan)			
qáaxayot=**la** very=1P	wisáaʔ happy	xabàa all	xeʔ béc-łoqʷ ó:-xoʔó xáxe D all-1PL:PO be-PRX now
'we are very glad that so many of us are here now' (Andrade 1931: 13)			
Makah (Southern Wakashan)			
huuʔaxi=**ø-sii-cux** still=IND-1S·SUBJ-2SOBJ	daac see	—	—
'I can still see you' (Jacobsen 1979c: 132)			
Heiltsuk (Northern Wakashan)			
wʼál=i-s aix-s really=3S-AD well-AD	tátuqʷla watch	wásm=a-xi man=D_1-D_2	wʼácʼ=iá-xi dog= D_1-D_2
'the man watches the dog really well' (Rath 1981: 101)			

Bella Coola has virtually abandoned two of the most important of the features shown in (1):

- the sentence-initial adverbial particle
- the sentence-second (S2) clitic

These losses are tied to a shift from a mixed system of predicate modification using adverbial particles and predicate enclitics towards the exclusive use of enclitics.

1.2)   Predicate modification

Most Central Northwest languages make use of a mixed system of pre-predicate particles and predicate enclitics, as in Lushootseed and Makah (predicates are underlined):

Lushootseed (S)

(2a) ckʼʷaqid=sixʷ   x̌ʷuɬ   ʔu+ʔəɬəd tiʔəʔ   qawʼqsʷ
always=CONTEMPT   just   PNT+eat   D   raven
'Raven is always just stuffing his face'   (Hess 1993: 116)

Makah (W)

(2b) huuʔax̌i=ø=sii=cux̌   daac
still=IND=1S=2S   see
'I can still see you'   (Jacobsen 1979: 132)

- ckʼʷaqid 'always', x̌ʷuɬ 'just' and huuʔax̌i 'still' are pre-predicate adverbial particles
- =sixʷ 'CONTEMPT' and the Makah =ø indicative morpheme are predicate enclitics
- **Salishan** favours particles (in terms of total number and textual frequency)
- **Wakashan** favours enclitics, often having fewer than a half dozen adverbial particles

Bella Coola has abandoned the pre-predicate particle in favour of predicate enclitics:

Bella Coola (S)

(3)   qʷals+am+ø=kʷ=ʔit=alu=tu=cʼi=k
hemlock:needles+INCH+3S=QTV=C-C=almost=now=PERF=C-C
'and now [it is said] he really almost became hemlock needles'   (Nater 1984: 131)

- Nater (1984) lists thirty-three predicate enclitics, a number more comparable to Heiltsuk and Kʷakʼʷala than to Salishan languages (which typically have a dozen or fewer)

This may be an example of "indirect diffusion" (Heath 1978), involving the transmission of a grammatical pattern without the transmission of actual morphemes.

1.3)   Loss of the sentence-second clitic

Bella Coola's loss of pre-predicate adverbials has obscured the S2-clitic pattern, which now only surfaces with the negative ʔax̌ʷ, the only sentence-initial adverbial:

Bella Coola (S)

(4)   ʔax̌=kʷ=i=lu=k   aykʼ+m+i+s   ta+s+cxʷ+lx+ulmx+tx̌
NEG=QTV=C-C=EXP=C-C   be:long+MD+DIM+3S   D+NP+dark+INCH+earth+D
        s+tuin+m+s=kʷ=lu=cʼ   ta+nanmkʼ+tx̌
NP+appear+MD+3S=QTV=EXP=PERF   D+animal+D
'it wasn't long after dark that the animal showed up before expected'
(Davis and Saunders 1980: 8, line 33)

- ʔax̌ʷ plays host to a string of evidentials which normally follow the matrix predicate (cf. the position of the evidentials in the embedded clause)
- unlike other Central Northwest languages, the person-marker (-s) remains on the verb

Given the existence of adverbial particles in Wakashan, their loss (and the consequent loss of landing sites for S2 clitics) in Bella Coola is not obviously the result of convergence. However:

- Bella Coola *has* opted for the predicate-modification strategy more strongly attested in the Wakashan languages—the use of predicate enclitics
- the move towards a more a rigid North Wakashan VSO template may have disfavoured pre-verbal adverbials, which are marked and textually infrequent
- this may be especially true in contact situations where one party has imperfect command of the other's language and so provides, or has access to, a more restricted range of structures to use as a basis or model for templates
- alternatively, the shift to an enclitic system of verbal modification may be overcompensation on the part of Bella Coola speakers emulating Wakashan linguistic patterns

Whatever their origin, the loss of the pre-predicate adverbial particle and the adoption of rigid VSO word-order has caused the unmarked matrix clause in Bella Coola both to resemble that of its Wakashan neighbours and to diverge from its relatives and neighbours in the CNW language area.

