

Intransitive $-t$ in Salish

Henry Davis & Sander Nederveen
University of British Columbia

60th International Conference for Salish and
Neighbouring Languages
The University of the Fraser Valley and The
Stó:lō Shxweli Halq'eméylem Language
Program
Chilliwack, B.C.

Roadmap

Part 1: General overview of intransitive $-t$ in Salish

- $-t$ on property concept roots (adjectives)
- $-t$ on change of state roots

Part 2: Deep dive into $-t$ on change of state roots

- Northern Interior Salish
 - St'át'imcets, Secwepemctsín, and n̓l̓eʔkepmxcín
- Roots and $-t$: what is the division of labour?
- Implications for other root-adjacent morphemes

Intransitive *-t* across Salish: Adjectives

While intransitive *-t* is relatively rare outside of Northern Interior Salish, there are reflexes of intransitive *-t* on a set of roots **across the whole language family**.

LANGUAGE	‘LONG/TALL’	‘WIDE’	‘THICK’
Bella Coola	(cak ^w)	(pĩq’-iik)-t	pl̥t
Comox-Sliammon	λaqt	(pĩq’)	pəlt
Pentlatch	λaqt	?	pəlt
Sechelt	λaqt	(pĩq’)	pəlt
Halkomelem	λeqt	lq’et	p̥let
Northern Straits	λeqt	lq’et	č̥l̥ət
Klallam	λaqt	lq’et	č̥l̥ət
Nooksack	λaqt	l̥əq’a(?)t, l̥əq’ət	?
Squamish	λaqt	l̥əq’	p̥luł
Lushootseed	(ha:c)	l̥əq’t	p̥l̥ət
Twana	(lax ^w)	l̥əq’	pəł
Quinault	λaq	l̥əq’-	p̥ət(-ł)
Upper Chehalis	λaq(-ł)	l̥əq(-ł)	p̥əl(-ł)
Cowlitz	λaq(-ł)	l̥əq(-ł)	pəł
Lillooet	(zax)-t	l̥əq’	p̥luł
Thompson (River)	λax̣ṭ / (zex)-t / (wis)-t	laq’t	p̥əl-t
Shuswap	λex̣ṭ / (yex)-t	leq’t	p̥el-t
Okanagan	(wis-xṇ)	laq’t	p̥al̥t
Moses-Columbia	(wis-xṇ)	l̥əq’t	p̥əl̥t
Spokane-Kalispel-Montana Salish	(wis-ṣ̌ṇ)	laq’t	p̥il̥t
Coeur D’Alene	(ciṣ̌)-t	l̥əq’t	p̥el̥t

Interior Salish: Adjectival *-t*

In Interior languages, **adjectival *-t*** is particularly associated with what is traditionally termed **‘characteristic’ reduplication**.

nxá'amxcín

(Willet 2003:243-245)

cál<cál>-t

< √cál 'shady'

x^wúk^w<x^wuk^w>-t

< √x^wuk^w 'clean'

Secwepemcstín

(Kuipers 1974:54-55)

pál<pəl>-t

< √pəl 'stubborn'

q^wəy~q^wíy-t

< √q^wiy 'blue'

nleʔkepmxcín

(Thompson and Thompson 1992:89)

zéw<zəw>-t

< √zew 'tiresome'

ʔaq<ʔəq>-t

< √ʔaq 'full of thorns, thorny'

St'át'imcets

qíl<qəl>-t

< √qil 'fun'

kín<kñ>-ət

< √kñ 'dangerous'

Interior Salish: Adjectival *-t*

Adjectival *-t* is also found on non-reduplicated adjectives

‘Characteristic’ reduplication **doesn’t** invariably require *-t*

Adjectives may be formed **without reduplication nor *-t***

Secwepemctsin

Adjectives with -t, without reduplication

λəx-t ‘sweet’

qʷuc-t ‘fat’

Adjectives with reduplication, without -t

məkʷ~mékʷ ‘blunt’

mət~mát ‘soft (as butter)’

*Adjectives with neither reduplication nor *-t**

: x̣mank ‘heavy’

x̣yum ‘big’

If there was a **systematic set of alternations** relating *-t* and reduplication, it has been obscured by **lexicalization**

Change of State (COS) *-t*

In Northern Interior Salish, *-t* has or had a distinct function as a COS marker:

Secwepemctsín

x-sult-**t** ‘freeze over’

q̣iw-**t** ‘wake up’

n̓leʔkepmxcín

qem-**t** ‘get shot’

cek-**t** ‘get cool’

St’át’imcets

zik-**t** ‘fall, topple’

łap-**t** ‘go out
(e.g., of a light)’

COS roots vs. COS *-t*:

What pieces of meaning are contributed by COS roots?