1.4)   Nominal Deixis

Another obvious way in which Bella Coola combines native Salishan traits with features borrowed from Wakashan is in its pattern of nominal deixis (determiners).

- in **Salishan** languages, deictics appear immediately preceding an NP or other phrasal element which takes a nominal role in a sentence, as in (5):

    Okanagan (S)
    (5a)   *ʕacənt+ís   iʔ   sənkɬcaʔsqáχaʔ*
          tie+3S:ERG   D   horse
          'he tied the horse'   (Mattina 1996: 30)

    Lushootseed (S)
    (5b)   *put   λ̓u+bə+ʔitut   tiʔiɬ   ʔəs+dxʷ+pakʷ+ah+əb*
          only   HAB+ADD+sleep   D   STAT+DP+lie+ass+MD
          'this He-Lies-With-His-Ass-In-The-Air would only sleep'   (Hess 1993: 183, line 57)

- **Wakashan** nominal deixis makes use of suffixation or encliticization, as illustrated in (6):

    Makah (W)
    (6)   *daasa=s   huktuub+iq*
          see=IND:1S   bird+D
          'I see the bird'   (Jacobsen 1979: 125)

- **Bella Coola** blends these two patterns:

    Bella Coola (S)
    (7)   *k̓x+is ti+ʔimlk+txci+xnas+cx*
          see+3S:3S   D+man+D Dƒ+woman+Dƒ
          'the man sees the woman'   (Davis and Saunders 1978: 38)

- deictic circumclitics seem to be unique to Bella Coola in the Salishan family

- however, in Kʷakʷ̓ala subject NPs appear bracketed between a deictic subject-marker attached to the verb stem and a demonstrative deictic suffix:

Kʷakʷ̓ala (W)

(8) *kʰáax̌=ʔm+oox̌   Wuláasəwʔ+eex̌*
     come=TOP+D$_{3:MIDDLE:SUBJ}$ Wuláasoo˙+D$_{MIDDLE:VISIBLE}$
     'Wuláasoo˙ has come' (Boas 1969: 537)

- this gives us a –D NP–D pattern which resembles the Bella Coola D–NP–D pattern
- the resemblance is, in fact, even more exact, as we will see in Section 2.5 below

Semantically, the Bella Coola deictic system resembles Wakashan more than Salish.

- a typical **Salishan** deictic system in terms of its complexity is that found in Upper Chehalis, which expresses three spatial degrees and a referential category of "indefinite":

(9) Upper Chehalis nominal deictics

	proximal	middle	distal	indefinite
non-fem	tit	ʔit	tact	t
fem	tic, cic	ʔic	tac, cac	t

(Kinkade 1964: 258)

- feminine–non-feminine gender is typical of coastal (as opposed to Coast) Salish languages as well as Chinook and Chimakuan (Thompson and Kinkade 1990), but not Wakashan

Bella Coola, on the other hand distinguishes three spatial categories, each sub-divided into demonstrative and non-demonstrative classes, shown in (10):

(10) Bella Coola nominal deictic clitics

	proximal		middle		distal	
	demon	non-dem	demon	non-dem	demon	non-dem
non-fem	ti—ɬ̓ayx	ti—tx	ta—ɬ̓ax̌	ta—ɬ	ta—tix	ta—tx̌
fem	ci—c̓ayx	ci—cx	ʔiɬ—ʔiɬayɬ	ʔiɬ—ɬ	ʔiɬ—cix	ʔiɬ—ʔiɬ
plural	wa—ʔac	wa—c	ta—ɬ̓ax̌ʷ	ta—ɬ	ta—tax̌	ta—tx̌ʷ

(Davis and Saunders 1980: 254)