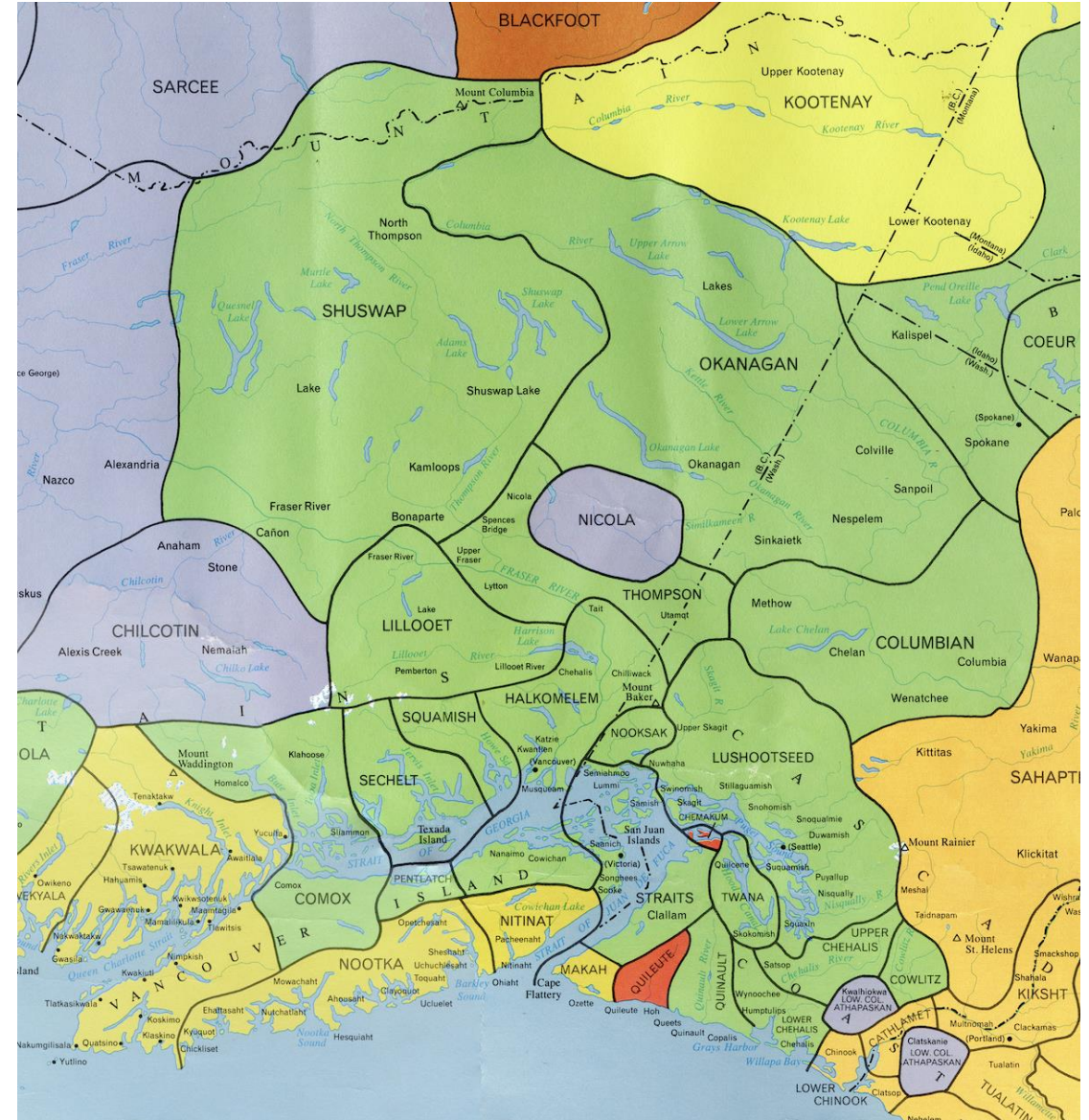
What is contributed by *-t*?