- in the area from the Columbia River to the Alaska panhandle, only Tsimshian and Bella Coola have plurality as an inflectional category (Thompson and Kinkade 1990)

The Bella Coola system is almost exactly parallel to the deictic systems of **Northern Wakashan** languages like Heiltsuk:

(11)   Heiltsuk nominal deictic suffixes

	proximal		middle		distal		absent
	visible	invisible	visible	invisible	visible	invisible	—
primary	-kʷa	-kʷacʰ	-iax̌	-iax̌cʰ	-ia	-iacʰ	-i
secondary	-x̌ka		-x̌ʷ		-x̌i		-x̌ka

(Rath 1981: 77)

- demonstrative/non-demonstrative is semantically related to visible/invisible (visible things being most amenable to being referred to demonstratively as "this" or "that")

The Heiltsuk system captures the three spatial degrees typical of Salishan systems; its fourth category, 'ABSENT', may correspond to the non-referential/indefinite/hypothetical category.

- in general, Salishan deictic systems become more complex as they move nearer the Northern Wakashan/Bella Coola area

Wakashan (or Central Northwest areal) influence on the Salishan deictic system may either extend back into the realm of Proto-Salish, or various Salishan languages may have borrowed certain aspects of the complex Wakashan nominal deictic system, those languages closest to the Central Coast area showing the greatest influence.

1.5) Person-marking

The Bella Coola person-marking system has become distinct from both Wakashan and Salish

- in the **Salishan** family, the marking of matrix subjects and objects is complex
  - in <u>intransitive clauses</u>, both Coast and Interior languages use clitics to mark first- and second-person plural and singular subjects
- in most languages, these clitics follow the sentence-second pattern
- <u>transitive clauses</u> in Lillooet and Coast Salish languages use S2 clitics for first- and second-person subjects:

Straits (S)

(12a) *x̌či+t=sən*
know+TR=1S
'I know it'

(12b) *x̌či+t=sxʷ*
know+TR=2S
'you know it'

(Jelinek and Demers 1983: 168)

Transitive clauses with a third-person subject take a suffix, *-s*, which is bound to the verb, does not undergo sentence-second fronting, and can cooccur with an overt NP, as in (13):

Straits (S)

(13) *x̌či+t+<u>s</u>*   *cə   swəy?qə?   cə   swi?qo?əł*
know+TR+3   D   man   D   boy
'the man knows the boy'   (Jelinek and Demers 1983: 168)

- transitive clauses in Interior languages use subject-suffixes rather than clitics

Direct objects in Salishan are expressed by suffixes on the transitive verb stem:

Shuswap (S)

(14) *kuk+st+sécm+x*
save+CAUS+1S:OBJ+2S:SUBJ
'thank you' (lit. 'you saved me')   (Demirdache *et al* 1994: 154)

- like third-person intransitive subjects, third-person objects are a paradigmatic zero
- in languages in which the subject pronominals follow the verb, the order is object–subject

Wakashan languages use pronominal clitics in both transitive and intransitive clauses

- the order of pronominal actants is subject-object rather than object-subject
- in **Southern Wakashan**, S2-clitics are used for both subjects and objects

Makah (W)

(15) *huuʔaǰi=ø=sii=cuǰ   daac*
still=IND=1S=2S   see
'I can still see you'   (Jacobsen 1979: 132)

- in Southern Wakashan, third-persons are also paradigmatic zeros

Paradigmatic zero subjects are not a characteristic of **Northern Wakashan**, which has adopted the practice of using deictic or demonstrative enclitics as pronominals.

- in Kʷakʷala, deictic elements may appear on their own as subjects but also obligatorily cooccur with third-person NP actants, which follow a rigid subject–object–oblique order:

Kʷakʼʷala (W)

(16a) *kʰáaǰ=kʰa*
come=D$_{\text{PROX:INVISIBLE:SUBJ}}$
'this one comes'   (Boas 1969: 535)

(16b) *néex=la+ee*   *ćeećeskin+ee*
say=QTV+D$_{\text{3:DISTAL:SUBJ}}$ Tseetseskin+D$_{\text{3:DISTAL:VISIBLE}}$
'Tseetseskin said'   (Boas 1969: 537)

(16c) *yóos+eeta*   *léelqʷʰalaƛʰ+aya+ǰa*   *qʷáaǰnis+ee*
eat:with:spoon+D$_{\text{3:DISTAL:SUBJ}}$ tribe+D$_{\text{3:DISTAL:INVISIBLE}}$+D$_{\text{3:DISTAL:OBJ}}$ dog:salmon+D$_{\text{3:DISTAL:VISIBLE}}$
'the tribes ate the dog salmon with spoons'   (Boas 1969: 538)

- in (16a), a deictic person-clitic appears alone as an anaphoric subject pronoun
- in (16b), a pre-nominal clitic cooccurs with a third-person subject bearing a deictic suffix
- in (16c), pre-nominal clitics are also used with direct objects
- however, in this case they appear as enclitics on the preceding noun rather than as agreement-markers on the verb

Syntactically, deictic enclitics and nouns seem to form a D-NP-D constituent, leading to the mismatch between syntactic and phonological structure noted by Anderson (1992):

- pre-nominal clitics in NPs are incorporated phonologically to preceding word
- pre-nominal deictics mark the following noun for person and case
- post-nominal elements distinguish visibility and the three primary spatial categories

This gives us the following paradigm of Kʷakʷ̓ala deictics:

(17)   Kʷakʷ̓ala third-person-deictic markers

		proximal		middle		distal	
		visible	invisible	visible	invisible	visible	invisible
pronominal (16a)	SUBJ	=kʰ	=ka	=oox̌	=oo	=ooqʰ	=oo
	OBJ	-qʰekʰ	-x̌ka	-qʷʰ	-q̓ʷ	-qʰ	-qʰee
	OBL	-seekʰ	-ska	-soox̌	-soo	-s	-see
pre-nominal (16b and c)	SUBJ	-kata		-oox̌ta		-eeta	
	OBJ	-x̌kata		-x̌oox̌ta	-x̌ʷa	-x̌a	
	OBL	-skata		-soox̌ta	-sa	-sa	
post-nominal		-kʰ	-ka	-eex̌	-aax̌	-ee	-aee

(based on Boas 1969: 532)

- aside from its case-marking function, the Kʷakʷ̓ala deictic system is highly congruent, both structurally and functionally, with the Bella Coola system of deictic circumclitics

Bella Coola marks subjects in intransitive clauses with person-number suffixes, as in (18):

Bella Coola (S)

(18a) *ksnmak+c*   (18b) *ksnmak+s*   (18c) *ksnmak+aw*
work+1S   work+3S   work+3P
'I work'   '3s works'   'they work'

In transitive clauses, Bella Coola has developed a unique system of portmanteau object-subject agreement suffixes to mark the person and number of actants, as in (19):

Bella Coola (S)

(19a) *kɬ+is*   *ti+ʔimmllkii+tx   ti+tq̓ɬa+tx*
drop+3s:3s   D+boy+D   D+knife+D
'the boy dropped the knife'   (Davis and Saunders 1997: 24)

(19b) *sp̓+tis*   *ti+ʔimmḷḷkii+tx   wa+wac̓+uk+sc*
hit+3P:3s   D+boy+D   D+dog+PLURAL+D
'the boy is hitting the dogs'   (Davis & Saunders 1978: 38)

Both transitive and intransitive paradigms represent a pattern of subject-verb agreement which has no exact counterpart in the other Central Northwest languages. In Salish:

- the closest thing to agreement is the transitive subject marker (-*s* in the examples in (13))
- however, these agree with NP subjects in person only and not in number

- in most Salishan languages there is a strong tendency to avoid overt NP subjects with this suffix (Kinkade 1990), making it seem rather the inverse of agreement
- intransitive subject-clitics also seem not to be agreement in that these have a Ø third-person which one might be hesitant to claim "cooccurs" with overt NP subjects
- Bella Coola intransitive person-markers cooccur freely with overt NPs or pronominals with whom they agree in person and number
- inflectional number agreement is unattested in the third person in other CNW languages
- no other Salishan language shows overt agreement with third-person objects

Wakashan shows no kind of agreement with overt subjects or objects, although Northern Wakashan has non-zero object pronominals which can appear associated with the verb.