Languages

Northern Interior Salish

- St'át'imcets (Lillooet)
- Secwepemctsín (Shuswap)
- n̓ɛʔkepmxcín (Thompson River Salish)

Fragment of a map created by Cameron Suttles (1985)



COS –*t* and bare roots

COS verbs may appear as bare roots in St’át’imcets but not in Secwepemctsín and n̓eʔkepmxcín

Bare roots in St’át’imcets

kəł=Ø ʔi=sčám̓-s=a, ʔəł
get.removed=3SBJ PL.DET=fish.bone-3POSS=EXIS and.then

kʰax=Ø, ʔəł **cəq̓**=Ø
get.dried=3SBJ and.then get.pounded=3SBJ

‘The (fish) bones were removed, and then it was dried and
pounded.’ (Mitchell 2022:396)

*Bare roots in Secwepemctsín and n̓eʔkepmxcín

Secwepemctsín

***sul**=Ø ɣə=c̥iʔ
get.frozen=3SBJ DET=deer
Intended: ‘The meat froze/got frozen.’

n̓eʔkepmxcín

***kíp̓**=Ø ʔə=sméyx
get.trampled=3SBJ DET=sake
Intended: ‘The snake got trampled.’ (Nederveen
2024:426)

COS $-t$ and bare roots are semantically similar

- Shared characteristics of bare COS roots (St'át'imcets) and $-t$ roots (Secwepemctsín and nłeʔkepmxcín):
 - Both bare and t-marked COS roots are unaccusative.
 - Unaccusative verbs only have a theme argument, for example in (1):
(1) The vase broke
The vase is *undergoing* the breaking
 - Both bare and t-marked COS roots are telic.
 - Telic verbs culminate, meaning that they reach their natural endpoint, for example in (2):
(2) Doug fixed his car (*but he didn't finish).
The fixing-event should have reached an endpoint.

Both bare and
t-marked COS
roots are
unaccusative

St'át'imcets bare root

q̓wəl=∅

ta=číʔ=a

get.cooked=3SBJ

DET=meat=EXIS

‘The meat got cooked.’ (≠ ‘Someone cooked the meat.’)

Secwepemctsin t-root

sul-t=∅

ye=číʔ

get.frozen-INTR=3SBJ

DET=deer

‘The meat froze/got frozen.’ (≠ ‘Someone froze the meat.’)

n̓eʔkepmxcín t-root

q̓wéy-t=∅

ʔə=sqyéy̓tə

get.roasted-INTR=3SBJ

DET=salmon

‘The salmon got roasted.’ (≠ ‘Someone roasted the salmon.’)

Both bare
and t-marked
COS roots
are telic.

St'átimcets bare root

$\acute{q}^w\acute{a}l=\emptyset$ $ta=\acute{c}i\acute{?}=a,$ $(*\acute{\lambda}u\acute{?}$ $wa\acute{?}=\emptyset=\acute{\lambda}u\acute{?}$ $\acute{?}\acute{a}s-\acute{x}\acute{i}\acute{w})$
get.cooked=3SBJ DET=meat=EXIS $(*\text{but}$ IPFV=3SBJ=EXCL STAT-raw
'The meat got cooked (*but it's still raw).'
Consultant's comment: "Going against itself."