1.6) Use of deictics as subjects

Another interesting fact about person-marking in Northern Wakashan is that the full range of categories in the determiner system (*cf.* (11)) are marked on pronominal subjects. Similarly, Bella Coola frequently uses its deictic enclitics as third person pronouns, as in (20):

(20) ks-is=kʷ-c̓   **ɬayx**   ta=mila-s=tx̌
      pull-3S:3S =QTV-PERF   **this:one**   D=cane-3PO=D
      'he pulled his cane out'   (Davis & Saunders 1980: 35, line 74)

- Bella Coola seems to use the full range of its enclitics as pronominal subjects
- these constructions are textually frequent (≈ 33% of sentences in texts)

Other Salishan languages may use deictic elements as pronominal subjects; however

- they are textually infrequent (> 10% as objects in texts, 1% as subjects in my sample)
- most languages that use nominal deictics (determiners) use a limited number thereof
- some languages use a separate set of elements which often mark different categories

The Bella Coola use of deictic enclitics as pronominals may be due to Wakashan influence.

Summary

Bella Coola has approximated North Wakashan grammatical patterns in that:

- it has adopted a rigid VSOO template
- it prefers enclitics for predicate modification
- it has a complex, 3 x 2 category determiner system of both enclitics and proclitics
- it marks a full range of deictic categories in its third-person pronominals

Bella Coola combines some of these features with native Salishan traits:

- (historical) O-S order of pronominal actants
- the use of deictic proclitics
- the marking of gender in the nominal deictic paradigm (typical of coastal Salish)

Bella Coola has lost the following features of the Central Northwest language area:

- the sentence-initial adverbial particle
- the sentence-second clitic (surfaces only with negative particle ʔax̌ʷ)

Bella Coola has developed unique grammatical patterns in the area of:

- inflectional marking of plurality (source/trigger unknown)
- complex inflectional system of person-agreement of seven object-subject paradigms
- non-zero marking of third-person objects

Bella Coola's person-marking system compares to Salishan and Wakashan as follows:

<u>Salish</u>

✔ person-markers follow O-S order and object-pronominals are suffixes

<u>Lushootseed</u>

(21a) łu-t̓ukʷ-tu-<u>bicid</u>=<u>čəd</u>
IRR-go:home-CS-<u>2S:OBJ</u>=<u>1S:SUBJ</u>
'I will take you home'

✘ čəd 'I' is a sentence-second clitic
✘ no or vestigial (person only) agreement with NP matrix subjects
✘ most Salish shows VSO/VOS alternation in word order
✘ many Salishan languages disfavour sentences with two NPs; Lushootseed prohibits them

<u>Wakashan</u>

✘ person-clitics follow S-O order and are interchangeable with NPs:

<u>Heitsuk</u>

(21b) tátuqʷla=í-qi
watch=<u>3S:SUBJ</u>-3S:OBJ
's/he watches that'

(21c) tátuqʷla   <u>wísm-á-x̌i</u>=qi
watch   <u>man-D₁-D₂</u>=3S:OBJ
'the man watches that'

✔ Heiltsuk and Kʷakʷala have rigid VSO order and allow two NP actants
✔ full range of deictic categories in pronominal system (Northern Wak. only)

While it is difficult to prove that all of the Bella Coola innovations are the direct result of borrowing, the borrowed and innovative features do seem to be inter-related:

1 Bella Coola appears to have adapted the rigid Wakashan VSOO syntactic template
2 with this change comes a shift away from a mixed (adverbial particle and enclitic) system of predicate modification to the exclusive use of predicate enclitics
3 the loss of pre-predicate particles eliminates environments for pre-verbal, sentence-second clitics
4 transitive and intransitive subjects come to be marked with post-predicate morphemes
5 both subject and object pronominals become incorporated to the verb-stem, a process reinforced by the historical loss or reduction of vocalic material noted by Nater (1984)
6 this leaves pronominals bound to the verb stem inside an often extensive string of other morphemes
7 these are no longer salient enough to act as anaphors or reference-tracking devices in discourse, encouraging iteration by pronominal deictics or full NPs

In this analysis, Bella Coola person-markers have undergone a transition from clitic pronoun to pronominal suffix to agreement marker co-occurring with overt, coreferential NPs—a well-documented cline of grammaticalization (Givón 1979; Hopper and Traugott 1993).

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