Secwepemctsin t-root

sul-t= $\emptyset$ $y\acute{a}=\acute{c}i\acute{?}$ $(*\acute{?}e\acute{?}$ $\acute{?}ex$ $\acute{?}ey$ $y\acute{a}=\text{sul-t}=\acute{a}s)$
get.frozen-INTR=3SBJ DET=deer $(*\text{and}$ PROG still D/C=get.frozen-INTR=3SJV)
'The meat froze/got frozen (*and it's still freezing).'

nle $\acute{?}$ kepmxcín t-root

ník-t= $\emptyset$ $\acute{?}\acute{a}=\text{sy}\acute{e}yp$ $(*\acute{\lambda}u\acute{?}$ $t\acute{a}\emptyset=\acute{t}\acute{e}\acute{?}e$ $k=s=\acute{t}\acute{e}k\acute{o}m=s)$
get.cut-INTR=3SBJ DET=tree $(*\text{but}$ NEG=3SBJ=NEG D/C=NMLZ=all=3POSS)
'The tree got cut (*but not all of it).'

The division of labour between intransitive $-t$ and COS roots

Two analyses

‘Bare root analysis’

Davis (2024)
(based on Bar-el et al. 2005)

COS roots lexically encode both unaccusativity and telicity.

‘Compositional root analysis’

Nederveen (in prep.)

COS roots lexically encode unaccusativity and a process component (dynamic change of state). **Telicity is added separately by $-t$.**

Can we reduce it to one analysis?

‘Compositional root analysis’

COS roots lexically encode unaccusativity and a process component (dynamic change of state). **Telicity is added separately by $-t$.**



Straightforwardly applies to t -roots in Secwepemctsín and nłeʔkepmxcín



What about bare roots in St’át’imcets?

‘Bare’ roots in St’át’imcets are **not bare**.

Instead, St’át’imcets $-t$ isn’t $-t$, it’s **∅**

Advantages:

We can use **one single analysis** to explain telic, unaccusative COS roots in all three languages

Disadvantages:

It’s very abstract – every ‘bare’ COS root in St’át’imcets has a piece of meaning that you **cannot see**.

Can we reduce it to one analysis?

‘Bare root analysis’

COS roots lexically encode both unaccusativity and telicity.



What about t-roots in Secwepemctsín & n̓eʔkepmxcín ?

Intransitive $-t$ has no meaning
 t -suffixation has no explanation



Straightforwardly applies to bare roots in St'át'imcets

Advantages:

No abstraction required to understand St'át'imcets.

Disadvantages:

A morpheme that is sometimes *necessary* has no clear function.

Not obvious how to adapt the analysis to account for $-t$.

Arguments for a ‘compositional root analysis’

- a) Relic $-t$ forms in St’át’imcets behave just like t -roots in Secwepemctsín and n̓l̓eʔkepmxcín, and other ‘bare’ roots in St’át’imcets
- b) The ‘compositional root analysis’ explains why the imperfective applies differently to different COS roots
- c) (non-culminating) inchoative predicates are more easily explained
- d) Roots encode a process under the ‘compositional root analysis’, which can be modified in St’át’imcets

Relic $-t$ forms in St'át'imcets...

...are **unaccusative**:

łap-t=∅ ta=smúłac=a
get.extinguished-INTR=3SBJ DET=woman=EXIS
'The woman went out (like a light).' (≠ The woman extinguished something (like a light).')

....are **telic**

zik-t=∅ ta=syáp=a, (*łu? wá? = ∅ = łu? ʔəs-γép)
fall-INTR=3SBJ DET=tree=EXIS (*but IPFV=3SBJ=EXCL STAT-upright)
'The tree fell (*but it's still standing).'

Just like St'át'imcets bare COS roots and t-roots in Secwepemctsín and nleʔkepmxcín.

This suggests that, historically, there used to be composition of intransitive $-t$ with COS roots in St'át'imcets, which has disappeared over time.

Imperfective COS roots

‘Compositional root analysis’:

COS roots encode a process component

Depending on aspectual classification of the root, the process component can be specified for different lengths. Thus, the imperfective applied to...

...longer process roots: **event is ongoing**

...short process roots: **repetitive event**

These findings are *not problematic* for ‘bare root analysis’, but it also *cannot explain* them.

Imperfective durative verbs

St’át’imcets

waʔ=∅ **mays** **ta=n-káh=a**
IPFV=3SBJ **get.fixed** DET=1SG.POSS-car=DET
‘My car is getting fixed.’

nleʔkepmxcín

?ex=∅ **péw-t** **?ə=sxáni**
IPFV=3SBJ **get.swollen-INTR** DET=wound
‘The wound is swelling.’

Imperfective near-instantaneous verbs

St’át’imcets

? **waʔ=∅** **pun** **ta=n-sqáxʔ=a**
IPFV=3SBJ **get.found** DET=1SG.POSS-dog=EXIS
‘My dog gets found (habitually).’ (≠ My dog is in the process of getting found)

Explaining non-culminating inchoative roots

In St'át'imcets, inchoative-marked COS roots, do not need to culminate

Bare root analysis:

Not clear how culmination entailment is undone by the inchoative

Compositional root analysis

Parallel to t-suffixation, inchoative morphology encodes properties of (a)telicity

ʔwəl-p=Ø ta=lam-xal-álx^w=a, ʔuʔ láp-añ-Ø-əm
burn-**INCH**=3SBJ DET=pray-ACT-place=EXIS but, extinguish-DIR-3OBJ-PASS
ʔə=ki=wáʔ=Ø láp-xal, níł=Ø=ʔuʔ s=x^wʔay=s
by=PL.DET=IPFV=3SBJ extinguish-ACT COP=3SBJ=EXCL NMLZ=NEG=3POSS
k^w=s=ʔwəl-p=s
D/C=NMLZ=burn-**INCH**=3POSS

'The church got on fire, but the firefighters put it out so the church didn't burn.' (*consultant's translation*)

yi<?>p=Ø ʔi=sq^wlap-áz-łkał=a
grow<**INCH**>=3SBJ PL.DET=strawberry-plant-1PL.POSS=EXIS
'Our strawberry plants are growing!'

ʔi<?>s=Ø ʔi=susuzíl=a l=ki=sq^wém<q^wəm>=a
shrink<**INCH**>=3SBJ PL.DET=glacier=EXIS in=PL.DET=mountain<PLU>=EXIS
'The glaciers are shrinking in the mountains.'

Modification of the process component of roots

In St'át'imcets, the eventive part of COS roots can be modified.



sáq^uul=Ø k^w=s=paw=s na=waʔ ʔəs-páw
half=3SBJ D/C=NMLZ=**get.inflated**=3POSS ABSN.DET=IPFV STAT-get.inflated
n-k^wup
LOC-mattress
'The air mattress got half-inflated.'

Bare root analysis:

Not clear how this is possible, as roots lack a process component altogether

Compositional root analysis:

Roots provide a process component that can be modified

tákəṃ ʔi=pəṭák=a sáq^uul=Ø k^w=s=q^wəl=s,
all PL.DET=potato=EXIS half=3SBJ D/C=NMLZ=**get.cooked**=3POSS
ʔəz k^was ka-čáq^w-a
NEG D/C+NMLZ+IPFV+3POSS CIRC-get.eaten-CIRC
'All the potatoes are half-cooked: they can't be eaten.'

Summing up

1. Intransitive $-t$ manifests itself in some way in most Salish languages.
2. $-t$ is productive on COS roots in the Interior languages Secwepemctsín and n̓l̓eʔkepmxcín, yet it isn't in the neighbouring language St'át'imcets.
3. Out of two competing analyses of $-t$ in COS contexts, we argue for the '**compositional root analysis**', which endows COS roots with a process/dynamic change, and in which $-t$ encodes telicity.

The '**compositional root analysis**' accounts for t -suffixation and easily extends to those without $-t$.

Arguments in favour come from:

- Relic t -forms in St'át'imcets
- Composition of COS roots with the imperfective
- Seamless extension of the analysis to (non-culminating) inchoatives
- Possible modification of the event process

thank you

kukwstumúlhkacw

kukwstéc-kucw

k^wuk^wstéyp

We are greatly indebted to the speakers of the Northern Interior languages whom we work with:

St'át'imcets:

Carl Alexander (Qwa7yán'ak)

Secwepemctsín:

Bridget Dan, Julie Antoine, and Garlene Dodson

nłeʔkepmxcín:

Bernice Garcia (k^wałtèzetk^wuʔ), **Marty Aspinall** (cúʔsinek), **Gene Moses**, and **Bev Phillips**